

DESCRIPTION OF ALLAH

Imam Ali (AS)

- Praise be to Allah whom refusal to give away and stinginess do not make rich and Whom munificence and generosity do not make poor, although everyone who gives away loses (to that extent) except He, and every miser is blamed for his niggardliness.
- He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts and grants.
- The whole creation is His dependants (in sustenance).
- He has guaranteed their livelihood and ordained their sustenance.
- He has prepared the way for those who turn to Him and those who seek what is with Him.
- He is as generous about what He is asked as He is about that for which He is not asked.
- He is the First for whom there was no 'before' so that there could be anything before Him.
- He is the Last for whom there is no 'after' so that there could be anything after Him.
- He prevents the pupils of the eyes from seeing Him or perceiving Him.
- Time does not change over Him, so as to admit of any change of condition about Him.
- He is not in any place so as to allow Him movement (from one place to another).

- If He gives away all that the mines of the mountains emit out or the gold, silver, pearls and cuttings of coral which the shells of the ocean vomit out, it would not affect his munificence, nor diminish the extent of what He has.
- (In fact) He would still have such treasures of bounty as would not decrease by the demands of the creatures, because He is that generous Being Whom the begging of beggars cannot make poor nor the pertinacity of beseechers make miser.

Attributes of Allah as described in the Holy Qur'an

- Then look on questioner, be confined to those of His attributes which the Qur'an had described and seek light from the effulgence of its guidance.
- Leave to Allah that knowledge which Satan has prompted you to seek and which neither the Qur'an enjoins you to seek nor is there any trace of it in the actions or sayings of the Prophet and other leaders (Aimmah) of guidance.
- This is the extreme limit of Allah's claim upon you.

- Know that firm in knowledge are those who refrain from opening the curtains that lie against the unknown, and their acknowledgement of ignorance about the details of the hidden unknown prevents them from further probe.
- Allah praises them for their admission that they are unable to get knowledge not allowed to them.
- They do not go deep into the discussion of what is not enjoined upon them about knowing Him and they call it firmness.
- Be content with this and do not limit the Greatness of Allah after the measure of your own intelligence, of else you would be among the destroyed ones.
- He is Powerful, such that when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extremity of His power, and mind, making itself free of the dangers of evil thoughts, tries to find Him in the depth of His realm.
- And hearts long to grasp realities of His attributes.
- And openings of intelligence penetrate beyond description in order to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the dark pitfalls of the unknown.
- And concentrating towards Him, He would turn them back.
- They would return defeated, admitting that the reality of His knowledge cannot be comprehended by such random efforts, nor can an iota of the sublimity of His Honour enter the understanding of thinkers.

About Allah's creation

- He originated the creation without any example which He could follow and without any specimen prepared by any known creator that was before Him.
- He showed us the realm of His Might, and such wonders which speak of His Wisdom.
- The confession of the created things that their existence owes itself to Him made us realize that argument has been furnished about knowing Him (so that there is no excuse against it).
- The signs of His creative power and standard of His wisdom are fixed in the wonderful things He has created.
- Whatever He has created is an argument in His favor and a guide towards Him. Even a silent thing is a guide towards Him as though it speaks, and its guidance towards the Creator is clear.
- (O' Allah) I stand witness that he who likens Thee with the separateness of the limbs or with the joining of the extremities of his body did not acquaint his inner self with knowledge about Thee.
- And his heart did not secure conviction to the effect that there is no partner for Thee.

- It is as though he has not heard the (wrongful) followers disclaiming their false gods by sayings "By Allah, we were certainly in manifest error when we equaled you with the Lord of the worlds." (Qur'an, 26:97-98).
- They are wrong who liken Thee to their idols; and dress Thee with apparel of the creatures by their imagination; attribute to Thee parts of body by their own thinking; and consider Thee after the creatures of various types, through the working of their intelligence.

I stand witness that whoever equated Thee with anything out of Thy creation took a match for Thee; and whoever takes a match for Thee is an unbeliever, according to what is stated in Thy unambiguous verses and indicated by the evidence of Thy clear arguments.

(I also stand witness that) Thou art that Allah who cannot be confined in (the fetters of) intelligence so as to admit change of condition by entering its imagination nor in the shackles of mind so as to become limited and an object of alterations.

About the greatest perfection in Allah's creation

- He has fixed limits for every thing He has created and made the limits firm, and He has fixed its working and made the working delicate.
- He has fixed its direction and it does not transgress the limits of its position nor fall short of reaching the end of its aim.
- It did not disobey when it was commanded to move at His will; and how could it do so when all matters are governed by His will.
- He is the Producer of varieties of things without exercise of imagination, without the urge of an impulse, hidden in Him, without (the benefit of) any experiment taken from the vicissitudes of time and without any partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.
- Thus the creation was completed by His order and it bowed to His obedience and responded to His call.
- The laziness of any slug or the inertness of any excuse-finder did not prevent it from doing so.
- So He straightened the curves of the things and fixed their limits.
- With His power He created coherence in their contradictory parts and joined together the factors of similarity.
- Then He separated them in varieties which differ in limits, quantities, properties and shapes.
- All this is new creation.
- He made them firm and shaped them according as He wished and invented them.

A part of the same sermon, containing description of the sky

- He has arranged the depressions and elevations of the openings of the sky.
- He has joined the breadths of its breaches, and has joined them with one another.
- He has made easy the approach to its heights for those (angels) who come down with His commands and those (angels) who go up with the deeds of the creatures.
- He called it when it was yet (in the form of) vapor.
- At once the links of its joints joined up.
- Then Allah opened up its closed door and put the sentinels of meteors at its holes, and held them with His hands (i.e. power) from falling into the vastness of air.

- He commanded it to remain stationary in obedience to His commands.
- He made its sun the bright indication for its day, and moon the gloomy indication for its night.
- He then put them in motion in their orbits and ordained their (pace of) movement in the stages of their paths in order to distinguish with their help between night and day, and in order that the reckoning of years and calculations may be known by their fixed movements.
- Then He hung in its vastness its sky and put therein its decoration consisting of small bright pearls and lamp-like stars.
- He shot at the over-hearers arrows of bright meteors.
- He put them in motion on their appointed routine and made them into fixed stars, moving stars, descending stars, ascending stars, ominous stars and lucky stars.

A part of the same sermon, containing description of Angels

- Then Allah, the Glorified, created for inhabiting of His skies and populating the higher strata of his realm new (variety of) creatures namely the angels.
- With them He filled the openings of its cavities and populated with them the vastness of its circumference.
- In between the openings of these cavities there resounds the voices of angels glorifying Him in the enclosures of sublimity, (behind) curtains of concealment and in veils of His Greatness.
- And behind this resounding which deafens the ears there is the effulgence of light which defies the approach of sight to it, and consequently the sight stands, disappointed at its limitation.

- He created them in different shapes and with diverse characteristics.
- They have wings.
- They glorify the sublimity of His Honor. They do not appropriate to themselves His skill that shows itself in creation.
- Nor do they claim they create anything in which He is unparalleled.

"But they are rather honored creatures who do not take precedence over Him in uttering anything, and they act according to His command." (Qur'án, 21: 26-27).

- He has made them the trustees of His revelation and sent them to Prophets as holders of His injunctions and prohibitions.
 - He has immunized them against the waviness of doubts.
 - Consequently no one among them goes astray from the path of His will.
 - He has helped them with the benefits of succor and has covered their hearts with humility and peace.
 - He has opened for them doors of submission to His Glories.
 - He has fixed for them bright minarets as signs of His Oneness.
 - The weights of sins do not burden them and the rotation of nights and days does not make them move.
 - Doubts do not attack with arrows the firmness of their faith.
 - Misgivings do not assault the bases of their beliefs.
 - The spark of malice does not ignite among them.
 - Amazement does not tarnish what knowledge of Him their hearts possess, or His greatness and awe of His glory that resides in their bosoms.
 - Evil thoughts do not lean towards them to affect their imagination with their own rust.
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- Among them are those who are in the frame of heavy clouds, or in the height of lofty mountains, or in the gloom of over-powering darkness.
 - And there are those whose feet have pierced the lowest boundaries of the earth.
 - These feet are like white ensigns which have gone forth into the vast expanse of wind.
 - Under them blows the light wind which retains them upto its last end.
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- Occupation in His worship has made them carefree, and realities of Faith have served as a link between them and His knowledge.
 - Their belief in Him has made them concentrate on Him.
 - They long from Him not from others.
 - They have tasted the sweetness of His knowledge and have drunk from the satiating cup of His love.
 - The roots of His fear have been implanted in the depth of their hearts.
 - Consequently they have bent their straight backs through His worship.
 - The length of the humility, and extreme nearness has not removed from them the rope of their fear.
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- They do not entertain pride so as to make much of their acts.
 - Their humility before the glory of Allah does not allow them to esteem their own virtues.
 - Languor does not affect them despite their long affliction.

- Their longings (for Him) do not lessen so that they might turn away from hope in (Allah) their Sustainer.
 - The tips of their tongues do not get dry by constant prayers (to Allah).
 - Engagements (in other matters) do not betake them so as to turn their (loud) voices for Him into faint ones.
 - Their shoulders do not get displaced in the postures of worship.
 - They do not move their necks (this and that way) for comfort in disobedience of His command.
 - Follies of negligence do not act against their determination to strive, and the deceptions of desires do not overcome their courage.
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- They regard the Master of the Throne (Allah) as the store for the day of their need.
 - Because of their love (for Him) they turn to Him even when others turn to the creatures.
 - They do not reach the ending limit of His worship.
 - Their passionate fondness for His worship does not turn them except to the springs of their own hearts, springs which are never devoid of His hope and His fear.
 - Fear (of Allah) never leaves them so that they might slacken in their efforts, nor have temptations entrapped them so that they might prefer this light search over their (serious) effort.
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- They do not consider their past (virtuous) deeds as big, for if they had considered them big then fear would have wiped away hopes from their hearts.
 - They did not differ (among themselves) about their Sustainer as a result of Satan's control over them.
 - The vice of separation from one another did not disperse them.
 - Rancour and mutual malice did not overpower them.
 - Ways of wavering did not divide them.
 - Differences of degree of courage did not render them into divisions.
 - Thus they are devotees of faith.
 - Neither crookedness (of mind), nor excess, nor lethargy nor languor breaks them from its rope.
 - There is not the thinnest point in the skies but there is an angel over it in prostration (before Allah) or (busy) in quick performance (of His commands).
 - By long worship of their Sustainer they increase their knowledge, and the honor of their Sustainer increases in their hearts.

A part of the same sermon, in description of earth and its spreading on water

- Allah spread the earth on stormy and tumultuous waves and the depths of swollen seas, where waves clashed with each other and high surges leapt over one another.
 - They emitted foam like the he-camel at the time of sexual excitement.
 - So the tumult of the stormy water was subdued by the weight of the earth, when the earth pressed it with its chest its shooting agitation eased, and when the earth rolled on it with its shoulder bones the water meekly submitted.
 - Thus after the tumult of its surges it became tame and overpowered, and an obedient prisoner of the shackles of disgrace, while the earth spread itself and became solid in the stormy depth of this water.
 - (In this way) the earth put an end to the pride, self conceit, high position and superiority of the water, and muzzled the intrepidity of its flow.
 - Consequently it stopped after its stormy flow and settled down after its tumult.
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- When the excitement of water subsided under the earth's sides and under the weight of the high and lofty mountains placed on its shoulders, Allah flowed springs of water from its high tops and distributed them through plains and low places and moderated their movement by fixed rocks and high mountain tops.
 - Then its trembling came to a standstill because of the penetration of mountains in (various) parts of its surface and their being fixed in its deep areas, and their standing on its plains.
 - Then Allah created vastness between the earth and firmament, and provided blowing wind for its inhabitants.
 - Then He directed its inhabitants to spread all over its convenient places.
 - Thereafter He did not leave alone the barren tracts of the earth where high portions lacked in water-springs and where rivers could not find their way, but created floating clouds which enliven the unproductive areas and grow vegetation.
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- He made a big cloud by collecting together small clouds and when water collected in it and lightning began to flash on its sides and the flash continued under the white clouds as well as the heavy ones He sent it raining heavily.
 - The cloud was hanging towards the earth and southerly winds were squeezing it into shedding its water like a she-camel bending down for milking.
 - When the cloud prostrated itself on the ground and delivered all the water it carried on itself, Allah grew vegetation on the plain earth and herbage on dry mountains.
 - As a result, the earth felt pleased at being decorated with its gardens and wondered at her dress of soft vegetation and the ornaments of its blossoms.

- Allah made all this the means of sustenance for the people and feed for the beasts.
- He has opened up highways in its expanse and has established minarets (of guidance) for those who tread on its highways.

On the Creation of Man and the sending of the Prophet

- When He has spread out the earth and enforced His commands He chose Adam (peace be upon him) as the best in His creation and made him the first of all creation.
- He made him to reside in Paradise and arranged for his eating in it, and also indicated from what He had prohibited him.
- He told him that proceeding towards it meant His disobedience and endangering his own position.
- But Adam did what he had been refrained from, just as Allah already knew beforehand.
- Consequently, Allah sent him down after (accepting) his repentance, to populate His earth with his progeny and to serve as a proof and plea for Him among his creatures.
- Even when He made Adam die He did not leave them without one who would serve among them as proof and plea for His Godhead and serve as the link between them and His knowledge.
- But He provided to them the proofs through His chosen Messengers and bearers of the trust of His Message, age after age till the process came to end with our Prophet Muhammad - Allah may bless him and his descendants - and His pleas and warnings reached finality.
- He ordained livelihoods with plenty and with paucity.
- He distributed them narrowly as well as profusely.
- He did it with justice to test whomever He desired, with prosperity or with destitution, and to test through it the gratefulness or endurance of the rich and the poor.
- Then He coupled plenty with misfortunes of destitution, safety with the distresses of calamities and pleasures of enjoyment with pangs of grief.
- He created fixed ages and made them long or short and earlier or later, and ended them up with death.
- He had made death capable of pulling up the ropes of ages and cutting them asunder.
- He knows the secrets of those who conceal them, the secret conversation of those who engage in it, the inner feelings of those who indulge in guesses, the established certainties, the inklings of the eyes, the inner contents of hearts and depths of the unknown.
- He also knows what can be heard only by bending the holes of the ears, the summer resorts of ants and winter abodes of the insects, resounding of the cries of wailing women and the sound of steps.

- He also knows the spots in the inner sheaths of leaves where fruits grow,
 - ❖ the hiding places of beasts namely caves in mountains and valleys,
 - ❖ the hiding holes of mosquitoes on the trunks of trees and their herbage,
 - ❖ the sprouting points of leaves in the branches,
 - ❖ the dripping points of semen passing through passages of loins,
 - ❖ small rising clouds and the big giant ones,
 - ❖ the drops of rain in the thick clouds,
 - ❖ the particles of dust scattered by whirlwinds through their skirts,
 - ❖ the lines erased by rain floods,
 - ❖ the movements of insects on sand-dunes,
 - ❖ the nests of winged creatures on the cliffs of mountains and
 - ❖ the singing of chattering birds in the gloom of their brooding places.

- And He knows whatever has been treasured by mother-of-pearls,
 - ❖ and covered under the waves of oceans,
 - ❖ all that which is concealed under the darkness of night and
 - ❖ all that on which the light of day is shining,
 - ❖ as well as all that on which sometimes darkness prevails and sometimes light shines,
 - ❖ the trace of every footstep,
 - ❖ the feel of every movement,
 - ❖ the echo of every sound,
 - ❖ the motion of every lip,
 - ❖ the abode of every living being,
 - ❖ the weight of every particle,
 - ❖ the sobs of every sobbing heart, and
 - ❖ whatever is there on the earth like fruits of trees or falling leaf,
 - ❖ or the settling place of semen,
 - ❖ or the congealing of blood or clot and the developing of life and embryo.

On all this He suffers no trouble, and no impediment hampers Him in the preservation of what He created nor any languor or grief hinders Him from the enforcement of commands and management of the creatures. His knowledge penetrates through them and they are within His counting. His justice extends to all of them and His bounty encompasses them despite their falling short of what is due to Him.

- O' my Allah! thou deserves handsome description and the highest esteem.
- If wish is directed towards Thee, Thou art the best to be wished for.
- If hope is reposed in Thee, Thou art the Most Honored to be hoped from.

- O' my Allah! Thou hast bestowed on me such power that I do not praise any one other than Thee, and I do not eulogies any one save Thee.
- I do not direct my praise towards others who are sources of disappointment and centers of misgivings.
- Thou hast kept away my tongue from the praises of human beings and eulogies of the created and the sustained.

- O' my Allah! every praise has on whom he praises the right of reward and recompense.
- Certainly, I have turned to Thee with my eye at the treasures of Thy Mercy and stores of forgiveness.

- O' my Allah! here stands one who has singled Thee with Oneness that is Thy due and has not regarded any one deserving of these praises and eulogies except Thee.
- My want towards Thee is such that nothing except Thy generosity can cure its destitution, nor provide for its need except Thy obligation and Thy generosity.
- So do grant us in this place Thy will and make us free from stretching hands to anyone other than Thee.

"Certainly, Thou art powerful over every thing." (Qur'an, 66:8).