

## The Beatific Vision of Allāh

وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يُرَى فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيَرَاهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَهُمْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بِأَعْيُنِ رُؤُوسِهِمْ بِلَا تَشْبِيهِ وَلَا كَيْفِيَّةٍ وَلَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ مَسَافَةٌ.

Allāh Most High will be seen in the Hereafter. The believers will see Him, while in Paradise, with their own eyes, without any comparison or modality. There will not be any distance between Him and His creation.

Allāh Most High will be seen in the Hereafter. [In the Arabic text,] *ākhirā* (Hereafter, lit., last) is the adjective of *dār* (abode), as in the words of Allāh, “That is the Final Abode” (Qur’ān 28:83). It is called *ākhirā* (last) because it succeeds this world, and it is derived from those adjectives that have become nouns because of frequent use. [One can make] a similar case with the world *dunyā* (closer); it is called *dunyā* because of its proximity and closeness to the Hereafter. The believers will see Him, while in Paradise, with their own eyes/ The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “When the inhabitants of Paradise will enter Paradise, Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, will ask them, ‘Is there anything more you need that I may bestow upon you.’ They will say, ‘Have you not brightened our faces? Have you not entered us into Paradise and delivered us from the Hellfire?’ Allāh will say, ‘Certainly.’” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Then the veils will be removed and they will see the Countenance of Allāh Most High. They will not have been bestowed anything more beloved to them than the sight of their Lord.” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then recited, “For those who do good is the best (reward) and more” (Qur’ān 10:26) (*Muslim*, “al-Īmān,” 266). | without any comparison or modality, as opposed to the Comparers (*mushabbiha*) and the Anthropomorphists (*mujassima*). There will not be any distance between Him and His creation when they will see Him. The word *masāfa* literally means “distance.” Here it means direction, area, and being face to face. Know that seeing Allāh with one’s own eyes in the Hereafter is true, known, and established through sacred texts, not through reason, but it is from the matters of ambiguous description. Fakhr al-Islam ‘Alī al-Bazdawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) states in his *Uṣūl al-fiqh*, “An example of a matter ambiguous in description is proving with a Qur’ānic text that Allāh Most High will truly be seen with the eyes in a direct encounter in the Hereafter; the said text is where Allāh Most High says, “That day will faces be resplendent, looking toward their Lord” (Qur’ān 75: 21–22). And although He exists with the attributes of perfection (to be visible to Himself and to others is among the attributes of perfection) and the believer, in his honored position, is qualified to see Him, it is impossible to determine a direction [for Him]. Hence seeing Him becomes ambiguous in its description. And yet, it is obligatory to accept the ambiguity while believing in the reality [of the vision].

[Qārī] “Seeing” something does not necessitate encompassing or grasping (*idrāk*) it completely, and thus there is no contradiction with the verse, “No vision can grasp Him” (Qur’ān 6:103) since encompassment (*idrāk*) is a capacity beyond just sight. Hence, the Lord Most High will be seen but knowledge cannot completely encompass him. One may be able to see the sun but not encompass it completely in its full reality.

The commentator on *Al-‘Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiyya*, [Ibn Abi ‘l-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī] erred on this issue when he said, “Is it logically possible to see something without being face to face with it? In this is the proof that He is above His creation. [Whoever says that Allāh will be seen without any direction should consult with his intellect” (*Sharḥ al-Ṭahāwiyya* 1:219)]. It is as though the commentator holds the opinion of Allāh [physically] being in the above direction.

The way of the Ahl al-Sunna wa ‘l-Jamā‘a is that Allāh Most High is not seen in a direction. The saying of the Prophet ﷺ, “You will see your Lord as you see the full moon” (*Bukhārī, Muslim*), is just to show general resemblance between the sighting of the one and the other,

and not to show a resemblance in every aspect between what is actually seen.<sup>174</sup> [249–250]

Imām Abū Ḥanīfa says in *Al-Waṣīyya*: “The meeting of Allāh with the people of Paradise is a reality [and is to occur] without modality, corporealism, or direction.”

<sup>174</sup> If the commentator had merely recalled the verse “And nothing is like unto him, and He is the One who hears and sees (all things)” (Qur’ān 42:11) and the fact that Allāh is not described by what created beings are described by in terms of possessing a direction or place, he would have restricted himself to what has been transmitted—the vision itself, without attributing any place or direction to it. Allāh existed before there was direction or place and He remains as He always has been, glorified is He. Abstaining from delving into this matter more deeply is wiser. As for attributing to Him a direction, it is inconceivable with respect to Allāh Most High (*Al-Ta’līq al-Muyassar* 249–250).