

## Asceticism in Nahjolbalaghe from Imam Ali's Point of View

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**Abstract:** Nahjolbalaghe is an excerpt from sermons, letters and aphorisms of Imam Ali (AS) and is an encyclopedia of Islamic culture. The great scholar of Shia, Seyyed Razi (died in 406 AH) collected Nahjolbalaghe and deep content of it are expressed in forms of words and eloquent statement which changed it into an immortal piece. As each every deep-thinking considers it over the speech of creations and lower than the words of God and the title of "Brother of Quran" is the most proper one for it. There is no doubt that Nahjolbalaghe is the most valuable and important Islamic heritage after Quran. It is a collection of the most beautiful and super lessons of a perfect human being for leading the individual and society; a human being who is the best and most complete after Holy Prophet.

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### 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that Nahjolbalaghe is the most valuable and important Islamic heritage after Quran. It is a collection of the most beautiful and super lessons of a perfect human being for leading the individual and society; a human being who is the best and most complete after Holy Prophet.

The subjects and discussions of Nahjolbalaghe are so complete and comprehensive that each can be an object for the Muslims. Nahjolbalaghe is not a masterpiece but it is higher than it. Its speech has comprehensibility and is not limited to time, place and specific person. Its audience is human being so it does not have any boarder and time.

Nahjolbalaghe is affected by Quran and it is in fact the offspring of Quran.

### Knowing Nahjolbalaghe

#### A) Title of Nahjolbalaghe

Nahjolbalaghe is the title of a book that shines like a sun in Islamic culture; it is lie a shell full of pearls of great wisdoms. This title was chosen by Seyyed Razi as a collection of speeches, advice, letters and contracts and aphorisms of Imam Ali.

Nahjolbalaghe means the light way of rhetoric.

Sharif Razi had selected the best title for this book of eternity.

#### B) Collection Era

Nahjolbalaghe was collected in 400 AH. It is a time that is significant considering the cultural aspects. This century coincides with the third period of Abbasid governing which was formed after great political changes. This period was the period of cultural changes.

#### C) Collector of Nahjolbalaghe

Collector of Nahjolbalaghe was Abulhasan

Mohammad Ibn Hossein Mousavi known as Seyyed Razi and Sharif Razi. He was born in 359 AH in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and died in 306 AH at the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### Methodology

In order to study the book Nahjolbalaghe and the glories theology of it, one of the following methods can be applied:

1. Procedural
2. Analytical
3. Subject

Each of these methods have their own features and advantageous which are pointed below.

#### 1. Procedure

The aim of procedure method is study and review from the beginning to the end. It means that studying the order of speeches, letters and wisdom of Imam Ali. The great scholars have explained the book using this method.

However, in order to understand it better and more, it is necessary to study it from different perspectives including:

1. Words, literature and wisdom symbols:
2. Quran
3. Historical
4. Social and political
5. Legal
6. Beliefs
7. Philosophical and mystic
8. Training and education
9. Personal and social psychology
10. Economic
11. Governing and management
12. Juridical
13. Cultural

#### 14. Moral and ...

Each parts of Imam's speech has an aspect of following points.

However, procedural method is time consuming but is proper for the understanding all the issues and subjects of Nahjolbalaghe.

### 2. Analytical Method

The analytical method studies and describes some part of Nahjolbalaghe sermons, letters, or wisdom.

This method is partly retrospective and partly prospective study. The major advantage of this method is that we can study sermons, letters, philosophy, or required part in a short time.

The method continuously was considered by scholars and students. As in the conventions of Malek Ashtar, Imam's letter to his son Imam Hasan, Hammam sermons, Shaqshaqyh sermon, wisdom of Imam addressed to Comeyl and others.

### 3. Subject method

In this method, a special subject is taken into account and offered to Nahjolbalaghe and all the contents which are directly or indirectly related to this subject are extracted and categorized. Lesson of Imam mentioned in other books are considered to better understanding of his words in Nahjolbalaghe. Then the conclusion is provided.

One advantage of this method is that discussion is less dispersed and there is a general view of the subject. Moreover, different aspects of a subject are taken into account.

In this method the speech of Imam are expressed in different occasions and interpret each other and indicate the true meaning of each other.

### Topics of Nahjolbalaghe

There are diverse topics in Nahjolbalaghe so that a comprehensive list of subjects more than ten sessions of different subjects can be produced.

Based on subjects, this book is seriously affected by holy Quran. Here, the subject of "Asceticism" is considered as a common subject of Nahjolbalaghe.

#### Asceticism

Asceticism is one of the most significant moral advantages and everyone who has this advantage is called pious.

Asceticism is a moral advantage which is opposite relish.

#### Literary meaning of Asceticism

It means leaving. Asceticism toward something means not desiring it and leaving it. The opposite of Asceticism is relishing which means desiring something.

### Definition of Asceticism

It means leaving the world and paying attention to the other world.

#### Asceticism and Piety

One of the advice subjects of Nahjolbalaghe is asceticism. It may be the most repeated subject after virtue. Asceticism means leaving the world. In Nahjolbalaghe we see the blaming the world and leaving it. It seems that the most important subject of Nahjolbalaghe is that it should be interpreted considering all aspects of a word.

We start our discussion by the word Asceticism: Asceticism and relish are opposite each other (without affixes). Asceticism means expressing reluctance which is opposite the desire and attraction.

Reluctance is of two types: mental and natural. Natural reluctance means that a person is reluctant toward everything. It is obvious that this type of reluctance is not related to Asceticism. Mental or spiritual reluctance means ignoring the desired objects.

So the pious person is someone who pays attention to something higher and better than the world and materials. Reluctance of a pious is in desire and idea not in nature.

Asceticism was defined in two cases in Nahjolbalaghe. Both refer to the meaning that was mentioned before. In sermon 18 it says that: "oh! People! Asceticism is shortage of desire, thanking the gifts and preventing the forbidden. Wisdom 439 says that : " all piety is between two words of Quran. God says: "do not be sorrowful on what has been gone and do not be happy on what is given. That is Asceticism.

#### Asceticism of Imam Ali

#### What is Asceticism?

It means ignoring the world. If the meaning of world is correctly understood the meaning of Asceticism is better obvious.

The materials of the world are considered in two ways: resident, position, properties, personality and credit. It can also be seen as a tool. The first view is devotion and wanting the world and the second view is Asceticism. It means that Asceticism is not related to being rich. It depends on the view of people.

#### Degrees of Asceticism

1. The lowest degree of Asceticism is that the heart of a man is the desired toward the world but this desire is left with hard work and a lot of attempt.
2. Moderate degree of asceticism is that in his view the world is beautiful, but it is narrow in comparison with the Hereafter and its

blessings counting and so he willingly leaves the world.

3. The third level is that the world does not matter to him and it's absolutely no enthusiasm and this is the highest degree of asceticism.

Signs of a true saint

1 – Not be happy for what they have and do not grieve for what is lost.

2 - Praise and censure is no difference.

3 - is familiar with the sweetness of worship with God on his heart.

The difference of Islamic asceticism and Christian monastic

Islam is a community-oriented religion, not ascetic oriented. In addition, a comprehensive teaching of the social, economic, political, moral in Islam is based on respect for life.

#### **Islamic Piety**

Based on the interpretation of terms about asceticism, piety is a state of emotional, spiritual and otherworldly devotions of the opinion that denies the materials of the world.

But Islamic piety requires the selection of naive living and is based on the avoidance of luxury and hedonism.

#### **Piety and freedom**

Another philosophy of piety is freedom and liberation. Ancient link between piety and freedom are inextricably connected. Needs and requirements are the criterion of "the freak" and satiety is the criterion of "freedom".

#### **Asceticism and spirituality**

Worship literally means the passion of love and service, and the right to recall him, being familiar and worship him and enjoy his presence.

The egotism and hedonism and glamor bondage of material is not consistent with asceticism in any

way. Not only Deism involves some sort of asceticism, love and worship (whether for home or sect and creed) requires asceticism and indifference to the dignity of a material.

Levels of piety:

Levels of piety has three degrees considering what human being wants:

1. The piety of hermits fearing God: human being is alienated from the world due to the fire and torment of the Hereafter.
2. Hopeful pious: means ignoring the world hoping to reach God and the blessings of heaven.
3. Asceticism of mystic: do not care about the pain and suffering to get rid of them and does not require the fun to take advantage of them But is longing to visit the Lord. It is only by learning from such piety.

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