

Glimpses of Nahjul Balagha

Session One

Readings: Introduction of the book

Glimpses of Nahjul Balagha

by Shaheed Murtada Mutahhari

Hadith

Reflect on the following Hadith of Imam Ali (a)

Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart, it manifests itself through unintentional words and [through] the expressions of his face

Hadith no. 26

Nahjul Balagha

Questions for Reflection from the Readings

- 1) What parts of Nahjul Balagha are you familiar with?
- 2) How was Shaheed Mutahhari led into the world of Nahjul Balagha? What do you think was the reason behind the tremendous impact of the teacher?
- 3) What makes Nahjul Balagha so unique?

Unique Aspects of Nahjul Balagha

1) Great Eloquence

Examples of effect on people:

Khutba no. 3 – Shaqshaqiyyah

When he stopped, Ibn Abbas says; Never in my life was I so sorry for the interruption of a speech.

Khutba no. 191- Qualities of the Muttaqeen

Hamam requests to hear qualities that describe a pious person in detail. He becomes unconscious and dies upon hearing this sermon.

Khutba al-Gharra (#83)

Sharif ar Radi, the compiler of Nahjul Balagha says about it;

As Ali delivered his sermon, tears flowed from the eyes of the listeners and hearts quivered with emotion.

Ibn al Hadid on Nahjul Balagha

In his commentary on Nahjul Balagha, this Mu'tazilite scholar writes:

Rightly has Ali's discourse been regarded as inferior to that of the Creator and superior to that of all creatures . . .

Look how eloquence has given its reins into the hands of this man and is docile to his every signal. Observe the wonderful order of words coming one after the other to bow in his presence, or gushing like a spring that flows effortlessly out of the ground.

Unique Aspects of Nahjul Balagha

Multi dimensional Topics

Various themes have been covered in Nahjul Balagha. These include

- God and theology
- Worship
- Government
- Ahlul Bayt
- The world
- Self-discipline

Imam's speech on such a variety of topics show a spirit that was all encompassing.

He was a pious devotee, a tough warrior, a kind and compassionate person, a philosopher, a ruler, a teacher, a preacher . . . And more.

His words convey the great spirit which lived within him.

Quotable Quotes from the Introduction

When talking about his great teacher:

- Listening to the language of the heart from someone whose great heart is full of love and wisdom has altogether a different affect and attraction.
- It seemed as if the Nahjul Balagha had opened its wings and he, having mounted on its wings, was taken on a journey through strange worlds which were beyond our reach.

Summary of Points from the Introduction

- The passion of a great teacher has outstanding and far reaching effects.
- Nahjul Balagha is unknown and unappreciated by many followers of Imam Ali (a)
- The words of Imam Ali (a) had tremendous impact on those who heard them.
- Great scholars, past and contemporary, have praised Imam's words as the most eloquent speech.
- Two qualities that distinguish Nahjul Balagha:
 - i) Great eloquence and
 - ii) multi dimensional topics.