

As an invaluable treasure of knowledge and truth, the high rank and importance of Nahjul Balagha has been acknowledged by men of letters at all times. It is not only literary masterpiece but a revealed book of Islamic teachings, the fountain-head of philosophy and ethics. Each word in this great treasure had come out of the infallible mouth of Ali a.s. the one who was brought up and bred by the sucking of the tongue of the eloquent of all the Arabs, Muhammad the Prophet of Islam may peace be upon him.

It was a thousand years ago during the 4th Hijra when Allama Sharif Razi (359 A.H.-406 A.H.-Baghdad) had rendered a yeoman service to Islam by compiling the valuable maxims, speeches & writings etc of Ali a.s. after great care and research. He named it NAHJUL BALAGHA meaning the main path of eloquence. A number of scholars and researchers, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, have since then commented on this book with profound eulogy. Let me herewith quote from the commentary of Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Muhammad Abdahoo (died 1323 A.H.) one of the prominent thinkers of modern times. In his introduction of Nahjul Balagha, he writes:

"Everyone who fully understands Arabic language must agree that the sermons and sayings of Hazrat Ali a.s. are next only to the words of God and the Holy Prophet... Ali's words are so full of meaning and they convey such great ideas that this book Nahjul Balagha should be very carefully studied, referred to and quoted by students as well as teachers."

It is mentioned that Sheikh Abdahoo persuaded the universities of Cairo and Beirut to include Nahjul Balagha in their curriculum for advanced studies of literature and philosophy.

Abdul Masih Antakee - Editor of AL IMRAN writes in his famous book Sharbee Qascedae Alvia:

'There can be no literary scholar wishing to acquire the art of writing but he should have before him the Qura'n and Nahjul Balagha the one as the word of creator and the other the utterance of the noblest creature. He further states that Allama Muhammad Abdahoo told him that if he wished to acquire eminence in writing, he should take Ali a.s. as his teacher and regard his utterances as the guiding lamp.

Allama ibne Abil Hadeed - Moatasali (died 635 A.H.) in his commentary over Nahjul Balagha says:

'His speeches, letters and sayings are so supremely eminent that they are above the sayings of man and below only to the words of God. None can surpass them but the holy Qura'n"

On deep study of Nahjul Balagha, one is bound to be startled by the way Ali a.s. combined literary magnetism along with minute-sightedness of science and philosophy. Ali a.s. is the first thinker in Islam who discussed the Unity of God and his attributes on scientific lines. The way in which he pictures the tiniest creatures in the world to argue out the sublime creativity of the Creator has no parallel in miraculous expression. On this score not only the graceful strutting of the peacock or its coloured feathers attract his eye but even the despised and lowly creatures like the locust or the ant appear full of nature's bounties.

Moreover the sayings of Ali a.s. contain quite conspicuously the principles of human conduct, civilization and social living, cannons of seeking and dispensing justice, rules of wars and instructions for the governors and the collectors of poor rates.

Nahjul Balagha is the fountain-head of moral studies. Its brief sentences and maxims provide the best lessons in decency of manners, self-reliance, truthfulness and righteousness. Each sentence of it carries the spirit of the Qura'n, Traditions and the true teachings of Islam. Those who have judged Islamic character after the beauty and music-ridden colourfulness of the Omayyad and Abbaside periods are ignorant of the pious teachings of Islam and its high standard of human behaviour. True judgement of Islamic character is possible in the light of sayings of Ali a.s. as contained in Nahjul Balagha.

In these days of revival of Islamic ethics and character building, the study of Nahjul Balagha is a must for everyone who desires to draw inspiration and guidance for true spiritual upliftment.

(Quotations from N.Balagha by Mufti Jaffer Husain)