

Identity of Allah

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

*The sky is one and vast and it is spread over us so when two faraway friends staying in separate countries **look at the sky at the same time they would see the same sky.** Also it would be equidistant from both of them. For example suppose a person in India looks at the sky and at the same time his friend in Iran also looks in the same direction, they both would **see the same sky** and it would be **equally near or far from both of them.***

Now if they are asked to describe the shape of the sky; whether it is circular, square or rectangular? What would be their response? I think they would say that it is difficult to guess the shape of the sky since it is spread all over us and our vision cannot grasp its shape.

➔ In the light of above example let us try to understand the Vastness and Limitlessness of Allah (SWT). Let us turn towards the Quran and try to understand this Divine Phenomenon of Allah's Greatness:

- *“Us ko aankhein dekh nahin sakti na duniya main na aakherat mein aur Woh logon ki nazaron ko khub dekhta hai aur Woh Bada bareekbeen wakifkaar hai...” – (Surah-e-Anam, ayah 103)*

“(No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.)”

We have a limited vision and just as we cannot see the shape of the sky it is difficult for us to see Allah (SWT) with such limitations. He is spread all around us and hence it is difficult for our eyes to grasp His Vastness. He is above all comprehension but He sees His creations and He is all knowing. So where is He? The Quran explains this as follows:

- *“(Ae Rasool) jab Mere bande Mera haal tum se poochhen to (kehdo ki) **Main unn ke paas hi hoon.**” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 186)*

*“(When My servants ask thee concerning Me, **I am indeed close (to them)**)”*

Allah (SWT) says He is very close to all of us. But **how close?**

- *“**Aur Hum to usske shehrug se hi bhi zyada qareeb hain**” – (Surah-e-Qaaf, ayah 16)*

*“(For We are **nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.**)”*

Allah (SWT) indicates in the above ayah that He is even **closer than our jugular vein.**

→ Hence let us understand this Divine Phenomenon now:

- Allah (SWT) is difficult to be seen because He is limitless and cannot be confined to a specific shape and size. Thus He is beyond our vision.
- The way sky is **equidistant from the people** across the globe, **Allah (SWT) is closer to the jugular vein** of every person on this earth.

So if **He is Unseen** but **nearer** than our jugular vein how do we recognize Him? Has He created His Identity which can be seen and understood by us? We would try to find out as we go further with this article, but before this let us try to focus on the following point.

We just saw that it is difficult to limit Allah (SWT) in a specific shape and size. And if somebody does it he becomes a **non-believer of Allah's Omnipresence**. With this in mind let us contemplate on the following ayahs:

- ***“Jo (Makhluk) zameen per hai sab fanaa hone wali hai aur sirf tumhare Parvardigar ki zaat jo azmat aur karamat wali hai baaqi rahegi.”*** – (Surah-e-Rehman, ayah 26-27)

*“(All that is on earth will perish: **But will abide (for ever) the Face of thy Lord**, - full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour.)”*

The above ayahs say that everything on this earth would perish except the bountiful, majestic and honourable **Face of Allah (وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ)**. But Allah (SWT) does not have any shape and hence to think that He is having a Face is to give Him a shape and confine Him which contradicts the phenomenon of His Omnipresence and Limitlessness. Then why did the ayah has said so? Let us see one more similar ayah and then we would ponder upon this aspect.

- ***“Usski zaat ke siwa har cheez fanaa hone wali hai.”*** – (Surah-e-Qasas, ayah 88)

*“(Everything (else) will perish **save His Face**.)”*

The ayah from *Surah-e-Rehman* says that **all that is on earth would perish** except Allah's Face which would remain forever, while the above ayah from *Surah-e-Qasas* says that **everything else would perish except Allah's Face (إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ)**; it does not mention the word 'earth' in this ayah.

There are three inferences which we can draw from here. 1) Allah (SWT) cannot be confined and hence there must be **someone created by Allah (SWT) who represents His Face** and who is **‘Wajahullah’**. 2) Along-with Allah's other creations *Face of Allah* is also present on this earth. 3) Except Allah's Face every other creations of Allah (SWT) which are on **earth and otherwise would perish**. Thus **whoever is “Wajahullah” would remain when everything else would perish.**

Now let us contemplate on the following ayah:

- “*Aur unn logon ne Khuda ki jaisi qadradani karni chahiye thi Uss ki (kuch bhi) qadr na ki haalanke (Wo aisa Qadir hai ki) Qayamat ki din saari zameen usski muthi main hogi aur saare aasman Uss ke dahine haath main lipte hue hain jise yeh log Uss ka sharik banate hain woh usse pakizah aur bartar hai.*” – (Surah-e-Az Zumr, ayah 67)

“(And they have not honored Allah with the honor that is due to Him; and **the whole earth shall be in His grip** on the day of resurrection and **the heavens rolled up in His right hand**; glory be to Him, and may He be exalted above what they associate (with Him))”

As per the above ayah on the day of resurrection the whole earth shall be in Allah’s Grip and the heavens would be rolled up in **His Right Hand**. One of the inferences which could be drawn from the above ayah is that **the word ‘Grip’ and ‘Right Hand’ used by Allah (SWT) are to showcase His control on that day**. But Allah (SWT) is always in total control of everything which He has created and He is not dependent on the day of resurrection for His Power and Control; Allah (SWT) holds the same Power and Control even now over His Creations. Thus it further forces us to infer that there must be **an appointed authority representing “Right Hand” of Allah (SWT)** which would be given powers to **control the proceedings of that day**. **And this authority cannot be different from “Wajahullah” (Face of Allah)**.

→ Allah (SWT) has kept Himself away from our eyes and vision. He is Unseen and He does not hold any shape and size. But **He has created His Countenance (Wajahullah) as His Identity and Sign**. Knowing and understanding this “**Face of Allah**” would help us improve our faith and understand Allah’s Greatness. And **rejecting and ignoring His Countenance would definitely lead to ‘kufir’ and punishment**. Hence it is important for us to take strides in this direction to find **Allah’s Countenance**.

In order to understand this let us take the help of the following ayah from *Surah-e-Saad*:

- *Khuda ne (Iblis se) farmaya ki ae Iblis jis cheez ko Maine apni khaas kudrat se paida kiya (bhala) uss ko sajda karne se tujhe kisi ne roka kya tune takabbur kiya ya waqayee tu Alin main se hai?” – (Surah-e-Saad, ayah 75)*

“(He said: O Iblis! What hindereth thee from falling prostrate before that which I have created with both My hands? **Art thou too proud or art thou one of the Alin (Mighty one)**”.

The above ayah refers to the incidence where *Iblis the Satan* refuses to prostrate in *sajda* before Adam (A.S). This act of pride and refusal makes him the rejected one and **he ultimately becomes ‘Kafir’ though he still believed in Allah’s Oneness and Greatness**.

When we observe the later part of the above ayah we find that Allah (SWT) is questioning *Iblis* on his not prostrating to Adam (A.S) by asking **whether he has turned arrogant or does he think he is from amongst the *Alin*?** This shows the presence of ***Alin* - the mighty ones** even **before the creation of Adam (AS)**. And they were made superior to Adam (A.S) in their position by Allah (SWT). We can further infer that Allah (SWT) **dislikes arrogance and pride** and **He equally dislikes someone who compares himself to these mighty ones** since in the above ayah Allah (SWT) has specifically questioned *the Satan* on these two aspects. **If someone still thinks that he can match them and be like them in position**, he is following the footsteps of *the Satan* and such a person is at a risk of losing everything which he has earned in his lifetime and it **would lead him to 'Kufr'**; though he **still might be a believer of Allah's Oneness and Greatness**.

This shows that '*Alin*' are the Greatest Signs of Allah and to accept their superiority is key to enhance our faith. The other thing worth knowing is that the word **'*Alin*' is the plural form of 'Ali' in Arabic.**

The following excerpts from the *tafsir* of our beloved Imam Hasan Askari (A.S) would help us identify them and their greatness:

- Imam Hasan Askari (A.S) has reported from his forefathers (pbuh) that the holy Prophet (pbuh) has said: "When Allah created Adam and Eve (Allah's peace be upon them), they strutted around Heaven, then **Adam told Eve:**" **Allah hasn't created any beings better than us."** so Allah sent this revelation to Jibriel (A.S): **Bring me my servant who is in the higher Paradise.** Then when they entered the paradise, they saw a female servant sitting on one of Heaven's carpets. She had a crown of light on her head and on her ears, she had earrings of light. The heavens had brightened from the beauty of her face?! So he (Jibriel) said: This is **Fatima (pbuh) the daughter of Mohammad (pbuh)**; a prophet who your descendants will begat at the end of time. So he said: What is **this crown on her head?** He said: **Her husband Ali (pbuh) son of Abi Talib**, he said: And **what are those earrings on her ears?** He said: **Her sons Al Hasan (pbuh) and Al Hussein (pbuh)**. He said: My beloved Jibriel! Have they been created before me? He said: **They existed in the obscure knowledge of Allah Almighty, before you were created in four thousand years.**

(Ref: *Tafsir Al-Imam Al-Askari* p.219, *Bihar Al-Anwar* vol.26 p.326, *Ta'weel Al-Ayat al-Zahira* vol.1 p.44, *Qasas Al-Anbiaa* p.43)

This clarifies that the '*Alin*' so mentioned in ayah of *Surah-e-Saad* are **Mohammed (SAW), Ali (A.S), Fatema (S.A), Hasan (A.S) and Hussain (A.S).** They have been created four thousand years prior to Adam (A.S) and they are superior to all other creations. Loving and accepting their superiority is enhancement of faith and would lead to salvation. *Iblis* could not understand

this and became *Satan* while Aadam (A.S)'s mistake was forgiven when he accepted their superiority. As Quran says:

- “*Phir Aadam ne apne Parvardigar se (Mazerat ke chand alfaaz sikhe), pus Khuda ne un alfaaz ki barkat se Aadam ki tauba qubool kar li beshak Wo bada maaf karne wala Maherbaan hai*”. (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 37)

“(Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He turned to him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.)”

Allah (SWT) in order to forgive Aadam (A.S)'s mistake, taught him some words and when Aadam (A.S) recited these words Allah (SWT) turned to him mercifully and his mistake was forgiven. The commentators have agreed that these holy words mentioned in the above ayah which Aadam (A.S) recited to invoke Allah (SWT)'s Mercy are the names of Mohammed (SAW), Ali (A.S), Fatema (S.A), Hassan (A.S) and Husain (A.S). (Ref: Durr-e-Mansur, Suyuti, vol 1 P 16).

→ From the above contemplation we can conclude now that Allah (SWT) created the **holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut)** superior to his every other creations and termed them as '*Alin*'- **The Mighty Ones** and made them **His Greatest Signs** as submitting to **their superiority is faith and rejecting to accept them as leaders is 'Kufr'**. They are so purified that **only through their intercession** Allah's Mercy can be invoked and **would He listen to our prayers and forgive our sins.**

So if they are '*Alin*', the mighty ones and **Allah's Greatest Creation** it is logical to infer that they are '*Wajahullah*' and **His Right Hand** as discussed earlier. Let us now prove this in the light of Quran.

In the following ayah Allah (SWT) defines Himself:

- “*Khuda to saare aasman wa zameen ka Noor hai, uske Noor ki misaal aisi hai jaise ek taak (sina) hai jismain ek roshan charaagh ho aur charaagh ek shishe ki qandeel main ho aur qandeel apni goya ek jagmagata hua roshan sitara (wo charaagh) zaitun ke aise Mubarak darakht (ke tael) se roshan kiya jaae jo na purab ki taraf ho aur na paschim ki taraf balke bicho-bich maidan main uska tael aisa shafaaf ho ke agar che aag uuse chuae bhi nahin taahum aisa ma'lum ho ke aap hi aap roshan ho jaeega gharaz ek Noor naihain balke Noor Ala Noor (Noor ki Noor per joat pad rahi hai) Khuda apne Noor ki taraf jise chahta hai hidayat karta hai aur Khuda logo ke samajhane ke waste mislain bayaan karta hai aur Khuda to har cheez se khoob waqif hai.* – (Surah-e-Noor, ayah 35)

“(Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as if were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for men: and Allah doth know all things.)”

While explaining the above ayah prominent scholars like **Hasan al-Basri, Abdul Hasan Maghazil and Shafei** have mentioned that **the Niche** mentioned in the above ayah refers to **Janab-e-Fatema (S.A), the Lamp** means her two sons - **Hasan (A.S) and Hussain (A.S)**. **Blessed Tree** is the **lineage of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S)** through which the holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut) descended. **Light upon Light (Noor ala Noor)** alludes to **one Imam succeeding the another Imam** and **Allah doth guide who He wills to His Light** means that **Allah (SWT) instills love for the descendants of Mawla Ali (A.S) and Fatema (S.A) in the heart of a person whom He wishes to guide.**

In the light of the above ayah it can be inferred that **Allah (SWT) defines Himself by defining the light of the holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut).** And since Allah (SWT) has identified Himself with them; **the holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut) are therefore Allah’s Identity.**

The prominent commentators have mentioned the following sermon of the holy Prophet (pbuh) on the authority of Imam Zainul Abedin (A.S), which further endorses our above mentioned inference:

- Imam Ali Bin Al-Hussein (pbuh) said: "My father narrated to me that his father narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

*"O servants of Allah. When Adam saw the Light shining from his seed, for Allah had transferred our spirits from the topmost of the Throne to his seed, he saw the Light but he didn't see the spirits so he said: "O Lord! What are these Lights?!" Allah the Almighty said: **"They are Lights of spirits whom I transferred from the most honorable place in My Throne to your seed and for that purpose I have ordered the angels to prostrate themselves for you because you were the holder of those spirits."** Hence, Adam said: "O Lord! Would you show them to me?" Allah the Almighty said: "Adam, look at the topmost of the Throne." He looked and the Light of our spirits fell from Adam's seed to the topmost of the Throne and then the images of our spirits' Lights that are in his seed were printed and reflected on it as someone's face reflects on a clear mirror. Hence, he saw our spirits and said: "O Lord! What are these spirits?" Allah, the Most High, said: "O Adam, these are the spirits of my greatest creations and servants.-"*

- ***This is Mohammad and I am Al-Mahmoud Al-Hamid (The Most Thanked) for My actions, I derived this name for him from My Name.***

- *This is Ali and I am Al-Ali Al-Athim (The Most High and the Greatest), I derived this name for him from My Name.*
- *This is Fatima and I am (Fater) the Originator of the skies and earth; I am the One who shall deprive my enemies from My mercy on the day of My judgment and protect my saints from what may harm them; hence, I derived this name for her from My Name and*
- *These are Al-Hasan and Al-Hussein and I am Al-Mohsen Al-Mojmel (The Most Charitable and the Most Generous); I derived their names from My Name.*

These are My most virtuous creations and My most dignified servants. By them, I give. By them, I punish. By them, I reward. Therefore, plead by them, O Adam, and if you face a hardship, let them be your interceders. For, I swore to Myself indeed to never disappoint anyone who hopes mercy by them and never refuse anyone who asks a request by them. Thus, when he (Adam) did a mistake, he **pleaded Allah the Almighty by them;** hence, **He accepted his repentance and forgave him.**

(Ref: Bihar-ul-Anwar, P 327, V 26, P 150, V 11, Tafseer-e-Imam Hasan Askari (as) P 219, Tafseer-e-Saafi, V 1, P 115, Yanabe-ul-Mawadda, V 1, P 288)

There is one more similar *hadith* by Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S) on the creation of *Panjetan Paak* (A.S):

- Imam Al-Sadiq (A.S) said: “Allah, the Most High, has been before anything existed. He created five ones from the Light of His Majesty and gave a name for each of them from His revealed names; for **He is Al-Hamid and He named (The Prophet) Mohammed;** **He is Al-Aala and He named Amir Al-Momineen Ali** and **the Greatest Names are for Him so He derived Al-Hasan and Al-Hussein from them** and **He is the Originator so He derived for Fatima a name from His names.** Therefore, when He created them, He let them be in the Covenant; hence they are on the Right Side of the Throne.” – (Ref: Tafseer Forat p.56, Al-Bihar vol 37 p. 62)

In the light of the above ayah from *Surah-e-Noor*, the subsequent sermon of the holy Prophet (pbuh) and the *hadith* of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S) we can say that Allah (SWT) created them before any other creations, made them **superior to all His Creations and thus made them His Identity.**

In the earlier part of this article while contemplating on the ayahs from *Surah-e-Rehman* and *Surah-e-Qasas*, wherein they have mentioned about Face of Allah, we inferred that since Allah cannot be limited to any shape and size **the Face of Allah is created by Allah (SWT) to represent Him.** While in the light of above analysis of *Surah-e-Noor* and other reference we have concluded that **the holy Prophet (SAW) and his Progeny (pbut) is Allah’s Identity.** And

a person is always identified by His Face therefore the holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut) are the Face of Allah. Thus we can further infer that our 12th Imam Mohammed Mehdi (A.S) who is in occultation represents the Face of Allah on this earth which would remain when everything else would perish.

Now let us see few more references in this regard:

- It is narrated by Mohammed Ibn Yahya from Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Ibn Isa from Mohammed Ibn Sinan from Abu Salam al-Khannas from some of our people that Imam Mohammed Baqir (A.S) has said that:

"We (family of Prophet Muhammad) are the al-Mathani (one of two) that Allah gave to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.). We are the Wajahullah (face of Allah, meaning a certain aspect of Allah's relation with people) that move among you on earth. We are the eyes of Allah (overseers or observers from the side of Allah) in His creatures. We are the hands of Allah that are open with blessings for His servants. Those who wanted to know us have known us. There are people who are ignorant about us they are ignorant of us and of the leadership of the pious people." (Ref: Kitab al-Kafi, Book # 3, Chapter 23, Hadith # 3)

- It is narrated in *Tafsir-e-Safi* on page 485, quoting from *Tafsir-e-Qumi* that **Imam Zainul Abedin (A.S)** has reportedly said that:

"We are the Face of Allah by means of which Allah is recognized and by whose means every command of Allah is reached."

- It is mentioned in *Al Manaqib* with reference to **Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S)** that while explaining the verse: "***There remaineth but the Countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory***" he said, "**We are the Face of Allah.**" (Ref: *Kazimi Sayyid Imdad Hussain, Al-Quran-ul-Mubin, Lahore: Himayat-e-Ahl-e-Bayt (waqf), nd, P. 692*)
- **Imam Ali (A.S)** has said that "**I am the face of Allah in the heavens and on earth.**" (Ref: *Ibid p. 206*)

And since he is the Face of Allah, the holy Prophet (pbuh) has praised Mawla Ali's face in the following manner in the below mentioned hadith:

"Looking at the face of Ali (AS) is Ibadat." (Ref: Sayyid Muhammad Sāleh Kashfī, *Kaukab-i-Durrī fī fazāil-i Ali*, Lahore, *Imamiyya Kutub Khāna*, 1963, p.161)

In the earlier section we had also pondered upon the ayah 67 from *Surah-e-Az Zumr*, which mentions that the on the day of the resurrection the heavens would be rolled up in Allah's Right Hand and the entire earth would be in His Grip. We had inferred that Allah's Right Hand refers

to the appointed authority which would be given powers and control to take care of proceedings of that day. Also our conclusion was that **Allah's Hand cannot be different from the Face of Allah (*Wajahullah*)**. **Now we know that Mawla Ali (A.S) and other Imams from his lineage are '*Wajahullah*' and hence they are Allah's Hand.**

- Allama Ibn Hajar has mentioned a tradition according to which the holy Prophet (pbuh) has said:

"O Ali you will be the distributor of Heaven and Hell- you will say to Hell:
"This one is for thee and that one for me."

Also, the holy Prophet (pbuh) has reportedly said that:

"He alone will cross the bridge of Sirat whom *Ali* permits."

So **Mawla Ali (A.S) is not only '*Wajahullah*' (Face of Allah) but he is the appointed authority and the distributor of Heaven and Hell and hence He is '*Yadullah*' (Allah's Hand).**

➔ Let us come to our conclusion. The Sky is invisible in absence of Sunlight, and during day time it is visible only due to Sunlight, at Sunset the Sky goes in darkness until Moon and Stars appear; similarly Allah (SWT) is Unseen from our eyes and it is because of **the guidance of the holy Prophet (SAW) that we became aware of Our Creator and became His Believer**. And after the holy Prophet (pbuh) **the guidance from Mawla Ali (A.S) and all Imams from his lineage would make us understand Allah's Greatness in a way it should be understood since they have been created superior to all, they are Allah's Face, His Identity, our guide and the duly appointed authority of Allah above us.**