

آنت كللم الله؟

Do You Speak to God?

By Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Translation by Dr. Abu Zayd

سلسلة إملاء الخاطر | Imlā al-Khāṭir Series



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جميع الحقوق محفوظة

Imlā al-Khāṭir Series

In this series, which he names *Imlā al-Khāṭir* (literally, “dictation of thoughts”), Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi follows in the tradition of the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Ṣayd al-Khāṭir* and shares with the world his reflections on a variety of topics ranging from theology to law, history to heart softeners, philosophy, education and more. Composed in a casual, conversational style consisting of questions followed by their brief answers (each portion predicated by *qālū/qultu*, “they said”/“I responded”), he utilizes therein the highest level of Arabic, reflecting his love of the language and his extensive expertise in Arabic grammar and rhetoric. These short but poignant reflections are part of the *balāghah* genre and tradition of Arabic literature. It should be noted that these translations, done by his senior students, serve as a guide and can never fully match the style, tone and eloquence of the original Arabic. Also note that Dr Akram does not necessarily review each translation and is not responsible for any errors, improper word choices, or the likes, that are an inevitable part of the translation process.

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi is a world-renowned scholar of Indian origin who has resided in England for an extensive time. After receiving in-depth training to an advanced level in the traditional Islamic disciplines at the famous Nadwat al-Ulama seminary in Lucknow, India, and receiving a PhD in Arabic literature from Lucknow University, he became a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, where he conducted research for a number of years on a variety of topics, including Ḥadīth and Sufi orders in India. He has published widely in Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English, including translations (like his work on Shāh Waliullah, *Bustan al-Muhaddithin*), editions of Arabic texts (such as a renowned critical edition of *Usul al-Shāshī* in Ḥanafī jurisprudence), and original monographs on Islamic law, female ḥadīth narrators and such figures as Abū Ḥanīfah and Sayyid Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi. His groundbreaking work, yet to be published, is an encyclopedic 40-volume documentation of the legacy of female scholarship in the Islamic tradition. He co-founded the Al-Salam Institute in 2006 where he continues to serve as Principal and Senior Lecturer.

Introduction

In this monograph, Dr. Akram addresses the idea that God can speak to human beings, showing how He does so continually and on various recurring occasions, if only our hearts were attentive and receptive.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أنت كلم الله؟

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: ما معنى قوله تعالى "وكلم الله موسى تكليماً" وقوله "يا موسى إني اصطفيتك على الناس برسالاتي وبكلامي"، وقول آدم عليه السلام "أنت موسى الذي اصطفاك الله بكلامه" وما جاء في حديث الشفاعة الكبرى "فيأتون موسى فيقولون يا موسى أنت رسول الله اصطفاك الله برسالاته وبتكليمه على الناس"؟ قلت: هو ما هو، نُصَّ على فضل موسى عليه السلام على سائر خلقه.

قالوا: فما هذا الذي وشى إلينا الوشاة بك زاعماً أنك كلم الله؟ قلت: لن أنفيه ولن أنكره إنكاراً، قالوا: سمعناك تعيب على الصوفية شطحاتهم ودعوايهم الفارغة، وأحوالهم ومقاماتهم التي ابتدعوها ما أنزل الله بها من سلطان، وتثلب من يزعم أنه مهدي منتظر مستقبلاً قوله استقباحاً في تعنيف كبير وتسفيه، وها أنت انتحلت قولاً أشنع من أقوال من طعنت فيهم، ويا له من قول مستهجن بشع! أنبت بلذك محمدا المهدي الجونفوري

في سالف الزمان، ولعلك استرقت حشوك من بلديك، فالطباع تتسارق؟ قلت: لم أستفده من أحد، وأبيت أن أقلد الناس تقليدا أعمى، وأحكي السخيف الرديء من دون أن أسمع أو أرى.

قالوا: فما الذي حملك على هذه الدعوى التي استفظعناها منك استفظاعا، وقد عهدناك أبعد الناس عن الدعاوي وأكْرههم للمستحدثات، حاثًا على اتباع السنن، ومحدِّرا من البدع؟ يا ليتك لم تُقدِّم على مثل هذا الكلام العقيم المُشاكل للترهات والأباطيل، فقد فتحت بابا للجهالة السفلة ينفذون منه للنيل منك والتشهير بك ورميك بسهام من السب والشتم، وأنت علينا عزيز غال.

قلت: إياكم وأن تكثرتوا بأقاويل الناس أو ترفعوا لها رؤوسا، فلن تسلموا من ألسنتهم ولن تنجوا من سهامهم وألسنتهم، ومن أتم وقد أؤذي أنبياء الله ورسله عليهم الصلوات والتسليم، وسائر الصالحين الأخيار، فمن فاته الجماعة من عذر رموه بالفسق والفجور، وإن رأوا الرجل يقوم الليل اتهموه بالسمعة والرياء، وعابوا المقسط في الإنفاق بالشح والبخل، والسخي الحواد بالإسراف والتبذير، والشريف العزيز بالصلف والاستكبار، والسليم المتواضع بالذل والمسكنة، والمعاشر للناس المخالط لهم بطلب الرئاسة والجاه، والحامل المنزوي بالجنب والخور.

قلت: وليكن همكم إرضاء ريكم غير مبتغين عنه بدلا، وهو الذي يقبل القليل ويُميه، ويرى الخطأ فيخفيه، ما أروع مناجاة ربنا! وما أرفع معيته!،

قالوا: قد وعينا عنك ما تقول، وسنجاهد أن لا نعبد الله إلا ابتغاء مرضاته غير مشركين به شيئاً.

قالوا: لنعد إلى سؤالنا، فاشرح لنا ما تعني بقولك إنك كلّم الله؟ قلت: ألم يقل الله تعالى "ما يكون من نجوى ثلاثة إلا هو رابعهم، ولا خمسة إلا هو سادسهم ولا أدنى من ذلك ولا أكثر إلا هو معهم"؟ ألم تعلموا أن العبد إذا قال في صلاته: الحمد لله رب العالمين، قال الله تعالى: حمدي عبدي، وإذا قال: الرحمن الرحيم، قال الله تعالى: أثنى علي عبدي، وإذا قال: مالك يوم الدين، قال: مجدي عبدي، فإذا قال: إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين، قال: هذا بيني وبين عبدي ولعبي ما سألت؟ أو عزّب عنكم أن العبد يقرأ كتاب الله وهو يكلمه تكليماً.

وقلت: لا غرابة فيما قلت، فالخلق كله يكلم ربه ويناجيه مناجاة، السماوات والأرض، والشمس والقمر، والنجوم والكواكب، والشجر والحجر كلها في كلام مع ربها، ولكن لا تفقهون كلامها.

قالوا: فما الذي دعاك إلى تحصيل حاصل أو ترديد ما هو ظاهر معلوم؟ قلت: ثلاثة أمور:

1- لأراقبه: أراه ويراني، فأعبده محسناً، وأطيعه محبباً إليه منيباً، وأخافه وأستحي منه، فلا أعصيه.

2- ولأستحضر قربه إلي و قربي إليه، فأوقن باستجابته إذا دعوته، فإنه القائل: "إذا سألك عبادي عني فإني قريب، أجيب دعوة الداع إذا دعان"، و"أمن يجيب المضطر إذا دعاه ويكشف السوء."

3- ولأستمع إليه فإني في كلام معه دائم، مستفهما إياه متدبرا، وملتنا به ناعما، وما أكرم العباد يكلمهم ربهم! وما أسأهم وأعلامهم شأنًا!

قالوا: قد وعينا عنك ما قلت غير مخطئين مرادك، إلا هذا الثالث الأخير، فقد اشتبه علينا وأشكل إشكالا.

قلت: إذا سرحتُ بصري قال لي ربي: انظر إلى الأنعام وسائر الحيوانات الماشيات كيف خلقتُ ونُحِّرنُ لبني آدم تسخيروا، وإلى السواوات العلاء كيف رُفِعن وما زانهن من الشمس والقمر والنجوم والكواكب، وإلى الجبال كيف نُصبت والهضبات والمرتفعات، واستوح من سكوتها واستنطقها استنطاقا، وإلى أرض الساحة والندى كيف سُطحت فكانت للأنام مهادا وبساطا، وإلى الأزهار والورود كيف انفتحت وفاحت بطيب روائحها وفاتن ألوانها، وإلى الرياض ونسيجها وشذاها، وإلى البحار والأنهار وأناشيدها وترانيمها، وإلى السحاب الذي يسبح سبحا ويعرض بسنا بركه فيجود على البراري والصحارى والقفار ويسقي الحدائق والجنان والمزارع والحقول، ويُغيث الخلق بزلال الماء، ما أعذبه وأصفاه! ارجع البصر هل

ترى من فطور، ثم ارجع البصر كرتين ولا تجهلن، وهل يجهل ذو
الناظرين تلك الآلاء، وينكر هذا الضياء؟.

وإذا رجعت إلى نفسي قال لي: انظر إلى عقلك كيف صنعته وأبدعته،
وإلى فكرك كيف نزهته ورفعته، وإلى قلبك كيف يتمن منه ما يتمن من
الحب والهوى والكراهية والعداء، وكيف يأنس بالدموع والدماء، وإلى
خاطرك كيف استودعته بديع الخيال، وإلى لسانك الذي استنطقته الكلام
المعجز، وإلى القلم الذي يمينك كيف حركته ومنحته البيان، وإلى سعيك
مختلفا إلى الخير والشر تحت مشيئة وقضاء، وما كل أيامك سواء، وإلى
صواعق العزمات فيك والآراء، وحسن فعلك والرواء، وأياد منك في
الخلق بيضاء، وانظر إلى الدول كيف تنتقل أيامهن في الورى تنقل الظلال
والأفياء، وأيام بؤس في الدهر وشقاء، وأيام مسرة ورخاء، وانظر إلى
قبور المترفين ساكنا فيها البلى، وقد كانوا قبل أهل بهاء، وحُلقت لإحدى
الغائتين فلا تتم وكن بين خوف منها ورجاء.

وإذا حان وقت الصلاة دعاني ربي إلى الفلاح ونهاني أن أجعلها مكاء
وتصدية، وإذا جاء شهر رمضان حثني على تكسب البركات قائلا: من
حرمها فقد حرم الخير كله، وكل نعمة منه تستوجب شكره، فإذا شكرته،
قال: رضيت عنك وزدتك، وإذا أصابتنى مصيبة وصبرت لأجله قال: لا
تحزن إني معك، وإذا كان شطر الليل قال هل من سائل فأعطيه، وهل
من داع فأستجيب له، وإذا تكبرت لم يهلكني بطري وغمطي للحق، بل

قال: أَقْصِرْ وَتَبْ، وَإِذَا اقْتَرَفْتَ إِثْمًا أَوْ ارْتَكَبْتَ ذَنْبًا قَالَ: اسْتَغْفِرْ أَغْفِرْ لَكَ، وَتَبْ أَتَبْ عَلَيْكَ، وَإِذَا تَوَاضَعْتَ قَالِ لِي: ادْنِ مِنِّي أَرْحَمَكَ، وَإِذَا تَضَرَّعْتَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ: أَجِبْتَ دَعْوَتَكَ، وَقَدْ تَبَدَّدَ مِنْعَا عَلِيٍّ، وَهُوَ كَرِيمٌ سَبَقَ كَرْمُهُ سَوَالِي.

قالوا: فما الفرق بين كلام الله إيانا وكلامه موسى عليه السلام، وبين سماعنا لهذا الكلام وسماع موسى عليه السلام له، قلت: الفرق كبير، فثمة كلام فوق كلام وسماع دون سماع، إن كلامه موسى عليه السلام أعلى من كلامه إيانا، كما أن كلامه ملائكته المقربين أعلى من كلامه موسى عليه السلام، وإن سماعنا له دون سماع موسى عليه السلام، وإن سماع موسى دون سماع الملائكة المقربين.

Do You Speak to God?

By Dr Mohammed Akram Nadwi
Oxford, UK

They asked: What is the meaning of God's statement: "And to Moses God spoke directly;"¹ His statement: "O Moses! I have indeed preferred you to all others by virtue of the Message I have entrusted to you and by virtue of My speaking to you;"² the statement of Adam, peace be upon him: "You are Moses whom God chose with His speech;"³ and what has come in the ḥadīth of the Greater Intercession: "They will come to Moses and say to him, O Moses, you are the Messenger of God whom He chose above other people with His Revelation and His speech."⁴

I replied: He is who He is, and these texts are about the virtue of Moses, upon him be peace, over the rest of creation.

They asked: So what is this calumny we hear about you claiming to speak to God?

I replied: I neither deny nor reject it completely.

They said: We have heard you criticize the ecstatic utterances and empty claims of some Sufis, and the spiritual states and ranks they invented, which God revealed no authority for. You harshly criticize those who claim to be the awaited Mahdī⁵ and now have adopted a stance that is even more repugnant than theirs. What a loathsome statement that is! Your land produced the likes of Muḥammad Mahdī Jawnpūrī in the preceding era, and

¹ Qur'ān 4:164.

² Qur'ān 7:144.

³ This expression has come in various Prophetic ḥadīth narrations, including in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb aḥādīth al-anbiyā', Bāb wafāt Mūsā wa dhikruhū ba'd.

⁴ This same statement appears as a quote of Adam in some narrations, and in others, as a statement of the people.

⁵ The Mahdī is a prophesied religious figure and savior heralded in some Muslim traditions as one who shall arrive to usher in justice and establish the truth.

perhaps you borrowed your assertions from your fellow countrymen, as like minds often borrow from one another?

I replied:

I did not borrow this from anyone, for I reject the blind following of any other person, nor do I relate from the foolish and malicious that which I haven't heard or seen myself.

They replied: So what made you adopt this claim which we find atrocious, as we know you as one who is farthest from false claims, the most hateful towards innovations, the most encouraging of the following of guided practices and ever-warning of the danger of innovation? Alas, had you never put forth such a fruitless statement resembling falsehood and forgery! You have opened a door to base ignorance which will open you to rejection, defamation, and calumny, and we hold you as valuable and dear.

I replied:

Be careful of paying heed to the statements of people or raising your ears to them, for you will never be safe from their tongues nor protected from their spears and arrows! Who are you in relation to the Prophets and Messengers of God, His peace and blessings be upon them, and the rest of the chosen and pious ones, whom the masses refused to find excuses for and accused them of transgression and misguidance? If they found one inclined to spend their nights in worship, they accused that one of ostentation and showing off. They tarnished the one who is fair in giving with greed and miserliness, and the generous, open-handed one with wastefulness and extravagance. They accused the noble and honorable of being boastful and arrogant, and the calm and humble as being weak and feeble. They accused the ones who are social and affable as seeking leadership and position, and the secluded and obscure as being cowardly and weak.

I said:

Let your concern be only the pleasure of your Lord, without seeking any substitute for that. He is the One that accepts little and increases it, the One who sees a mistake and hides it. How marvelous is softly conversing with our Lord! And how lofty His company!

They said: We are aware of what you say, and we shall strive to worship God solely for seeking His pleasure, without associating any partners with Him.

They also said: But let us return to our question. Explain to us what you meant by your statement that you speak to God.

I replied:

Does not God say: “Never is there any whispering among three but He is their fourth; nor among five but He is their sixth; nor fewer nor more but He is with them wherever they may be.”?⁶

Do you not know that when a servant says, “All praise belongs to God,”⁷ God the Exalted responds, “My servant has praised Me!”? And when he says, “the Merciful, the Compassionate,” God responds, “My servant has commended Me.” And when he says, “Master of the Day of Judgment,” He responds, “My servant has glorified Me.” And when he says, “You alone do we worship, and You alone do we turn for help,” He responds, “This is between My servant and My Self, and for My servant is what He asks.” Is it far-fetched for you that when a servant recites the Book of God, he speaks to God?

And I said:

There is nothing strange in what I have said, for all of creation speaks with its Lord and converses with Him: the heavens and earth, the sun and moon, the stars and planets, the trees and stones, all of them in conversation with their Lord—but you just don’t understand their speech.

They said: What drove you to acquire this understanding and repeat what is already overtly known?

I replied:

There are three matters:

⁶ Qur’ān 58:7.

⁷ This is a well-known Prophetic commentary of the first Sūrah of the Qur’ān, al-Fātiḥah.

1. Being acutely aware of Him: I see Him while He sees me, and I worship Him with excellence. I obey Him in faithful submission, fear Him and shy from Him, without disobeying Him in the least.
2. To prepare myself for coming closer to Him, and be certain of His response when I call upon Him: He is the one who said, “When My servant calls upon Me I am ever close, and I respond to the supplication of the one who calls upon Me;” and “Who is it Who heeds the prayers of the distressed when he calls out to Him and Who removes his affliction?”⁸
3. To hear Him: For I am perpetually in conversation with Him, trying to understand Him with deliberation, and enjoying that, even in my sleep. How noble are the servants who speak to their Lord, and how lofty and exalted their state!

They said: We comprehended what you have said without misconstruing your intent, except for the third and last, which we find doubtful and problematic.

I replied:

When I let my eyes roam my Lord says to me: Look upon creation and see:

- All the roaming animals, how they were created and subjected to the children of Adam
- The high heavens, how they were raised and adorned with the sun, moon, stars and planet
- The mountains, how they were fixed, their every peak and summit. I am inspired by their silence, while He made them speak eloquently
- The magnificent and generous earth, how it was spread out, becoming a bed and cradle for creation
- The roses and flowers, how they open and emit sweet aromas and exhibit dazzling colors
- Its gardens with their breeze and fragrance
- The oceans and rivers, with their hymns and melodies

⁸ Qur’ān 27:62.

- The clouds driving forth, rejuvenating the deserts and wastelands and watering the gardens, parks, pastures and fields, and nourishing creation with fresh water

How sweet it all is! Return your gaze to find any faults, and do it yet again, not ignoring a single thing! Can the onlookers ignore those blessings, or deny this light?

When I return to myself, He further says to me:

- Look at your intellect, how I created it
- Look at your thought, how I refined and elevated it
- See your heart and its capacity for love and desires, hatred and enmity; and its close association with tears and blood
- Contemplate your mind and how it lays down new ideas
- Look at your tongue and how it articulates unique speech
- Reflect over the pen in your hand and how I move it to sculpt and produce expression
- Look at your efforts for good and bad, all under His will and decree
- Look at the fact that your days are not all the same
- Look at the thunderous resolutions within you and your views
- Look at your good actions and effects, and your noble hands that stretch out among people
- Look to the nations and see how their fortunes shift in the mortal world, with fading shadows and shade
- Look at the fateful, unlucky days among time, days of distress and misfortune
- Look at the days of bliss and comfort
- Look at the graves of the affluent, living in decline therein, whereas previously they lived in glory

Realize that you have been created for one of two possible ends, so always hover between fear and hope.

When the time for prayer draws near, my Lord calls upon me to come to success and forbids me from approaching it in the manner of whistling and

clapping.⁹ When the month of Ramadan arrives, He encourages me to partake in its blessings by saying: “Whosoever is deprived of it is deprived of all good.” And all blessings from Him necessitate being grateful to Him, and when I am grateful, He says: “I am pleased with you and will give you even more.” When an affliction befalls me and I am patient for His sake, He says: “Do not worry for I am surely with you.” When it is the middle of the night, He says: “Is there anyone asking me for something that I may grant him, or calling upon Me that I may answer him?” When I become arrogant and my insolence or anger destroys me and turns me from the truth, He says: “Curtail [your anger] and repent.” When I commit a sin or error, He says: “Seek My forgiveness that I may forgive you, and repent to Me that I may accept it.” When I humble myself, He says: “Come closer to me that I may have mercy upon you.” When I implore Him, He responds: “I answer your supplications.” He initiates His blessings upon me, and He is Ever-Generous, for His generosity precedes even my asking.

They asked: What is the difference between the speech of God to us and His speech to Moses, peace be upon him; and between our hearing His speech and Moses hearing Him?

I replied:

The difference is tremendous, for there is some speech that lies above other speech and some hearing that is different than other hearing. God’s speech to Moses is higher than His speech to us, just as His speech to the closest angels is even higher than His speech to Moses. Our hearing of God’s speech is not like that of Moses, just as Moses’ hearing is not like that of the closest angels.

They said: You have lifted a barrier from our Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, and brought Him closer to us. Your words surely surpass published volumes in theology and philosophy.

I replied:

Beware of these artificial and contrived books that corrupt the thought and mind, and stir confusion and blunders among their writers and their readers.

⁹ And their prayer at the House was not except whistling and handclapping. So taste the punishment for what you disbelieved. [Qur’ān 8:35]

They erect dense barriers and thick curtains between you and your Lord, and increase your distance from Him. You should rely instead on the Book of your Lord, for no one can acquaint you with your Lord save He.