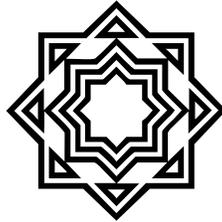


THE EXEMPLARY PRINCIPLES

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Preface

We will be studying the 'aqīdah of Allah's Names and Attributes from a very important book, "*al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā*" (Exemplary Principles Concerning the Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allah) by the great scholar, author, and teacher, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn (رحمته الله) who died ten years ago.

Note: To better assist the noble reader, our beloved teacher's words (i.e. Moosaa Richardon) have been colored in dark blue while the original work has been left in black. We ask Allāh for success.

Preface to the Book

We begin in the Name of Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى). We praise Him and send the *ṣalāt* (peace) and *salām* (security) upon His Servant Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and upon those who have allegiance with him until the Last Day.

To proceed:

- The first unit is about the Names of Allah and the principles concerning them;
- The second unit is the principles concerning the Attributes of Allah;
- The third unit consists of the principles concerning the evidences that establish the Names and Attributes of Allah;
- The fourth unit mentions examples of *aḥādīth* from the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with an application of those principles.
- The book ends with a refutation of the *Ash'arīs*, the sect that ascribes to Islam, yet explains away the majority of the Attributes of Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى). We will discuss them in detail, including where they came from and the angles of refutation there are to defend Islam from their distortions and innovations.



Review

The three categories of *tawḥīd*:

- [1] *Tawḥīd ar-Rubūbiyyah* (the Oneness of Allah with regards to His Lordship);¹
- [2] *Tawḥīd al-'Ulūhiyyah* (the Oneness of Allah with regards to His Right to be worshipped alone);²
- [3] *Asmā' wa Ṣifāt* (the Oneness of Allah with regards to His Names and Attributes)^{3,4}

The Science of *Tawḥīd* (or '*aqīdah*') is also called the Science of *Shari'ah* or the Science of *as-Sunnah*. The early *Imāms* would title their books, "*Kitāb as-Sunnah*" and it would all be about '*aqīdah*'. Other *Imāms* would write books named "*ash-Shari'ah*" and likewise it would all be about '*aqīdah*'. Some wrote "*Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*" like ibn Khuzaymah and it was regarding '*aqīdah*' and *ṣifāt* (the Attributes of Allah).

- **Allah** (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى)

Belief in Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى) is generally spoken of by the scholars and divided into **three categories**:

- [1] *Tawḥīd ar-Rubūbiyyah* (the Oneness of Allah in His Lordship)

This relates to His Attributes or His Actions of Creating, Disposing of His Creation, Giving life or Bringing death to them, Providing for them, and taking care of all of their affairs and so on.

All of these issues are called *ar-Rubūbiyyah*. We affirm them for Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى), He is the Only One who brings life and He is the Only One who takes the souls when their time is up. He is the Only One who creates. He is the Only One who Provides. He is the Only One who knows about all the affairs in the heavens and the earth. He manages all of that.

Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said about Himself:

¹ How many books have been written to establish that Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth? No one can mention a book in history written in this subject because throughout the Qur'an, Allah Himself, the Lord of all that exists, never invited people to this idea. It was always brought as a method of mentioning something of *Tawḥīd* that the people agree upon to move them into an affair they differ over. The people affirmed that that Allah was their creator and that He was the One Who provides for them and brings them life and death. It was not a subject of debate in history, it is only in recent times that you have atheists or people who reject the idea of a higher power altogether. So, now, there is some kind of need to discuss this idea of *Rubūbiyyah* because you cannot begin an argument with people today as if to say we already agree that Allah has created us. There is a need to use rationale proofs with people and to discuss the idea of their creation. So, Allah uses the idea that the people agree upon to lead them to that which they differ over. The people have differed over the right of Allah to be worshipped alone.

² We know of many, many books that have been written about the right of Allah to be worshipped alone, from the most outstanding books is *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd* by Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abdul-Wahhab.

³ We know of many books that the scholars have written about the Names and Attributes of Allah such as *al-Waṣiṭiyyah* by Shaykh *al-Islām* ibn Taymiyyah.

⁴ Many books have been written throughout history to clarify that Allah has Names and Attributes that are unique to Him and many books have also been written to understand the right Allah has to be worshipped alone.

﴿اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

«Allah is the Creator of all things.» [39:62]

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has referred to Himself as the Creator.

The polytheists of Makkah who opposed the *da'wah* of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had no problem in accepting this concept. They did not have a problem affirming that Allah alone, without any partners, was the One who created them and He was the One they had to return to; that He is the One who takes care of the universe and provides for all of the creatures therein; that He is the only One who gives life and the only One who takes it away; and the Only One through whom benefit and harm can reach the people. This concept may sound shocking, but it was agreed upon throughout history. It was only the rare exception in history that denied this. Moreso, it was never the target or the goal of any Prophet to call the people to this idea since it was something already accepted.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) created the people and He is the One who provides for them. He raises them up and He manages their affairs. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ﴾

«Say (O Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs? They will say: Allah.» [10:31]

These were the *mushrikīn* in the time of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) who affirmed that there was no other provider and no other creator besides Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

[2] *Tawḥīd al-'Ulūhiyyah* (the Oneness of Allah with regards to His Right to be worshipped alone)

This category is also called *Tawḥīd al-'Ibādah*, and this kind of *Tawḥīd* is the *Tawḥīd* that Allah sent all the Messengers with. It was the very core foundation of the Message.

Allah says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ﴾

«And verily, We have sent among every *ummaḥ* (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): **Worship Allah** (alone), and **avoid** (or keep away from) *Ṭaghūt* (all false deities, i.e. do not worship *Ṭaghūt* besides Allah).» [16:36]

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has made the very statement of belief in Him, the statement of *Tawhīd al-'Ulūhiyyah*. When you say: 'I bear witness that there is no *ilāh* other than Allah' - the meaning of the word *ilāh* is the One who deserves '*ibādah - al-Ma'būd bil-Haqq* (there is no one worthy of worship other than Allah).

You do not enter into Islam by saying: '*lā khāliqa illa allāh*' (there is no creator other than Allah). You do not enter into Islam by saying: '*lā muḥī illa allāh*' (there is no one who brings life other than Allah). You only enter into Islam by testifying that Allah is the Only One who deserves to be worshipped. It was the goal of every Message throughout history from every Prophet sent by Allah (ﷺ).

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ٢٥ ﴾

«**And We did not send any Messenger before you** (O Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) **but We revealed to him** (saying): *lā ilāha illa ana* [none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah)], **so worship Me** (alone and none else).» [21:25]

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) addressed each and every nation.

So it was this idea of worshipping Allah alone that came to the Arabian Peninsula and then to the world. Some people today who ascribe to Islam think that the meaning of '*lā ilāha illa allāh*' is 'There is no creator other than Allah.' They believe that it is sufficient for you to merely say this (upon your tongue) and then you are Muslim.

Some people today affirm '*lā ilāha illa allāh*' but they do not know that it is a negation of all acts of worship to other than Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). They continue to call on saints and righteous people who have passed, or Prophets or angels, and they still say: "I am a Muslim because I say '*lā ilāha illa allāh*' and I only call upon the saints and righteous people to get closer to Allah." This is the exact kind of *shirk* that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was sent to. The people of that time said: 'These are our intercessors with Allah. We do not worship them except that we are trying to draw nearer to Allah.'

Look at their statement: '*mā na'buduhum*' (We do not offer '*ibādah* to them). They affirm that what they were doing by calling on these saints, less than Allah, was '*ibādah*, and they knew that this '*ibādah* could not coincide with the statement '*lā ilāha illa allāh*.' So they fought against the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), rejected his message, kicked him out of Makkah, and they spent their lives and property against that statement '*lā ilāha illa allāh*.' This is because they knew the meaning of it.

So, look at how some people today call upon a saint and say, "No, I am a Muslim. I am upon *tawhīd*." They are doing the exact same type of *shirk* that was done in *Jāhiliyyah* before the coming of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). The very *shirk* that because of it Allah sent His Messenger to call the people back to the worship of Allah alone. They are committing the very same *shirk*, saying: "I am a Muslim. I only worship Allah, *lā ilāha illa allāh*." They do not know the meaning of '*ibādah* and they do not know that what they are doing is '*ibādah*. They claim that it isn't, but rather just calling upon saints to get them closer to Allah.

The *mushrikūn* of Makkah knew that calling upon saints was *'ibādah*, so they knew more about the meaning of *'ibādah* and the meaning of *tawḥīd* than some of the people ascribing to Islam today. When the Message came to the people of Makkah, they thought it was strange that a man was going to come to them and tell them that they could not worship other than Allah alone, when they had as a practice, culture and an inheritance from their ancestors the worship and calling of other than Allah. They said:

﴿ أَجْعَلُ الْأِلَهَةَ إِلَهًا وَحِيدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ ﴾

«Has he made the *ālihah* (gods) (all) into One *ilāh* (God – Allah)? Verily, this is a curious thing!» [38:5]

They understood that the call to '*lā ilāha illa allāh*' meant there are no *ālihah* and no things that can be worshipped besides Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). So, the *tawḥīd* of *'ibādah*, the *tawḥīd* of *ulūhiyyah* - that Allah is the *ilāh*, the Only One deserving worship - was the very core message of Islam and the most important issue that distinguishes the people of *tawḥīd* from the people of *shirk*.

[3] *Asmā' wa Ṣifāt* (the Oneness of Allah with Regards to His Names and Attributes)

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has given us a number of verses in His Book that discuss the third category of *tawḥīd*, the *tawḥīd* of Allah's Names and Attributes.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has mentioned that He has the Most Beautiful Names and Attributes. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has said about Himself:

﴿ وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ﴾

«And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them.» [7:180]

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has named Himself in many verses of the Qur'an, such as:

﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾

«In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.» [1:1]

He named Himself with two names - both referring to His Mercy, *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*.

Allaah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has given Himself a long mention of many names as in *Sūrah al-Ḥashr*:

﴿ هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ

الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾ (٢٣)

«He is Allah, beside Whom *lā ilāha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory is to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him.» [59: 23]

We affirm that Allah has all of these Names and the meanings that they contain, and we declare Him free from *tashbih* or from being like the claims made against Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾



«He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.» [59: 24]

These are some of the more well-known verses that refer to Allah having the Beautiful Names and Attributes that He possesses.



Foreword by *Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz b. Bāz*

The brief introduction of *al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā* is by *Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz b. Bāz* (ﷺ). Ibn Bāz (ﷺ) was a very accepted authority of knowledge throughout the world. He was the senior and the *Shaykh* of Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn. He was someone the *Ummah* looked to for guidance, by Allah's Permission. He read this book by ibn al-'Uthaymīn and was fond enough to help the book spread, so he wrote its introduction:

All praise is for Allah and may Allah raise the mention of His Messenger and grant him peace, and his family and companions, and whoever follows his guidance. To proceed:

I came across the valuable book written by the possessor of excellence, our brother, the '*Allāmah*, *Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn concerning the Names and Attributes. He named it *al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā fi Ṣifātillāhi wa Asmā'ihil-Ḥusnā*. I have listened⁵ to its reading from beginning to end, and I have found it to be a magnificent book.

It contains a clarification of the creed of the righteous *Salaf* concerning the Names and Attributes. Likewise, it includes great principles and collective benefits concerning the topic.

It also clarifies the meaning of the *Ma'iy-yah*⁶ that is mentioned in the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, in both a specific and general sense, according to the understanding of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jāma'ah*. Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* must be affirmed in its literal sense, and this does not mean that He is included in or mixed with His Creation. Rather, He, the Exalted, is above His Throne, as He has informed us about Himself, in a way that is befitting to His Majesty.⁷

His *Ma'iy-yah* includes His Knowledge and Awareness, and His encompassing the Creation as He hears their statements and movements, sees their situations and knows their inner conditions, preserves and watches over His Messengers and His believing *awliyā'* (close allies), and grants them victory and success. Allah's *Ma'iy-yah*, both the general and specific kinds, include many other magnificent meanings and substantiated realities related to Him, the Exalted One.

Furthermore, in this book is a firm refutation of the position of those who deny Allah's Names or Attributes, those who claim He is like His Creation, and those who claim knowledge of the specific

⁵ 'This refers to the *Shaykh's* blindness, Allahu Akbar!

⁶ *Ma'iy-yah* (مَعِيَّة): The concept of one thing being *with* another. Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* with the creation means that He is with them wherever they are while being above His Throne. The concept is explained in detail throughout the book.

⁷ There are people called *Ḥulūliyyah* and *It.tiḥādīyyah*. The former group of people (*al-Ḥulūliyyah*) say that '*Allah ḥalla fi khalqihī*' (Allah has manifested Himself inside of His creation). The latter group of people (*It.tiḥādīyyah*) believe that everything is Allah and Allah is everything like the '*aqīdah*' of the famous ibn 'Arabī. He said everything is Allah and Allah is everything; there is nothing except Allah, everything you see and feel is Allah. There is nothing real that exists except that it is Allah.

However, Allah (ﷻ) has affirmed that He is separate from His creation and that He is distinct. He is the Creator and they are the creation. He has affirmed for Himself a distinct presence.

details of Allah's Attributes. As well, it refutes those who claim that Allah is found within His Creation, and those who claim a union between Allah and His Creation.⁸

So may Allah reward him well, multiply his good reward, and increase us and him in knowledge, guidance, and success. May Allah benefit the readers with this book, and all of the Muslims. Verily, He is the Caretaker of that, the All-Capable.

May Allah raise the mention of our Prophet Muḥammad and grant him security, and likewise his family and Companions.

Many issues are presented in this book, but *Ma'iy-yah* is something that *Shaykh* ibn Bāz focused on specifically because of a mistake that was made by the author during his lifetime. He said (as a mistake that he retracted and is free from when he meets Allah (ﷻ)):

Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* is a literal *Ma'iy-yah Thātiyyah*.

So he said, as an error: the idea of Allah being with His creation (*Ma'iy-yah*) is with His actual self or presence (*Thātiyyah*).

It is a position held by the *Hulūliyyah* who say that Allah has manifested Himself within the creation and that He is with them. So they say, for example: "Allah is *physically* with any good person in the same realm. He is truly with us with His actual presence."

This was a slip of the pen by our *Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn. When given the chance to explain the issue in greater detail, he explained it according to the understanding of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. However, he used an incorrect word which led to a wrong conclusion. It was the error of this word that agreed with some of the people of *Ahlul-Bid'ah* and supported their position although the *Shaykh* did not support their position in his detailed writings.

It was this mistake that led the *Shaykh* Ḥamūd at-Twajrī to write a very detailed refutation against *Shaykh* ibn al-'Uthaymīn. Ibn al-'Uthaymīn found out about this book and read it. It was referring to him, his *'aqidah*, and his statement that Allah is with His creation with His actual self instead of with His Knowledge and His Hearing. The book was full of proofs and evidences against the usage of this word and that this word is a word of *Ahlul-Bid'ah* and not one of *Ahlu-Sunnah* - the book clarified that this was a mistake from every possible angle.

Upon reading the book, *Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn went to *Shaykh* ibn Bāz (he originally got the book from him) and said: "I request that you do not repeat the publication of this book unless I write something in it." What did he write in the book? Nothing to defend himself, save his reputation, or attack the critic like some people might do. Rather he fully praised the critic, saying that he has spoken properly, truthfully, and that his mistake was a true mistake and an error, and anyone who said what he used to say about the *Ma'iy-yah* of Allah being *Thātiyyah* has spoken with falsehood and it is obligatory to refute him.

⁸ These claims and their meanings and implications, along with the evidences used to refute them, are mentioned and explained throughout the course of the book.

So, *Shaykh* ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn was humble and accepted the truth. This is why this issue - about thirty years ago - was something you would perhaps find the students talking about. It was a controversial thing going on until it all ended with humble submission to the truth, clarification, rectification, and cooperation amongst the scholars and recognition of the *Ḥaqq* (truth) from wherever it came from.

It was a beautiful example for all of us; that no matter how high your status or no matter how well-respected you are all over the world, you are never going to go beyond the idea of possibly being mistaken in an issue, maybe even in *'aqīdah*. But what is the correct thing to do when you realize a mistake? It is to correct and clarify it and to be an example of a person who recognizes his error, and of a person who (finds) truth to be more beloved to him than his own reputation. So if he has to say that he was mistaken and he said some things of falsehood that were against the *dīn* of Allah, then he does that to clarify the truth as was done by *Shaykh* Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn.

This is a little bit of insight into the introduction of *Shaykh* ibn Bāz. Why did he focus so much in his introduction on the issue of *Ma'iyah*? It was to cement the idea that in this book, *Shaykh* ibn al-'Uthaymīn presents the views of *Ahlu-Sunnah* in its entirety and that *Ma'iyah* is clarified in a correct way. It was also to clarify that this is what is to be taken and understood as the position of *Shaykh* Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn.

May Allah have mercy on all of our *mashayikh*: *Shaykh* Ḥamūd at-Twajrī, *Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, and *Shaykh* 'Abdul-'Azīz b. Bāz, and all of their brothers and scholars. *Āmīn*.



Author's Foreword (*Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn*)

All praise is for Allah, we praise Him, seek His Assistance, and seek His Forgiveness. We repent to Him, and seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our own selves and from the evils of our bad deeds. Whomever Allah guides, then none can misguide him; and whomever Allah allows to be led astray, then there is no guide for him. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship other than Allah Alone, without any associate; and I further testify that Muḥammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah raise his mention, that of his family, Companions, and all those who follow them in goodness, and may He grant them an abundance of peace.

To proceed:

Verily, belief in the Names and Attributes of Allah is one of the pillars of faith in Allah, the Exalted. They are:

- [1] belief in the existence of Allah
- [2] belief in His Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah*)
- [3] belief in His sole Right to all forms of worship (*Ulūhiyyah*)
- [4] belief in His Names and Attributes (*Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt*)

Furthermore, it is one of the three categories of *Tawḥīd*:

- [1] belief in His Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah*)
- [2] belief in His sole Right to all forms of worship (*Ulūhiyyah*)
- [3] belief in His Names and Attributes (*al-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt*)

So, the status of the *Tawḥīd* of *al-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt* in the Religion is very high and of the utmost status. It is not possible for anyone to worship Allah in a complete way, until he has acquired knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allah, the Exalted, in order to worship Him upon clarity. Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

«And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them.» [7:180]

Calling upon Allah using His Names and Attributes is to be done when requesting something specific, and also when one calls upon Allah just to praise Him.⁹

⁹ There are two kinds of *du'ā*:

1. *Du'ā al-mas'alah* (*du'ā* of request, when requesting something specific).
2. *Du'ā ath-thanā* (*du'ā* of praise, when you call upon Allah just to praise Him). For example: *lā ilāha illa anta* (There is none worthy of worship other than You).

The best *du'ā* is *al-Ḥamdulillāhi rabb al-'Ālamīn* as mentioned by the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). There is no request here, it is just a praise for Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ).

When one calls upon Allah to request something, he mentions some of Allah's Names that are suitable for the occasion. For example: "O' *Ghafūr* (the Ever-Forgiving)! Forgive me! O' *Raḥīm* (the Ever-Merciful)! Have Mercy on me! O' *Ḥafīth* (the All-Protecting One)! Protect me!" and the like.

When one calls upon Allah simply to praise Him, he worships Allah with the implications of these Names. For example, you repent to Allah since He is *at-Tawwāb* (the Acceptor of Repentance), you mention Him on your tongue since He is *as-Samī'* (the All-Hearing), you worship Him with your limbs since He is *al-Baṣīr* (the All-Seeing), you fear Him in secret since He is *al-Laṭīf* (the Sublime One), *al-Khabīr* (the All-Informed One), etc.

So due to the high status of knowledge of Allah's Oneness through understanding His Names and Attributes, and due to the people speaking about the topic correctly sometimes and with falsehood from either ignorance or bigotry at other times, I was inclined to author some principles concerning it, hoping that Allah, the Exalted, would make this action of mine a sincere effort seeking His Face, being in agreement with what He is pleased with, and that it would be beneficial for His Servants.

I have named it *al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā fī Ṣifātillāhi Ta'āla wa Asmā'ihil-Ḥusnā* (Exemplary Principles Concerning Allaah's Beautiful Names and Attributes).



Question: What is the difference a Name, an Attribute and an Action?

Answer: Sometimes people refer to a name as an attribute. They say: "Akhī, what is your attribute?" They mean by this: "What is your name?" For some reason, the idea of an attribute gets confused with the idea of a name. The meanings in the names of the creation may or may not apply to the person. A person can have the name Kareem (generous), but he may be stingy. He does not have the attribute of being generous.

This has led some of the people of logic and analogy to conclude that Allah has names with no meanings. These are the people of the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Jahmiyyah*. They say that Allah is *ar-Raḥmān*, but He does not have any *Raḥmah*, or they say that Allah is the *Samī'* (All-Hearing) but He does not have any hearing. This is because they say that the name does not imply any meaning. People have names, but it does not apply to them as a meaning. So, Allah has names, but there is no meaning intended behind these names. They are just names. So *ar-Raḥmān* is Allah and does not mean anything else but Allah. [They claim we should not] worry about the root of the word nor about the meanings of what the Arabs understood - forget all of that. Allah is just Allah whether you call Him *ar-Raḥmān* or *ar-Raḥīm*. [O Turner of Hearts, keep our hearts firmly established upon your religion], it is just a reference to Allah without any meaning intended in those names. This will be disproven *in shā' Allāh* in one of our forthcoming principles.

A name is something a person is known by. An attribute can be other than a name. For example, someone is kind, but that is not his name. His name is not kind, he is kind. And so Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has Attributes that may not come from a name. Every name includes an attribute, as we will see in our principles, but not every attribute can make a name.

From Allah's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) Attributes is that He is Generous, Kind, Forgiving, Gracious to His servants and He is All-Knowing. These are attributes.

His Names are *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm*, *al-Qadīr*, and *al-Majīd*, etc. These are His Names.

His Attributes are the descriptions we have of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Then we have something called an Action. It is not necessarily an attribute, but rather an action of Allah (ﷻ). What is an action?

﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ﴾

«He rose over (*Istawā*) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty).» [7:54]

This is an action that He did.

(Other examples): a) Allah descends and b) Allaah will come on the Day of Judgment to judge between the servants.

These are His actions and not His Names nor His Attributes. These are actions that He has done or will do whenever He chooses.

So we have names like *ar-Rahmān*, attributes like *Rahmah*, and we have actions like He has forgiven a certain person or He has done something, i.e. He has spoken to Mūsā or He has revealed verses of the Qur'an at certain stages.

Each and every Name is Perfect and Complete in every sense of the Name. And each and every action is Perfect and Complete in the way that Action is done (something befitting to Him (ﷻ), the Perfect Lord of the Creation). And every Attribute is a perfect Attribute having no deficiency or weaknesses or anything other than absolute perfection in the utmost possible beauty. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is only described with those kinds of Names, Attributes and Actions. All of that, under that general principle we will learn, is free from any type of resemblance to His creation. Perfect. Complete. And Free of any resemblance to any of His creation.

- **Summarization**

A name is a name, e.g. Moosaa Richaardson.

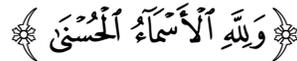
An Attribute is a description, e.g. I am tall.

Actions are something he did, has done, and continues to do.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.1 - ALL OF ALLAH'S NAMES ARE BEAUTIFUL

All of Allah's Names are beautiful, meaning that they reach the utmost limits of beauty. Allah, the Exalted, has said:



«And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah.» [7:180]

Each and every Name of Allah that is a reference to Himself also includes the Most Perfect and Most Beautiful Attribute that can be understood from the language of that Name. With that, they can have no deficiencies or imperfections in anyway whatsoever unlike the names of the creation. For example, someone can be called with a good and noble name in meaning, yet he is deficient in the characteristic that the name represents, i.e. a man named Kareem (generous) yet he is stingy. Allah is beyond and above that. Each and every Name of His includes a description that is Perfect without any deficiencies or limits.

An example of this is that *Al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living) is a Name of Allah the Exalted, and it includes the Attribute of perfect Life.

Some people wonder: How can Allah have life if life is preceded by birth and followed by death?

The answer is: When we affirm life for Allah, it is not like the life that we know as created beings. Our lives were preceded by birth and our lives will followed by death. Yet Allah's life was neither preceded by birth nor will it be followed by death. So it includes the Attribute of perfect Life, not preceded by absence and nor followed by death. It has no deficiency whatsoever.

Such Life that Allah has necessitates other perfect Attributes as well, like perfect Hearing, Sight, Knowledge, and unlimited Capabilities.

Another example is that *Al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing) is one of Allah's Names. *Al-'Alīm* comes from the word *'ilm*. *Al-'Alīm* means one who possesses *'ilm*. *Al-'Alīm* includes perfect Knowledge, not preceded by ignorance, nor followed by forgetfulness.

Any knowledge that we possesses has been preceded by ignorance, *knowledge is only the result of gaining it*. So anyone who has knowledge from us now is because they sought it and it was preceded by ignorance, meaning they were ignorant of what they know. Likewise much of the knowledge that we have now will be followed by forgetfulness or weakness in memory. All of these things are impossible to be understood when we talk about knowledge of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Allah's Knowledge is Perfect, Comprehensive, All-Encompassing detailed Knowledge that has no deficiency, no limit and no restrictions as He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is beyond all of these ideas.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى ﴿٥٢﴾﴾

The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record.
My Lord neither errs nor He forgets. [20:52]

The Knowledge of Allah as He has described Himself with in this verse does not include possibility of unawareness, ignorance, and nor could it include the possibility of forgetfulness.

The knowledge referred to here is comprehensive knowledge, and it encompasses everything generally and specifically, whether it is related to His Actions or the actions of His Creation. Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

﴿وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

«And with Him are the keys of the *ghayb* (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.» [6:59]

Again this shows you the expansiveness and comprehensive nature of the Knowledge of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦﴾﴾

«And no moving (living) creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allah. And He knows its dwelling place and its deposit (in the uterus, grave). All is in a Clear Book (*al-Lawh al-Mahfūd* - the Book of Decrees with Allah).» [11:6]

﴿يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤﴾﴾

«He knows what is in the heavens and on earth, and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is the All-Knower of what is in the breasts (of men).» [64:4]

[The Effect this Should Have On Us As Servants](#)

1. Fear of Allah;
2. Obedience to Him because He Sees, Hears, and Knows everything that we do.

If a leaf does not fall in the darkness of the night except that Allah knows where it falls, then what about us and our actions? Our intentions? What our chests hide from the people? So knowledge of Allah increases a person's consciousness of Him and it leads him to better his practice of Islam and to stay away from disobedience to Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

A third example is that *ar-Raḥmān* (the All-Merciful) is a Name of Allah, the Exalted. It includes perfect Mercy, about which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((اللهُ أَرْحَمُ بِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ بَوْلِدِهَا))

**Verily, Allah is more Merciful to His Servants
than this (woman) is to her son.¹⁰**

The *ḥadīth* is referring to a mother when she found her baby among some captives, took him and placed him close and breast-fed him.

This could be the pinnacle of mercy in the *dunyā* - a mother for her little baby.

However, Allah's mercy is not like that. Rather it is more expansive. If we want to understand the expansive nature of Allah's Attributes while mentioning the creation, it is not done in a comparative way. But it is (described) as 'This one is better than that one,' meaning Allah is more Merciful than that woman. You will never find a text where the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) says that the Mercy of Allah is like this and he offers a similitude. Rather every text will say that Allah is **more** Merciful than this or Allah is **more** knowledgeable than that, etc.

¹⁰ This is from the *ḥadīth* of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "A group of war captives came before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), and a woman was searching for her child. When she found her child, she embraced him and breast-fed him.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) then said:

((أَتُرُونَ هَذِهِ طَارِحَةً وَلَدَهَا فِي النَّارِ؟))

Could you see this woman casting her son into the Fire?

We said, 'No, by Allah, not as long as she is capable of preventing it.'

So the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((اللهُ أَرْحَمُ بِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ بَوْلِدِهَا))

**Verily, Allah is more Merciful to His Servants
than this (woman) is her to son.**

It was collected by al-Bukhārī (5999) and Muslim (2754).

The Name, *ar-Rahmān* (the All-Merciful), also includes the Attribute of expansive Mercy, about which Allah has said:

﴿وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ﴾

«My Mercy embraces all things.» [7:156]

And He has said about the supplications of the Angels for the believers from *Banī Ādam* (children of Ādam):

﴿رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا﴾

«O our Lord! You have encompassed all things by way of Your Mercy and Your Knowledge!» [40:7]

The Beauty of the Names of Allah, the Exalted, can be expressed through each and every Name on its own, meaning if you study *Al-Ḥayy*, you can derive many benefits. You will have much awe of Allah and much submissiveness and humility before your Lord.

Furthermore, the beauty can be expressed by combining Names. By combining a Name with another, perfection upon perfection is achieved. An example of that is *Al-'Azīz* (the All-Mighty) and *Al-Ḥakīm* (the All-Wise), since, Allah, the Exalted, combines these Names in many places within the Qur'an.¹¹

When used separately, each of the two Names includes a particular kind of perfection. *Al-'Azīz* includes *'izzah* (Might), and *ḥukm* (Judgment) and *ḥikmah* (Wisdom) are understood from *Al-Ḥakīm*. Allah has *Hukm*; He is the Ruler and the One who legislates. And Allah has *Ḥikmah* (All-Encompassing Wisdom).

When combined, there is another form of perfection understood - that the Might of Allah, the Exalted, is coupled with His Wisdom. Thus, His Might does not include oppression, tyranny, and evil actions because the *'izzah* of Allah is not coupled with *thulm* (transgression), it is coupled with Wisdom.

The mighty ones from amongst the creation in the *dunyaa* may use their might for sin or to oppress people. They tend to oppress, tyrannize, and behave in evil ways.

Yet Allah's Might and Strength is coupled with Wisdom. So it used in a way that denotes complete Perfection.

¹¹ See the following Qur'anic Verses for examples: *Sūrah al-Baqarah* [2:129, 209, 220, 228, 240, 260]; *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* [3:6, 18, 62, 126]; *Sūrah an-Nisā'* [4:56, 158, 165]; *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* [5:38, 118]; *Sūrah al-Anfāl* [8:10, 49, 63, 67]; *Sūrah at-Tawbah* [9:40, 71]; *Sūrah Ibrāhīm* [14:4]; *Sūrah an-Naml* [27:6]; *Sūrah al-'Ankabūt* [29:42]; *Sūrah ar-Rūm* [30:27]; *Sūrah Luqmān* [31:9, 27]; *Sūrah Sabā'* [34:27]; *Sūrah Fāṭir* [35:2]; *Sūrah az-Zumar* [39:1]; *Sūrah Ghāfir* [40:8]; *Sūrah al-Jāthiyah* [45:2, 37]; *Sūrah al-Fat-ḥ* [48: 7, 19]; *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf* [46:2]; *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* [57:1]; *Sūrah al-Ḥashr* [59: 1, 24]; *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah* [60:5]; *Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaff* [61:1]; *Sūrah al-Jumu'ah* [62: 1]; *Sūrah at-Taghābun* [64:18].

Likewise, the Judgment and Wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, are coupled with perfect Might and Honour, contrary to the judgment and wisdom of the Creation, as they are often subject to disgrace and humiliation.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has referred to Himself as *Al-Qawī* (the Mighty or Strong). The Attribute is *Quwā*.

How is the Strength of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) the perfect kind of Strength unlike the strength in the created beings?

Note [as pointed by another student]: One way to make Allah's attributes distinct and to understand their superiority and perfection is to think about what precedes that Attribute or what follows it, such as Life not being preceded by birth nor followed up by death.

So here, (we respond by saying, His) strength was not preceded by a period of weakness and is not followed by fatigue or a loss of strength as is the case with the strongest creature on earth whose strength is limited. The latter reaches a point where it cannot work anymore and it must rest. Does Allah reach that point? No. Allah does not reach a point where His Strength goes away and where He loses the Attributes of Strength such that He may rest. Allah is Exalted beyond that. So from that, thinking about the name *Al-Qawī*, we think about the perfection of Allah's Strength and how He is only to be described with the most perfect and complete kind of Strength imaginable.

Another Name of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is *Al-'Alī* (the Most High). The Attribute is *'Ulūw* (Loftiness). So Allah is *Al-'Alī* and He has Loftiness.

How is Allah's Loftiness distinct and more superior in comparison to the loftiness of things in the created realm?

There is nothing and no-one above Allah, His Loftiness is absolutely perfect, meaning the Highest and Most Lofty.

Some people want to reject the idea that Allah rose above His throne. They say: Based on the *dunyā* regulations that we know, and the way our created realm works, if you rise above something, that means you were below it before you rose above it.

However, this is Allah (ﷻ) with the most perfect kind of *'Ulūw* and the most perfect kind of Action. So we do not dictate to Allah how He rose above His Throne. And to say that He was beneath it before He rose above it is not from the statements of the *Salaf* and it is not understood from the *'istiwā* (rising above the Throne).

Some perverted the text in Arabic by saying that Allah conquered the Throne,

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ

This is incorrect. *Istiwā* is known in the Arabic language as *irtafa'a 'alā, wartafa'a, wa ṣa'ada*. This is what the early scholars of the *ṣaḥābah* and the *tabi'ūn* used to describe the *Istiwā'* with - as ascension, rising, and elevating. All of them denote the idea of being Lofty.

When someone ascends above something within the created realm, it means he was underneath it before that. But Allah's perfect Ascension would never include that Allah was beneath something before He has risen above it. He is the *Al-'Alī*, the Lofty in the most perfect way.

Another Name is *Al-'Afū* (the Pardoner). In the last ten nights of *Ramathān*, the Messenger (ﷺ) taught 'Ā.ishah (رضي الله عنها) to say:

((اللهم إنك عفو كريم تحب العفو فاعف عني))

**O Allaah! You are the 'Afū (Pardoner),
You love to Pardon, so Pardon me.¹²**

So Allah is the Pardoner, the One who excuses people. How is His Pardoning of the people different from the way people use this attribute? Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. From this angle, we could say that Allah's Pardoning is paired with Forgiveness and Mercy.

For example, how do the people forgive? When you ask for forgiveness, is everyone always ready to forgive you? What about the people who forgave you? Do they always forgive you with complete forgiveness or do they come back later and mention what you did, although they say that they forgave you...?

When Allah (ﷻ) forgives someone, He expunges their record, meaning he erases ones record (completely). If Allah (ﷻ) excused you for something, you will not have to face Allah and be asked about that thing.

((اتق الله حيثما كنت وأتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها))

**Fear Allah wherever you are
and follow up a bad deed with a good one,
it will wipe (the former) out.**

One of the ways Allah will pardon you is if you obey what His Messenger (ﷺ) has guided us to. If you make *Tawbah* from your sin, Allah will pardon you for your sin. He has promised us this. If you repent to Allah sincerely, He will forgive you and He will pardon your sin. The one who has made repentance from his sin is like the one who has not sinned at all, because the Pardoning of Allah is complete and perfect. No trace. No bad feelings. Nothing left. Allah erases the bad deed from your record and He replaces it with a good deed. Who does that from the people? Who will pardon you, THEN give you credit for good things after you've transgressed against them? Who considers you better than you were before

¹² at-Tirmithī in his *Sunan* (3513) on the authority of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). Shaykh al-Albānī declared the *ḥadīth* as *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmithī* (3513).

(after you sought their forgiveness)? But Allah (ﷻ) is perfect in His Pardoning, and when He Pardons you, He loves that you sought His Forgiveness. This is from the completeness of His Attribute of Pardoning.



THE SECOND PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.2 - THEY ARE BOTH TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Allah's Names are titles, as they refer to Him, and descriptions, as they refer to different meanings.¹³

As titles, they are like synonyms, since they all refer to the same thing - Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. For example, *ar-Raḥmān* is Allah and *al-'Azīz* is Allah as a title. Who are we referring when we say *al-Kareem*? We are referring to Allah. Who are we referring to when we say *ar-Raḥmān*? We are referring to Allah. So as a titles on their own, they refer to Allah, so in this sense, they are synonyms - names referring to One Deity. As descriptions, they all carry different meanings, each one referring to a specific meaning as understood from the pure and correct Arabic language.

Based on this, *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living), *al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing), *al-Qadīr* (the Ever-Capable), *as-Samī'* (the All-Hearing), *al-Baṣīr* (the All-Seeing), *ar-Raḥmān* (the All-Merciful), *ar-Raḥīm* (the Ever-Merciful), *al-'Azīz* (the All-Mighty), and *al-Ḥakīm* (the All-Wise) are all Names that refer to one thing - Allah, the Glorified and Exalted. However, the meaning of *al-Ḥayy* is different from the meaning of *al-'Alīm* is different from the meaning of *al-Qadīr*, and so on. We say that they are both titles and descriptions since the Qur'an has indicated this.

The Qur'an has indicated that they are not mere titles alone as the *Mu'tazilah* believe. The *Mu'tazilah* say: "However names you mention for Allah, it does not matter what they are constructed from or what their base meaning is, because they have no meanings. They are only titles that refer to Allah." (For example, Kareem is a name of a man and it does not necessarily mean he is generous). However, this is with regards to the creation. The *Mu'tazilah* have made a *Qiyās* (analogy) between the creation and the creator which is always leading to falsehood and error in the religion.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:



«And He is the Ever-Forgiving, *ar-Raḥīm*.» [46:8]

Before we even mention the comparison of this *āyah* with another *āyah*, what about when Allah mentions two Names for Himself? According to the belief of the *Mu'tazilah*, He is «Ever-Forgiving, *ar-Raḥīm*» meaning, He is simply Allah, because to them, there is no distinction between the meaning of these two Names. So then (if this were true), there would be no need for Allah to mention the second Name for Himself in one passage! From this you see an easy refutation.

¹³ [N.B. Every name has an Attribute. They are not mere titles without description].

﴿ رَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ﴾

«And Your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy.» [18:58]

The second Verse shows that *ar-Raḥīm* is the One who is described as having Mercy. Arab linguistics agree that one may not be called '*alīm*' unless he has knowledge. One may not be called '*samī*' unless he hears. One may not be called '*baṣīr*' unless he sees. This is an affair that is too evident to be in need of a proof.

When one understands this, he can see the misguidance of those who negate the specific meanings of the Names of Allah, the Exalted. Such are the people who reject the meanings of Allah's Names. They say: 'Allah, the Exalted, is *As-Samī*' (the All-Hearing) without hearing, *Al-Baṣīr* (the All-Seeing) without sight, and *Al-'Azīz* (the All-Mighty) without might," and so on.¹⁴ [They do not allow the Names to establish an Attribute. They say that the Names are simply a title and a reference to Allah and nothing more.](#)

They have even attempted to justify this, saying that to affirm multiple Names and Attributes necessitates affirming multiple deities. [For example, to say we worship *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm* is to mean we worship two separate deities.](#)

This kind of falsehood is too easy to see and refute. This a very weak justification, or rather, a dead one due to the textual and intellectual evidences that prove its futility:

Textual Evidence: Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has described Himself with many descriptions, while maintaining that He is uniquely One. Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ هُوَ بَدِئُ وَيَعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ ﴿١٤﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَالٌ لَمَّا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾

«Verily, (O Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) **the Seizure (punishment) of your Lord is severe and painful. Verily, He it is Who begins (punishment) and repeats (punishment in the Hereafter) (or originates the creation of everything, and then repeats it on the Day of Resurrection). And He is Oft Forgiving, full of love (towards the pious who are real true believers of Islamic Monotheism). Owner of the Throne, Glorious. (He is the) Doer of whatsoever He intends (or will).**» [85:12-16]

In these noble Verses are many descriptions of one thing, yet this does not necessitate that we affirm multiple deities.

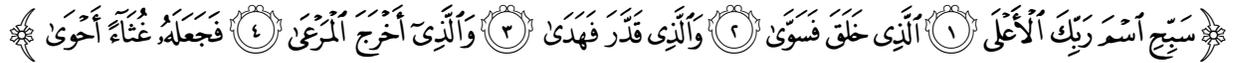
[So Allah has described Himself with a series of description, and even in those descriptions, a number of Names.](#)

¹⁴ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) mentions that Bishr al-Misrī [d.218], the head of the *Mu'tazilah* of his time, had held this exact position. One day, a Bedouin heard him saying this and said to him, 'That is your lord who you are describing and yours alone, Bishr! As for our Lord, then He is not like that!'



«And He is Oft-Forgiving, full of love (towards the pious who are real true believers of Islamic Monotheism).» [85:14]

He has referred to Himself with two Names one after the other.



«Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High. Who created (everything), and then proportioned it. And Who has measured (preordainments for everything even to be blessed or wretched); and then guided (i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths, and guided the animals to pasture). And Who brings out the pasturage, then makes it dark stubble.» [87:1-4]

This is the textual evidence to refute the idea of multiple Names meaning multiple deities or multiple Attributes meaning multiple deities.

Intellectual Evidence: The Attributes themselves are not separate from the One being described, so this cannot necessitate affirming multiple deities. They are just Attributes of the One described with them. They are not separate from Him. It is inevitable that everything in existence must have multiple attributes. It has the attributes of existence, and it can be described by being either something that must exist or something that may or may not exist. Furthermore, each thing that exists can either be something independent or something reliant on something else.

For example, if we take a single piece of paper and ask people to describe it, we can come up with thirty descriptions. So if we can talk about giving created things many descriptions, what would be the possible angle for someone to say multiple descriptions necessitates multiple ideas or multiple deities.



Based on this principle - that Allah's Names are both titles and descriptions - it becomes known that *dahr* (time) is not one of the Names of Allah, the Exalted, for two reasons.

Firstly, Allah says in a *ḥadīth qudsī*:

((قَالَ اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - : يُؤْذِينِي ابْنُ آدَمَ، يَسُبُّ الدَّهْرَ،
وَ أَنَا الدَّهْرُ، بِيَدِي الْأَمْرُ، أَقْلَبُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ))

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, has said, 'The son of Ādam wrongs Me. He speaks badly of time (*dahr*), yet I am the *dahr*, the affair is in My Hand, I alternate the night and the day.'¹⁵

This text is confusing to some people because they see that Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has said, «**Yet I am the *dahr*.**»

So then, we should not refer to Allah as *Dahr*? No.

[1] Because it is a word that has no relative description or action related to it so as to be considered from the Beautiful Names of Allah,

He is *al-Qawī* (the Mighty), He is *al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing). But for *ad-Dahr* (time) - what would the attribute be? What beautiful and perfect Attribute could you understand from the name *ad-Dahr*? There is nothing to derive from that name.

[2] And since it is a word that refers to time.

So, as a result, using this (first) principle, we understand that Allah did not intend to Name Himself with *ad-Dahr*, but He intended to let the people know that He is in Charge of the passing of time. This is when he meant when He said: «**Yet I am the *dahr***» He explained it immediately after that by saying: «**The affair is in My Hand, I alternate the night and the day**» So Allah (ﷻ) is in Charge of time. He alternates the Day and the Night. And Allah is the Creator of the Day and the Night. **So there is an Alternator and an Alternated.** Allah is the One Who turns the time and changes the time, and He is not the time itself.

Also, time is something that passes away. Is it befitting to refer to Allah with a description that passes away and goes into nothingness? Rather Allah's Attributes are Permanent Attributes that He holds and that we continue to describe Him with. They will not cease to exist and they will not come to an end, because He is the First and the Last, with none before Him and none after Him. He is the Eternal One. Not only is He Eternal, but all of His Names, Descriptions, Attributes and Actions are Eternal as well. They do not come to an end and they do not reach a time where they go away. There was not a time when He did not have them.

¹⁵ Collected by al-Bukhārī (7491) and Muslim (2246) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Time is a created thing and there is a Creator of time. There is a Creator and Alternator of the Day and Night and that is Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). He is not is the Alternated!

So each and every Name has perfection in its Name and in the Meaning that is associated with it. They are titles and descriptions, and not mere titles that do not have a description.

Allah, the Exalted, has said, quoting those who deny the Resurrection after death:

﴿ وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ﴾

And they say: There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except *ad-Dahr* (time). [45:24]

They were referring to the passage of the days and nights.

((قَالَ اللهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - : يُؤْذِنِي ابْنُ آدَمَ، يَسُبُّ الدَّهْرَ،
وَ أَنَا الدَّهْرُ، بِيَدِي الْأَمْرُ، أَقْلَبُ اللَّيْلَ وَ النَّهَارَ))

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, has said, 'The son of Aadam wrongs Me. He speaks badly of time (*dahr*), yet I am the *dahr*, the affair is in My Hand, I alternate the night and the day.'

This does not mean that *ad-Dahr* (time) is from the Names of Allah, the Exalted. That is because those who speak badly about time only intend to refer to the frame of events, they do not intend to speak badly about Allah, the Exalted.¹⁶

The meaning of His Statement, «**And I am the *dahr*,**» is explained by His Statement, «**The affair is in My Hand, I alternate the night and the day.**» Allaah, the Exalted, is the Creator of time and whatsoever it contains, and He clarified that He is actually the One who turns and alternates the day and night, and they are time. It is impossible that the One who alternates is also the one being alternated!

In light of this, it becomes clear that it is impossible for *ad-Dahr* in the *hadīth* to be referring to Allah, the Exalted (as one of His Names).

¹⁶ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) quotes the statement of *Imām* ash-Shāfi'ī (may Allah have mercy on him) as found in *al-Imdād* (3/428) to explain the situation of the Arabs and how they would speak about the passing of time:

The Arabs had a habit of dispraising and verbally abusing it when faced with calamities, like death, senility, or the loss of property. They would say, 'It is the passing of time (the days and nights) that destroys us!' They would say 'The tribulations of the days and nights have afflicted us,' and, 'The passing of the days and nights have ruined us!' They ascribed actions to the days and nights and thus spoke ill of them, saying that time has done these things to them. So the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) forbade them from speaking ill of time by saying that it has destroyed them or done bad things to them. This is because insulting time can only be an insult to the One who makes the time pass - Allah, the Blessed and Exalted.



1. What have you noticed about the scholars efforts in making *tafsīr* of the *basmallah* (*bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm* (transl. In the Name of Allah, the Ever-Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy))?

They busy themselves explaining the differences between *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahīm* since they are both based on *Rahmah*. So then, if Allah is *ar-Rahmān* (the Possessor of *Rahmah*) and Allah is *ar-Rahīm* (the Possessor of *Rahmah*), what is the difference between the Mercy that is included in the name *ar-Rahmān* and the Mercy that is included in the name *ar-Rahīm*?

Some of the scholars have said that *ar-Rahīm* is specifically for the believers in the Hereafter. It is the Mercy that Allah will extend to the people of *Tawhīd* when He puts them in Paradise, and it is the Mercy they will enjoy therein. It does not include the disbelievers. The *Rahmah*, understood from the name *ar-Rahmān*, refers to the Mercy that is constantly enveloping all of the creation (Muslims, non-Muslims, animals, inanimate things, etc). The Mercy of Allah that is in each and every place, and He has had Mercy on everything that exists since the time it existed. So Allah's Mercy is encompassing. This is the Mercy understood from the Name *ar-Rahmān*.

The scholars make this distinction because of the *āyah*:



«And He is Ever Most Merciful to the believers.» [33:43]

The word *Rahīm* has come in some passages which indicate that Allah refers to Himself as *ar-Rahīm* in a way that is specific to the believers.

And the references of Allah being *ar-Rahmān* come in a more general way. It is an *ijtihad* - something that the scholars have offered as an opinion. It is not decisive, however, it seems to be in line with the texts that they mentioned. The point is: Why did the scholars busy themselves trying to find a distinction between the name *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahīm*? This is because Allah has mentioned two Names for Himself, and therefore, there must be some meanings in *ar-Rahmān* that He intended that are different than the meanings in the Name *ar-Rahīm* that He intended.



Allah is *al-Khāliq* (the Creator). What Attribute is understood from that? The idea of Creating - Allah Creates.

Side Note: Can we affirm *al-Khalq* for other than Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)? People create things from what Allah has already fashioned.

Can we use the word *Khalq* for the creation?



So Blessed is Allah, the Best of creators. [23:14]

This is an affirmation for *Khāliqīn* (creators).



THE THIRD PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.3 - THEY MAY OR MAY NOT INCLUDE A RELATED RULING AND IMPLICATION

If the Name refers to a transitive description,¹⁷ then it includes three things:

- [1] An established Name of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic,
- [2] An established Attribute that is included in the meaning of the Name,¹⁸
- [3] And an established ruling and implication.

For example, from the Name *al-Ghafār* (the All-Forgiving) we understand that this is a title to Allah firstly, and secondly it is a reference that Allah has the Attribute of Forgiveness. And thirdly, there must be a *maghfūr lah* (someone who is forgiven). So this Name indicates that some of the creation are affected by this Attribute since they will be forgiven by Him.

Another example, the people of knowledge have said that highway robbers who repent (before being caught) may be exempted from punishment, using as proof the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«As for those who repented before they fell into your power, then know that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.» [5:34]

This is because the related ruling and implication of these two Names is that Allah, the Exalted, has forgiven them of their sins and bestowed Mercy on them by cancelling the legislated punishment.

So when Allah mentioned these two Names at the end of the verse, all three things were intended,

- [1] A reference to Allah,
- [2] A reference to His two Attributes of Forgiveness and Mercy

¹⁷ In Arabic (وصف متعدّ) a description that includes a direct external effect, like the Name *as-Samī'* (the All-Hearing) and how it affects others, in that Allah hears them. The opposite of this, a non-transitive description, does not include any external effect, like *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living) for example.

¹⁸ Each of Allah's Names refers to an Attribute by way of *tadam-mun*. *Tadam-mun* is discussed thoroughly in the next principle.

[3] And an indication that if robbers or thieves turn themselves in to the authorities before they are captured, then they should be excused from the punishment of the crime.

An illustration of this principle is that *as-Sami'* (the All-Hearing) includes:

- [1] The Name *as-Sami'* for Allah, the Exalted,
- [2] The Attribute of Hearing,
- [3] And a relating ruling and implication - that He hears all secret and concealed talks.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:



«And Allah hears the dispute between you both.
Verily Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.» [58:1]

Between who? Between the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Khawlah, who complained about her husband. When she showed distress of the situation she was in, Allah had revealed that he had heard their conversation. What is the significance? 'Ā.ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrates that she was in the other side of the room while Khawlah was being discreet with the Messenger (ﷺ). So 'Ā.ishah said: Exonerated by Allah, Whose Hearing encompasses everything! I was in the room and I could not hear the conversation that took place, but Allah from Above the heavens heard the conversation between the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Khawlah!

So, the first kind of Name is a Name that has a transitive description (includes an effect on a third party). However, what about a name based on an Arabic word that does not have a transitive description like *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever Living)?

If the Name refers to a non-transitive description, then it only includes two things:

- [1] A Name of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic
- [2] And an Attribute that is included in the meaning of the Name.

An illustration of this is how the Name, *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living), includes:

- [1] The Name *al-Ḥayy* for Allaah, the Exalted,
- [2] And the Attribute of Life.

From this aforementioned illustration we do not see a related ruling or implication (as opposed to a transitive description). However, based upon the first principle, anyone who has perfect and complete life

must have hearing, seeing, knowledge, greatness, and capabilities. So, in this case, by way of the things that we understand from *al-Ḥayy*, we can indirectly say that it impacts our life. Allah is the All-Living, Ever-Living. He is the Only One Who has this Attribute. There is none before Him and none after Him. So it must have an effect on us somehow, but it is indirect through the other Attributes - it necessitates complete hearing, complete vision and complete understanding, awareness, and capabilities and honor. All of this must be included in someone who has perfect life. But indirectly from the verb that establishes this Name, we cannot understand that this Attribute has an impact.

Another example is *al-'Athīm* (the Most Great):

[1] The Name *al-'Athīm* for Allah, the Exalted,

[2] And the perfect and complete Attribute of Greatness.

As for the third principle, what is its effect upon us? In Arabic, we say *'athuma fulān* (so and so became great), however we are not waiting for anything to complete the sentence. So, here, it is *waṣf muta'adī* (it is an attribute that does not have a transitive description) - it does not have an effect or object. Indirectly we can understand that if He is *al-'Athīm*, He must have other Attributes as well, and those other Attributes must have an impact on His creation. However, He is Great and He is described with Greatness, but it does not include a transitive description.



The difference between verbs that are transitive and verbs that are intransitive:

Muta'addī has an object and *Lāzim* does not have one.

Example of *Muta'addī*: Zayd hit 'Amr.

Example of *Lāzim*: Zayd sat.

When you simply say: "Zayd hit" - (we ask) who or what did Zayd hit? So, the meaning of the verb either carries on into the object or it stays within the doer of the verb. In Arabic, we have some verbs that are the root of the Name that Allah has described Himself with. A Name that Allah has which has a direct transitive effect with the creation is *al-Muḥīt* (the All-Encompassing One). What is He encompassing? He is encompassing everything without exception. He is encompassing all of the creation by way of His Knowledge, His Hearing, so on and so forth.

The first example that the author gave in regards to transitive verbs was concerning the highway robbers:

﴿إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«As for those who repented before they fell into your power,
then know that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.» [5:34]

When the highway robbers surrender to the authorities, they are to be forgiven and excused. They are to be allowed to make repentance and be excused from the punishment of highway robbery. This is because Allah closes this *āyah* with:

﴿غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.»

The scholars of *tafsīr* said *al-Ghafūr* is the All-Forgiving and *Raḥīm* is the All-Merciful. Allah did not close the *āyah* by saying He is Powerful, Capable, All-Wise, All-Knowing, or Severe in Punishment. Rather he ended the verse saying that He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. So what we understand is He has mentioned His own Names, He has referred to Himself with an Attribute, and there must be an implication. What is the implication that Allah wanted us to understand from His Book? The implication is that His *maghfirah* (His Forgiveness) and Mercy reaches the highway robbers who surrendered themselves.

So we are looking at Names of Allah that have an impact on a third party versus Names that are based on Attributes that do not seem to have an object that they would take.

An illustration of a intransitive verb is the Name *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living) that refers to Allah. It is an Attribute of perfect Life. We believe that Allah is the possessor of perfect Life that is neither preceded by birth nor followed by death. This Life is an Attribute that we affirm for Him. But how does this impact us?

What reaches us from this perfect Life? There is nothing directly understood from it, except indirectly we could say that if He has perfect life, then He must be All-Seeing, All-Hearing, All-Capable and All-Great, etc. So these Attributes, that we deduced from His perfect Life, could have effects on us. But the very name *al-Ḥayy* does not have a direct impact on the creation.

The other example we looked at was the Name *al-'Athīm* (the Most Great). No doubt His Greatness is seen in the creation and in His Ability to fashion and form things. His Greatness can be seen everywhere. However, from the Arabic language and from the description '*Athuma fulān* (so-and-so became great), the sentence is over and the description is finished. He Himself is Great. There is no object of this Greatness. It is not an action that transcends to someone else. He is Great Himself. Of course, the reflection of His Greatness can be seen in His creation in an indirect way. But the actual name *al-'Athīm* does not include an action that transcends into the created realm.

Most of the Names of Allah have transitive descriptions.

Another example is *Al-Awāl* (the First One). He Himself is the First with none before Him. What is the transitive description from this? There is none. We glorify Allah with this, He is the First with none before Him, and we affirm this as a Name for Him, but it does not have a direct object. There is no Action that transcends into the creation. But if we said that Allaah is *ash-Shakūr* (the Thankful One), the One Who thanks His creation and rewards them, then there must be someone who is thanked. There must be someone who has done something to earn the pleasure of Allah and there must have been a good action. Therefore, we have a transitive description.

Al-Ākhir (the Eternal One whom there is none after) does not have a direct object in the Arabic language. Therefore, it is intransitive. We only understand two things from it:

[1] It is a reference to Allah,

[2] It is a reference to Him being Eternal with none after Him.

Al-Aḥad (...) = intransitive.

Al-Baṣīr (the All-Seeing) = transitive. This has a direct impact on the creation. We know with certainty that Allah is Seeing us now. Nothing we do can escape His Sight. So then, it has a transitive description and it has a direct object and implication on His creation. So, *Al-Baṣīr* establishes three things for us, not just two:

[1] It is a Name of Allah,

[2] It establishes the Attribute of perfect Vision and Sight that is not obstructed nor limited by anything, and that has no deficiency in it whatsoever,

[3] And there are actions and movements that are seen by Him,

At-Tawāb (the Acceptor of repentance) = transitive.

[1] It is a Name of Allah,

[2] It establishes the perfect Attribute of accepting repentance,

[3] And there is repentance being offered, and it is accepted by Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Al-Ḥafīth (the Preserver) = transitive. So it establishes three things:

[1] It is a Name of Allah,

[2] The Attribute of Perseveration

[3] Allah preserves some of His creation.

Abū Ṭayyib at-Ṭabarī (an early scholar) was an old man, nearly a hundred years old, but his vision and hearing were sharp. He was physically capable of running and performing actions just like the young man. He once came back from a trip by sea - and you could imagine, during that time period, traveling by sea is exhausting. Rather even today, by the time one lands from an 8-houred flight, they are exhausted. This is with air-conditioned seats and food accommodation. What about weeks and months at sea?

So, when the boat landed and everyone was exhausted, Abū Ṭayyib at-Ṭabarī jumped off the boat and hopped down to the land. People were amazed. How could you be a hundred years old and jump around like this? He said:

When I was a young man, I preserved these bodily limbs from the disobedience of Allah and Allah preserved them for me in my old age.

This story is mentioned by Ibn Rajab in his explanation to 'Preserve Allah and He will preserve you,' of the 40 *Aḥādīth* of An-Nawawī.

Al-Qawī' (the All-Mighty) = intransitive. As an indirect implication, Allah being Strong and All-Capable and possessing perfect Strength is something that is definitely going to have an impact on how we understand what He has done, how He has created things and how He has fashioned the earth, the rivers, the mountains, and all of that. He is *Al-Qawī'*. But the Attribute of *Quwā* is mentioned as a description of Allah (ﷻ) and when we say Allah is *al-Qawī'* we are not waiting for the object of the sentence. So in this case, it is intransitive.



THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.5 - THE NAMES OF ALLAH ARE TAWQĪFIYYAH - THERE IS NO PLACE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREE-THINKING REGARDING THEM

Tawqīfiyyah is the opposite of *tawfiqiyyah*. *Tawqīfiyyah* is an issue about which you have no right to speak except with evidences. Nothing can be legislated except with evidences.

Tawfiqiyyah is something open to opinions, assessments and personal judgments. It is something open to free thinking, etc.

For example, the issue of *Ṣalāh* is *tawqīfiyyah*. As soon as you make *takbīr* and enter into *Ṣalāh*, you are in the realm of *Tawqīf* (from the same verb that establishes *qif* (stop)). So, you cannot do anything here except with evidences. The *Ṣalāh* itself is *tawqīfiyyah*; you need a proof to establish your action before you can ask someone to prove that you cannot do it.

However, if I said that I do not know of a *ḥadīth* where the Messenger (ﷺ) wore the exact color of the *thobe* you are wearing, or that you are unsure if it is even *ḥalāl* for you to even wear it, do you have to have a text in order to wear that color? No. Why is that? In the affairs of clothing, eating, interactions, etc., everything is *ḥalāl* until you have a text proving it is *ḥarām*. Every sitting posture is *ḥalāl* except when there is a *ḥadīth* prohibiting it. This is because the affair of sitting and dressing, etc., is *tawfiqiyyah*. It is left up to you, your opinion, and what you like to do until there is a text.

If I say: "Akhī, you are wearing silk, can he say: "No. Clothes are *tawfiqiyyah*"? "I can wear whatever I want, it is *ḥalāl*"? He cannot because we have a text that prohibits the wearing of silk. So a specific exemption is made here. Silk is not *ḥalāl* for the men, it is *ḥarām*, and it is exempted from the general permissibility of clothing.

First scenario: Wearing a Buddhist's orange robe, wrapping it around oneself, and shaving your head bald, is this *ḥalāl* or not? Clothes are permissible, but there is a text that says «**Whoever imitates a people is one of them.**» Now, this is imitating the religious custom of a people, and this is absolutely prohibited. We have a text against it.

Second scenario: You should not lean back on your left hand. All sitting postures are permissible, but do you know anything from the Prophet (ﷺ) saying this particular position is not permissible? There is an authenticated *ḥadīth* by *Shaykh al-Albānī* (رحمته الله) mentioned in the *Prophet's Prayer Described* that this sitting posture is not permissible within the *Ṣalāh* nor permissible outside the *Ṣalāh*. The Prophet (ﷺ) came to the *masjid* and saw a man reclining back on his left hand, so he said: You are going to sit with the posture of those who have earned His Anger? (i.e. the Jews)?

So, if the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) described this sitting posture as the sitting posture of those who earned Allah's anger, then it is an indication that it is not permissible. Therefore, we exempt it from the general permissibility of sitting postures, etc.

So *tawqif* means to stop and not do anything until you have a text. Do not fast because fasting is a *'ibādah*, until you learn how to start fasting, when to stop fasting, what you do when you fast and what you refrain from when you fast. You learn all of that from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). You cannot say I am going to fast tomorrow by only avoiding water and drinking Pepsi. Your *ṣawm* is *tawqifī*, it is only to be done according to the way that the Messenger (ﷺ) taught.

Tawfiqī is that you are free to do it however you like. For example, you are free to wear shoes. What kind of shoes are you allowed to wear in Islam? You are allowed to wear any shoe, but you are prohibited from wearing one shoe. If there was no text you would have had the right to say, I can wear one shoe if I want to. It is a *dunyā* (worldly) thing. It is not worship of Allah, it is mere clothing. Yet there is a prohibition of wearing one shoe, the Messenger (ﷺ) told us to remove the other shoe or put the second one on. So either walk barefoot or walk with two shoes. Do not walk with one shoe only, give your body its balance.

Some of the scholars mentioned that this was the knowledge of chiropractic medicine that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) had. Chiropractors say that if one of your legs is longer than the other, or if you have some imbalance in your walk, it will eventually lead to major back problems. So, if the person is consistently walking with one shoe, this would definitely affect his back. There is something harmful in what the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) forbade us from. So, this is an exemption from the generality of the permissibility of shoes.

How does this relate to Allah's Names and Attributes? Can we say that one of Allah's Names is Vishnu? (Vishnu is regarded by some people as being a deity that is powerful). No. We cannot. Why not? There is no text showing that Allah's Name is Vishu. Allah's Names are *tawqīfiyyah*. You cannot say Allah is the Great Architect. If Allah's Names and Attributes were *tawfiqī*, you can call Him whatever you wanted to call Him. But if Allah's Names are *tawqifī*, you cannot refer to Him with a Name that He has except with a text.

You cannot say Allah is *Muhandas al-Kawn* (the Architect of the Universe) as some people say. As a *khabr*, it is true, Allah designed the universe, and Allah's design of the universe is an amazing design. We can talk about Allah with a *khabr*. Meaning, you can describe Him with descriptions, but you cannot establish a Name from that description. You can say Allaah designed the universe in the most beautiful and intriguing way, with all kinds of wisdom and knowledge. But can we bring a Name from that? From the authentic descriptions of Allah is that He descends to the lowest heaven every last third of the night. Can we call Him *an-Nāzil* (the Descendor)? No. We cannot call Him the Descendor. Why not? Because the Names of Allah are *tawqīfiyyah*. We cannot establish any Name we want from a description.

Allah's Names are *tawqīfiyyah* (توقيفية), meaning a kind of knowledge that is restricted to textual evidence; there is no place for intellectual free-thinking regarding them. Based on this, we must suffice ourselves with what is found in the Book and the *Sunnah*, without adding or taking anything away. This is because

the intellect will not be able to grasp the understanding of Allah's Names that He rightfully deserves, so then we must suffice ourselves with textual evidences only.

This is due to Allah's Statement

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴾ (31)

«And do not follow what you have no knowledge of. Verily the hearing, the sight, and the heart, (you) will all be questioned (about each of them).» [17:36]

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ ۖ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا ۚ وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْمُونَ ﴾ (33)

﴿ وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْمُونَ ﴾ (33)

«Say: Verily, my Lord has prohibited (all forms of) lewdness, whether committed openly or in secret, sinning (in general), oppressing without any due right, that you associate partners with Allah with no authority sent down from Him, and that you speak about Allah with what you do not know.» [7:33]

Some scholars said that Allah mentioned "speech about Him without knowledge" in the order of the severity of the crime. He mentioned it after *shirk*. If making *shirk* with Allah is the greatest crime that a person can commit, and it is that which will borrow him from Paradise forever and keep him from being able to receive the Mercy of Allah, then how could there be something mentioned after that? The scholars of *tafsir* say that the one who makes *shirk*, mentioned in the fourth position (in the verse) makes *shirk* by himself, however, the one who speaks about Allah without knowledge leads other people into *shirk*. Not only does he make *shirk* with the speech about Allah without knowledge, i.e. Allah has a son, Allah has a partner, but **he conveys this to other people**. He speaks about Allah like this and it affects others and it leads them to *shirk*. So the severity of the crime is more so, because he is not restricted by his own action of committing *shirk*, he has lead other people into that great crime as well.

Furthermore, to Attribute a Name to Allah, the Exalted, that He did not Attribute to Himself or to deny something He has Named Himself would be a serious crime against Him. We must behave in the appropriate manner in this affair and stick to what is found in established textual evidences only.

A number of scholars throughout history such as Ibn al-Qayyim, Al-Khaṭṭābī, Ja'far Aṣ-Ṣādiq, Ibn Hubayrah, As-Sa'dī, Ibn Al-'Uthaymīn, Ṣiddīq Ḥassan Khān strove to extract the 99 Names of Allah and they attempted to list and gather them. They wrote books, making *ijtihad* trying gather the 99 Names of Allah that they believed was intended by that text (whoever enumerates the 99 Names of Allah will enter Paradise).

The scholars throughout history, though they differed in some branches of how they approached the text, all understood that **it is the text** that established the Names of Allah. They all began with the easiest and clearest affirmations like *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm*, *al-Qudūs*, etc. Then, you have issues of *ijtihād* - some scholars affirmed some Names and others did not. For example, some affirmed *ar-Rashīd* and some didn't. Some of them said: *Thul-Jalāli wal-Ikrām* is one of His Names and others said *Māliki Yawm ad-Dīn* is a name, because *iqāfah* is allowed when it comes to the name of Allah and others responded in the negative, there's no *iqāfah* in the Names of Allah. But there is no proof for or against either positions, the efforts that they made or make to list the Names was something that we hope Allah will reward them for, and give them the Promise as mentioned in the *ḥadīth*.

The whole point is that all of them based their *ijtihād* on evidences, and none of them said, I'm going to think and come up with [some random] 99 Names, so therefore, Allah is *al-Muhandiss*. You find some people today who say Vishnu is one of Allah's names! Or they claim that we can refer to Allah as Vishnu or with other pagan names. Rather Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is only referred to with the Names that He has Named Himself with or the Names His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) named Him with.



THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.6 - THEY ARE NOT LIMITED TO A SET NUMBER

Allah's Names are not limited to any specific number, and this is understood from the statement of the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) in the well-known narration:

((...أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ،

أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ،

أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ...))

**«...I ask You by every Name that You have,
those You named yourself with, those You revealed in Your Book,
those You taught one of Your created beings,
and those You kept with Yourself as knowledge of the Unseen...»**

It was collected by Aḥmad,¹⁹ Ibn Ḥib-bān,²⁰ and al-Ḥākim,²¹ and it is *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic).²²

The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) classified the Names of Allah into three categories from all the Names He Named Himself with:

[1] Those He has revealed in His Book,

e.g. *bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm* (In the Name of Allah, *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm*).

[2] Those He has taught one of His created beings

i.e. It is not in the Qur'an, however, it has been taught by revelation to one of His Prophets. How can anyone be taught a Name of Allah that is not in the Qur'an unless he was a Prophet who received revelation? So, he is referring to the Names he learned about Allah from the revelations that are not in the Qur'an. An example of this would be *al-Witr*. Allah is *al-Witr* (the Unique One). The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

((...إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَتَرِ يَجِبُ الْوِتْرَ...))

¹⁹ Collected by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (1/391, 452)

²⁰ Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥib-bān bi-Tartīb Ibn Balbaan* (972)

²¹ Refer to *al-Mustadrak* (1929)

²² Refer to *Silsilatul-Aḥādīthis-Ṣaḥīḥah* (199) of al-Albānī and Muqbil ibn Hādī's comments on *Al-Mustadrak* (1/696). For further study, review the criticism mentioned in *al-'Ilal* of ad-Dārquṭnī (5/199-201) and *Taḥqīq Musnad Aḥmad* (6/247-250).

«Allah is *Witr* and He loves *Witr*.»

So, reference to Allah being *Witr* is not found in the Book of Allah, rather it comes from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

[3] And those He has kept with Himself as knowledge of the Unseen.

e.g. We have no knowledge of this third category, because Allah has chosen to keep some of these Names to Himself. So, we do not say, just because we know all the Names in the Qur'an, and that we've gathered all the Names in the *Sunnah*, that we could have possibly gathered all of Allah's Names. We have only been given a little knowledge with regards to His Names. How many Names are there that He has kept for Himself and not revealed to anyone? We do not know. Knowledge of that has not been given to us. We only know the Names that He has Named Himself with in His Book and the Names His Messenger (ﷺ) has conveyed to us. Beyond that, we do not know. We do know from this reference of the Messenger (ﷺ) that there are other Names that He did not reveal to us and that His Messenger (ﷺ) did not even know about.

That being the case, we have another proof against those who name Allah with Names other than those in the Book and the *Sunnah*, those who go against the *tawqifiyyah* nature of Allah's Names. They name Allah with names like Vishnu, *al-Muhandis*, and so on. They name Allah with names that they feel are good in their meaning, but have no support in the Book or the *Sunnah*. This is not permissible based on this *ḥadīth*. This *ḥadīth* gives us three categories of Allah's Names, and one of them is not good names that you deduce from your own intellect. Rather (we have been given a classification of) Names that Allah has revealed in His Book, Names that He has taught one of His Prophets, or Names that He has kept for Himself. This is a refutation, and a further support for what was mentioned about Allah's Names being *tawqifiyyah*.

We have a clear indication from the Messenger (ﷺ) that Allah has Names we do not know of. This being the case, anyone who can mention the ninety-nine Names, we say: 'Those are from the Names that we have knowledge of and there are others we do not have knowledge of.' In fact, many of the scholars of the past made attempts to enumerate the Names of Allah so that they may attain the reward from Allah mentioned in this *ḥadīth* we will discuss.

They gathered ninety-nine, and they kept gathering because they needed a principle by which to extract the Names from the verses that would land them on ninety-nine. Some of the scholars had lengthy, lengthy lists of Allah's Names that reached up to two hundred names while they were initially trying to gather the ninety-nine mentioned in the *ḥadīth*. However, their principles led them to gather more. Some of them like Ibn Ḥazm could not count up to ninety-nine, they only got to eighty-some or seventy-some. So, they differed in the numbers of names they gathered, and they did not have the same number although they all tried to gather ninety-nine.

It is not possible for anyone to count or have complete knowledge of the Names that Allah, the Exalted, has kept with Himself as knowledge of the Unseen.

As for the statement of the Prophet (may Allah raise rank and grant him peace):

((إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا، مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا،
مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ))

«Verily Allah has ninety-nine Names, one shy of a hundred.
Whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise.»²³

Then this does not prove that Allah's Names are limited to only this number. If the intent of the hadeeth was to limit them, then the wording would have been, "Verily, the Names of Allah are **only** ninety-nine; whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise," or "Allah has no more than ninety-nine names," or some phrase in the Arabic language that denotes *ḥaṣr* and *qaṣr* - that it is limited or bound by a set number.

This is not understood from the Arabic of this *ḥadīth*. To say that Allah has something does not mean He does not have anything beyond that. Therefore, the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that whoever enumerates this specific group of His Names will go to Paradise. There are ninety-nine of Allah's Names that He has revealed and given us knowledge of, if you were to gather those ninety-nine Names intended by the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then there is a specific reward for doing it. This is the point of the *ḥadīth*.

Thus, his statement (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), «Whoever enumerates them,²⁴ will enter Paradise» completes the first part of the *ḥadīth*, referring to the intended ninety-nine Names. It is not a separate statement referring to all of Allah's Names.

So you do not have to gather every single Name that is in the Book of Allaah and spoken by the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), but you are to gather those intended by the Messenger in this *ḥadīth* of ninety-nine Names. This leads you to an idea that there must be certain principles (such as using *iḍāfah*, or not, being *muqayyid* or *ghayr muqayyid*, etc) that would lead you to ninety-nine Names.

So, the similitude of this statement (the *ḥadīth*) will be like your saying, "I have one hundred *dirhams* that I want to give as charity." This statement does mean that you have only that many *dirhams* and they are all reserved for charity. It only means that you have some number of *dirhams* reserved for charity, and it does not speak about what you have beyond that. Similarly, the Names of Allah mentioned in this *ḥadīth* are «Allah has ninety-nine Names, whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise,» it does not negate more than ninety-nine.

Additionally, it has not been authentically established that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) specified all of these ninety-nine Names. The *ḥadīth* which has been reported about this is unauthentic:²⁵

((إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا غَيْرَ وَاحِدَةٍ، مِنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ . هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ، الرَّحِيمُ،
الْمَلِكُ، الْقُدُّوسُ، السَّلَامُ، الْمُؤْمِنُ، الْمُهَيْمِنُ، الْعَزِيزُ، الْجَبَّارُ، الْمُتَكَبِّرُ، الْخَالِقُ...))

²³ Collected by al-Bukhārī (7392) and Muslim (2677) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

²⁴ The author commented here, saying: "Enumerating them means to memorize them and know their meanings. This is fulfilled when one worships Allah based on their related meanings and rulings."

²⁵ Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmithī* (3507) of al-Albānī.

This unauthentic *ḥadīth* begins like the first *ḥadīth* mentioned: «Verily Allah has ninety-nine Names, one shy of a hundred, whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise,» but then, the mention of the Names begin, one after the other - as if they are part of the *ḥadīth*. This is something that the scholars have classified as being *mudrajī/mudrajāt* (things that are inserted into something). Sometimes a narrator would narrate a *ḥadīth* and then explain its meaning.

In this case, there's a prime opportunity for the narrator to explain the *ḥadīth*. What are these ninety-nine Names? The narrator goes on to explain them, yet he does not make a distinction in his words, he does not clearly define when his explanation begins and when the words of the Messenger are over. So, the one who hears the narration gets confused and considers it to be part of the *ḥadīth*. This is one of the ways that *mudrajī* happens. And sometimes the listener, who narrates the *ḥadīth*, understands that this is not part of the *ḥadīth*, yet the way he writes it in his book when he narrates the *ḥadīth* from his *shaykh*, is not clearly understood by the one who takes it from him! He doesn't make a distinction between the end of the *ḥadīth* and the beginning of the narrators' explanation.

When you look into the different chains of transmissions in this hadeeth, you find the ones that have the very, very long list of ninety-nine names are consistent with the narrator of these chains (namely, Walīd b. Muslim), whereas the *ḥadīth* narrated by other than him do not have these additions. This led the 'ulāma of 'Ilal (hidden defects of *ḥadīth*) to be able to categorize it as the additional explanation of Walīd b. Muslim or maybe the individual he narrated the *ḥadīth* from.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "The specification of them (the Names of Allah) is not from the speech of the Prophet (ﷺ), as agreed upon by the scholars of *ḥadīth*."²⁶

Here, Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمته الله) is quoting *ijmā'* (a census) from the scholars of *ḥadīth* saying that the mention of the Names is not authentically related from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

He also said, "Al-Walīd²⁷ mentioned them (the names) as the explanation of the *ḥadīth* by some one of his teachers from the *Shām*,²⁸ as is clarified in some of the narrations of his *ḥadīth*."²⁹

Ibn Ḥajar³⁰ said, "The problem that the two *shaykhs* (al-Bukhārī and Muslim) had with it (the *ḥadīth*) was not just that it only comes by way of al- Walīd, but that he (al-Walīd) has narrated it inconsistently³¹, his *tadlīs*,^{32/ 33} and possibility of additional wordings added to the narration."³⁴

²⁶ Refer to *Majmū 'al-Fatāwā* (6/382).

²⁷ Al-Walīd b. Muslim, one of the narrators of the *ḥadīth*.

²⁸ *Shām* is modern day Syria and Palestine and parts of their bordering countries.

²⁹ Refer to *Majmū 'al-Fatāwā* (6/379).

³⁰ The author of *Fat-ḥul-Bārī* and many works in *ḥadīth*.

³¹ *Ustāth* Moosaa Richardson (رحمته الله): Meaning, there is some differing in the Names themselves! During one occasion, there is a list of ninety-nine names and during another occasion, when someone else narrates it from Walīd, there is a difference in the Names themselves. The ninety-nine names don't exactly match up. There are three or four different narrations of the *ḥadīth*, all of them having a slight differences in the actual names. So, sometimes he would add names that he didn't mention the first time, or he would not mention names. This inconsistency is another phrase from the sciences of *ḥadīth* called *itirāb* (inconsistency in one's narration).

Since the specification of the Names by the Prophet (ﷺ) is not authentic, the *Salaf* differed over them, and thus a number of different opinions were held.

I (ibn al-'Uthaymīn) have gathered the following ninety-nine Names from the Book of Allah, the Exalted, and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ):

From the Book of Allah, the Exalted:

- [1] Allah
- [2] *al-Aḥad* (the One)
- [3] *al-A'lā* (the Most High)
- [4] *al-Akram* (the Most Generous)
- [5] *al-Ilāh* (the Worshipped)
- [6] *al-Aw-wal* (the First)
- [7] *al-Ākhir* (the Last)
- [8] *ath-Thāhir* (the Knower of all apparent things)
- [9] *al-Bāṭin* (the Knower of all hidden things)
- [10] *al-Bārī* ' (the Commanding Ordainer)
- [11] *al-Barr* (the Beneficent One)
- [12] *al-Baṣīr* (the All-Seeing)
- [13] *at-Taw-wāb* (the Acceptor of Repentance)
- [14] *al-Jab-bār* (the Compelling One)
- [15] *al-Ḥāfith* (the Preserver)
- [16] *al-Ḥasīb* (the Preserver)
- [17] *al-Ḥafīth* (the All-Protecting One)
- [18] *al-Ḥafī* (the Gracious One)
- [19] *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth)
- [20] *al-Mubīn* (the One who clarifies)
- [21] *al-Ḥakīm* (the All-Wise)
- [22] *al-Ḥalīm* (the Gentle One)

³² *Tadlīs* (lit. deception); when a narrator habitually fails to mention the name of a narrator that is between him and his *shaykh*, using a wording like, "On the authority of my *shaykh*...." instead of, "My *shaykh* narrated to me..." Because of the likelihood of an unmentioned person in the chain who may not be reliable, the scholars of *ḥadīth* consider this kind of narration unacceptable.

³³ *al-Walīd* was also *mudallis*, one who narrated with the habit of saying, "On the authority of my *shaykh*," while it was a *ḥadīth* he actually heard from another person who narrates from his *shaykh*. So, he would knock that person out of the chain and narrate directly from his *shaykh*. This is called *tadlīs*, and the one who does it is a *mudallis*, and the *ḥadīth* it is done to is called *mudallas*.

³⁴ Refer to *Fat-ḥul-Bārī* (11/215)

- [23] *al-Ḥamīd* (the Praiseworthy One)
 [24] *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living)
 [25] *al-Qay-yūm* (the One who establishes and sustains)
 [26] *al-Khabīr* (the All-Informed One)
 [27] *al-Khāliq* (the Creator)
 [28] *al-Khal-lāq* (the Ever-Creating)
 [29] *ar-Ra'ūf* (the All-Kind)
 [30] *ar-Raḥmān* (the All-Merciful)
 [31] *ar-Raḥīm* (the Ever Merciful)
 [32] *ar-Raz-zāq* (the Ever-Providing)
 [33] *ar-Raqīb* (the Ever-Watchful)
 [34] *as-Salām* (the Flawless One)
 [35] *as-Samī'* (the All-Hearing)
 [36] *ash-Shākīr* (the Ever-Thankful)
 [37] *ash-Shākūr* (the Ever-Thankful)
 [38] *ash-Shahīd* (the Witness)
 [39] *aṣ-Ṣamad* (the Eternal One)
 [40] *al-'Ālim* (the Knowledgeable One)
 [41] *al-'Azīz* (the All-Mighty)
 [42] *al-'Athīm* (the Great One)
 [43] *al-'Afuww* (the Pardoner)
 [44] *al-'Alīm* (the Lofty One)
 [46] *al-Ghaf-fār* (the Most Forgiving)
 [47] *al-Ghafūr* (the Ever Forgiving)
 [48] *al-Ghanī* (the One Free of Needs)
 [49] *al-Faṭ-ṭāh* (the Deciding Judge)
 [50] *al-Qādir* (the Capable One)
 [51] *al-Qāhir* (the Forceful One)
 [52] *al-Qud-dūs* (the Holy One)
 [53] *al-Qadīr* (the Ever-Capable)
 [54] *al-Qarīb* (the Close One)
 [55] *al-Qawī* (the Strong One)
 [56] *al-Qah-hār* (the Ever-Dominating One)
 [57] *al-Kabīr* (the Great One)
 [58] *al-Karīm* (the Generous One)

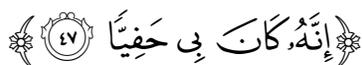
- [59] *al-Latīf* (the Sublime One)
 [60] *al-Mu'min* (the Granter of Security)
 [61] *al-Muta'ālī* (the High and Exalted One)
 [62] *al-Mutakab-bir* (the Justly Proud)
 [63] *al-Matīn* (the Powerful)
 [64] *al-Mujīb* (the Ever Responding One)
 [65] *al-Majīd* (the Majestic One)
 [66] *al-Muḥīṭ* (the All-Encompassing One)
 [67] *al-Muṣaw-wir* (the Bestower of forms and shapes)
 [68] *al-Muqtadir* (the All-Capable One)
 [69] *al-Muqīt* (the Protector)
 [70] *al-Malik* (the King)
 [71] *al-Malik* (the Sovereign)
 [72] *al-Mowlā* (the Guardian)
 [73] *al-Muhayim* (the Watchful Witness)
 [74] *an-Naṣīr* (the Ever-Helpful)
 [75] *al-Wāḥid* (the Only One)
 [76] *al-Wārith* (the Owner who all things return to)
 [77] *al-Wāsi'* (the Encompassing One)
 [78] *al-Wadūd* (the Loving)
 [79] *al-Wakīl* (the Guardian)
 [80] *al-Walī* (the Protector)
 [81] *al-Wah-hāb* (the Ever-Giving)

And from the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

- [1] *al-Jamīl* (the Beautiful One)
 [2] *al-Jaw-wād* (the Bestower of Goodness)
 [3] *al-Ḥakam* (the Ruler)
 [4] *al-Ḥay-yī* (the Shy One)
 [5] *ar-Rabb* (the Lord)
 [6] *ar-Rafīq* (the Gentle One)
 [7] *as-Sub-būḥ* (the Justly Glorified One)
 [8] *as-Say-yid* (the Master)
 [9] *ash-Shāfī* (the Healer)

- [10] *aṭ-Ṭay-yib* (the Pure One)
 [11] *al-Qābidh* (the One who seizes)
 [12] *al-Bāsit* (the One who grants increases)
 [13] *al-Muqad-dim* (the One who brings things forth)
 [14] *al-Mu'akh-khir* (the One who delays things wisely)
 [15] *al-Muḥsin* (the One who does things perfectly)
 [16] *al-Mu'tī* (the Giver)
 [17] *al-Man-nān* (the Ever-Bestowing)
 [18] *al-Witr* (the One who is similar to none)

This is what we have chosen based on our research - eighty-one Names from the Book of Allah, the Exalted, and eighteen from the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). However, there remains some doubt about including *al-Ḥafī*, as it is only found in a restricted sense in His Statement, quoting Ibrāhīm:³⁵



«Verily, He is *Ḥafī* (Gracious) to me.» [19:37]

What we have listed here is based on our knowledge and understanding, while above each possessor of knowledge is someone more knowledgeable. Above all of them is the Knower of all hidden and apparent things, the One who knows everything.³⁶



³⁵ This idea of Allah being *Ḥafī* to Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) **specifically** is questionable - does it establish *al-Ḥafī* as a Name of Allah or not? So, the *Shaykh* considered it as one of the Names of Allah and included it in his list of ninety-nine names, yet he said that he was not entirely sure about it.

³⁶ The author (may Allah have mercy on him) commented here, saying:

And we have not mentioned any Names that come in the texts as *muḍāf* (an Arabic construction that shows possession), like *Rabb al-'Ālamīn* (the Lord of all the worlds), '*Ālim al-Ghaybi wash-Shahādah* (the Knower of all hidden and apparent things), and *Badī' as-Samāwāti wal-Ardh* (the Originating Creator of the Heavens and the Earth). There are many examples of this. It was not clear to us that they were intended (from the *ḥadīth*), and knowledge (of what is most correct) is only with Allah, the Exalted.

[«And we have not mentioned any Names that come in the texts as *muḍāf*...»]

Ustāth Moosaa Richardson comments:

The *Shaykh* begins to give you some insight into the guidelines he used when he looked at the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah* to derive these lists of Names. He tells you here, that he chose not to use the *muḍāf* construction. The *muḍāf* Arabic construction is when you say (for example): 'This is the book of Mustafa,' "This is the Book of Allah" - it is the relationship between two things that generally denotes ownership, "the Messenger of Allah," or "the pen of 'Umar." So this *idāfah* construction like the "Master of the Day of Judgment," "the Lord of all the worlds," and so on, *Shaykh* ibn al-'Uthaymīn chose not to consider to be listed as Names.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S NAMES

1.6 - THE KINDS OF DEVIATION FROM THE CORRECT BELIEF

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ﴾

«And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names, so call on Him using them. And abandon those who commit *ilhād* regarding His Names.» [7:180]

*Ilhād*³⁷ with regards to the Names of Allah, the Exalted, means to stray from the obligatory manner of believing in them.

So, when Allah affirms for Himself that He has the Most Beautiful Names, He addresses you with two orders:

[1] To call upon Him using those Names,

[2] And abandon the people who commit *ilhād* and deviation regarding the Names of Allah.

Ilhād takes many forms and manifestations which you must pay attention to:

ONE: To reject some of them, or some of the related Attributes or resulting rulings

An example of people³⁸ who do this are the people of *ta'tīl* (rejection of the meanings of Allah's Names and/or Attributes) from the *Jahmiyyah*³⁹ and others.

The *Mu'at-tilah* (the people of *ta'tīl*) are the ones who say that Allah does not have a certain Name, or He has a Name but it doesn't have a meaning, for example, Allah is *as-Samī'* (All-Hearing), but He does not have Hearing, or Allah does not have a Hand, when Allah says:

³⁷ The author (may Allah have Mercy on him) is explaining the following Verse:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ﴾

«And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names, so call on Him using them. And abandon those who commit *ilhād* regarding His Names.» [7:180]

³⁸ This is the first group of people we have to abandon by the order of Allah.

³⁹ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) explains here that the people of *ta'tīl*, the *Mu'at-tilah*, are the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah* who came before them, and the *Ash'arīs* who came after them.

﴿تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي يَدِيَهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (١)

«Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion, and He is Able to do all things.» [67:1]

They believe this verse is a discreet reference to something else. So, they deny the Attributes of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

This is considered *ilhād* because it is obligatory to believe in the Names and in the related rulings and Attributes that befit Allaah. To reject any of these things is a straying from the obligatory manner of believing in them.

TWO: To view them as Names that establish attributes similar to the attributes of the Creation

This is done by the people of *tashbīh* (those who consider Allah similar to His Creation).

The *Mushabiha* (the people of *tashbīh*) are those who say that Allah does have a Hand, but it is similar to the hand of the creation - Exalted is He high above what they say! They say that Allah has the shape like the shape of the human beings, or that He has a Face like the Face of the human beings, or Allah ascends and descends like the human beings ascend and descend. These are the *Mushabiha*. Since *tashbīh* is falsehood, and it is not possible that any of the texts establish *tashbīh*, rather they show the falsehood of such an idea, then such people have truly strayed from the obligatory manner of believing in the Names of Allah.

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾ (٤)

«And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.» [112:4]

﴿هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا﴾ (٦٥)

«Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer]» [19:65]

These texts that negate any type of equivalent or anything comparable to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) are clear in their nature, and they show the falsehood of such an idea, so we have to abandon these people.

THREE: To attribute a name to Allah that He did not name Himself with

An example of this is how the Christians call Allah the father, or how the philosophers call Him the root cause of everything.⁴⁰ Since knowledge is *tawqifiyyah* (restricted to textual evidence), attributing a name

⁴⁰ In Arabic: (العلة الفاعلة) "al-'Illatul-Fā-ilah"

to Allah that He did not name Himself with is a straying from the obligatory manner of believing in them. Furthermore, these names that they have attributed to Allah are sheer falsehood that Allah is far removed from.

As mentioned earlier, there are those who say that Allah is *al-Muhandis al-Akbar* (the Greatest Architect) or *Muhandis al-Kawn* (the Architect of the Universe), etc. They may sound good, but we say that Allah (ﷻ) is the One who has named Himself with the Names that are befitting to Him. Since He has not named Himself with that name, we will refrain from naming Him with it.

FOUR: To derive names of idols from the linguistics base of His Names

An example of this is what the polytheists did when they derived the name *al-'Uzzā* from *al-'Azīz*, and *al-Lāt* from *al-ilāh*, according to one opinion. They named their idols with these names.

This is considered *ilhād* because the Names of Allah are specific to Him, due to His Statement:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

«And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names,
so call upon Him using them.» [7:180]

Allah does not share His Names with the names of the idols, it is not permissible to derive from His names the names of idols that are worshipped beside Him.

﴿لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

«And for Him are the most beautiful Names,
everything in the heavens and on earth glorifies Him.» [59:24]

Just as acts of worship are specifically for Him, so are the most beautiful Names, as everything in the heavens and on earth glorifies Him. So to name others with His Names, in the way that Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, alone deserves, is a straying from the obligatory manner of believing in them.

ilhād in any form is forbidden. Allah has threatened those who commit this with His saying:

﴿وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلِحُّونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

«And abandon those who commit *ilhād* regarding His names.
They shall be recompensed for what they have done.» [7:180]

Allah has threatened them severely saying «**they shall be recompensed for what they have done!**» leaving it open like that. This is the kind of threat that is very scary, for indeed Allah - the One who is severe in Punishment, the One who created the Hell-Fire as a trial and punishment for the disbelievers

and disobedient from His creation - has issued a warning that He will give them a recompense for what they have done.

Some kinds of *ilhād* may be crimes of *shirk* or *kufir* (while others are less than that), depending on the relative evidences and what they imply.



So, we have mentioned two kinds of deviation:

One extreme says, "If Allah says that He has a Hand, and we know what a hand is, then we can think of a hand like that for Allah." These are the *Mushabiha* (the people of *tashbih*) who consider Allah to be similar to His creation. They claim that Allah has informed us of these things, and since we have these things in front of us, it must be like what we have seen.

This is easier of the two deviations, since it is simple ignorance that has led people to this position. They lack knowledge in all the texts that talk about Allah's Names and Attributes, and they ignore the other texts that negate similitude. They have only taken texts that mention things that we know about, and they have forgotten the texts that negate any kind of similitude between the creation and Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Then there are the *Mu'at-tilah*, those who negate the texts, or the meaning of the texts, or some of the meanings of the texts, or some of the meanings of some of the texts, and they have built upon the deviation of the first group. The first group have said: "Allah is like the creation in some or all of His Attributes." The *Mu'at-tilah* have come and said: "Since having a hand must include that Allah is similar to His creation, we must negate that Allah has a hand. We must exonerate Allah above such an idea." So, it is as if it is a response to the first group, since the former says: "Allah has a hand, so it must be like ours" and the other group says: "No! Allah cannot have a hand like our hand, so there is no hand." They go to the other extreme. (Exalted be Allah above what they claim).

Ahlu-Sunnah, however, are in the middle. They say: Allah has a Hand that befits Him, we describe the details of the hand with what comes in the text only. If we reach the end of the details in the text, we stop speaking. "The Hand is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

Ahlu-Sunnah is the middle path, always between the two extremes. We affirm that Allah has a Hand because He has affirmed that He has a Hand, and we stop where Allah said He has a hand. We affirm it in all of its Majesty for Him. It is a complete and perfect Attribute that He has, denoting Attributes and Actions of Perfection with no deficiency, in any way, whatsoever. It is not similar in any way to the Hands of the created beings, but it is a true Hand that we affirm for Him. We have every *ḥadīth* from the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in our favor, and we have not violated any of the texts in our religion. This is the sign of the correctness of the belief of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. And Allah knows best.



THE FIRST PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.1 - ALL OF THEM ARE ATTRIBUTES OF PERFECTION THEY ARE NOT DEFICIENT IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER

Some of Allah's Attributes are, for example: Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, Mercy, Honour, Wisdom, Loftiness, Greatness, etc. The perfection of these Attributes can be proven by textual, intellectual, and instinctive evidence.⁴¹

Textual Evidence: Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوِّءِ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

«Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, they are the worst example; and for Allah is the loftiest example; and He is the Possessor of Honour, the All-Wise.» [16:60]

Meaning: In each and every case, we say: «for Allah is the loftiest example.» So, for every single thing you conclude with, Allaa is Better and more Complete than what your understanding reaches.

The «loftiest example» means the loftiest possible description.

Intellectual Evidence: Everything that truly exists must have an attribute, and that attribute must either be a perfect one or a deficient one. The latter is rejected when referring to the Perfect Lord who deserves our worship.

Notice that the intellectual evidence here, already relies on some belief in the Book and the *Sunnah*. For example, if someone were to come and say, "I do not believe that Allah is the Most Perfect and deserves our worship," we understand that intellectual evidence cannot be used with him, rather the instinctive evidence could be used. So, *ad-dalīlul-'aqli* (intellectual evidence) is used for people who have a grounding in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

⁴¹ The *Shaykh* (ﷺ) here, makes reference to three types of evidences:

- **The first is textual evidence** and this refers to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.
- **The second is intellectual evidence** and this refers to those evidences that are generally based on the first type, meaning conclusions and analogies based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.
- **The third is instinctive evidence** and this refers to evidences used by people who have never touched the Book or the *Sunnah*, meaning basic human instincts (*fiṭrah*) to arrive to certain conclusions. What is the benefit of human instincts? We can use it to invite people to *Tawḥīd* using instinctive evidences that their natural disposition agrees with. Before they even believe in the Book of Allah, they could be guided by what they find within themselves.

(continued...) Because of this, Allaah the Most High, has exposed the futility of worshipping idols by describing them with deficiencies and incapability.

Important point: Every attribute can be categorized into a perfect attribute or a imperfect one. When someone with a 'perfect' 20/20 vision is asked to look beyond a fog, his vision will not enable him to do so, he cannot see behind objects nor can he see in an unlimited manner. His 'perfect' vision is relative to the human eye, meaning, he has the best vision available to the human eyeball. And at the end of the day, his eye is imperfect vision. He cannot see everything. He cannot see every detail of what he is seeing - even if he held up binoculars with his 20/20 vision, he would see more with his eye would let him see than he would without the binoculars. So, when we say 'perfect,' we mean the best of what the human eye can see.

Now, which is befitting to apply to Allah? The perfect attribute or the imperfect attribute? He is described with the Perfect Attribute. He is Allah, who has none similar to Him.

Anyone who has imperfect attributes does not deserve worship. This reason is sufficient for them to be undeserving of worship. If Allah (ﷻ) is Perfect in each of His Attributes, and He is the One who deserves our worship, how could those less than Allah with imperfect perfect attributes deserve our worship? This is the intellectual angle here.

He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنِ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ ﴾

«And who is more astray than the one who calls on other than Allah, those who will not answer them (from now) to the Day of Standing, while they (those called upon) are heedless of their supplications.» [46:5]

So, He has described the false objects of worship as being those that do not respond and are *ghāfilūn* (they have no recognition of the supplications being addressed to them). So, how could they be worthy of worship when their attributes are as such?

And He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخَلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرٌ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ

يَبْعَثُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾

«And those who call upon those less than Allah, those who do not create anything, rather they have been created, (they are) dead, not alive, and they do not (even) know when they will be brought forth (from their graves).» [16:20-21]

Those who are worshipped besides Him are described with death, is Allah described with death? No. Is He described with ignorance? No. Can we say that Allah does not create? No. Those described in the *āyah* do not create anything. They themselves were created. They themselves being created is an attribute of deficiency. The fact that you were created, and do not exist on your own accord, and you are dependent on a creator is a deficiency in of itself. More so, human beings go through stages of weakness, they die and when they die, they do not know when they are going to be sent forth. They do not know when the Day of Judgment will be, so they are in their graves, ignorant to when they will be sent forth - all of these things are deficiencies, and these deficiencies prove that whoever is described with them cannot be the object of worship, rather worship is directed to the One who deserves it and the One who deserves it must be the one who has Perfect Attributes, Allah.

And He said, quoting the statement of Ibrāhīm when he was debating his father:

﴿يَتَأْتٍ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٤٢﴾﴾

«O my father! Why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see, nor does it bring you any benefit?» [19:42]

Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), as a Prophet, used this angle of intellectual proof: «Why do you worship that which cannot hear you and cannot see you, nor does it bring you any benefit?»

These are deficiencies in attributes, and they lead you to the clear intellectual understanding that someone with these deficiencies should not be worshipped. This was the line of argument for Ibrāhīm with his own father.

And when he debated his people:

﴿أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾ أَفِي لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾

«So then are you going to worship other than Allah, something that cannot befit or harm you? Woe to you! And (woe) to what you worship other than Allah! Will you not then think reasonably?» [21:66-67]

«Will you not then think reasonably?» is the line of argument appealing to the intellect of the human being. If you have an intellect and you want to use it, can you worship something that can neither help you nor harm you? Can Allaah (ﷻ) help us? Yes. Can He harm us? Yes. In fact, can anyone help us if Allah does not want that help to reach us? No.

«واعلم أن الأمة لو اجتمعت على أن ينفعوك بشيء ، لم ينفعوك إلا بشيء قد كتبه الله لك ، ولو اجتمعوا على أن يضروك بشيء ، لم يضروك بشيء إلا قد كتبه الله عليك»

«Know, if all of the people gathered to benefit you, they would not be able to do so except by what Allah has decreed for you, and if they all gathered together to harm you, they would not be able to do so except by what Allah has decreed for you.»⁴²

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is the Only One who brings about benefit and harm, so anyone less than that cannot really harm you and cannot benefit you, except by the Permission of Allah. Could that person or object deserve worship in truth? Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) could put you in the Hell-Fire, therefore you are afraid. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) could put you in Paradise, therefore you are hopeful. He is the Only One who could put you in the Hell-Fire. It is His decision alone, and it is His decision alone to place you in Paradise. The polytheists agree that Allah is the only One who makes the decision about who attains Paradise, and it is His decision alone about who goes to the Hell-Fire, so then intellectually, what is before us now? As an intellectual conclusion, Allah alone is deserving of worship and none besides Him. What would the benefit of worshipping others be, when Allah is the only one who makes the decisions?

So, once we establish that things that are deficient in their attributes do not deserve worship, the conclusion is: Allah is the one who deserves mankind's focus and worship in every aspect, so then Allah's Attributes must all be Perfect and complete in every way and angle.

Furthermore, it is known that some of the created beings have been given some attributes of perfection⁴³ from Allah, so then the One who gave them these Attributes of perfection has more right to them Himself.

When we talk about the perfection of a created being, we are talking about one within the human capacity. Ask those with 'perfect memory' if they remember when they were one or two years old, ask them what they saw and what they were exactly told. There is obviously a limit to the perfection of their memory with regards to a certain book or attempts at memorization. It is not unlimited like Allah's Perfection. For example, Allah's Knowledge is Perfect from every angle in an unlimited and unrestricted way. Similarly, someone can have perfect hearing, but the meaning of that perfect hearing is inasmuch as the ear would allow; there are ranges of sounds that our ears do not pick up that animals hear, and we do not say that a person with perfect hearing can hear all ranges of sounds, we only say: he hears everything that is expected from him. So, it is all relative to the device that is being used. When we talk about the Hearing of Allah, we are not limiting it to a device or to an attribute of a human being, rather we say that Allah's Hearing is Perfect and Complete, not reliant on a device, and His vision is Perfect and Complete, not relative to any device or human limitation, but beyond all limitations and without restriction.

Instinctive Evidence: All pure, untainted souls are naturally inclined to love Allah, declare His Greatness, and worship Him.

⁴² Reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*, no. 7957 from a *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās. *Shaykh* al-Albānī declared it *ṣaḥīḥ*.

⁴³ Like someone with a "perfect memory", 20/20 vision, a strong body with no weaknesses, etc. *Shaykh* Muḥammad Amān Jāmī (may Allah have Mercy on him) commented here: "And the Perfection that He (Allah) is described with is absolute perfection, a perfection that no one shares with Him."

Small societies that haven't been influenced by the outside world have this natural feeling that there is a creator out there, and that they need to show worship to that creator. As a result of that, some people have created a number of different religions, and they have made for themselves systems for worshipping; some people have laid down idols and others have worshipped the winds, trees, and objects of nature, all because mankind has this instinct deep within, to worship.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

«And I (Allah) created not the *jinn*s and humans except that they should worship Me (alone).» [51:56]

People have been created to worship. You find people without a book, without a *Sunnah*, without a Messenger, without any guidance and without a teacher - finding a need to worship something and a need to bow down. They have a need to find something greater than themselves. This is the instinctive need we are discussing here. Many times, people identify one creator that does not have a shape - it is not a tree, it is not in front of them - rather, it is a creator who is distant from them and who is all-seeing and all-hearing, yet they do not have any revelation telling them that! For example, when they are afraid, they look up to the sky, pleading, "Help me!" They do not know why they look up. No one told them that their Lord is up, no one brought them proofs from the Qur'an that Allaah is above the seven heavens, that He rose above His Throne. Rather, they have this instinct that causes them to look up when they have a need to call upon the creator, their god, or object of worship.

Since they have this instinct to worship and extol a deity, would you then love, extol and worship something other than the One you know has the most perfect Attributes that befit His Lordship and His Right to be worshipped?

When a person contemplates the creation of the heavens and the earth, and that everything around him has a system, an order, and there are mountains, wildlife, eco-system where certain animals eat other animals, and that everything is relative to a water supply, and that it is much interactive and interdependent...a complete system that could have not come together randomly and could not have just self-constructed because evolving organisms - when a person sees all of this, his instinct tells him that someone made this. It tells him that there is a creator somewhere. The person instinctively goes to the idea that there is someone that deserves my worship - the One who created the perfect and interconnected system around is the One who has the Attributes of perfection. That is the One whose creation is an Attribute of perfection. That is the One whose knowledge is complete. That is the one whose ability is unlimited. That is the One whose wisdom is perfect unlike our wisdom. That is the One who deserves my worship.

So, if an attribute is deficient, less than perfect, then it is impossible for it to be one of Allah's Attributes. Examples of this are death, ignorance, forgetfulness, incapability, blindness, muteness, etc. This is due to His Statement:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ ﴾

«And put your trust in *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living),
the One who does not die.» [25:58]

And His Statement, quoting Mūsā (Moses):

﴿لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى﴾

«My Lord is not unaware, nor does He forget.» [20:52]

And His Statement:

﴿وَمَا كَانَتْ أَلَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ. مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

«And nothing in the heavens or on earth
is beyond Allah's Capability.» [35:44]

Meaning: His Capability is not limited nor restricted to boundaries.

And His Statement:

﴿أَمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ﴾

«Or do they think that We do not hear their secrets
or their private discourses? Of course (We do),
and Our messengers are with them, writing.» [43:80]

This *āyah* speaks clearly about the Perfect Attribute of hearing and of knowledge of a person's secret discourse.

And the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said about the *Dajjāl*:

((إِنَّهُ أَعْوَرٌ، وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَيْسَ بِأَعْوَرٍ))

«Verily, he is one-eyed, and your Lord is surely not one-eyed.»⁴⁴

Having one eye is an attribute of deficiency and Allah is Exalted beyond attributes of deficiency.

And in a *ḥadīth* - when the companions would travel, it was from their habit when they reached a high hill or passageway, that they say: "*Allahu Akbar!*" and when they descended, they would say: "*Subḥān Allah.*" So, one time they raised their voices, saying: "*Allahu Akbar!*"⁴⁵ and when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw this action from them, he took a moment to advise them and teach them something about Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

⁴⁴ Collected by al-Bukhārī (7131) and Muslim (2933) on the authority of Anas b. Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him).

⁴⁵ It is not understood that they were saying it congregation, rather it is understood that they were all saying "*Allahu Akbar*" by themselves while raising their voices.

He said:

((أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! ارْزِعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ!
فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْعُونَ أَحَدًا وَلَا غَائِبًا!))

«O people! Remember (Allah) to your own selves (quietly), for verily you are not calling on someone deaf, nor an absent one!»⁴⁶

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) negated two attributes from Allah, here: deafness and absence.

As a base ruling, when one makes *thikr* (remembrance) of Allah, he should keep his voice low. There is no need to raise your voice to call upon Allah, simply pronounce on your tongue what you want to ask Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) without raising your voice, since Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) does not need us to raise our voices for Him to hear us.

And Allah, the Exalted, has decreed punishment for those who describe Him with attributes of deficiency, as in His Statement:

﴿ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلِعِنَّا لَمَّا قَالُوا لَئِن يَدَاهُ مُبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ﴾

«And the Jews said the Hand of Allah is tied up. Rather, their hands are tied up and they are cursed for what they said! For both of His Hands are outstretched, He gives however He likes.» [5:64]

«And the Jews said the Hand of Allah is tied up.» They meant that Allah is stingy, and this was their mockery of the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his call to *tawhīd*, when they heard him asking the people to give their money in charity for the sake of Allaah. So, they said: «They have a Lord who needs money.» They took this opportunity say negative things about Allah and the religion of Islam.

«Rather, their hands are tied up...» Allah shows the reality of the Jews in that time and in all times. They are the ones who are stingy! All of the creation that have dealt with the Jews are witnesses to that, Allah is accurate in His description of the Jews. They are the ones whose hands are tied up, they are the ones who cannot spend, they are the ones who are stingy, and «they are cursed for what they have said.» The curse of Allah is distance from His Mercy. When you ask Allah to curse someone, you are asking Allah to put His Mercy far away from that person. So this is the meaning of «and they are cursed.» Allah has moved them away from His mercy for what they have said, «Rather both of His Hands are outstretched, He gives however He likes.» Meaning: He has described Himself with the perfect attribute of Generosity and the perfect attribute of Giving and Spending on His creation. He has also described His creation as being deficient and stingy.

⁴⁶ Collected by al-Bukhārī (6384) and Muslim (2704) on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (may Allah be pleased with him).

And His Statement:

﴿لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ
وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ﴾

«Verily, Allah has heard the statement of those who have said: "Allah is poor and we are rich!" We will write what they say, and also their killing of the prophets with no right. And We will say (to them): Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire!» [3:181]

...«and also their killing of the prophets with no right» The prophets would come to them, calling them to the worship of Allah and His obedience alone, and they would plan and plot to kill the messenger in each and every case throughout history. They even plotted and planned to kill the last Messenger, Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

Furthermore, He has glorified Himself far above the deficiencies they ascribe to Him, as He has said:

﴿سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾﴾

«Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above how they describe Him! And peace be upon the messengers, and all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.» [37:180-182]

So, Allah has exonerated Himself, and the believers exonerate Allah using this verse and others, to show that Allah is exonerated and far above the claims of those people who describe Him with attributes of deficiency, like poverty and ignorance, etc.

«Glorified is your Lord» meaning: Allah is exonerated above false claims of deficiencies. So, when someone says: "Allah has a son," likely the first thing you will say, if you understand the phrases of *thikr* is, "Subḥān Allah" (Allah is exonerated above that). So, when Allah mentions the claims against Him in the Qur'an, His common response is similar to the likes of this *āyah*, «Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above how they describe Him!»

And Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾

«Allah has not taken a son, nor was there (ever) any deity along with Him. And (if there had been other deities) then each deity would have gone off with what it created, and some of them would have taken position over others. Glorified be Allah above what they describe Him with!» [23:91]

«**and (if there had been other deities)...**» each deity would go off with some of its creation, and there would be competition between them, some would overtake the others, and in the end there would be One who would be more dominant (if there were many creators).

So, even if that was the case, there would still be One supreme creator who would be more dominant and deserving of worship than others! Yet Allah is One and the Only Creator. So with this idea, that had there been multiple creators, and each one would have gone off with its creation, and there would have been competition between them, it is said «**Glorified be Allah above what they describe Him with!**»

And if an attribute is considered perfect on some occasions, and deficient on others (depending on the situation), then we cannot affirm such an attribute for Him without limit, nor can we negate it without limit.

Important point:

What happens when there are attributes like plotting? Is it negative or positive? Is it a good attribute or a bad one? Is it good in some situations and bad in others?

It is a good thing when there are some people plotting to defend or clarify the religion of Islam. However, as for people who want to take over the *masjid* by creating *fitnah* between the people, and attempting to divide them and turn them against each other, then this is evil plotting. May Allah save us from that, *āmin*.

Jews plotting against Islam? This is evil plotting.

So, plotting (i.e. designing a plan) can either be good or bad, depending on the situation. Can we describe Allah with plotting or planning? In situations where the plotting is good, we say Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is described with that kind of plotting when it is to counteract the plotting of someone else and turn it against them.

﴿وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ﴾

«**And they were plotting, while Allah plots (as well),
and Allah is the best of plotters.**» [8:30]

Look at how Allah mentions it, He does not call Himself *al-Mākir* (the Plotter). He is not Allah the Plotter. It is not a Name that is established. It is not an attribute that is perfect in every situation. It is an attribute of perfection in **some** situations. So Allah only affirms this attribute for Himself in response to the plotting of those with the evil type of plotting.

...if an attribute is considered perfect on some occasions, and deficient on others (depending on the situation), then we cannot affirm such an attribute for Him without limit, nor can we negate it without limit. There is a need for a more detailed explanation. It is permissible to describe with Allah with such an attribute **only** when that attribute would be considered perfect. It would be impossible to describe Allah

with that attribute when that attribute would be considered deficient. This is the case for attributes like planning (against someone), plotting, and deception.

These attributes would be attributes of perfection when counteracting someone who performs that sort of action. In such an instance, it shows that someone is fully capable of matching the enemy's move, or even outdoing him.

On the other hand, these Attributes would be considered deficient other than this scenario. This is why Allah, the Exalted, did not mention any of these kinds of Attributes in an unrestricted manner. He has only mentioned them in response to those who deal with Him and His Messengers in such a way. This can be illustrated by His Statement:

﴿ ۳۰ ﴾ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ

«And they were plotting, while Allah plots (as well),
and Allah is the best of plotters.» [8:30]

The proof there is that the word for 'Makar' does not come in the Qur'an as an attribute or action of Allah, except in response to their plotting. This is the case with all four of the aforementioned examples.

And His Statement:

﴿ ۱۷ ﴾ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿ ۱۵ ﴾ وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿ ۱۶ ﴾ فَهَلِ الْكَافِرِينَ أَهْمُ لَهُمْ رُؤُوسُ

«They are planning a serious plan,
while I, too, am planning a serious plan.» [86:15-16]

And His Statement:

﴿ ۱۸۳ ﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿ ۱۸۲ ﴾ وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ

«And as for those who disbelieve in our signs, We will gradually
lead them into a punishment from where they do not know.
So leave Me to them, verily My Plan is strong.» [7:182-183]

If you ask a Muslim, "can we describe Allah with deception?" He would likely say: "Never! Our Lord Allah is exonerated beyond that." Yet deception with regard to the human being is praiseworthy in a few situations. For example, when you are at war and you are applying a military strategy, do you tell the enemy that you will be at their coast Tuesday morning at six, so be prepared to fight us? Or do you do things to confuse and deceive them? The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: «War is deception.»

So, if military strategies are line with the Islamic goal of spreading truth and repelling corruption, spreading the statement of the *shahadatayn* and justice on earth, repelling obstruction of justice and oppression, then this would be something praiseworthy for the Muslim to be involved in under a Muslim

government. In this case, his act of deception in line with the strategy of war, becomes a praiseworthy attribute. The leader who is straightforward with his tactics by telling his enemy what he will be doing and he does not use deception, is not successful in his strategy. He is not a good planner for the army. And each and every country on earth, Muslim or non-Muslim, affirm this for this military. So, deception is agreed upon during war-times - it is a tactic that is needed and it is something that accomplishes the goal of the military.

However, we are not going to establish 'deception' as an attribute of Allah unless there is something in the Book of Allah to attribute it to Him. Otherwise, we say: No, we cannot attribute any attribute or any name without a proof.

His Statement:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ﴾

«Verily, the hypocrites (think they) deceive Allah, while (actually) He is the One deceiving them.» [4:142]

Allah deceives the *munāfiqīn*. How does the deception of the *munāfiqīn* happen? They claim to be Muslims outwardly, and they conceal the disbelief in their hearts. They think that they have reached a level of success, because the people accept their outward statements and actions. They become pleased with themselves, and they begin to think they are upon goodness until they become so confused with this self-deception that they forget their corruption and disbelief in Allah from within. So in reality, during their disillusion of attempting to deceive Allah with this act, Allah is deceiving them!

So, we say that Allah deceives in this situation **only**. We **cannot** use deception for general understanding and conclude that Allah is a deceiving Lord. We do not call Him *al-Khādi'* (the Deceiver) just as we do not call him *al-Mākir* (the Plotter). We call Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) by the Names He has established for Himself. And if an attribute can be good in some situations and bad in others, we only refer to Him with the attribute when it is befitting to Him as He has mentioned in His Book. So, do not say blanketly that Allah is the Deceiver. We say: Allah deceives the *munāfiqīn* and leads them into self-deception, and that is His deception of them, because they seek to deceive Him. In response to their efforts, Allah has deceived them.

Does Allah mock people? He mocks them in a restricted way to some instances, and that is when they mock Him, His religion, and/or His Messenger.

And His Statement (regarding the *munāfiqīn* again):

Allah mocks people in some instances, and that is when they mock Him, His religion and His Messenger.

﴿قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ﴾

«They said: 'Verily, we are really with you, we were only mocking.'
Allah makes mockery of them.» [2:14-15]

Allah makes a mockery of them in a complete and perfect way. So, do we call Allah the Mocker? No, we say that Allah makes a mockery of the hypocrites who try to mock Him, His Religion, and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

What about *khiyānah* (betrayal)? Can we say that Allah betrays people in some situations? No. Betrayal is when someone gives you their trust and you 'pull the rug from under their feet' by betraying them. When someone puts all their trust in you, and they are betrayed, it is not a positive attribute in any way in any situation. Betrayal is only done in an evil way. It never has a good application.

In the following Verse, notice how Allah does not say that He betrays those who betray Him, rather, He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾ (٧١)

«And if they desire to betray you, then surely they have betrayed Allah in the past, and He gave (you) power over them. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.» [8:71]

«and He gave (you) power over them» Allah has given others the power to overtake them despite their betrayal. He did not say that "He gave authority to others to betray them..." or "We guided people to betray them..." rather, Allah said «And He gave (you) power over them. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.»

So...

He said, «And He gave (you) power over them,» and He did not say, "And He betrayed them," since betrayal is only done after trust has been built, and it is always a lowly attribute. Based on this, it becomes clear that what some of the common people say, "Allah betrays those who betray Him," is a grossly evil statement that must be censured.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Similarly, as *Shaykh* Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī (may Allah have mercy on him) explained, is the saying of some of the people, "So-and-so oppressed me, so may Allah oppress him!" (فلان ظلمني الله يظلمه) This is also not allowed, as oppression is blameworthy in all instances, and thus Allah cannot be described with it, especially in light of His Statement in the *ḥadīth qudsī*, «O my Servants! Verily I have prohibited Myself from oppression, so do not oppress one another!...» [Collected by Muslim (2577)]

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.2 - KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES IS MORE EXPANSIVE- THAN KNOWLEDGE OF HIS NAMES

Knowledge of Allah's Attributes is more expansive than knowledge of His Names, since each one of His Names includes an Attribute, as has preceded in *The Second Principle Concerning Allah's Names*. This is also the case since some of the Attributes are connected to Allah's Actions, and there is no end to the Actions of Allah, just as there is no end to His Statements.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَمٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ

سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

«And if every tree on earth was a pen, and the sea was extended seven times over (and used as ink), the words of Allah would still not be finished. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.» [31:27]

From the examples of this are the following Attributes of Allah: Coming, Going, Seizing, Taking, Striking, etc. **The attributes cannot be enumerated.**

Compare this to the names: they cannot be enumerated either. You can attempt to name ninety-nine of His names and get a reward for listing them, but the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to supplicate to Allah with the following:

((...أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ،

أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ،

أَوْ اسْتَأْتَرْتَهُ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ...))

**«...I ask You by every Name that You have,
those You named yourself with, those You revealed in Your Book,
those You taught one of Your created beings,
and those You kept with Yourself as knowledge of the Unseen...»**

So, there are names for Allah that He has not informed us of. It is not humanly possible to enumerate the names of Allah. And based on the author's statement: "The attributes cannot be enumerated," - we should

not understand from that a comparison between the names and then say: "The names can be enumerated and the attributes cannot." Rather, the author is simply talking about the expansive nature of the attributes and not making a comparison in that sentence.

The point here is: For every name, there is an attribute, but not from every attribute is there a name. Many verses in the Qur'an talk about the attributes of Allah and many others talk about His names. Every verse that talks about a name can lead you to affirm an attribute for Allah. But not every verse that talks about an attribute establishes a name.

So then, we see here that the attributes and our knowledge and discussion of the attributes will be far more expansive and detailed, because we have more attributes to discuss than we do names.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ ﴾

«And (when) your Lord has come...» [89:22]

Can we name Allah as *al-jā'i* or *al-Ātī* (the one who comes)? No. Why? This is because not every attribute establishes a name. Would "the Arriver" be from the most perfect idea of a Name? No, since it is not a name of majesty and beauty. It is simply a description of Allah that He will arrive and come on the Day of Judgement.

﴿ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ ﴾

«Are they waiting for anything other than Allah to come to them in their shadows of the clouds?» [2:210]

This is another verse that mentions the coming of Allah.

﴿ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ﴾

«So Allah seized them because of their sins.» [40:21]

Should we name Allah as *al-Ākhith* (the Seizer)? It is not a befitting name for Allah. Likewise, a name is not established from an attribute, but names can be used to establish attributes.

﴿ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ﴾

«And He holds back the skies so that they do not fall down upon the earth except by His Permission.» [22:65]

﴿ إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴾

«Verily the Striking of your Lord is a severe one.» [85:12]

Do we affirm *al-Bāṭish* (the Striker) as a name for Allah? No. We do not call Allah the Striking One.

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

«Allah **wants** ease for you,
and He does not want any difficulty for you.» [2:185]

Can we name Allah as *al-Murīd* (the one who wants)? It is not a name of perfection and thus, He has not named Himself with that name. So, we do not describe Him with that name.

And the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((يُنزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا...))

«Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven...»⁴⁸

Can we call Allah, the Exalted, *an-Nāzil* (the descending one)? No. It is not a name befitting of His Majesty. It is not a name that He has named Himself with, so we refrain from naming Him with it.

Q. Can I say that *an-Nāzil* is not one of Allah's Names?

A. No, because we do not know the names which Allah has named Himself with, that He has kept to Himself. When we say: "This is not a name of Majesty that Allah has affirmed for Himself, so we do not name Him with it," you should not understand that [as though] we are saying: It is not one of His names. Rather, we say: "Do not establish that as a name for Allah because He has not named Himself with that name in His Book." There is a big difference between saying that and saying it is not one of the names of Allah.

Sometimes you find scholars saying, for example: "*an-Nāṣir* is not one of the names of Allah, so it is not permissible to call yourself '*Abdun-Nāṣir*,' as *Shaykh* ibn Bāz said, "Anyone with that name has to change it." So, *Nāṣir* (on its own) is OK, but '*Abdun-Nāṣir*' is not permissible because he said that *Nāṣir* is not one of Allah's names. We understand that he meant to say: "We do not have textual proof to establish *an-Nāṣir* as one of Allah's names."

So we describe Allah, the Exalted, with these Attributes in the way that they are reported in the texts, and we do not ascribe names to Him based on them. For example, we do not say that the following are from Allah's Names: *al-Jā'i* or *al-Ātī* (the one who comes), *al-Ākhith* (the seizer), *al-Mumsik* (the withholder), *al-Bāṭish* (the striker), *al-Murīd* (the one who wants), *an-Nāzil* (the descending one), etc. We do not attribute these to Him as names, even though we have been informed that they are His Attributes and we describe Him with them.

⁴⁸ Collected by al-Bukhārī no. 1145 and Muslim no. 758 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

The principle:

Knowledge of the attributes are more expansive than knowledge of the names based on the idea that from every name there is a meaning and that meaning allows us to understand an attribute. That is not the case with the attributes - we do not understand from every attribute a name with which we can name Him.



Benefit:

You can never ever deduce that Allah has fingers. However, from looking at the creation, you can make an intellectual conclusion and say: "Allah has Greatness and Wisdom." You can look at what He has created and say: "He has wisdom, I do not need a text. I can see in the creation that Allah is Powerful, Great, Wise, and has Capabilities." These are attributes that can be understood without texts. Then there are some things that you cannot understand about Allah - **ever** - except with a text.

You could not rationalize and say: "Oh, the way the creation is, I can deduce that Allah has fingers." There is no information in the creation within the way Allah has made things and the signs that He has given you other than the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah* to inform you of something as such. You can only reach these conclusions [e.g. "I know that Allah has a hand, a face, or fingers] with texts affirming them for Allah. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) has affirmed for Allaah fingers, a hand, and a Face. So, now, do we say that Allah is the Fingered one? The handed one? The Faced one? Obviously not. We cannot use these attributes to establish a name for Allah, the Exalted.



THE THIRD PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.3 - ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES MAY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINDS-ATTRIBUTES OF AFFIRMATION AND ATTRIBUTES OF NEGATION

When do you think you can say: "Allah does not have this attribute?" For example, we negate with all clarity and surety, ignorance from Allah, the Exalted.

﴿ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنسَى ﴾

«My Lord is neither unaware nor He forgets.» [20:52]

We also have texts about His Knowledge and how expansive and all-inclusive it is. All of this leads us to understand that we can negate the attribute of ignorance from Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). He is not ignorant of anything from any situation, so He is not ever described with ignorance.

Thus, when the attribute is not praiseworthy, simply negative and contains complete deficiency AND when the text has negated that from Allah, we negate them as well.

On the other hand, we affirm attributes for Allah which have been affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Allah's Attributes may be divided into Attributes of Affirmation and Attributes of Negation.

Attributes of Affirmation (الصفات الثبوتية), *aṣ-ṣifāt ath-thubūtiyyah*, are those that Allah has affirmed for His own Self in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace). All of them are Attributes of perfection having no deficiencies whatsoever, like Life, Knowledge, Power, Ascension over the Throne, Descent to the lowest heaven, His Face, His Two Hands, etc. It is binding to affirm these for Allah, the Exalted, literally, in the way that is befitting to Him, based on both textual and intellectual evidence.

Textual Evidence: Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَيَّ
رَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ءَ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ ءَ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَ وَالْيَوْمِ ءَ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلًّا بَعِيدًا ﴾

«O you who believe! Believe in Allah, His Messenger, the Book that was sent down to him, and the Book that was sent down before that. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, or the Last Day has gone far astray indeed.» [4:136]

So believing in Allah as mentioned in this Verse includes believing in His Attributes, just as believing in the Book that was sent down to His Messenger includes believing in the Attributes of Allah that are mentioned in it. Also, believing in Muḥammad (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) as His Messenger includes believing in everything he reported on behalf of the One who sent him, Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

Intellectual Evidence: Verily, Allah, the Exalted, has informed us about Himself, mentioning these Attributes, and He is more knowledgeable about them than anyone else, and He is more honest in Speech and more precise in His narrations than anyone else. So then, it is obligatory to affirm these Attributes without hesitation, as Allah himself is the One who has informed us of them. Hesitation in accepting a report only occurs when the one reporting may be ignorant, or perhaps lying, or even incapable of expressing what he wants to say. All three of these faults are impossible for Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. Thus, it is binding to accept everything He tells us about.

There are people who claim to be Muslims, yet when they read an *āyah* about an attribute (for example, anger), they say: "That attribute is not something we can affirm for Allah. It is not allowed to say that Allah is angry because anger is boiling of the blood and perhaps an attribute that leads to injustice or oppression." The answer is this intellectual angle: Allah is the one who has described Himself with it. We are not concluding or deducing this from what we see from the creation. Allah, who is the most accurate of anyone to describe Himself, has described himself with this attribute and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has conveyed that message to us and affirmed that attribute. So, there should be no wavering nor any consideration that this report may be inaccurate and that we cannot affirm it for Allah. Allah knows best about himself and He has described himself with an attribute, so it is up to us to affirm it without questioning it or without being doubtful in anyway whatsoever.

And we believe similarly in the reports of the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) that he conveyed from Allah. For verily, the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) was the most knowledgeable of the people concerning his Lord, the most truthful of them in his narrations, the purest of them in his intentions, and the most eloquent of them. Therefore, it is binding on us to accept his reports as they are.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ **Transcriber's note:** *Shaykh* ibn al-'Uthaymīn says:

We believe in all that He assigned to Himself or what His Messenger described Him with, of names and attributes....We negate all what He negated about Himself or what His Messenger negated about Him. We believe that negation implies the affirmation of its perfect opposite. We do not discuss what He or His Messenger did not mention about Him.

We believe that following this approach is a must, because what Allaah affirmed or negated concerning Himself is a statement He made about Himself. He knows Himself best. His words are most just and trustful, and people cannot know everything about Him. What Allah's Messenger affirmed or negated about Him is a statement that he made about Allah. Besides knowing Allah better than anyone, he is the most truthful, sincere, and eloquent

Attributes of Negation (الصفات السلبية), *aṣ-ṣifāt as-salbiyyah*, are those that Allah has declared Himself free from, either in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), and all of them are attributes of deficiency, and thus, unbecfitting to Him. Examples of this are death, sleep, ignorance, forgetfulness, incapability, and fatigue.

It is binding upon us to negate them and not associate them with Allah as mentioned, **while affirming their opposites as Attributes of perfection**. This is because whatever Allah has negated about His own Self, then the intent is to negate them in order to affirm their opposite, not to merely negate them alone. This is so because negate something does not necessitate perfection, unless it implies affirming some kind of perfection, since negation alone is basically the absence of something, and the absence of something is nothing, so then it could not be considered as something perfect.

For example, Allah cannot be described with the attribute of death, so what is the meaning of negating that attribute, except that we are going to affirm life? When we say that Allah does not die, we are not simply making a negation, rather we are making a negation that leads us to an important point: Allah does not die **because** He is the Possessor of Complete and Perfect Life. So, when we negate something from Allah, the intention is to affirm the opposite as a perfect and complete attribute of His.

So, negating an attribute could lead you to simply deny something, like if you said: "The wall does not oppress anyone." This does not necessitate that the wall is just and fair.

Negating an attribute could also be understood as describing something as being incapable as well, as the poet once said:

فُبَيْلَةٌ لَا يَغْدِرُونَ بِدِمَّةٍ وَلَا يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ حَبَّةَ خَرْدَلٍ

"A small tribe that does not ever betray a trust,
Nor does it oppress the people a single bit."

It is a small tribe with no fighters, no abilities, no skills, and they do not oppress anyone. So, when we say that this tribe has not oppressed anyone, it does not affirm that they are just. It only negates that they have not oppressed anyone. In fact, in this case, it is because they have neither the power nor ability to oppress (someone) even if they wanted to; so it does not establish a good attribute for them. This is different to how we negate things from Allah, the Exalted.

Another poet said:

لَكِنَّ قَوْمِي وَإِنْ كَانُوا دَوِي حَسَبٍ لَيْسُوا مِنَ الشَّرِّ فِي شَيْءٍ وَإِنْ هَانَا

"However, my tribe, even though they are people of rich heritage,

among people. Thus, in what Allah said and what His Prophet said concerning His names and attributes is the truth, knowledge, and clarification. Therefore, we have no excuse to reject or even hesitate in accepting it. [*The Muslim's Belief*].

they are not evil in any way, not in the least manner."

An example of this principle can be found in Allah's Statement:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ ﴾

«**And put your trust in *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living),
the One who does not die.**» [25:58]

In this Verse, Allah has negated death for Himself, which necessitates the Attribute of perfect Life. So both are mentioned, an affirmation that He is the Ever-Living and an negation of death.

Another example is found in His Statement:

﴿ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴾

«**And your Lord does not oppress anyone.**» [18:49]

Negating oppression includes an affirmation of the Attribute of perfect Justice.

A third example can be found in His Statement:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَتْ أَلْفٌ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

«**And nothing in the heavens or on earth
is beyond Allah's Capability.**» [35:44]

Allah has negated incapability, and this implies perfect Knowledge and Capability. Thus, He says after that:

﴿ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴾

«**Verily, He is All-Knowing, All-Capable.**» [35:44]

This is because incapability is due to either ignorance of the reasons for the existence of things or a lack of power. So due to the perfect Knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, and His Capability, nothing in the heavens or on earth is beyond His Capability.

Through this example, we learn that the negation of these attributes necessitates an extension of His Perfection.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) does not sleep nor slumber. Is this an attribute of negation? It is an attribute of negation. We negate that Allah sleeps or slumbers. What is the object of negating sleep or slumber? It implies that Allah is vigilant and Aware of All Things. The one who sleeps is unaware of his surroundings,

so it is an attribute of deficiency, and it is not befitting to describe Allah with it. So, when we negate sleep and slumber from Allah, we affirm perfect and total awareness and knowledge of the creation.

Another attribute of deficiency that we negate from Allah is stinginess. The Jews say that the Hand of Allah is tied up (i.e. He is stingy or miserly). Is this a *ṣifah thubūtiyyah* or *ṣifah salbiyyah*? It is *salbiyyah*, we negate it from Allah. When we negate stinginess from Allah, what is the objective? We affirm Generosity for Him in the most complete and perfect way. We affirm that He gives without limit to whomever He pleases.

So any negation that we make from Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) based on the texts that He does not have this attribute, we affirm the opposite attribute in the perfect and most complete manner.

If Allah has negated a son for Himself and we negate from Him the idea of having a son, what do we affirm for Him? As a result, we affirm for Him absolute unique Oneness, independence, no reliance upon His creation or anyone else. Total independence. Total unique oneness.

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝١ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَكِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝٣﴾

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝٤﴾

«Say (O Muḥammad): **He is Allah, the One. The Self-Sufficient Master. He begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.**» [112:2]

Allah has negated similarities to Himself. He has negated that there is anything in His creation that could be similar to Him. So, what does this negation affirm for Allah? It affirms uniqueness, oneness, and the idea that Allah, the Exalted, is uniquely one.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.4. POINTS OF WISDOM BEHIND THE NEGATION OF CERTAIN ATTRIBUTES

Allah's established Attributes are Attributes of due praise and perfection, and the more variety that is found in their meanings, the more apparent the perfection of the One being described is.

Likewise, Allah's Attributes of affirmation that He informed us about are greater in number than the attributes He negated, as is known. His Attributes of negation are normally mentioned in only three instances:

Firstly, they are mentioned to clarify the generality of His Perfection. This can be found in His Statements;

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾^ط

«There is nothing similar to Him.» [42:11]

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾^٤

«And there is nothing comparable to Him.» [112:4]

So, Allah completely negates any type of similarity in a manner that clarifies the generality of His Perfection. These verses establish that He is uniquely Perfect in each and every way of perfection.

Secondly, they are mentioned to negate the false claims made against Him by the liars. This can be found in His Statement:

﴿أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ۗ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا﴾^{٩٢}

«They have claimed that the All-Merciful has a son!
And it is not befitting for the All-Merciful to have a son.» [19:91-92]

Who is it that is saying: "It is unbecoming for Allah to have a son?" Is it our opinion? Is it the opinion of the Prophet? Or is it Allah Himself saying that this is not befitting for Himself to have a son? Allah Himself has described Himself as being above having a son.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Another indication here as a **side point**: The Book of Allah, from its being to its end, is a Book of refutations. Those who say: "We should not be focused so much on refutations," often do not understand the reality of what they are saying. Refutations are necessary in Islam to clarify the truth.

Thirdly, they are mentioned to repel an inappropriate conclusion about His Perfection relating to a specific affair, like what is mentioned in His Statements:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَلْعِبَةِ ﴾ (٣٨)

«And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for play.» [44:38]

And like His Statement:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ﴾

﴿ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ﴾ (٣٨)

«And verily We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no fatigue reached Us.» [50:38]

It can be said that the third point of wisdom can be interrelated to the second point of wisdom. The second point of wisdom was to refute the false claims of the false claimants and the third one is to repel inappropriate conclusions. The last verse is a refutation of the Christians and a refutation of a false idea that someone, who is not affected by the Christians, might produce. He (the latter) might say: "Creating the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in a period of six days, must be exhaustive." So, without a proper understanding of Allah, they could fall into an assumption that Allah had become fatigued. May Allah be exonerated above such a claim.

Allah has made a refutation in this verse, and by way of this refutation, made His *tawhīd* and attributes of perfection much clearer and more understandable to His creation. Refutations are used by Allah in His Book in many occasions, from the beginning of the Book to its end; refuting the hypocrites, the idol-worshippers, the enemies of the prophets, the statements of the false claimants against His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and refuting the claims made by the Jews and the Christians; mentioning some of them by name and others by general references.

So refutations are part of our religion. People should not make statements similar to: "Refutations harden the heart," since the book of Allah contains refutations and this would necessitate Allah's Book hardening your heart. Rather, you could say: "Being obsessed with the peoples refutations of each other and neglecting Islamic duties can have negative effects. (If you want to advise someone)." But do not say that refutations harden the heart. Refutations can protect the heart and keep it soft.

This statement was mentioned to our *Shaykh* Rabī' b. Hādī. They said to him: "People say refutations harden the heart." He said: "Then what softens the heart? Ignorance of innovation? Falling into innovation? Contradictions to the order of Allah? That's what softens the heart?" This is the result of neglecting refutations and being aware of people who oppose the religion of Islam, that you fall into their traps and speech. So, being aware of evil for the sake of avoiding evil is something that will keep your heart soft and protect it in the guidance that Allah has given you.

Similarly, it is a specific claim made by the Christians, they said: "Allah has created the heavens and earth, on the seventh day, He rested," implying that He needed to rest because of the work He did. And Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is exonerated and exalted above false claims.

To conclude, this is the fourth principle regarding Allah's attributes; every negation of an attribute includes an affirmation of a perfect opposite and every negation come with one of three main points of wisdom:

The first: to express the generality of Allah's perfection.

The second: to refute a false claim that has been made.

The third: to repel an assumption that has been made based upon ignorance or not being aware of Allah in the best manner.

Building on the previous principle, the negation must have an affirmation of the complete opposite. Let us apply it to the three examples here.

The first example is the negation of similarity to Him. What would that entail? Total perfection in His uniqueness. Someone who is uniquely perfect cannot be compared to anyone. Someone who is perfect, but not uniquely perfect, can be compared to other things. But uniquely perfect means that it is perfect and on a level of its own. So, Allah's uniqueness and perfection are understood to be unparalleled and incomparable to anything in His creation.

The second example is the negation of a son. What would that affirm for us? If Allah has negated having a son, it would affirm unique oneness and being Eternal. Why do human beings have children? They have to die and someone has to continue after them, so Allah made them *khulafah* (to follow each other in succession) on earth. Having a son is a weakness, because it indicates that you are getting old and someone has to take over. So, Allah does not have a son because there is no type of weakness that will approach Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). There is no type of weakness that He could be described with. He does not need an heir, He is not going to be absent. He is not going to be dead, *ta'āla Allāh*, so He does not need a son. This leads to the attribute of independence and lack of reliance upon anything or anyone else. This is what we can affirm from the negation of a son.

The third example is the negation of creating the heavens and earth in jest. If Allah negates from Himself play, jest or pointless creation, what does it affirm? It affirms purposeful creation, a goal, and wisdom behind the creation. It affirms having a direction planned for this creation. It was not created for the sake of having fun. Rather, it was done with a goal and a purpose. So, the negation of play and jest means that they were created with purpose and wisdom.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

«And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind
except to worship Me.» [51:56]

The fourth example is the negation of fatigue. What does this entail? It entails strength that is perfect and does not have any weakness or limit to it. Rather, it is perfect and complete strength befitting to the Majesty of Allah.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.5. THEY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINDS - PERMANENT, CONTINUOUS ATTRIBUTES AND CHOSEN ACTIONS

Allah's affirmed Attributes might either be permanent Attributes that He is always to be described with, or Actions that He performs when He likes.

His permanent Attributes (الصفات الذاتية), *aṣ-ṣifāt ath-thātiyyah*, are those He never ceases to be described with, like having Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, Honor, Wisdom, Highness, and Greatness. Some of them are Attributes that are only known to us through His reports (الصفات الخبرية), like His Face, two Hands, and two Eyes.

His chosen Actions (الصفات الفعلية / الاختيارية), *aṣ-ṣifāt al-fi'liyyah*, are the actions that related to His Will. If He wants, He does them, and if He does not want to do them, He does not do them, like His Ascent over the Throne and His Descent to the lowest heaven.

Do we always say that Allah is rising above His Throne? Notice the difference here: Allah is the Lofty One above His creation. Is He always described with this or sometimes? He is always described with this attribute. Allah is Lofty, and we will never have an occasion wherein we could say: "Allah is now beneath something," or "There are things above Allah." We have no text to establish anything like this. Allah's loftiness and highness has been established as an attribute that He is always described with.

Now, the act of ascending above His Throne - do we say: "Allah is always ascending over His Throne," or "He continues to ascend above His Throne?" Or is it something that He has done when He liked? It is something that He did and is not continually described with.

Also, an Attribute may also be a combination of both a permanent Attribute and a chosen Action, like His Speech for example. His Speech is, in a basic and more general understanding, a permanent, continuous Attribute, since Allah, the Exalted, did not stop, nor will He stop speaking.

We can say that because we have many narrations about Allah speaking, yet we have no narration that says: "And Allah remained silent," or "Allah stopped speaking." We only have affirmations that Allah speaks, and we have no text and verse that Allah remained silent. So, to describe Allah with silence requires a proof that we do not have. And to describe Allah with speech requires a proof, which we have. Since, we have many texts regarding the speech of Allah and we do not have texts regarding silence as an attribute for Allah, we must refrain from attributing silence to Allah. We must only describe Him with speech. This is in the general sense.

How is Allah's Speech? We do not know the reality of Allah's speech in each and every situation. We know some of the words that He has spoken to some of His creation in some circumstances. Allah spoke to Mūsā. He spoke to the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Allah said to the angels such-and-such on such-and-such circumstance. So, we have individual phrases that have been relayed to us by Allah Himself about what He said to some of His creation at certain occasions. These are *ṣifāt fi'liyyah*.

So, for example, do we say: "Allah is speaking to Mūsā permanently?" or do we say: "Allah spoke to Mūsā?" We say that Allah has spoken to Mūsā and we do not say that Allah is always described as speaking to Mūsā.

With this, the specific things He said are considered chosen Actions, since they are related to His Will - He speaks whenever He wants, saying whatever He wants. This can be understood from His Statement:

﴿ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴾ (٨٢)

«His affair is such that whenever He wants something,
He merely says 'Be' and it is.» [36:82]

And every Attribute that is connected to His Will is in accordance with His Wisdom. This Wisdom may or may not be known to us, as we may be unable to grasp it. However, we know with conviction that He does not want anything that is not in accordance with His Wisdom. This is alluded to in His Statement:

﴿ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ (٣٠)

«And you will not want to (draw near to your Lord) unless Allah wants
that, verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.» [76:30]

In summary, the principle here, is a distinction between *ṣifāt fi'liyyah* and *ṣifāt thātiyyah*. An example of the latter: Allah is Great. We always describe Him with this attribute. An example of the former: Descending to the lowest heavens. We do not always describe Him with this attribute. We describe Allah with it in the last third of the night as He has informed us of in the speech of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

Allah's Wisdom: Is it a *ṣifah thātiyyah* or a *ṣifah fi'liyyah*? It is a *ṣifah thātiyyah*. Why? Everything He does and says and all of His other attributes are related to His Wisdom. He creates with Wisdom, He fashions and shapes with Wisdom, and He brings the rains to the people with Wisdom. He gives some people boys from His Wisdom and He gives others girls from His Wisdom. All of the things He does are based on His Divine and Perfect Wisdom. So, then, we can never say that something happened during which Allah was not wise. This would be a serious claim made against Allah. So, Allah, in each and every instance, is to be described with permanent and continuous wisdom.

Allah's Guidance: "Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide him. And whoever Allah lets stray, none can guide him." The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was distressed at the loss of his uncle Abū Ṭālib, and Allah consoled him, saying:

﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾

«Verily! You (O Muḥammad ﷺ) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills.» [28:56]

So, Allah negated that the Messenger (ﷺ) could guide, i.e. make someone accept the truth. (Not the guidance of teaching, however, because he was a guide, i.e. he taught the people and showed them the legislation). This is only for Allah. So, we can say: with regard to specific individuals and instances, Allah does not guide every single person. Allah lets some people to stray. So it would be a *ṣifah fi'liyyah*.

We can also say, from a more broader sense however, that Allah is guiding someone in each and every situation or that Allaah is always guiding the people in some capacity. So here, from a broader sense, we can say it is a *ṣifah thātiyyah*, without a specific mention to individuals. We do not say, however, that Allah is always guiding Yūsuf, but we can say that Allah is constantly guiding His creation in a general way.

ar-Raḥmān (the Extremely Merciful) and *ar-Raḥīm* (the Bestower of Mercy):

﴿ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴾

«And He is Ever Merciful to the believers.» [33:43]

The *Raḥmah* (i.e. *ar-Raḥīm*) that is specific to the believers on the Last Day can be called *ṣifah fi'liyyah*. It is not for everyone. It is reserved to the believers who have believed in Him and it is the mercy that He will give them on the Last Day.

ar-Raḥmān denotes the attribute of perfect mercy in an all-encompassing way. It is the mercy that is shown to even the disbelievers. It is the mercy that each person receives, constantly, day and night. His heart beats while he sleeps and his lungs breath in air and keep him alive. All of this is from the mercy of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). Each and every person's provisions have been laid out for him for his entire life.

So, there is a kind of mercy that is all-encompassing, constant and permanent. It is constantly reaching the creation and affecting them in each and every way, day and night. This mercy never stops. And there is a kind of mercy that some people will receive in the Hereafter and some will not based on their adherence to Allah's orders to worship Him alone. The people who worshipped Allah alone and did not associate others in their worship, will receive the specific mercy of Allah that is for the Hereafter. It could be in the form of entering Paradise initially and it could be absolute forgiveness from all sins. It could be in the form of being punished in the fire, taken out of it, then being allowed to go into the Paradise. In any of those cases, a person will receive specific mercy that is not available to the non-Muslims.

So the Mercy that reaches all of the creation is a *ṣifah thātiyyah* and the Mercy that is specific to the believers is a *ṣifah fi'liyyah*.



THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.6. THE DANGERS OF *TAMTHĪL* AND *TAKYĪF*

Tamthil is from *mathala*, *yumathilu*, *tamthilan*, and *takyif* is from *kayyafa*, *yukay-yifu*, *takyifan*.

Affirming His Attributes requires one to shun two very dangerous thoughts: *tamthil* (التمثيل) and *takyif* (التكليف).

Tamthil is when the affirmer believes that the Attributes he affirms for Allah are similar to the attributes of the creation. This belief is falsehood, as understood from both textual and intellectual evidence:

Textual Evidence: Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

«There is nothing similar to Him.»⁵¹

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

⁵¹ *Sūratush-Shūrā* (42):11.

«Then is the One who Creates like the one who does not create?
Do you not reflect?»⁵²

﴿ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ۖ ﴾

«Do you know anything comparable to Him?»⁵³

﴿ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۖ ﴾

«And there is nothing comparable to Him.»⁵⁴

These texts are very clear in each and every case, there is nothing similar to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). No similarities could be assumed from the first impression, nor could they be concluded after reflection. So, there is nothing in Allah's Book that produces the meaning of similarities, nor would the proper *tafsīr* of any verse be that Allah has an attribute or action similar to those of His creation. Any *tafsīr* of any verse or *ḥadīth* that leads to that understanding must be false because of the clarity found in these verses here.

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ﴾

«There is nothing similar to Him.»⁵⁵

This is absolute negation: There is absolutely nothing similar to Him.

﴿ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۖ ﴾

«And there is nothing comparable to Him.»⁵⁶

These explicit statements from Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) negating similarities are very clear.

Intellectual Evidence: This is from a number of angles:

Firstly, everyone knows that there are differences between the Creator Himself and the Creation. This necessitates that there be differences in their attributes, since the attributes of each and every thing are attributes that befit it, as is apparent in the various things Allah created. For example, the strength of a camel is not like the strength of an atom. So when it becomes clear that the created things differ between themselves in attributes that they share in common, **then it becomes even more clear that there must**

⁵² *Sūratun-Naḥl* (16):17.

⁵³ *Sūrah Maryam* (19):65.

⁵⁴ *Sūratul-Ikhlās* (112):4.

⁵⁵ *Sūratush-Shūrā* (42):11.

⁵⁶ *Sūratul-Ikhlās* (112):4.

be a stronger and more obvious difference between the attributes of the creation and the Attributes of the Creator.

Secondly, it can be said: "How can the Lord, the Perfect Creator, the One who is Perfect from all angles, be similar in His Attributes to His Creation that He provides for, while they are deficient and in need of someone to take care of them? Isn't believing this taking away from the Right of the Creator, since making the perfect one similar to a deficient causes him to be deficient as well?"

If we agree that things in Allah's creation are imperfect and that Allah is perfect, then to compare the perfect one to the imperfect one is an unjust comparison. For example, one might say: "The mother's love is great, and Allah's love is similar to that, but greater." This is oppression. However, to say: "Allah's love for His creation is **greater** than a mother's love for her child," then that is a permissible statement. Allah's love for His creation is **indeed** greater than a woman's love for her baby. But to say: "Allah's love for His creation is **like** the love of a woman for her baby, but stronger," then that is a similitude and thus, it is impermissible, since the Lord of all that exists has denied and negated similitude for Himself. There is nothing comparable to Him.

Thirdly, we witness created things that share the same name but differ in their details and realities. We see that the human being has a limb that is not like the limb of an elephant, while the elephant has a strength that is different from the strength of a camel, while they are both possessors of the same attribute called strength. Both have limbs, and both have strength, while between the two there is a clear difference in their details. So then, it becomes known that the sharing of a name of an attribute does not necessitate sharing the same qualities.

Another example is between an infant who is beginning to walk and a racehorse - both have strength in their legs, but is there any real comparison here? Is there any way to compare the two? The strength of the racehorse's legs is incomparable to the strength of that of the baby who is now beginning to walk. So, within the creation, there are great differences between the individuals and the species. There are attributes that differ so greatly, so much so you would say: 'The attribute of this animal is incomparable to the attribute found in other animals,' while you are talking about the very same attribute! i.e. strength, intelligence or creativity, etc.

Now, within the creation, there are differences so great that two things become incomparable. If this is found in the creation, how much more should we regard Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and His Knowledge? Think about our knowledge and the knowledge of Allah. In regards to this, we say: Allah has perfect and complete knowledge incomparable to our knowledge in each and every way. Our knowledge is deficient. Our knowledge is weak. Our knowledge is limited by our abilities. Our knowledge is based on other weak attributes. Our knowledge is gained through sight and hearing which are both weak attributes containing deficiencies. Whereas, Allah's knowledge is not based on any deficiency. Allah's knowledge is not preceded by weakness nor does forgetfulness follow it. None of these things can be related to the knowledge of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

So, we must agree that whatever greatness in distance between two creatures regarding an attribute, the Creator has more right to be considered far and above the attributes of the creation in an incomparable manner.

What do you think about the basic knowledge of a common person versus the knowledge of *al-Imām Mālik* (عليه السلام)? Can we say it is comparable? Or do we say that *Imām Mālik* has more knowledge than the common Muslim? Is that an accurate description of *Imām Mālik*'s knowledge? It is not a fair statement to say about him, because his knowledge is incomparable to the average every-day Muslim! So, if there is a huge difference between the knowledge of two people in the creation of Allah, so much so that you would say: 'You cannot compare a common person to a scholar of the religion,' what about the Creator and the creation?! We have an obligation to say that Allah's knowledge is incomparable to the knowledge of His Creation. His Knowledge is perfect from every angle, etc.

Tashbīh is from *shabaha*, *yushabihu*, *tashbīhan*.

Tashbīh (التشبيه) is similar to *tamthīl*. **The difference between the two words is that *tamthīl* is (to claim) total equality in all attributes, while *tashbīh* is (to claim) equality in most, but not all attributes.** Therefore, to negate *tamthīl* is more appropriate and in accordance with the Qur'an:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

«There is nothing similar to Him.»⁵⁷

There is no *tamthīl* allowed, nothing can be like Him in all of His attributes. Further, we say: There is nothing like Him in some of the attributes. Even further: There is nothing that can be compared to Him in even one of His attributes! He cannot be compared to in any way, whatsoever.

So, the *tamthīl* is a negation of all similarities; there is no one who could be entirely similar to Allah, and *tashbīh* is a negation of some attributes, no one can be similar to Him in some of the attributes.

Where does this idea of comparison come from? For example, why would someone say: 'Allah has a Hand, so the Hand is like our hand?' [It may be the result of] becoming affected by those who distorted the religion from the people of the book, they began to speak about Allah with anthropomorphism. And you find in the passages of what we call the "bible" today, horrible accounts that we know are falsehood. They say, for example: "Ya'qūb wrestled Allah and won." A wrestling match took place between a prophet and the Lord of mankind?! Exalted is He above what they claim. They say things about Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) which denotes that they think of Him as a human being.

So, to be influenced by the Christians and the Arabic philosophers, could lead someone to say: "If Allah has a Hand while He has addressed us in the Arabic language, and we know what a hand is, and I'm looking at my hand now, I'm going to think of Allah's Hand in this fashion." This is *tashbīh*. This is the idea of thinking of Allah in a way that is similar to His creation. In response, we simply say: "Allah is the One who has informed you that He has these attributes AND He is also the one who negated similarities between Him and His creation." So, the correct understanding is that each and every attribute He

⁵⁷ *Sūratush-Shūrā* (42):11.

affirmed for Himself or that His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) affirmed for Him, we understand it to be an attribute that is unique and befitting His Majesty and not comparable to our attributes.

Takyif is when the affirmer believes in a specific understanding of the Attributes of Allah, the Exalted, that they must be like this or that, without claiming them to be similar to something else. This belief is also falsehood, based on textual and intellectual evidence:

Textual Evidence: Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِءَ عِلْمًا﴾⁵⁸

«And they cannot encompass His Knowledge.»⁵⁸

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ

وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾⁵⁹

«And do not follow what you have no knowledge of.
Verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart,
(you) will all be questioned (about each of them).»⁵⁹

And it is well known that there is no knowledge available to us about the specific details of the Attributes of our Lord, as He, the Exalted, **has only informed us of them and has not informed us of their specific details.**

Some things have been explained to us about some of the attributes of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), so if that explanation comes from the text of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, then we can go as far as the explanation goes and not any further. For example, Allah has described Himself as having a Hand, so He says:

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ﴾

«Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion.»⁶⁰

But in another verse, He says:

﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ﴾

⁵⁸ Sūrah Ṭā-Hā (20):110

⁵⁹ Sūratul-Isrā' (17):36

⁶⁰ Sūratul-Mulk (67):1

«The Jews say: "Allah's Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty)." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills.»⁶¹

So, Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has given us further information about His Hands: «both of His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills.»

And in the authentic *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

((كلتا يديه يمين))

«Both of His Hands are right-handed.»⁶²

So, now we have given more details about the attribute of a hand, but **notice** that each and every detail we give is based on a text from Allah or His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So the author is speaking *relatively*, meaning: we do not seek after the specific details which are not found in the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Therefore, seeking to know their specific details would be considered following after what we have no knowledge of and speaking with what it is not possible for us to understand.

Intellectual Evidence: The details of something's attributes can only become known to us after having knowledge of the details of the thing itself, or by knowing about it through descriptions of something similar or equal to it. All of this is clearly impossible with regards to the details of the Attributes of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. Thus, it is binding to reject *takyif*.

So you cannot possibly know about the attributes of something if you do not know about the reality of *adh-Thāt* (actual presence). What is the reality of Allah's actual presence? If you do not know about the specific details of that, then how could you know about the specific details of the individual attributes that you learned of from the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*?

If I told you, for example, that there is a new incomparable cell-phone from Apple which you have not seen before, could you possibly - without having ever seen the phone - begin to understand the specific details of this phone and how it works? It is not like the old iPhone, but it is completely different and there is nothing comparable to it. Now, do you think that you are able to understand the details of how it works without knowing what it is in the first place? You have to know what it is to have an idea about it, afterward, you can begin to understand its details.

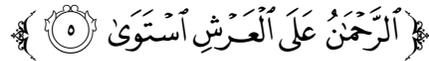
So, how can a person, who does not have detailed knowledge about Allaah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and His Presence, be able to gain detailed knowledge about the actions and attributes of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)? It would be beyond the scope of his intellect.

⁶¹ *Sūratul-Mā'idah* (5):64

⁶² Reported by Muslim no. 1827 from a *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr (رضي الله عنه).

Furthermore, which specific details about the Attributes of Allah, the Exalted, are you able to estimate? Whatever specific details you estimate in your mind, then Allah is Greater and More Lofty than that! No matter what details you imagine, **you are a false claimant, since you have no knowledge of what you claim!** So now, you understand the obligation of refraining from guessing about the specific details of Allah's Attributes in your heart, speaking with your tongue based on that, and from acting by that with your limbs.

When *Imām Mālik*⁶³ (may Allah have Mercy on him) was asked about the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:



«The All-Merciful ascended above the Throne.»⁶⁴

He was asked: "How did He ascend?"

The man who posed this question to *Imām Mālik* was seeking the *takyīf* (specific details) of this *istiwa*. This was an indeed strange question, because it during a period when the people were upon the language of the Qur'an. Perhaps this was the first time a question like this was even asked in a hundred and fifty years since the revelation! Innovations have now crept into the Muslim ranks to such an extent they began to ask innovated questions about the attributes of Allah.

Imām Mālik put his head down⁶⁵ until he began sweating, and then said:

"إِلَّا سِتْوَاءٌ غَيْرٌ بَجْهُولٍ، وَالْكَئِيفُ غَيْرٌ مَعْقُولٍ،
وَالْإِيمَانُ بِهِ وَاجِبٌ، وَالسُّؤَالُ عَنْهُ بَدْعَةٌ." "

"The ascension is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"⁶⁶

⁶³ *Imām Mālik* was a great *Imām* and scholar. His book *Muwatta* was a book that the whole nation in his time considered to be the very first and foremost book to memorize after the Qur'an. Later, almost 100 years after *Imām Mālik*, (in terms of *ḥadīth*) *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* overtook that position and became more reliable and focused on. But for a good 80 years from the *Imāms* time, his book was the relied upon text.

Imām ash-Shāfi'i, for example, who came shortly after *Imām Mālik* read the *Muwatta* to *Imām Mālik* when he was a boy of 10 years. He read the text to *Imām Mālik* from his heart, so *Imām Mālik* recognized something in him and said: Fear Allah because you are going to have a big role.

Imām Mālik carried the 'aqīdah of the companions and their children from the city of al-Madeenah. He brought it to the *Ummah* and explained it to them.

⁶⁴ *Sūrah Ṭā-Hā* (20):5

⁶⁵ In some narrations, he began to sweat and turn red, and in other narrations, he remained silent with his head down for a very long time. In some narrations, he ordered the man to be banished from the study circle and then he said the statement, and other narrations say that he said the statement and then ordered the man to be removed.

⁶⁶ Refer to *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* no. 664.

To seek information from the position of an ignorant person is not an innovation, rather it is from our religion. However, "questioning about it is an innovation" means to ask beyond the text and to seek the specific details which we do not have.

And it has also been narrated that his teacher, Rabī'ah, also said: "His Ascension is not unknown, and the details of it are not comprehensible."⁶⁷

The people of knowledge after them remained upon this understanding. If the specific details cannot be rationally deduced, and there are no texts of revelation in the matter, then both kinds of evidence, textual and intellectual, are absent, so it is binding on us that we refrain from speaking in these cases.

So I warn you about *takyīf*! I warn you about it, since if you were to seek after the details of Allah's Attributes, you will fall into a trap that you would never be able to escape from! So if Satan whispers about it into your heart, then know that it is from his evil whisperings and seek refuge with your Lord, for verily with Him is your refuge. Do what He has ordered you to do, since He is your Doctor!⁶⁸

Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) says here: "*Imām* Mālik (may Allah have mercy on him) took a tough stance with this person and did not go easy on him. Indeed, he called for his removal and said: 'I only know you to be astray!' or according to another narration, 'I only know you to be an innovator!'

Shaykh Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī (may Allah have Mercy on him) said, explaining the author's words:

This was at a time when the tribulations caused by theological rhetoric had appeared and began to spread. The *Imām* (Mālik) was one of the *imaams* who were severe in their opposition to these ideas being introduced to the people. Thus, he used to say: "Is it that every time a man comes sharper in his skills of debate than the one before him we are to abandon what Jibrīl brought to Muḥammad (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace)?! He was like the rest of the *imāms* in their stern opposition to the implications and meanings of theological rhetoric when it appeared, and this is why he became upset and astonished.

⁶⁷ Refer to *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, no. 665.

Shaykh Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī (may Allah have Mercy on him) said here, "What is authentic is the narration from *Imām* Mālik. The people of knowledge have stated that what is attributed to Rabī'ah, and Umm Salamah as well, has problems and that what is authentic is the narration from *Imām* Mālik.

⁶⁸ This is based on a *ḥadīth* in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad (4/163) and *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* no. 4206, on the authority of Abū Rimthah (may Allah be pleased with him), who narrated that his father said to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace): "Let me see what is wrong with your back, I am a doctor." The Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((اللَّهُ الطَّبِيبُ! بَلَّ أَنْتَ رَجُلًا رَفِيقًا، طَبِيبُهَا الَّذِي خَلَقَهَا!))

«Allah is the *ṭabīb* (doctor). You are merely a kind man.
Its doctor is the One who created it.»

This is Abū Dāwūd's wording. Refer to *Silsilatul-Aḥādithiṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1537.

Can we refer to Allah as our doctor (not as a Name but as a *khabar*)? Can we say that Allah is the one who cures people? When we say that Allah is a *ṭabīb*, we mean that Allah is the One who gives us the medicine and He is the One who allows the

Allah has said:

﴿وَمَا يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ﴾

﴿إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾⁶⁹

«And if an evil whisper from the *Shayṭān* comes to you, then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.»⁶⁹

Do you think the statement of *Imām* Mālik is specific to the ascension of Allah? Or is it a principle that we can use with all of the attributes of Allah? We use it unrestrictedly with all of Allah's Attributes.

For example: Allah has a hand. How is the Hand of Allah? We say: "The Hand is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

Some people have said: 'So long as we cannot explain an attribute of Allah, we should negate it,' or 'To explain it could only mean to explain it as it relates to our human attributes,' and so they would talk about the hands of the creation and would say unbecoming things about Allah (ﷻ). This is the angle of argument that the *ashā'irah* use.

Furthermore, there is an error in their reasoning. They say: 'Allah has a Hand and we know what a hand is. Allah couldn't have a hand like that, so He could not have a hand.' The person denying the attribute first made a *tashbīh*, as soon as he heard about the hand, he thought about it in relation to Allah, so he said: 'There can be no hand, because I know what a real hand is, so it must be figurative speech.' So what lead them astray is *tashbīh* firstly - they did not keep in mind the verse:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

«There is nothing similar to Him.»⁷⁰

When you think of any attribute, let it be in the forefront of your mind that there is nothing similar to Him! He ascended in a way that is not like an ascension you know. He has a Hand that is not like the hands you know. There is nothing similar to Him. If that was at the forefront when we thought about any attribute, we could not go far into thinking about it and drawing similitude.

The Foot of Allah: We say: "The Foot is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

medicine to take effect. He is the One who grants success to any medical treatment. This is the meaning. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) spoke with words like that, otherwise, we are not going to refer to Allah as the *ṭabīb*.

⁶⁹ *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* (41):36

⁷⁰ *Sūratush-Shūrā* (42):11.

The Mercy of Allah: We say: "The Mercy of Allah is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

Did you know: The *ashā'irah* say that Allah does not have mercy? It is allegorical (to them). They worship a Lord with no mercy. They believe that anything regarding mercy in the Qur'an does not really mean mercy, it really means an intention to reward someone or protect them from harm. This is the meaning of mercy (according to them).

They believe that mercy is a weakness of the heart, since showing mercy towards someone necessitates compassion and thus, that is weak. So, they believe that one cannot describe Allah with that. But (notice): they are talking about the specific details of the creation's mercy! And because they have compared Allah to the creation, they said: "It is not befitting," thus rejecting the idea of mercy for Allah (ﷻ). This is where they have deviated.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.7. THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH ARE *TAWQĪFIYYAH* - THERE IS NO PLACE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREE-THINKING REGARDING THEM

Knowledge of Allah's Attributes is *tawqīfiyyah*, meaning that you do not seek to establish attributes for Allaah, except that which is affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Imam Aḥmad, may Allah have Mercy on him, said: "Allah may not be described except with what He has described His own Self with, or with what His Messenger has described him with. This can not go beyond the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*." Refer back to 'The Fifth Principle Concerning Allah's Names.'

Attributes are established for Allah from the Book and the *Sunnah* by one of three ways:⁷¹

One: The Attribute is clearly mentioned, like Honor, Strength, Mercy, His Striking, His Face, His two Hands, etc.

Two: It is derived from one of His Names, like how *al-Ghafūr* (the Ever-Forgiving) includes Forgiveness, and *as-Samī'* (the All-Hearing), includes Hearing, and so on. Review 'The Third Principle Concerning Allah's Names.'

⁷¹ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) points out here that it is as if the author (may Allah have Mercy on him) was answering a question that could be asked here, "If there is no intellectual free-thinking regarding the Attributes of Allah, the Honored and Exalted, and one must rely solely on textual evidences, then how can one use texts from the Book and the *Sunnah* to know about the Attributes?"

Three: It is directly understood from an Action or a Description, like:

- (1) His Ascension over the Throne;
- (2) His Descent to the lowest Heaven
- (3) His Coming to judge between the servants on the Last Day
- (4) His Retribution for the acts of the criminals.

The proofs for these Attributes are as follows, in order:

[1] Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾

«The All-Merciful ascended above the Throne.» [20:5]

[2] The Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا...))

«Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven...»⁷²

[3] Allah has said:

﴿وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا﴾

«And (when) your Lord has come with the Angels,
rank after rank.» [89:22]

[4] Allah has said:

﴿إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنْقِمُونَ﴾

«Verily, We will get retribution from the criminals.» [32:22]

⁷² Collected by al-Bukhārī no. 1145 and Muslim no. 758 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).



THE FIRST PRINCIPLE CONCERNING THE EVIDENCES

3.1 - THE PROOFS THAT ESTABLISH THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES ARE EXCLUSIVELY FOUND IN THE BOOK AND THE *SUNNAH*

The evidences used to establish Allah's Names and Attributes are found in the Book and the *Sunnah*, and no Names or Attributes may be affirmed using other than these proofs.⁷³ So, based on this:

- ⊗ Whatever Names and Attributes that have been established by the Book and the *Sunnah*, it is obligatory to affirm them.⁷⁴
- ⊗ Whatever has been negated by the Book and the *Sunnah*, then it is obligatory for us to negate that, while we affirm its opposite as a perfect Attribute.⁷⁵
- ⊗ Whatever has not been affirmed nor negated in the Book and the *Sunnah*, then it is obligatory for us to remain silent about its wording, as it must not be rejected outright simply because of the lack of evidence regarding its affirmation or negation.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Tawqīfiyyah*

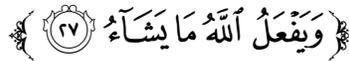
⁷⁴ *Ṣifāt Thubūtiyyah*

⁷⁵ *Ṣifāt Salbiyyah*

⁷⁶ We discussed the Name 'an-Nāṣir' (the aider or supporter); *Shaykh* ibn Bāz said that it was not one of the Names of Allah. How should we understand this statement? We cannot affirm it as a name of Allah because we do not have a text that says it is one of His names. However, we do not say with absolute certainty that it is not one His names (ﷻ), because there are

However, more elaboration is required regarding the meaning of the attribute not affirmed or negated by the Book or the *Sunnah*. **If its meaning is something befitting to Allah, the Exalted, then it is acceptable.** However, if its meaning is unbefitting to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, then it must be rejected.

Other examples are the Attributes understood from the mention of certain actions, like His Ascension over the Throne, His Descent to lowest heaven, or His Coming to judge between His Servants on the Day of Judgment, and other numerous kinds of His Actions, down to every last single Action of His:



«And Allah does whatever He wants.»⁷⁷

These are Attributes established for Allah in the text of the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Other examples of Attributes that must be affirmed are His Face, His Two Eyes, His Two Hands, etc. Others include His Speech, His Will, and His *Irādah* (what He desires). There are two types of *Irādah* - one carries the same meaning as His Will, *kawniyyah*, and one that is based on what He loves (for His worshippers), *shar'iyah*.⁷⁸

When we say *irādah kawniyyah*, there is an *irādah* that Allah has, meaning: good things and bad things occur in the universe; birth and death, etc.

Did any of that, whether good or bad, occur outside of the decree of Allah? It is within the *Qadr* of Allah *al-kawniyyah*. Allah has ordained those things to happen for a reason, for a benefit He knows and we may not know. So, for example, when someone dies, we say that he could not have died except that he was under Allah's *irādah* - the *irādah kawniyyah*.

The *irādah shar'iyah* is what Allah has legislated. When we say here: Allah does not want the people to commit *shirk* - people might say: 'Well, how can people commit *shirk* if Allah does not want them to commit it?' Allah does not want, meaning: He has not legislated for them to commit *shirk*. He has guided them away from *shirk*, yet from his *irādah kawniyyah* (the way He has organized His universe) is that He has made this life a test, and He has made some people to be the people of the Hell-Fire and some people to be the people of *Tawhīd* and *Jannah*.

Names that He has not informed us of. Can we swear that it is not one of His names? We have no idea, so we remain silent about it, meaning: I cannot affirm it, so I will not name myself 'Abdun-Nāṣir. I will not refer to Allah as having the name an-Nāṣir. If someone ascribes it to Allah as a name, I cannot refute him, but I can advise him and say: we should affirm for Allah the Names that are in the Book and the *Sunnah*, and we should remain silent about what was not mentioned therein. This principle applies to the Attributes of Allah as well.

⁷⁷ *Sūrah Ibrāhīm* (14):27

⁷⁸ An example of Allah's *Irādah Kawniyyah* is that the Sun rises and sets, disasters occur, children are born, people die, etc. These things all happen by Allaah's *Irādah Kawniyyah*. As for Allah's *Irādah Shar'iyah*, it is what Allah wants for us, He wants us to worship Him alone; He wants us to believe and not to disbelieve; He wants us to fast in *Ramaḍān*, etc. These things may or may not happen, but they are sought from us.

So, anyone who has disbelieved, has not disbelieved outside of the *Qadr* of Allah. He has not resisted the *Qadr* of Allah and did his own action in opposition to what Allah wanted, meaning: *irādah kawniyyah*.

Allaah (ﷻ) has destined for each and every person to be a believer or a disbeliever, to be from the people of *Jannah* or from the people of the Hell-Fire.

He has said:

﴿ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

«And you will not, unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the 'Ālamīn (mankind, jinns and all that exists).»⁷⁹

No one will be righteous and pious unless Allah wanted that, meaning: it was written for him (*irādah kawniyyah*).

﴿ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ﴾

«Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.»⁸⁰

He wants - meaning: *irādah shar'iyyah*, He legislated a legislation that gives you ease and that is what He wants for you. He wants you to follow His legislation. He wants you to take the concessions given by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

If you have a cut on your arm, He does not want you to harm yourself by washing it with water for *wudū*. He wants you to wipe over the bandage, because He wants ease for you. This is the *irādah shar'iyyah*.

The *irādah kawniyyah* is that everything that has happened has only happened because Allah **has** legislated to happen from His *irādah kawniyyah*.

Sometimes *irādah shar'iyyah* and *irādah kawniyyah* are referred to as *mashī.ah kawniyyah* and *mashī.ah shar'iyyah*, they are similar.

Irādah and *mashī.ah* mean the same thing. They are interchangeable in terms of being referred to *shar'iyyah* and *kawniyyah*.

(The author continues): Other examples are His Pleasure, Love, Anger, Disliking, etc.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Sūrah at-Takwīr* (81):29

⁸⁰ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):185

⁸¹ The author commented here saying: "The evidences to establish the aforementioned are found in the books of '*aqīdah*."

Some examples of attributes that must be negated due to the texts that have negated them, while in their opposition are affirmed as perfect Attributes, are dying, sleeping, slumbering, inability, ignorance, oppression, and heedlessness of His Servants' deeds, or that there exists someone similar to Him, etc.

[New Principle]

An example of something that has not been established nor negated by textual evidence is the word *jihah* (جِهَة), position or direction. If someone asks about affirming a direction or position for Allah, the Exalted -

What do we say in response to that? Do we remain silent? While remaining silent about the word *jihah*, can we talk about the intended meaning of the questioner? If someone asks you: "Does Allah have a position or a place?" Do we just say: "I am silent about that. I do not speak about a *makaan* or a *jihah*. Directions are understood as North, South, East and West."

What can we say? If you intended to know where Allah is, then the question: "Where is Allah?" has been asked before you, so we can say: "Allah is above the heavens."

We can say that Allah has ascended above His Throne. We can talk about Allah and that He is above all things Capable. **SO**, if you are asking about loftiness, if you are asking to affirm '*uluw* or not, then I can affirm '*uluw*, and you can shift the question to wordings established in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

(The author continues): If someone asks about affirming a direction or position for Allaah, the Exalted, we say to them: The **word** itself has not been mentioned in the Book or the *Sunnah*. I has neither been affirmed nor negated by the texts.

It suffices us that Allah, the Exalted, is above the heavens as has been established.

As for the **meaning**, then it may mean: (1) a position beneath things, (2) a high position still included within the creation realm, or (3) a high position not within the created realm.

Is it befitting to refer to Allah with position (1) and position (2)? He is definitely not beneath anything. **Ever**. Can we say that Allah is within the created realm at the very top? **No**. Because it means that He is within His creation, which is an innovation called *Ḥulūl*. So, both of these are ideas are unbecoming for Allah.

Is it possible to say (3) Allah is at a high and lofty position not within the created realm? **Yes**. This is the '*uluww* that we affirm for Allah. It is one of the meanings of *jihah*.

If we say: Allah has *jihatul-uluww* (He has the direction of being above the creation), people will say: "These people are saying that Allaah has a direction. They say: "He is North, South, East or West," or saying that Allah has a direction, means that "He must be within the created realm." This can be understood from the word direction so we want to refrain from using the word. But if someone asks about the word, we can turn back to what we understand based on the wordings and attributes affirmed in the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*.

So,

The first meaning is falsehood, as it contradicts the Loftiness of Allah that is affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*, and **by way of sound intellect, instinct, and scholarly consensus.**

The second meaning is also falsehood, since Allah is above being encompassed by His Creation.

And the third meaning is correct, since Allah, the Exalted, is the Most High above His Creation, never being encompassed within His Creation.

This first principle is proven by both textual and intellectual evidences:

Textual Evidence: From the many textual evidences for this principle are the Statements of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿ ۱۵۵ ﴾ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

«And this is a Book that We have sent down, blessed, so follow it, and be pious, so that you might receive Mercy.»⁸²

﴿ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ

﴿ ۱۵۸ ﴾ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ، وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

«So then believe in Allah and His Messenger, the illiterate Prophet, the one who believes in Allah and His Words, and follow him, so that you might be guided.»⁸³

﴿ ۷ ﴾ وَمَا نَهَكُمُ عَنْهُ فَأَنْهَوْا وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

«And whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it; And whatever he forbids you from, the abstain from it.»

﴿ مَنِ اطَّاعَ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ اطَّاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنِ

﴿ ۸۰ ﴾ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

«Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah; And whoever turns away, then We have not sent you as a guardian over them.»⁸⁴

⁸² Sūrah al-An'ām (6):155

⁸³ Sūrah al-A'rāf (7):158

﴿ فَإِن نَّنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ

﴿ ٥٩ ﴾ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

«And if you dispute over anything, then refer it back to Allah and His Messenger, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day, for that is better and more suitable as a final destination.»⁸⁵

﴿ وَأِن أَحْكَم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

«And that you judge between them with what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their desires.»⁸⁶

There are many other texts that prove the obligation to believe in what has come in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Furthermore, every text that proves the obligation to believe in what has come in the Qur'an is also a proof that one must believe in what has come in the *Sunnah*, due to the direct orders found to follow the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) and refer back to him in disputes. And referring back to him (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) was done by going directly going to him during his lifetime, and it is done by referring to his *Sunnah* after his death.

So where is the belief in the Qur'an for the one who is too haughty to follow the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the very one he has been commanded to follow in the Qur'an?! And where is the belief in the Qur'an for the one who does not refer back to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in disputes, while Allah has ordered him with that in the Qur'an?!

And where is the belief in the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), that which the Qur'an has directed us to, for the one who does not accept what is found in the *Sunnah*?! And verily, Allah has said:

﴿ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

«And We have sent down upon you the Book, a clarification of everything.»⁸⁷

It is well known that many of the affairs of the Islamic legislation, of both knowledge and practice, have been explained by the *Sunnah*. This shows how the details given to something from the *Sunnah* are actually from the "clarification" of the Qur'an (as referred to in the above Verse).

⁸⁴ *Sūrah an-Nisā* (4):80

⁸⁵ *Sūrah an-Nisā* (4):59

⁸⁶ *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5):49

⁸⁷ *Sūrah an-Naḥl* (16):89

In summary: You have been ordered to take what is in the Book and the *Sunnah*, and you have been forbidden from speaking about Allah without knowledge. Speech about Allah without knowledge has been given the status of being from the highest and most dangerous of sins in the statement of Allah:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْمُونَ ﴾^{٣٣}

«Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "(But) the things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are *al-Fawāḥish* (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds), **unrighteous oppression, joining partners** (in worship) with Allah for which He has given no authority, **and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.**»⁸⁸

Allah says:

﴿ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِنَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴾^{١١٦} مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ^{١١٧}

«And say not concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely: "This is lawful and this is forbidden," so as to invent lies against Allah. Verily, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper. A passing brief enjoyment (will be theirs), but they will have a painful torment.»⁸⁹

So, Allah threatened those who lie about Him with regards to His regulations with a severe punishment. (For example), with regards to that which is not *ḥarām* (because in reality it is *ḥalāl*) their statement, "This thing is *ḥarām* (forbidden)," likewise with regards to that which is not *ḥalāl* (because it is in fact *ḥarām*) their statement, "This thing is lawful" (and so on). So Allah, the Most Glorious, has clearly explained that it is NOT permissible for a slave to say that this is *ḥalāl* or that is *ḥarām* except that he has to have knowledge that Allah has (in fact) made that thing *ḥalāl* or that other thing *ḥarām* (before he utters such statements)."⁹⁰

So, the one who speaks about Allah without knowledge can make *ḥalāl* what Allah has made *ḥarām* or declare *ḥarām* what Allah has made *ḥalāl* and then spread it to the people. He can innovate. He can legislate. He can say that Allah legislated this while it is a lie. So, now He is committing *shirk* AND He is spreading that *shirk* to the people.

So, it is a *shirk* that is not limited to himself, but rather it is something that transcends and reaches others. So the ill effects of someone who speaks about Allah's religion without knowledge, are widespread harms for the whole society. Whereas the one who makes *shirk* between himself and the idol in the

⁸⁸ *Sūrah al-A'rāf* (7):33

⁸⁹ *Sūrah-Naḥl* (16):116-117

⁹⁰ *I'lām al-Mawaqī'in*, Ibn al-Qayyim.

privacy of his own home and does not call to it, then he has not corrupted the society unless he spreads that by speaking about Allah without knowledge.

So, you only refer to Allah with Attributes and Names that have been affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

If someone asks: "You believe that Allah is restricted to a place?!"

We can switch to proofs and avoid the usage of the word "place." We wouldn't say: "The place of Allah is above the throne." **No.** *Ahlu-Sunnah* do not use that word. But if you mean to ask about a question that has been asked to the Messenger, such as: 'Where is Allah?' then that question has a legislated answer that was approved of by him (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

So if that is the question, then we say that Allah ascended above the throne. He is Lofty. He is 'Ālī (the One with Loftiness and Above everything).

He sent down the revelation. And you send things down from 'above.'

The good words and deeds rise up to Allah. And things rise up to something that is above.

So, Allah is above His creation. We only speak about Allah with 'ulūw. We do not speak about Allah with that which will violate that permanent attribute.

Why are you insisting that we restrict Allah to a place, when that is **not** what we are saying, but **what you are saying!** The very thing we are saying is from the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*. If you are going to insist that this is the meaning of what we are saying, then you must insist that is the meaning of what is in the Book and in the *Sunnah*!! Our position is always clean and never based on invented words. Our words are from the Book and the *Sunnah*. If you necessitate that we believe in restricting and containing our Lord, or that we believe that He is restricted and contained, then you believe that this is the resulted understanding of the Book of Allah and the Messenger's *Sunnah* (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). You have misunderstood the Book and the *Sunnah* and you are attempting to force **US** to carry that misunderstanding. Rather, we use the phrases in the Book and the *Sunnah* as intended by Allah and His Messenger. They produce no negative or deficient meanings **ever**. Allah has never mentioned for Himself that He is restricted or contained or any of those false ideas, and **we have never used** those words either! So why are attacked and being forced to defend ourselves as if we said that Allah is contained!

They draw false conclusions from the text and they ascribe it to us. You will never find a scholar from *Ahlu-Sunnah* saying that Allah is restricted to a place. These liars attribute things to us that we've **never ever even** said. They can only make us look bad if they can convince people that we have said things other than what we have actually said.

Allah told us that He is Above the creation. He never told us that He is limited or contained. He never used any of those ideas. Everything He informed us of, we understand in light of who is speaking! **Allah**, the One **with the Most Perfect Attributes from all angles of perfection**. He is above His creation as He has described in a way that is befitting to His Majesty. We stop. That is enough for us.

One of the arguments that they have is: "If Allah ascended above His throne, where was He before He ascended above it?" They want you to say that He was beneath His throne. They want you to produce a false understanding. We say that Allah has ascended above His throne and that He descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of every night, while He, as a permanent attribute (*thātiyyah*), is above his creation.

When you say: "Well, there is a throne, and He ascended above it, that means..." and then you produce a deduction. This deduction you are producing is what you understand as it relates to the created realm. When someone walks up the stairs, he cannot have climbed the *mimbar* unless he was first below it. So I am going to force *rabbil-'ālamīn* to abide by the physical rules of the creation He has created. And I am going to force myself to understand Him in light of all that. This is where they have started with *tashbih*.

They have started with understanding Allah's attributes as they relate to the creation, when a person ascends, it indicates he was below whatever he ascended before he ascended above it. Do you have any texts in the Qur'an or *Sunnah* that can support this meaning as it relates to Allah? That He was below the throne before He ascended it? **No**. As all the texts indicate, He is *al-'Alī* (the Lofty One) and He is above all things Capable. All the texts in the Book and the *Sunnah* indicate that He was, is, and will always be above His creation in a way that is perfect and befitting to His Majesty. So, from that angle, it is falsehood.

The only reason you want us to produce that, is because you have understood the ascension to be like the ascension of the creation. And you are attempting to force us to have that opinion as well. It is causing you to negate the whole idea of an ascension and you want us to follow that way.

We simply say: 'We are talking about Allah, who Ascends as it befits His Majesty.' How is it that He ascended above his throne, specifically? We say: 'The ascension is something known, the details of it are incomprehensible, and believing it is *wājib* and asking about it is *bid'ah*.'

If we cannot even grasp [...] to view Allah with our eyes (and His view will only be enjoyed by those in Paradise) then, we will not be able to use our minds, eyes, and faculties to come to understanding as to exactly how Allah is with His actual presence or any of His Attributes. We rely on His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ) to give us some information that leads us to knowledge of His attributes.

Intellectual Evidence: To say that something is binding upon Allah, or something is impossible regarding Him, or He may or may not do something, all of these are from the affairs of the Unseen, that which the intellect cannot reach understanding of (without revelation). So, then it is obligatory to refer only to what is found in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

We have not seen Allaah to describe him. So we have to limit ourselves to what we have from the Book and the *Sunnah* as conveyed by the Messenger (ﷺ).



THE SECOND PRINCIPLE CONCERNING THE EVIDENCES

3.2 - KEEPING TO THE APPARENT MEANINGS OF THE TEXTS

This principle builds on the concept of *tawqifiyyah* of Allah's Names and Attributes and the evidences related to them.

Some words in the Arabic language are either used with their apparent meaning or with a secondary meaning. The English language also utilizes this idea. For example, if we said: 'I cannot carry all these books, **please give me a hand,**' the context of 'give me a hand,' allows us to make *ta.wil* of the word 'hand.' So, the reference to a hand here, means 'help me carry the books' and it does not mean 'place your hand in front of me.' The word 'hand' can be used for a literal hand and for other different contexts. Another example may be, 'everyone give him a hand,' meaning: give him a round of applause. Or, 'I am seeking your daughters hand in marriage,' meaning: the right to be married to her. So, there are many ways to use the word 'hand' and whenever we use the word in other than its basic meaning, there has to be something relevant to the situation we were in to lead us to the understanding that it is not a literal hand.

In we understand all of the Attributes that Allah has affirmed for Himself under the basic and first understanding of that word as it comes to mind. This is called the *thāhir*. And the secondary meaning that could be applied in some situations is called the *mu.awal* (that which you made *ta.wīl* to).

Now as a principle, do we understand Allah's attributes based on the *thāhir* or the *mu.awal*? The *thāhir* (of course) and not the *mu.awal*, since Allah has addressed us in clear Arabic.

It is obligatory to understand the texts of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* according to their apparent meanings, without perverting their meanings, especially with regards to the texts about Allah's Attributes, as there is absolutely no place for independent free-thinking with regards to them.

This principle is proven by both textual and intellectual evidences.

Textual evidence: The following statement of Allah, the Exalted, prove this principle:

﴿ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴾

«The trustworthy Spirit (Jibrīl) came down with it (the Revelation) upon your heart, so that you would become from the warners, in a clear Arabic tongue.»⁹¹

When describing His Book, Allah always mentions "*mubīn*" (clear).

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

«Verily, We have sent it down, an Arabic Qur'an, so that you might use your intellect.»⁹²

﴿ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

«Verily, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an, so that you might use your intellect.»⁹³

These Verses show the obligation to understand the texts based on their apparent meanings from the Arabic language, except when there exists a textual proof that would prevent that.

Who are the people, historically known, to take the clear, apparent meanings of Allah's verses and twist them and use secondary meanings without any proof for that? The hypocrites among the Jews. The Jews are known for *tawīl* and *tahṛīf*⁹⁴ (to corrupt the meaning, from *ḥarafa*, *yuḥarrifu*, *tahṛīfan*).⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Sūrah ash-Shu'arā* (26):193

⁹² *Sūrah Yūsuf* (12):2

⁹³ *Sūrah az-Zukhruf* (43):3

⁹⁴ They can be used interchangeably. When the word *ta.wīl* is used to blame someone for twisting the meaning, it is considered *tahṛīf*. *Tahṛīf* is always dispraised, but *ta.wīl* can be used in a praiseworthy manner. For example, *ta.wīl* is also a

Allah has blamed the Jews for their distortions (of their texts) and clarified that they, due to this distortion of theirs, are the furthest people from having faith.⁹⁶ Allah has said:

﴿ أَفَنظَمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴾

﴿ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

«So then do you really hope that they will believe because of you, while a group of them listen to the Speech of Allah, and then pervert it after having understood it, whilst having knowledge?»⁹⁷

And Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا ﴾

«From among the Jews are those who pervert the Words from their true meanings, and they say: We hear and we disobey.»⁹⁸

synonym for *tafsīr*. Many *tafsīr* scholars have named their books using the word *ta.wīl*, i.e. *Jāmi'ul Bayān fi Ta.wīli Aayāt-ul Qur'ān* by at-Tabarī. When the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) supplicated for Ibn 'Abbās, he said:

((اللهم فقهه في الدين وعلمه التأويل))

«O Allah, grant him understanding of the religion and knowledge of *at-ta.wīl*.»

He was not asking Allah to give Ibn 'Abbās innovation in the religion or to lead him astray to what the philosophers or people of rhetoric have fallen into, but rather, he was asking Allah to give him knowledge of *ta.wīl*, meaning knowledge of *tafsīr*. The scholars have said that his *du'ā* was answered and Ibn 'Abbās is the premier scholar of this *Ummah* for the science of *tafsīr*.

⁹⁵ The latter is more severe than the former.

⁹⁶ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) explains the reason for the mention of the upcoming Verses, saying: The author intended here to warn the Muslims from the path of the Jews, and that if they were to seek after unapparent meanings of the texts without any indication (from established principles) to do so, they would be perverting the Words of Allah and His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) from their true meanings. Praiseworthy characteristics are mentioned in the Book and the *Sunnah* to encourage people to attain them and emulate good people, just as blameworthy characteristics are mentioned to prohibit them and warn the people against those who possess them, so that they do not become like them, and thus they deserve dispraise and punishment that is heading for the people of bad characteristics. Perverting the Words of Allah and His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) from their apparent, obvious meanings is a blameworthy characteristic, a horrible path taken, and a crime against the words of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

⁹⁷ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):75

⁹⁸ *Sūrah an-Nisā* (4):46

Be warned against twisting the meanings of a text or using a secondary meaning for a word in the text while the Qur'an has been revealed with the most apparent meanings intended.

Intellectual evidence: Since the One who spoke with these texts is more knowledgeable of their meanings than anyone else, and He has addressed us in the clear Arabic language, then it is obligatory to accept their apparent meanings. Otherwise, the opinion would go on opposing each other to no end, and the *Ummah* would split up.⁹⁹

The definition of *adh-dhāhir* is: (المتبادر الى الذهن), i.e. your first thought upon hearing something. This is what is intended in each and every case of every passage of the Qur'an, with the condition that the one whose understanding you are referring to is someone who has knowledge of Allah. You can tell a Christian: «Say (O Muḥammad): **He is Allah, the One**» and the first thing that comes to his mind is: 'Say: Jesus is Allah, the One.' Because their minds are corrupted, the first thing that comes to their mind is false. So, when we say that the intended meanings of the book of Allah are the *dhāhir*, we mean, to the uncorrupted, untainted intellects that are left upon their fitrah, not tainted by the corruption of disbelief and who remain upon the pure understanding of the Arabic language.

This is what is intended by the passages of the Qur'an.

In summary, we stick to the apparent meanings and we stay away from *ta.wīl* and *taḥrīf*. *Ta.wīl* is to pervert the meanings to a secondary meaning without proof. And *taḥrīf* is to distort them and alter their meanings.



⁹⁹ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) adds here:

In reality, the principle is a general principle that applies to all foundational matters of the Religion. It is obligatory on the people to stop where the texts have stopped. Even in subsidiary matters of jurisprudence we are required to return back to Allah and His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace).

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE CONCERNING THE EVIDENCES

3.3 - THE MEANING OF THE ATTRIBUTES ARE KNOWN TO US, WHILE THEIR SPECIFIC DETAILS ARE NOT

This principle is an introduction to the idea of *tafwīdh* (تفويض), from *fawaḍa*, *yufawīḍu*, *tafwīḍan*. The *mufawīḍ* is the one who says: 'I affirm that Allah has a Hand, but I have no idea what the intended meaning of a hand is.' Notice the difference between this statement and the statement of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. The latter say: 'We affirm a Hand for Allah, it is something known in the language, but the details of it are incomprehensible.' But here, the *mufawāḍ* says: 'I affirm a Hand for Allah, but I have no idea what that could mean. It is a word that I cannot allow to have any meaning since it is related to Allah.'

To them, they may affirm Attributes for Allah, but 'must' remain blank and clueless with regard to what any one of them could mean. For example, Allah has a Hand and a Foot, they affirm those for Him, but they [believe] that they could not have any clue as to what that would mean whatsoever.

And the distinction between us and them, is that we say: "We know what a Hand is. We know what a Foot is. But we do not know their details as they relate to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). We do not say, "We have no clue what a Hand is." We know what a hand is. And when Allah mentioned the word, 'Hand' and affirmed it for Himself, He was speaking in the Arabic language that was understood by the people at that time. They understood what a Hand was. However, Allah negated from Himself *tashbih* and *tamthil*. The Hand is not like the hand of the creation. The Hand is a Hand that is affirmed for Him, that is befitting His Majesty and we may not deny or explain the Hand away with *tahrif* or *ta.wil*.

We do not make *tafwid* of the *ṣifah*, we affirm it. We do not say that we have no clue what this attribute means, we say: the basic idea of that Attribute is known to us. We make *tafwid* of the specific details of that Attribute. We say: 'We know that Allah has a Hand, but we do not know the reality of that Hand and we do not know its details. We leave that for Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), who knows about Himself.' The difference is very important.

The apparent meanings found in the texts that establish Allah's Attributes are known to us from one angle, yet unknown to us from another. Their general meanings are known to us while their specific details are not. This is proven by both textual and intellectual evidences.

Textual evidences: From the texts that prove this principle are the statement of Allah:

﴿ كُنْتُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ

وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾

«A Book that We have sent down to you, blessed,
so that they might ponder over its signs,
and so that people of understanding might take heed.»¹⁰⁰

﴿ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

«Verily, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an,
so that you might use your intellect.»¹⁰¹

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا

نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

«And We have sent down upon you the Reminder,
so you could clarify to the people what has been sent down to them,
and so that they might reflect.»¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Sūrah Ṣād (38):29

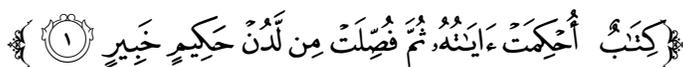
¹⁰¹ Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43):3

Reflecting can only be done over things that can be understood, the result being that a person takes admonition from what he understands.

The fact that the Qur'an is Arabic, and that those who understand Arabic can understand it, shows that its meanings must be understandable. Otherwise, there would be no significance in it being in Arabic or in any other language.

And the Prophet's (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) clarification of the Qur'an to the people includes the clarification of the words as well as its meanings.

Intellectual evidence: It is impossible to think that Allah, the Exalted, would send down a Book, or that His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) would say things, intending for the Book or this speech to be guidance for the Creation that they are in dire need of, while at the same time it is something that cannot be understood, like some jumbled letters of the alphabet that do not make any sense. This is impossible since it is foolishness that could not coincide with the words of Allah, the Exalted.



«A Book, its Verses have been perfected and then explained
by One (who is) All-Wise, All-Informed.»¹⁰³

These are the textual and intellectual evidences that prove that we are able to understand the meanings of the texts regarding Allah's Attributes. As for the evidences that prove we are ignorant of their specific details, then this has preceded in *The Sixth Principle Concerning Allah's Attributes*.

So now based on this, one can see the futility of the *Mufaw-wiḍāh*'s¹⁰⁴ beliefs, those who claim that we cannot understand the meanings of the texts concerning Allah's Attributes, and that this was the way of the *Salaf*, while the *Salaf* were free of these ideas!

Their (the *Salaf*'s) sayings of affirmation of the meanings of the texts are abundant and widespread. Sometimes they spoke on the issue in general, and other times they went into details. They affirmed that the specific details of the Attributes are known only to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic (not the actual meanings themselves).

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said in his famous book, *al-'Aql wan-Naql*, on page 116 of the first volume of the version printed along with *Minhājus-Sunnah*:

¹⁰² *Sūrah an-Naḥl* (16):44

¹⁰³ *Sūrah Hūd* (11):1

¹⁰⁴ *Mufaw-wiḍāh* (مفوضة): those who hold to *tafwīḍ* (تفويض), or the claim that we cannot understand the meanings of the Names and Attributes.

As for *tafwīd*, then it is known that Allah orders us to reflect over the Qur'an, and He encourages us to understand it and use our intellects. How then could it be possible that we are expected to turn away from its understanding, to turn away from knowing anything about it?

Later in the same book (p. 118):

This belief (*tafwīd*) necessitates that what Allah describes Himself with in the Qur'an, or much of what Allah describes Himself with, are descriptions without any meanings, **and their meanings were not even known to the Prophets, who just related words that they did not understand.**

He also said:

And it is known that this is an insult to the Qur'an and to the Prophets, since Allah sent down the Qur'an and informed us that He made it as **guidance** and **clarification** for the people, and He ordered the Messengers to convey it clearly and to clarify to the people what has been sent down to them. He also ordered the people to reflect over the Qur'an and to understand it.

Having said all of this, then the most virtuous of what is in it is what He informed us of regarding His Attributes.

To say that the meanings are not known and cannot be understood or reflected over, and that the Messenger did not clarify to the people what was sent down to them, nor did he convey it clearly, this would allow any infidel or innovator to say that the truth of the affair is what he knows from his own opinion or intellect, as the texts could not refute that, since they are all similarly problematic in that they cannot be understood by anyone, and thus, no one can use them as evidences!

This kind of speech would necessitate the absence of any possible guidance or clarification from the Prophets, and it would mean that those who contradict the Prophets can say that the guidance and clarification is from them, not from the Prophets, as they are the ones who know what they say, and they can clarify the meanings with intellectual evidences, but the Prophets did not know what they were saying themselves, so they could not possibly explain what they meant.

All of this shows clearly that the position of the people of *tafwīd* who themselves believe they are following the *Sunnah* and the *Salaf*, is from the most evil statements of the people of innovation and *ilhād*.

These are some very direct words coming from the possessor of a very guided position, so what could I add to it? May Allah, the Exalted, have abundant Mercy on him, and may He gather us with him in Gardens of delight.

Imagine! [According to the belief of the *mufawwīd*], when the Messenger (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) conveyed that Allah descends in the last third of every night, he had no clue what descending meant, and he did not intend for it to be relevant to the descension we know of. To them, it just a word being employed and the Prophet was clueless about what he was uttering. Could you imagine someone saying that? And that is true belief in Allah's attributes?

Ahlu-Sunnah affirm the Attribute based on its meaning that is understood in the language and they relegate its details to Allaah. They say: we cannot speak about its specific details. However, the meaning in Arabic is well-known and we affirm it. The *mufawwiḍa*, on the other hand, say: 'We have no clue what the meaning is, even from the very word itself. We have no understanding what that could mean as it relates to Allah. So, we demand the word is empty of meaning. It has no meaning whatsoever. Any meaning you can possibly think of is wrong.' They say: 'We relegate all of that to Allah from the start.' This is *bāṭil* (falsehood) because Allah has addressed us in Arabic, and He has affirmed different Attributes for Himself using words that were known to the people who received the Qur'an. He used words that had meanings that were known to the people while at the same time, He negated any similarities between Himself and the creation. All of this is a way of understanding the Book of Allah, gathering together all of the evidences and proofs related to one subject.



THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE CONCERNING THE EVIDENCES

3.4 - THE APPARENT MEANING OF THE TEXTS ARE RELATIVE TO THE PROPER CONTEXT

The apparent meaning of the texts are those meanings that come to one's mind naturally, and they differ based on the general context of the speech. So a word may carry one meaning in one context and a second meaning in another context, just as a group of words in a certain order may carry one meaning, and another when the order is changed.

For example, the word *qaryah* (قرية) may be used to refer to a group of people, and it may also be referring to their village. An example of the first usage can be found in the statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿وَأِنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ

يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا﴾

«And there is no *qaryah* (group of people) except that We will cause it to perish before the Day of Standing, or We will punish it with a severe punishment.»¹⁰⁵

What is a village made of? A neighborhood, primitive buildings, some trees, and gardens, etc. Allah has said that He is going to punish the *qaryah*, what comes to your mind because of the context? The buildings or the people? **The people are going to be punished.** Does Allah (ﷻ) punish buildings? Is it from wisdom to punish a building? **No.** So He punishes the people who have done wrong. However, Allah has referred to those people as the *qaryah*. As aforementioned, the first thing understood from the word *qaryah* (out of context) is that it is a village. However, when you put it in the context of: "Go ask the *qaryah*" or the like, you understand that it is being referred to the people who live in that place.

An example of the second usage is found in the Statement of Allah, quoting the Angels who came as guests to Ibrāhīm:

﴿إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ﴾

«Verily we are going to destroy the people of this *qaryah* (village)!»¹⁰⁶

Here, the word *qaryah* remains upon its original meaning of village because of the context «**the people of the *qaryah***» meaning: the *qaryah* is the village.

So the word *qaryah* could mean one thing or the other. Now, we are not discussing Arabic or *tafsīr* of the Qur'an but rather, we are speaking about '*aqīdah*'. So, let us place everything into context. When Allah says: 'I have a Face,' He is not talking about the faces of the created beings. He is not talking about faces that you have seen. He is talking about the Face that has not been seen by the creation, the Face that is not similar to any of the creation in anyway, the Face that is Majestic. The Face of Allah (ﷻ).

If we understood our '*aqīdah*' properly, we would put the word "Face" in context. Understand that there is no *tashbīh* nor any *tahrīf* and all of the rules of understanding to the text now apply. Any time you hear about an Attribute related to Allah (ﷻ), put it into context and know about whom you are learning and about whom the verse is referring to. So, if Allah is referring to Himself, put that in context.

Likewise, you may say, "I made this with my hand." But the word *hand* here is not like the *Hand* referred to in the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

¹⁰⁵ Sūrah al-Isrā' (17):58

¹⁰⁶ Sūrah al-Ankabūt (29):31

﴿ قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي ﴾

«He (Allah) said: 'O Iblīs! What has prevented you from prostrating to what I have created with My two Hands?»¹⁰⁷

This is because the hand mentioned in the example is the hand of a created being, thus it is understood in relationship to that. The Hand mentioned in this Qur'anic Verse is the Hand of the Creator, so it is something befitting Him. No one with a clear mind and an unpolluted rationale could believe that the Hand of the Creator is like the hand of one of His Creation, or vice-versa.

Likewise, we can say the following two statements:

(ما عندك إلا زيد) No one is with you except Zayd.

(ما زيد إلا عندك) Zayd is only with you.

The second sentence clearly carries a different meaning than the first, while they both have the same words. But the different order causes them to have different meanings.¹⁰⁸

This indicates that the placement of the words in the sentence dictates what is being understood about those words. To summarize, what are the things that affect the meaning of words in Qur'anic passages? 1) The order of the words, and 2) the context of the words. These are the two ideas that have been spoken about now. Words can have different meanings and produce different understandings if the order of the words changes or if the context of the word changes.

The context was from the example of the *qaryah*. We understood that when Allah said He is going to destroy the *qaryah*, He meant the people of the *qaryah*. And when Allah told us about punishing the people of the *qaryah*, then that means the village (the buildings, the area, etc). The people have now been mentioned explicitly. These are the textual meanings understood from the use of the language.

Once this is understood, one knows that the apparent meanings of the texts of the Attributes of Allah are the meanings that naturally come to one's mind.

People can be categorized into three main groups with regard to this principle:

The first group are those who affirm the Truth of the apparent meanings that come naturally to one's mind in a way that is befitting to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and they allow the texts to be used as a proof based on this understanding.

They say: Allah has a hand. I know the basic idea of a hand. The reality of that I cannot know.

¹⁰⁷ *Sūrah Ṣād* (38):75

¹⁰⁸ An example of this concept in the English language would be: Zayd hit the man; The man hit Zayd. These two sentences both contain the same words, just in a different order, with an obvious difference in meaning.

The group is the *Salaf*, those that united upon what the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) and His Companions were upon. They are the only ones who deserve the title *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.

They collectively agreed to this understanding as Ibn 'Abdil-Barr¹⁰⁹ reported, saying, "*Ahlu-Sunnah* are united upon the affirmation of all Attributes mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and upon belief in them, literally, not figuratively. They did not seek after their specific details, nor did they limit them in any way."

al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā said in his book *Ibtāl at-Ta'wīl*:

It is not permissible to reject these narrations, nor is it permissible to busy oneself trying to explain them away. Rather, what is obligatory regarding them is to understand them according to their apparent meanings, knowing that they are the Attributes of Allah that do not resemble the attributes of created things. One may not believe that they are similar to the creations' attributes, rather he must believe in them in the same way that has been reported from *Imām Aḥmad* and the rest of the *imāms*.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah quoted these statements of Ibn 'Abdil-Barr and al-Qāḍī in his book *al-Fatāwī al-Ḥamawīyah*, as found in Ibn Qāṣim's *Majmū' al-Fatāwī*.¹¹⁰

This is the correct position and the upright way of wisdom for two reasons.

Firstly, it is the complete way of applying the texts from the Book and the *Sunnah* that show the obligation of accepting the Names and Attributes. This is something known to anyone who studies the issue with knowledge and fairness.

Secondly, it can be said that the truth is either that which is found in the statements of the *Salaf* or that which is found in the statements of others. The second idea is falsehood, since it means that the *Salaf*, the Companions and those who followed their way in righteousness, spoke with clear and open falsehood, and they never openly spoke the truth that it is obligatory to believe in, not even one time! The falsehood of the conclusion proves the falsehood of the idea, and so it becomes clear that the truth is found in what the *Salaf* said, not others.

The second group of people with regard to this principle are those who accepted the apparent meanings of the texts, but in a false way, with *tashbīh*. They likened Allah to His Creation, and this is unbecoming to Allah. They allowed the texts to be understood in this way.

They are called the *Mushab-bihah*. Their beliefs are falsehood, and they are prohibited from a number of angles.

¹⁰⁹ He was Abū 'Umar, Yusuf b. Abdil-Barr an-Nimiri [d. 463]. He was a great *Mālikī* scholar who wrote the most famous and most relied upon explanations of the *Muwāṭṭa* of *Imām Mālik* in history. He wrote more than three of them.

¹¹⁰ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (5/87-89).

Firstly, it is a crime against the texts and a denial of their true meanings, for how could their meanings be based on *tashbih* when Allah says:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

«There is nothing similar to Him.»¹¹¹

Secondly, our intellects accept the differences between the Creator and the Creation, between both their actual presence and their attributes. So then how could one claim that the texts prove similarity between them?

If we accept rationally that there is a difference between the Creation, then we must accept that there is a huge difference between the creation and the creator, not only in attributes but in actual presence; that our presence is not like the presence of Allah, since our presence is different from the presence of others. Every presence is different. Some are strong. Some have better attributes. Some people have better attributes and character than others. So rationally, the difference that exists between the creator and the creation is much bigger and clearer than those differences that we can see with our eyes. Intellectually, if we agree that there is a very huge difference between our attributes and the attributes of Allah - Allah's attributes are attributes of perfection and completeness, with no deficiency whatsoever, while each and every one of our attributes are deficient. So this huge difference that exists - how can that, rationally speaking, allow us to understand a similarity between something of ours and something of Allah's? An attribute of Allah's and an attribute of ours. How could there be a similarity?

Thirdly, this understanding of the texts that the *Musha-bihah* have is in direct contradiction to what the *Salaf* understood. Thus, **it must be falsehood.**

This is based on the idea that anytime there is a difference between your understanding of *Islaam* and the understanding of the first generations of Muslims, the companions, the *tabi'ūn*, their immediate students, then, we must believe that your opinion and position is incorrect and the correct position and understanding is that of the people who witnessed the revelation coming down. They witnessed the Prophet of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) believing in and interacting with the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*. Their understanding is correct and accurate and an understanding that opposes their understanding is falsehood.

And if a *Musha-bihah* were to say: "I cannot comprehend the Descent of Allah, nor His Hand, unless I compare it to the Creation, and Allah has only addressed us with what we know and understand."¹¹²

The answer could be from three angles:

Firstly, the One who addresses with that is the same One who says about His own Self:

¹¹¹ *Sūrah ash-Shūrā* (42):11

¹¹² This is what has actually led them to make *tashbih*. They say: Allah has addressed us in the Qur'an with clear Arabic. And He has referred to Himself as having a Hand. So, Allah is telling us that He has a Hand like [ours], because it is the hand that I know of in the Arabic language.' So then, they have gone a step further beyond the correct way of affirming that Hand.

﴿ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (٧٤)

«So do not strike examples unto Allah, verily, Allah knows and you do not.»¹¹³

And He also says:

﴿ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (٢٢)

«And do not attribute equals to Allah while you have knowledge.»¹¹⁴

The Speech of Allah, all of it, is truth. It is self-confirming, without any contradictions.

Secondly, it can be said to him, "Do you not understand that Allah has a presence that is not like the presence of others?"

He will say: "Yes."

It can then be said to him: "So accept that Allah has Attributes that are not like the attributes of others as well, since your position on His Presence must be the same as your position on His Attributes." Whoever makes a difference between the two has contradicted himself.

Thirdly, it can be said to him: "Have you not seen created things that share the same name but are actually very different in their realities?"

How much of the actual presence of Allah do we actually know? We only know few pieces of information that He has told us about. Some of His Attributes. Some of His Names. Some of His Actions. So, how can we possibly bring a comparison to the actual presence of Allah? The *mushab-biha* themselves do not do that. They do not say that His actual presence is like our actual presence. They say: "No! He is Allah. So, He is obviously different, distinct and unique. He is better than us in His presence and more perfect than human beings.' So with that, why can't they apply the same idea to the individual attributes mentioned in the *Sunnah*? When we speak of a hand, why can't you apply the same understanding that Allah's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) Hand must be different than your hand?

The *mushab-biha* say that His hearing is like our hearing and His sight is like ours. They are the ones who basically say that Allah is similar to the human person. They begin to affirm devices for every type of attribute, for example, there has to be a device for speech, because to them, speech is something known; it occurs with teeth, a tongue, and a throat. Now, since they have this error and deviation that Allah is like His creation, they begin to affirm a body and a shape for Allah, and they begin to worship Him as if he is a human being.

¹¹³ *Sūrah an-Nahl* (16):74

¹¹⁴ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):22

We say: Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has Hearing, but we do not talk about ears for Allah, since such attribute have not come in the Book and the *Sunnah*. We affirm Eyes for Allah because it has come in the Book and the *Sunnah*. And we affirm them in a way that are befitting to His Majesty, not similar to the eyes of His creation. We affirm Sight and Seeing (*al-Başar*) for Allah, Seeing that is Perfect and Complete without deficiency and without similarity to the sight of His creation.

So, to play a blind eye to all of the verses that say Allah is Unique and that He has no similarities to His creation, and then to understand Allah to be similar to His Creation is a despicable approach to understanding the Book of Allah.

You say: 'Allah told us that He has a Face, and I know what a face is, so Allah was speaking in reference to what we know.'

In response, we say: The earth has a face. Clocks have a face. The moon has a face.

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

((خَيْرُ مَاءٍ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ مَاءُ زَمْزَمَ))

«The best water on the face of the earth is zamzam water.»¹¹⁵

Within the creation, there are faces other than the human face. So why have the *mushab-biha* chosen a human face to make this *tashbih* when the face of the earth is bigger and more magnificent as a creation? What lead them to understand Allah's Face in light of the human face, while there are other faces in the creation that are more magnificent, and would be - **if** there was such an idea of *tashbih* allowed - more befitting to be considered as the resemblance to Allah. However, Allah is **exonerated and exalted above any resemblance to anything in his creation.**

Thirdly, it can be said to him: "Have you not seen created things that share the same name but are actually very different in their realities?"

He will say: "Of course."

So then it can be said to him, "So if you accept the differences between the created things themselves when they share attributes of the same name¹¹⁶, then why do you not accept differences between the Creator and the Creation, especially since the differences between the Creator and His Creation are more obvious and greater?"

¹¹⁵ *Silsilatul aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 1056. *Shaykh* al-Albānī declared its chain to be *ḥasan*.

¹¹⁶ The face of a whale to the face of a shark contains enormous differences, just as the face of an elephant is not like the face of a lion. This is all within the creation. And they are all faces, using the Arabic word *wajh*. Therefore, why would you single out one specific kind of a Face and say that it is the kind of Face Allah has? This shows you the false method of the *mushab-biha*. If there are such great differences between the faces found in the creation, then the difference between the face of the Creation and the Face of Allah must be more distinct and more obvious and more clear of a difference. The Face of Allah is perfect from every angle of understanding. It is complete in its level of beauty and perfection, not having any deficiency. And the faces of the creation have deficient attributes and weaknesses.

Similarities between the Creator and the Creation are impossible, as has been mentioned in The Sixth Principle Concerning Allah's Attributes.

The third group of people in relation to this principle are those who allow the texts to carry the false meanings that are unbecoming to Allah, meanings of *tashbīh*, and then they reject them due to this false assumption of theirs.

The *mushab-biha* say that Allah's Face is like a human face. The *mu'ṭilah* say: 'Glorified is Allah! Exonerated is Allah! They say a face means a human face, so therefore, Allaah cannot possibly have a face.' This statement: "It is unbecoming for Allah to have a Face," is called *ta'ṭīl* from '*aṭalla, yu'aṭṭilu, ta'ṭīlan*. It means to render something unusable. They made *ta'ṭīl* of the *nuṣūṣ* (the texts that establish a Face are unusable). They say: We cannot use these texts because Allah cannot have a Face.

This proves that people can have good intentions, but their '*aqīdah* is warped. Their intention is to exonerate Allah above and beyond any similarity to His creation, and since there has been a mention of a Face for Him and they know what a face is, Allaah is exonerated above having a Face. They neglect the One who has affirmed a Face for Himself. Had it not been befitting for Him to have a face, He would be the One to declare Himself free of having a Face.

These are the people of *ta'ṭīl* (تعطيل), whether they reject all of the Names and Attributes or only some of them. They have perverted the texts from their apparent meanings to meanings that their intellects invented. Their position is full of inconsistencies. They have named their position *ta'wīl*¹¹⁷, while in actuality it is merely *tahrīf* (perversion of the texts).

The *ashā'ira* are actually *mu'ṭillah*. They call their position *ta'wīl*. They say: I am not negating a Face. The face here is a reference to glory and honor. It does not mean a face and cannot mean a face. The fact that they said: "This is a face" whilst pointing to a human face, then saying Allah is exonerated above this is *ta'ṭīl*. It was based on *tashbīh*. They did not negate the meaning until they only understood it as one rooted in *tashbīh*, i.e. Allah has a face similar to the creation. Oh! What a horrible thing that is, this cannot be the case, so I must negate that.

They did not set out to reject the verses from Allah's Books or twist them. They set out to exonerate Allaah and exalt Him above similarities with His creation. So, they said: Allaah cannot have a Face like His creation, so He does not have a real face. It is allegorical. It is a reference to His bounty. And they use a secondary meaning for the word 'Face.' So for example, in English, we say: Why did that brother apologize? We say: He was trying to save face.'

In Arabic, face can be used to represent glory, honor, or even reputation. With that idea, they say: Since that exists in the Arabic language, I am going to use that as the real meaning and apply it to Allah's face.

They say that the Hand of Allah is a *ni'mah*, a bounty that He has given you. What about the text that refers to Allah as having two Hands? Or a right Hand? Is there a right *ni'mah* and a left *ni'mah*? When Allah

¹¹⁷ *Ta'wīl* here, in the context of the speech of the people of *ta'ṭīl* and what they intend, means to give something its proper explanation. It is being used as synonym for *tafsīr*.

has said, describing His Hand: *al-ākhid*, *al-baṭsh*, *wal-imsāk*, seizing, and striking, do they all mean a blessing? That He has outstretched blessings?

Allah says: «**If you were to count the blessings of Allah, you would never be able to count them.**» And Allah has informed us that He has two blessings?! Hands?

Their position is falsehood for a number of reasons:

Firstly, it is a crime against the texts, as they have caused them to carry false meanings that are not befitting to Allah, nor are they the intended meanings.

Secondly, it is a departure from the obvious meanings of the Speech of Allah, the Exalted.

Allah says:

﴿يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ﴾^{٤٢}

«(Remember) **the Day when the Shin shall be laid bare**
(i.e. the Day of Resurrection) **and they shall be called to prostrate**
(to Allah), **but they** (hypocrites) **shall not be able to do so.**»¹¹⁸

In this context, can you say that the *kashf* is a removal of grief and difficulty on that Day?

Allah has clearly conveyed that the shin will be laid bare, and in the Arabic language, that is the first thing that comes to your mind. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) specifically confirmed that in a *ḥadīth*, when he discussed the *munāfiqīn* who will be unable to prostrate to the shin of Allah. So, in context, could the shin be difficulty and hardship? No. Based on its first and easiest meaning, the shin here is an attribute of Allah.

Look at how easy the *math-hab* of *Ahlu-s-Sunnah* is. It is not rhetoric. It is not based on advanced formulas of thinking that only the most intellectual people could arrive to, and which the common people have to trust as being correct. Rather, each and every person who reads the Qur'an and understands basic Arabic, could understand the correct '*aqidah*.

So..

It is a departure from the obvious meanings of the speech of Allah, the Exalted, and the speech of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace). Allah has addressed the people using the clear Arabic language, and the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) had addressed them in the finest tongue known to Mankind. As a result, it is obligatory to understand the Speech of Allah and the speech of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) based on their apparent meanings as found in the Arabic language, while refraining from seeking after the specific details of Allah's Names and Attributes or likening Him, the Mighty and Majestic, to His Creation.

¹¹⁸ *Sūrah al-Qalam* (68):42

Thirdly, to depart from the apparent meanings of the Speech of Allah and the speech of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), and to arrive at meanings that oppose them, is considered speaking about Allah without knowledge, and this is not permissible due to Allah's Statement:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ
وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا
وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

«Say: Verily, my Lord has prohibited (all forms of) lewdness, whether committed openly or in secret, sinning (in general), oppression without any due right, and that you associate partners with Allah with no authority sent down from Him, and that you speak about Allah with what you do not know.»¹¹⁹

And also due to His Statement:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

«And do not follow what you have no knowledge of. Verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, (you) will all be questioned (about each of them).»¹²⁰

Anyone who explains the Speech of Allah and the speech of His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) to mean something contradictory to its apparent meaning has followed after that which he has no knowledge of and has spoken about Allah with things that he has no knowledge of, from two angles:

[1] He has assumed that the apparent meaning is not the intended meaning, while it is what is clearly understood from the text.

[2] He has assumed that the text carries another meaning not found in the apparent wording. So **while it is understood that to specify one of two equally possible meanings (with no evidence) is speaking without knowledge, then what do you say about someone who specifies the more distant meaning that contradicts the more apparent one?!**

An example of this is what some people say about Allah's Statement to Iblīs:

¹¹⁹ Sūrah al-A'rāf (7):33

¹²⁰ Sūrah al-Isrā' (17):36

﴿ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي ﴾

«What has prevented you from prostrating to what I have created with My two Hands?»¹²¹

They claim the Hand mentioned here means other than a true, actual hand, that it means this or that!

We say to them, "What is your evidence for what you have negated? And what is your evidence for what you have affirmed?" Let them bring their evidence, and they will not be able to do that.

What is the proof that Allah does not have a real Hand? They can bring no solid proof. They have not seen Allah nor do they have information from anyone who has seen Allah, nor do they have any information from the Book or the *Sunnah* saying that Allah does not have a Hand. So, how could they say that Allah does not really have a Hand? What do they base that on? What is their proof?

Thus, they have spoken about Allah without knowledge with this baseless negation and affirmation of theirs.

Fourthly, in refutation of the people of *ta'ṭīl*, to explain the texts of the Attributes in a way that contradicts the apparent meaning is a contradiction to what the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), the Companions, the *Salaf*, and the *Imāms* were upon. So it must be falsehood, since the truth must certainly be what the Prophet (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), his Companions, the *Salaf*, and the *imāms* were upon.

You find no statement from any of the four *Imāms* that the Hand of Allah is not a true hand. You find no statements like this from the first three generations. You find nothing of this real nature. This is clear proof for the falsehood of those who say that Allah does not have a real hand.

Fifthly, it can be said to the person of *ta'ṭīl*, "Are you more knowledgeable about Allah than He is about His own Self?"

He will say: "No."

Then it can be said to him: "Are the things that Allah reported about His own Self truthful and correct?"

He will say: "Yes."

Then it can be said to him: "Do you know any speech more eloquent and clear than the Speech of Allah, the Exalted?"

He will say: "No."

Then it can be said to him, "Do you think that Allah wanted to make the truth unclear to His Creation in these texts so that they would have to extract their meanings intellectually?"

¹²¹ *Sūrah Ṣād* (38:75]

He will say: "No."

Then why have you understood a meaning that is unclear? If Allah did not want to make His book unclear, why have you understood it in a way that is unclear and you claim that this is the correct understanding? We are to leave the clearest and more obvious meanings and go to an unclear and difficult to understand meaning? And you claim this is what Allah has wanted with his revelation of the Qur'an?

This is what can be said to him regarding the texts of the Qur'an.

As for the *Sunnah*, then it can be said to him: "Are you more knowledgeable about Allah than His Messenger (may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace)?"

He will say: "No."

Then it can be said to him: "Is what the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) reported about Allah truthful and correct?"

He will say: "Yes."

Then it can be said to him: "Do you know anyone more eloquent or clearer in speech than the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?" Meaning: from the people.

He will say: "No."

Then it can be said to him: "Do you know anyone who gave better advice to the worshippers of Allah than the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?"

He will say: "No."

Then it can be said to him: "So if you say all this, then why can't you just go ahead and bravely affirm what Allah has affirmed for His own Self and what His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had affirmed for Him, according to the apparent, literal meaning that is befitting to Allah? **After all, you were brave enough to put yourself forward to deny the reality of those Attributes and to explain them in a way that contradicts their apparent meanings, without having any knowledge?**

And would it hurt you to affirm what Allah has affirmed for His own Self in His Book or in the *Sunnah* of His Prophet in the way that is befitting for Him? How would it hurt you to accept the affirmations and negations that are found in the Book and the *Sunnah*?

Would this not be safer for you and more proper as an answer when you will be asked on the Day of Judgment:

﴿ مَاذَا أَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾ ﴿٦٥﴾

«With what have you responded to the Messengers?»¹²²

And is not your departure from the apparent meanings of the texts and your explanations of them with other meanings a risky venture, since, if it is possible to explain them with other than their apparent meanings, their meanings could be other than what you have understood?¹²³

Other people may have other allegorical ideas. Why is your allegorical idea the correct one? If we allow this idea that the Attributes are allegorical and they really have other meanings, then what would the proof be to affirm any of those meanings? We would all go on differing to no end, because we all have an idea of which allegorical meaning would be most appropriate to replace the apparent meaning with. Look at the lack of unity, there's no way for us to come together except and unless we affirm the attributes that come in the Book and the *Sunnah* as they were intended by Allah and to stay away from *ta'wīl*.

Sixthly, many erroneous things are logically concluded from such a position. The erroneous nature of the conclusions proves the falsehood of the position itself.

Some of the logical conclusions from the position of the people of *ta'wīl* are:

One: The people of *ta'wīl* only explain away the texts of the Attributes because they believe that the texts require one to believe that Allah is like His Creation, while likening Allaah to His Creation is disbelief that contradicts the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

«There is nothing similar to Him.»¹²⁴

Nu'aym ibn Ḥam-mād al-Khuzā'ī, one of al-Bukhārī's teachers, said:

Whoever likens Allah to His Creation has surely disbelieved, and whoever denies something that Allah has described Himself with has surely disbelieved. And there is no *tashbīh* in what Allah has described Himself with, nor in that which His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has described Him with.¹²⁵

There is no need to explain any of those attributes away, because there is no *tashbīh* in them to begin with. The only reason they would be explained away is because of an idea of *tashbīh*, that this attribute must be similar to the attributes of the created beings.

¹²² *Sūrah al-Qasas* [28:65]

¹²³ So the reader does not think that he is being encouraged to enter into debates with the people of innovation, *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him), says: "This fifth point includes a discussion between a heretical *Mu'aṭ-ṭil* and a *Sunnee* scholar of great knowledge and insight whom all the people of Islam recognize the great status of."

¹²⁴ *Sūrah al-Qasas* [28:65]

¹²⁵ Refer to *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah at-Tahaawiyyah* (p.117). Ath-Thahabī mentions the report with its chain in *al-'Uluww* (429), and then says: "Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād was a possessor of knowledge. He was arrested and detained during the trials of (the false belief of) the Qur'an being created. He was imprisoned until he died in shackles at the age of 80 in the year 229, may Allah have mercy on him. Al-Bukhārī reported narrations from him."

Further, it is well known that it is an extreme form of falsehood to claim that the apparent meanings of the Speech of Allah or the speech of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) are *tashbih* or statements of disbelief, or things that suggest either of the two.

Two: Another conclusion based on their position is that while Allah is the One who sent down His Book to explain everything as guidance for the people, a cure for what is in their chests, and a clear light and tool of distinction between truth and falsehood, He failed to clarify in His Book the obligatory beliefs regarding His Names and Attributes. Rather, He made them subject to the people's intellects, so that they could affirm whatever they wanted and negate whatever they did not like. This is clear falsehood.

Three: Another conclusion is that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), his rightly guided successors, His Companions, the *Salaf*, and the *imāms* all fell short in understanding and clarifying the obligatory beliefs regarding the Attributes of Allah and things that Allaah may or may not do, **since not a single letter of what the people of *ta'wīl* claim about the Attributes has been reported from any of them!**

Therefore, either the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), his rightly guided successors, the *salaf*, and the *imāms* all fell short due to their ignorance and inability to understand the Attributes, or they fell short in conveying the proper understanding of the attributes to the Muslims. Both of these ideas are sheer falsehood.

Four: Another conclusion from their position is that the Speech of Allah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is not a source for people to refer to regarding what they must believe about their Lord and object of worship, while knowledge of Him is from the most essential things that came in the revelations. We could even say that it is the best part of the messages sent down.

To them, the real source of knowledge is their own confused and self-contradictory intellects. Whatever goes against their intellects is rejected if they find a way to do that. If not, they explain it away and distort its meaning, calling this procedure *ta'wīl*. This is when they could not find a way to disbelieve in it altogether.

Five: Another conclusion of their position is that it necessitates the permissibility of denying things that Allaah and His Messenger have affirmed.

Regarding the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ ﴾

«And (when) your Lord has come...»¹²⁶

One who holds their position is allowed to say: "Rather, He is not coming!"

They say: No. No, Allah will not come. The idea of Arriving or Coming is not befitting for Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). It truly means the angels will come. The order or the judgment of Allah will come. But Allah Himself cannot come. So then,

¹²⁶ *Sūrah al-Fajr* (89):22

﴿ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴾

«And your Lord has come with the angels in rows...»¹²⁷

Is this the context here?! His verdict will come with the angels rank on rank!? What context could that be understood from?! His judgment will come along with the angels rank on rank?! How could that be understood from the context of the passage?

The text says: "YOUR LORD HAS COME," and they say: "THE LORD HAS NOT COME."

This *math-hab* allows to affirm the exact opposite of the text.

Allah says:

﴿ تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي يَدِرُّهُ الْمَلِكُ ﴾

«Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion, and He is Able to do all things.»¹²⁸

They say: The dominion is not actually in His Hand. How could the opposite meaning of the wording be its explanation!?

Or regarding the statement of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

((يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا))

«Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven...»¹²⁹

They are allowed to say, "Rather, He does not descend!" This is because Allah's Actions of Coming and Descending are only figurative in their opinion.

The people who claim the existence of figurative speech (in the Qur'an) say that the clearest sign of figurative speech is that you can deny it.¹³⁰ To deny what Allah and His Messenger have said is from the most rejected forms of falsehood. Furthermore, it is not possible to claim that this (Allah's Descending) really means His Order, since the context does not indicate that.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ *Sūrah al-Mulk* (67):1

¹²⁹ Collected by al-Bukhārī no. 1145 and Muslim no. 758 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

¹³⁰ For example, they say: "Of course Allah does not really descend, its only figurative speech." The end result is that they have claimed that the speech of Allah or the speech of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is just not true."

¹³¹ The *ḥadīth* mentions that Allah descends and asks: "Who seeks My Forgiveness?" Claiming that this means that Allah's Orders descends, or His Angels, is clearly against the context. Is it Allah or His Order who says, 'Who seeks my Forgiveness?' Is it Allah's Forgiveness that we are to seek or the forgiveness of His Angels?!

Then you have some of the people of *ta'ṭīl* who apply their principle (of denial) to all of the Attributes, and this may even carry over into their positions on the Names as well.

Others contradict themselves by affirming some of the Attributes and not others, like the *ash'ariyyah* and the *māturīdiyyah*. They affirm some attributes, saying that sound intellect allows them to affirm them. They reject others, saying that sound intellect rejects them or does not support them.

We say in response: These Attributes that you have rejected by saying that sound intellect does not support them, it is possible for them to be affirmed by another intellectual way, similar to how you have affirmed those attributes that you affirm. this can be proven by textual evidences.

For example, they affirm an Attribute, *irādah* (wanting), and they reject another, *raḥmah* (mercy). They have affirmed the attribute of wanting using textual and intellectual evidences.

So to them, it is possible to read a text about *irādah* (that Allah wants something) and affirm it. There is nothing wrong with that. But if it comes to Allah having mercy, they say: The real meaning of mercy is wanting to protect and reward. Those are the *lawāzim* (conclusions) that we make if Allah wants to have mercy on someone, that He just really wants to protect them and give them Paradise.

We understood that there is *irādah* and *raḥmah*. Two attributes have come with separate texts affirming them both. The *asha'ris* affirm the *irādah*, but cannot affirm *raḥmah*. To them, *raḥmah* is just another meaning of *irādah*. It is from the generality of Allah wanting to do something, but in actuality, Allah does not have mercy. That is where their falsehood is clear.

CLARIFYING MISCONCEPTIONS

You should know that some of the people who wish to explain away Allah's Attributes have spread doubts about certain texts from the Book and the *Sunnah* regarding them, claiming that *Ahlus-Sunnah* explain them according to other than their apparent meanings.¹³² They intend by this to force *Ahlus-Sunnah* to accept their false interpretations, or at least lay the groundwork for that.

They say: "How can you reject our interpretations when you have done likewise in your own interpretations?"

We answer them and their doubts, with Allah's Assistance, with two kinds of answers: a brief, summarized answer; and a lengthy, detailed explanation.

As for the **brief answer**, then it can be summarized by two main points:

Firstly, we do not accept that the *Salaf* explained the texts based on other than their apparent meanings. The apparent meaning is what first comes to mind, and it varies from situation to situation, depending on the context and other related words and phrases. Words themselves carry different meanings depending

¹³² Meaning, that *Ahlus-Sunnah* make *ta.wīl*.

on their order within a sentence. So texts contain words and sentences that carry specific meanings when placed together in different ways.¹³³

Secondly, if we were to accept that the *Salaf* explained the texts based on other than their apparent meanings, then surely they would have had some evidence from the Book and the *Sunnah* to do that. That evidence would have either been directly related to the issue or deduced from something else. So this doubt that they hold is not a decisive proof that would allow them to negate what Allah has affirmed for Himself in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

As for the **detailed explanation**, then we must look at each and every text they claim has been explained according to other than its apparent meaning by the *Salaf*.

We will begin by looking at what Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī relayed from some of the Hanbalīs, that:

Imām Aḥmad did not make *ta'wīl* except with three narrations, "The black stone is the Right (Hand) of Allah on earth," "The hearts of the servants are between two of *ar-Raḥmān's* Fingers," and "Verily, I find the *Nafas*¹³⁴ of *ar-Raḥmān* coming from Yemen."

Remember what we spoke about regarding the context in verses and *aḥādīth*; we must put the Attributes of Allah in context of whom we are talking about. If we are talking about a human being, then that is one context, but if we are talking about the **Creator** of the human beings, then that is an entirely different context.

Shaykh al-Islām quoted this statement of al-Ghazālī in *Majmū' al-Fatāwī*, and then said: "This report is a lie against *Imām Aḥmad*."

So, to say *Imām Aḥmad* made *ta.wīl* three times is a false statement. *Imām Aḥmad* was not a man of *ta.wīl*. He did not make *ta.wīl* of the *nuṣūs*. He would not allow himself to make *ta.wīl* three times and then prohibit the rest of the *Ummah* from ever making *ta.wīl*. This is a contradiction.

They want us to believe individuals from the *salaf* like *Imām Aḥmad* made *ta.wīl*. They want us to believe that the *salaf* in general made *ta.wīl* on certain *aḥādīth*, and this gives them [those who wish explain away Allah's Attributes] the authority to make the *ta.wīl* they wish with their texts.



¹³³ Review Section 3.4 for examples and more explanation of this point.

¹³⁴ *Nafas*: [i] help, assistance; [ii] breath. The meanings of these three narrations are discussed in the coming pages.

THE FIRST EXAMPLE

4.1 - "THE BLACK STONE IS ALLAH'S RIGHT (HAND) ON EARTH."

Firstly, the (يمين الله في الأرض) is different than saying (يد الله اليمنى) (the Right Hand of Allah). One of the meanings of (يمين) is the Right Hand.

[**Their claim:** "Since the apparent meaning of this *ḥadīth* is that the black stone here on earth is actually Allah's Right Hand, then it must be explained based on other than its apparent meaning."]

The response: It is a false *ḥadīth* that is not established from the words of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).¹³⁵

Ibn al-Jawzī said in *al-'Ilalul-Mutanāhiyah*, "This is a *ḥadīth* that is not authentic."

Ibn al-'Arabī said, "It is a false *ḥadīth* that is not to be paid any mind to."

¹³⁵ Refer to *Silsilah al-Aḥādīthi aḍ-Ḍa'īfah* (223).

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said, "It has been reported from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) with a chain that is not authentic."

So, first and foremost, this claim is invalid because the very text that they are talking about is not an authentic text in the first place.

Having said this, there is no need to delve into its meaning. However, *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah said:

What is known about this report is that it has been reported from Ibn 'Abbās that he said, "The black stone is the Right of Allah on earth, so whoever rubs it and kisses it, it is as if he has shaken Allah's Right Hand and kissed it."¹³⁶

It will be clear to anyone who contemplates this statement that there is nothing problematic in it. He said, "Allah's Right (Hand) on earth," and he did not make it general by saying only, "Allah's Right Hand." The ruling on a restricted phrase is different from the ruling on an unrestricted one.

Then he said, "So whoever rubs it and kisses it, it is as if he has shaken Allah's Right Hand and kissed it."

This clearly shows that this handshaking is not actually done with Allah's Right Hand at all. Rather, the one who kisses the black stone is described **as being similar** to the one who shakes hands with Allah.

So the first part of the *ḥadīth*, as well as the last part, clarify that the black stone is not one of Allah's Attributes, as is known to every person of intellect.¹³⁷



¹³⁶ This report also has a weak chain, according to al-Albaanī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīthi aḍ-Ḍa'īfah* (1/391).

¹³⁷ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (6/397-398). Note: The author's reference: 5398.

Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (may Allah preserve him) explains that the narration is a fabrication, and thus, could never be used as a proof from any angle. Thus, it is not to be given any regard. He further explains that fabricated narrations in general are not to be given any regard in Islamic rulings, especially in fundamental issues of creed.

THE SECOND EXAMPLE

4.2 - "THE HEARTS OF THE SERVANTS ARE BETWEEN TWO OF AR-RAHMAN'S FINGERS."

[**Their claim:** "The apparent meaning of this *ḥadīth* is that Allah is touching His creation or mixed in with them to some degree. So it must be explained based on other than its apparent meaning."]

If the servants hearts are between two of *ar-Raḥmān*'s fingers, according to them, this is necessitates that Allaah is mixing with his creation.

The response: This *ḥadīth* is authentic. *Imām* Muslim collected it in the second chapter of his Book of *Qadr*, on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, who heard the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying:

((إِنَّ قُلُوبَ بَنِي آدَمَ كُلَّهَا بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ
كَقَلْبٍ وَاحِدٍ، يُصْرَفُهُ حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ))

**«Verily, the hearts of all of the descendants of Ādam are between
two of *ar-Raḥmān*'s Fingers, as if they are one heart,
He turns them about as He likes.»**

Then the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) supplicated:

((اللَّهُمَّ مُصَرِّفَ الْقُلُوبِ! صَرِّفْ قُلُوبَنَا عَلَى طَاعَتِكَ!))

**«O Allah, Turner of the Hearts!
Turn our hearts to your obedience!»¹³⁸**

So, the *Salaf*, *Ahlu-Sunnah*, understood the *ḥadīth* based on its apparent meaning and said, "Verily, Allah, the Exalted, has real fingers we affirm just as His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) affirmed them."

The first issue is establishing the Attribute of Fingers for Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). The *Ash'ari*'s, the *Mu'tazilah*, the people of *Kalām* (rhetoric) are very disturbed by this text. They say that Allah cannot have fingers, because having fingers is a human attribute; Allah is not a human being, so therefore, He must not have fingers. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told us of this *ḥadīth* (which is in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*), that the hearts of the servants are between the Fingers of *ar-Raḥmān*. So, we accept this from the Messenger because we declare that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah - we are obliged to accept his reports when they come to us.

We have no way of knowing about Allah, His Names, His Attributes, His Actions, except through the reports of the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So, if he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) informed us that Allah has Fingers, then there should be no harm and no difficult in submitting to the report of the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

The presence of the hearts of the descendants of Ādam between Allah's Fingers does not necessitate that Allah is physically touching them. These are Allah's Fingers and Attributes we are speaking of, Allah who is above the heavens, and not mixed with His creation, so it is impossible to apply this to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Look to the clouds that are suspended between the heavens and the earth, they do not touch the sky, nor do they touch the earth. And it can be said that the full moon is between Makkah and al-Madeenah, while it is quite distant from both cities.

Being between something does not necessitate touching and mixing in with that thing that is talked of.

So, the hearts of the descendants of Ādam are truly between two of *ar-Raḥmān*'s Fingers. This does not necessitate that Allah is physically touching His Creation, nor does it necessitate that He is inside of it.

The most obvious meaning of the text could not be that Allah is like a human being and that He touches things with Fingers in a manner in which a human touches things with his fingers. This would not be

¹³⁸ Collected by Muslim, no. 2654.

befitting. How could the most obvious meaning of what the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) be disbelief in Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)?! That is impossible. When someone knows Allah and understands the *ḥadīth* in light of their knowledge of Allah, they could put the Attribute in its context and say: these are the Fingers of Allah. I do not understand them in the same manner I understand the fingers of the created beings. With that, we have no problem in accepting that the hearts of every human being are between the fingers of *ar-Raḥmān* in a way that befits His Majesty.

We do not have to say that this means something else, that it means He controls our hearts. Did we not already know that? Did we not already know that Allah is the One who guides and misguides? The One whose *Qadr* overwhelms the creation? Is it not already known to us? The Messenger informed us about Fingers of Allah, so we have no need to reject the report, to explain it, or to twist the meaning in a way that was not intended by the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).



THE THIRD EXAMPLE

4.3 - "I SENSE THE *NAFAS* OF *AR-RAḤMĀN* COMING FROM YEMEN."

[**Their claim:** "*Nafas* means breath, so the apparent meaning of this *ḥadīth* is that Allah's breath is present on earth, so then it must be explained based on other than its apparent meaning."]¹³⁹

The response: This *ḥadīth* has been collected by *Imām* Aḥmad in his *Musnad* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). He said that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

((أَلَا إِنَّ الْإِيْمَانَ يَمَانٍ, وَالْحِكْمَةَ يَمَانِيَّةٌ,))

((وَأَجِدُ نَفْسَ رَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْيَمَنِ))

«Verily faith is Yemenī, and wisdom is Yemenī,
and I sense the *Nafas*¹⁴⁰ of your Lord coming from Yemen.»¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ What is between the brackets was added by the translator.

¹⁴⁰ *Nafas*: [i] help, assistance; [ii] breath.

¹⁴¹ *Musnad Ahmad* (2/541)

As found in *Majma' uz-Zawā'id*,¹⁴² "Its narrators are all from those relied upon in the *Sahih* (of al-Bukhārī and Muslim), except Shabīb who is (still) reliable."¹⁴³

Ibn Ḥajr said in *at-Taqrīb*, "He was a reliable narrator from the middle category of the successors of the Companions."¹⁴⁴

al-Bukhārī said likewise in *at-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*.¹⁴⁵

These are the statements of the *Imāms* about the narrator, specifically, Shabīb who is the only possible angle of criticizing the chain. And he, as seen from the critics of the narrators, is reliable. So, the *ḥadīth*, then, is authentic. The author continues:

This *ḥadīth* is to be understood according to its apparent meaning. One of the meanings of the word *nafas* is the alleviation of someone's burdens, as the scholars of the Arabic language have said in *an-Nihāyah*,¹⁴⁶ *al-Qāmūs*,¹⁴⁷ and the *Maqāyīsul-Lughah*.¹⁴⁸

Ibn Faaris said in *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, "A *nafas* is anything that alleviates a burden."

So, then the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that Allah will alleviate the burdens of the believers by way of the people of Yemen.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "And they were the ones who fought the apostates and conquered many lands. So, by way of them, *ar-Raḥmān* alleviated the burdens of the believers."¹⁴⁹

That is a clear and easy meaning for the *ḥadīth*, and you might say: Alright, but it seems that the *Ashā'irah* have a point, because the first thing I understand from the *nafas* of *ar-Raḥmān* is the breath of Allah coming from Yemen.

Do we have the right to say Allah has breath? We do not know any clear *ḥadīth* or *aayah* proving that, so we refrain from that Attribute. We only understand Allah with the Attributes He has affirmed for Himself in His Book or from the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So, if we have no grounds to affirm breath, then how could we assume that this is the meaning, when in actuality and historically, it is correct to say the other meaning, which is also found in the Arabic language; and someone who knows Allah would consider that to be the most obvious meaning.

So, the obvious meaning of the *ḥadīth* would be that Allah's alleviation of burdens will come by way of the people of Yemen, which historically proved to be true.

¹⁴² A book by al-Haythamī, where he collects *ahādīth* from the lesser known source books of *ḥadīth* and he grades them.

¹⁴³ *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (10/56)

¹⁴⁴ *Taqrīb at-Tah-thīb*: the biography of Shabīb ibn Nu'aym (p.431).

¹⁴⁵ *at-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* (4/231), without mention of Shabīb's reliability, similar to *al-Jarḥ wat-Ta'dīl* of Ibn Abī Hātim (4/358).

¹⁴⁶ By ibn al-Athīr.

¹⁴⁷ al-Fayrūz az-Zabādi.

¹⁴⁸ by Ibn Fāris.

¹⁴⁹ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (6/398).



THE FOURTH EXAMPLE

4.4 - ALLAH'S DESCENT TO THE SKY

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ﴾

«Then He (Allah) ascended to the sky.»

[**Their claim:** Some of the *salaf* have explained this verse to mean that Allah has set His focus on the creation of the heavens. This shows how they used to make *ta.wil...*] ¹⁵⁰

The response: *Ahlu-Sunnah* have two different explanations of the Verse.

The first explanation is that it means He ascended over the sky. This was the position of Ibn Jarīr (aṭ-Ṭabarī). He said in his *tafsīr*, "And the most befitting of the meanings for the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

¹⁵⁰ This is a true claim, as found in the books of ibn Kathīr and in the classical books of *tafsīr* by *salafī* authors, that «**Then He (Allah) ascended to the sky**» means He set His focus on the creation of the heavens, and that *istawaa* here does not mean ascension above the heavens.

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ﴾

«Then He (Allah) ascended to the sky.»¹⁵¹

is that He ascended over it, organized it using His Power, and made it into seven heavens."

al-Baghawī mentioned this in his *tafsīr*, and that it was the position of Ibn 'Abbās and most of the scholars of *tafsīr* from the *salaf*. This is in keeping with the literal meaning of the verb *istawā* (to ascend) while holding that the specific details of it are known only to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

We normally employ (استوى على), and here we have (استوى إلى); the preposition does not match the verb in normal usage. The scholars of *tafsīr* have two basic approaches to when this is the case. The first approach is called *ta.wīl al-ḥarf*, to make *tafsīr* of the *ḥarf* as another *ḥarf*. So, (استوى إلى) means (استوى على). This is commonly quoted and commonly understood.

A doubt created by some of these people, for example, the *Ḥulūliyyah*, who believe that Allah is present in his creation, as, according to them, in many verses of the Qur'an, Allah is (في السماء):

﴿أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنِ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ﴾

«Or do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven (Allah), will not send against you a violent whirlwind?»¹⁵²

(في السماء) is a ظرف (you are within s.th.). So, they believe Allah is saying that he is inside of the heavens, and thus, that would mean He inside His creation.

The response: *ta.wīl al-ḥarf*: the real meaning of (في) is (على).¹⁵³ How is that? We understand that in light of how Allah has used this word in relationship to other things as well. How has Allah described the people on earth?

¹⁵¹ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):29.

¹⁵² *Sūrah al-Mulk* (67):17

¹⁵³ In his notes on '*Aqīdatul-Wāṣitiyyah*, *Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn*, may Allah have mercy upon him, comments:

The Meaning of Allah being Above the Heavens (في السماء)

It means that He is above the Heavens. The word (في) here means above (على), just as it does in Allah's words:

﴿قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

«Say: Travel on (في) the land» [*Sūrah al-An'ām* (6):11]

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ here means above the earth.

﴿وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

«Whosoever is on the earth.»

Does this mean we are inside the earth or above it? Here, we clearly see "fi al-ard" means "alā al-ard" (above the earth). Since this is found in His Book and in the language He used (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), then can we not apply that in the case where it makes sense? He refers to the people as being *fil-ard* (inside the earth), but the meaning of it is that they are above the earth, so then, why can't we understand that Allah, who has described Himself with *fi as-samā*., as being above the heavens?

The second explanation of the meaning of *istawā* here is that Allah set His complete focus on the creation of the heavens.

Ibn Kathīr held this position in his explanation of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, and al-Baghawī held it also in his explanation of *Sūrah Fuṣ-ṣilat*.

Ibn Kathīr said: "It means that He set His focus on the heavens. *Istawā'* here means to turn to and set one's focus on something, since it is paired with the preposition *ilā* (إِلَى)."

Istiwā ilā is different from *istawā 'alā*.

al-Baghawī said: "It means that He set His focus on the creation of the heavens."

It is also permissible for the word *fi* to be adverbial (ظرفية), thus the meaning of heavens (السماء) in *في السماء* would then be highness (العلو). The word *السماء* has come with the meaning of highness in His saying:

﴿أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً﴾

«He sends down water (rain) from the sky» [*Sūrah ar-Ra'd* (13):17]

It is not permissible for the word *fi* to be adverbial if the meaning of *السماء* is the bodily heavens because that would give the incorrect impression that the heavens encompass Allah. Such a meaning would be false because Allah is greater than anything of His creation encompassing Him. [End quote]

al-Bayhaqī said:

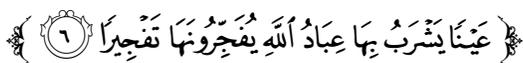
Abū 'Abdullāh al-Hāfiḍ said that *Shaykh* Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin Is-ḥāq bin Ayyūb al-Faqīh said: "Sometimes the Arabs replace '*alā* (above) with *fi* (in). (For example) Allah said: «So travel freely in (fi) the land.» (9):2. Meaning: 'on ('*alā*) the earth' and similarly «I will crucify you in (fi) the trunks of date-palms» (20):71. [Meaning «on ('*alā*) the trunks»]. Similarly is the saying of Allah, «fi *al-samā*.» which means «On the throne, above (*fawq*) the sky» as is proven in authentic narration.

al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā waṣ-Ṣifāt*, vol. 2, p425.

<http://islamtees.wordpress.com/2011/11/24/the-correct-meaning-of-allah-fee-as-sama/>

This second explanation is not a departure from the apparent meaning, since the verb *istawā* (استوى) is paired with a preposition (إلى) that alludes to an object or a goal, **so its meaning is understood based on the preposition used.**

Do you not see the preposition used in the Statement of Allah:



«A spring from which the servants of Allah drink to their fill, they will cause it to gush forth in abundance.»¹⁵⁴

The verb *yashrabu* (يشرب), meaning *to drink*, is understood here as *yarwī* (يروى), meaning *to drink to one's fill*, since it is paired with a preposition (بـ) that is appropriate for it.¹⁵⁵

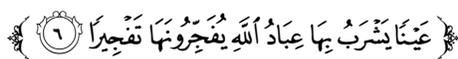
So the verb takes on a meaning that is in accordance with the preposition used, and this conveys the proper meaning.¹⁵⁶

[Thus, to say that the verse means that Allah has set His focus on the creation of the heavens is not a departure from the apparent meaning of the verse in the first place.]

This is actually based on a very important principle of *tafsīr*. It is based on looking at the verb and comparing it with the preposition used that goes with it, and then the *tafsīr* is based on one of the two *math-thab* explained. So, these two authentically established ways the scholars of *tafsīr* use are under the idea of understanding the texts in its obvious, apparent meaning and not departing from that and saying

¹⁵⁴ *Sūrah al-Insān* (76)6.

¹⁵⁵ For example: do you say (موسى شرب الماء) or (موسى شرب من الماء) or (موسى شرب بالماء)? You say: (من الماء). I took a drink from it. There's still water left. I drink من the water. So here, when we say:



«A spring from which the servants of Allah drink to their fill, they will cause it to gush forth in abundance.»

If I were to drink به , it means أروي به I drink to my fill. Not that it has to be depleted, because we are talking about the spring of the gardens of Paradise that would not be depleted. But that I would drink and drink and drink until I am completely satisfied. This is the case in the description of the people of Paradise, they drink until satisfaction. This is understood by the (بـ). It is not عينا يشرب منها , rather it is عينا يشرب بها . The (بـ) indicates that there is something different intended by the verb.

¹⁵⁶ *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned this principle in his book *Muqaddimah fī Uṣūl at-Tafsīr* (An Introduction to the Principles of *Tafsīr*). *Shaykh Aḥmad Bāzmūl* explained this principle thoroughly when he taught this book in Summer of 1432 (2002) in Makkah. His classes were translated into English and recorded.

that we are going to leave the apparent meaning and explain it with something else. Rather, they allow the text itself to provide the obvious and apparent meaning. So there has been no *ta.wīl* in this verse.



THE FIFTH AND SIXTH EXAMPLES

4.5 / 4.6 - REGARDING ALLAH'S MĀ.IY-YAH

﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ﴾

«And He is with you wherever you are.»¹⁵⁷

﴿وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا﴾

«And no less than that, and no more than that, except that He is with them wherever they are.»^{158/159}

¹⁵⁷ Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57):4.

[**Their claim:** The apparent meaning of these verses is that Allah is physically with His Creation in the same place. If you deny this idea, then you must have explained these texts based on other than their apparent meanings].

So, Allah "being with us," means that He is here with us in this room (according to them). If Allah has told us that He is with us wherever we are, that means that He is within His Created Realm. Thus, to say other than that means that we have to make *ta.wīl*.

This is their angle and what they want us to say; that we have made *ta.wīl* and that we do not consider Allah to be with us in this created realm.

The response: That which is mentioned in these two verses is the truth, and they are to be understood on their apparent meanings. However, what are their apparent meanings?

Can it be said that the literal and apparent meaning is that Allah, the Exalted, is with His Creation in a way that means He is not separate from them, or that He has become present in the same place as them?

Or should it be said that its reality and apparent meaning is that Allah, the Exalted, is with His Creation in a way that means He encompasses them by way of His Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Seeing, Planning, Authority, etc., while He remains above the Throne, above all of His Creation?

For those who know Allah and the descriptions He has given Himself, the answer should be clear. You put the speech about Allah in context. It must be relevant to whom you are speaking of; here, you are speaking of Allah, *al-'Alī*, *al-'Athīm*, the High and Lofty One.

There is no doubt that the first meaning is not found in the context of the evidence, nor do they provide any proof for this whatsoever. *Ma'iy-yah*¹⁶⁰ here has been attributed to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and He is greater and more sublime than anyone who could be surrounded by created things.

Ma'iy-yah in the Arabic language that the Qur'an was revealed in does not necessitate that something is mixed with other things or combined in the same place, rather it refers to something being with something else in a general way. The exact meaning is to be defined by the context.

To explain Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* with His Creation in a way that necessitates Him being present with them and mixed in with them is sheer falsehood. This is known from a number of angles.

Firstly, it is a contradiction to the consensus of the *Salaf*, as not one of them explained it in this way. On the contrary, they were united upon the censorship of such an idea.

¹⁵⁸ *Sūrah al-Mujādilah* (58):7.

¹⁵⁹ Allah, the Most High, is speaking about the number of people in a gathering; no less than the number of people present, or no more than the number of people present, except that Allah is with them wherever they are.

¹⁶⁰ *Mā'iy-yah* (معية): the concept of one thing being with (مع) another.

Secondly, it negates the Loftiness of Allah, the Exalted, that He is above everything, as is authentically established in the Book and the *Sunnah*, as well as by way of sound intellect and instinct, and the consensus of the *Salaf*. And whatever contradicts authentic evidence is falsehood, and whatever is built upon falsehood is also falsehood.

Thus, to explain Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* with His Creation is a kind of mixing and sharing space is falsehood, as proven by the Book, the *Sunnah*, sound intellect and instinct, and the consensus of the *Salaf*.

One of the signs you have incorrectly understood a passage from the Book or the *Sunnah* is that your understanding produces *tanāqud* (two verses that oppose each other in their meanings). If He says: «**And He is with you wherever you are**» or «**He is with them wherever they are**» and you say: This *Ma'iy-yah* proves that Allah is within His Created realm, you will have no answer to the verse: «**The Most Beneficent (Allah) istawā (rose over) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)**»¹⁶¹ or His Statement, the Most High: «**And Allah has power over all things.**»¹⁶²

So, now we have arrived to a contradiction; and this contradiction we have arrived to must be the result of a deficiency in our understanding, as the Book of Allah cannot have a contradiction in it:



«**Had it been from other than Allah,
they would surely have found therein much contradictions.**»¹⁶³

There is no contradiction in the Book of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). Therefore, any deduction you have made and any understanding you have reached that causes the verses of the Qur'an to contradict each other is a clear indication that you have strayed from the correct understanding, and you have erred, for Allah's Book is not erroneous, and Allah's Book is not self-contradictory, rather your intellect is deficient and you have misunderstood the text.

This is the basis that the *'ulāma* have always worked with when dealing with evidences that seem to clash. The very foundational approach is whatever clash that seems to be between any two evidences from the Book or the *Sunnah* must be based on a missing piece of information, a misunderstanding of the texts, or some limited understanding on our behalf, as Allah's religion is perfect and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is in harmony with the Book, and there is no contradiction between them whatsoever.

Based on this, there are series of books written by scholars throughout history called "*Mushkil al-Qur'ān*," where they discussed verses which seemed to contradict each other. They said: Since we know that there is no contradiction in the Qur'an, we have to examine the tafseer of the verses carefully and come to a proper understanding of the verses.

¹⁶¹ *Sūrah Tā-Hā* (20):4.

¹⁶² *Sūrah Āli-'Imrān* (3):165.

¹⁶³ *Sūrah an-Nisā*. (4):82.

Similarly, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) has had scholars serve it and write books in the field of *Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, where they said: There are *aḥādīth* whose meaning seems to oppose a verse from the Qur'an, and since our foundation is that there is no contradiction between the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Qur'an, and the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was not self-contradictory, we must then be able to research the meanings of these *aḥādīth* and find the correct meanings for them that allow them to be understood in harmony. Based on this principle, the texts from the Book and the *Sunnah* are *ma'soom*, they are inspiration from Allah and they cannot be understood as contradictory from any angle.

Thirdly, the logical conclusions from such an explanation are falsehood, and they are unbecoming to Allah, the Glorified and Exalted. It is not possible for someone who knows Allah, recognizes His true Magnificence, and knows the intended meaning of *Ma'iy-yah* in the Arabic language that the Qur'an was revealed in, to say that the reality of *Ma'iy-yah* with His Creation implies that He is present in the same place as them or mixed with them. The only one who would say such a thing is someone totally ignorant of the Arabic language, and ignorance of the Greatness of Allah, the Mighty and Exalted.

So, when the futility of this first explanation becomes clear, then the truth of the second explanation becomes obvious. The Truth must be that Allah is with His Creation in a way that means He encompasses them by way of His Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Seeing, Planning, Authority, etc., while He remains above the Throne, above all of His Creation.

And this is what is apparent from the two Verses, without a doubt, since they are the truth, and the apparent meaning of the truth must also be the truth. Furthermore, falsehood could never be the apparent meaning of the Qur'an.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Then this *ma'iy-yah* will have different rulings related to it depending on the context. When Allah has said:

﴿يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا﴾

«He knows all that goes into the ground (seeds, rain, etc.)
and what exits from it...»

To His Statement:

﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ﴾

«And He is with you wherever you are.»¹⁶⁴

The apparent context shows that the meaning of this *ma'iy-yah* is that Allah is well-informed about you, a Witness over you, One who compels you and is knowledgeable about you. This is the meaning of what the

¹⁶⁴ *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* (57):4.

salaf said, that He is with them by way of His Knowledge¹⁶⁵ and this is the apparent and literal meaning of what is in the verse.

Similar to this is what is found in His Statement:

﴿ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ ﴾

«There is no private gathering of three,
except that Allah is the fourth...»

To His Statement:

﴿ هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ﴾

«...And He is with them wherever they are.»¹⁶⁶

And when the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, said to his companion in the above (Abū Bakr):

﴿ لَا تَحْزَنَ إِنَّا بِاللهِ مَعَنَا ﴾

«Do not be sad, verily Allah is with us.»¹⁶⁷

This is also the Truth based on its apparent meaning. The context shows that the meaning of the *ma'iy-yah* here is that Allah was informed of their situation, a *ma'iy-yah* of victory and assistance...

He went on to say:

...So, the phrase, *ma'iy-yah* has been used in a number of places in the Book and the *Sunnah*. In each place, it may carry specific meanings that are not found in other places. So whether it indicates different things in some texts, or it shares the same meaning with other texts but has specific differences, it cannot be said in either case that the actual presence of the Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, is mixed in with His Creation. Thus, it cannot be said that the texts have been explained according to other than their apparent meanings.¹⁶⁸

And a further proof that the texts do not imply that the actual Presence of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, is mixed in with His Creation is that Allah, the Exalted, mentions this *ma'iy-yah* in *Sūrah al-Mujādilah*

¹⁶⁵ The author (may Allah have mercy on him) commented here, saying: "This is because it is understood that Allah is both with us and above (the creation), the only way to understand both ideas harmoniously is that the meaning of this *ma'iy-yah* must be that He knows about us, is aware of us, and witnesses us, not that He is physically present with us on earth."

¹⁶⁶ *Sūrah al-Mujādilah* (58):7.

¹⁶⁷ *Sūrah at-Tawbah* (9):40.

¹⁶⁸ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (5/103).

between the mention of the expansiveness of His Knowledge in the beginning of the Verse and in the end as well.¹⁶⁹ He has said:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آدَنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾



«Do you not see¹⁷⁰ that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth? There is no private gathering of three, except that He is the fourth. And there is no (private gathering of) five, except that He is the sixth. And there is no (private gathering of) less than that and no more, except that He is with them wherever they are. Then, He will inform you them of what they did on the Day of Standing. Verily, Allah is knowledgeable about all things.»¹⁷¹

The verse begins with Allah's attribute of knowledge, and it ends with Allah's attribute of knowledge.

So, we say:

افتتحت الآية بالعلم واختتمت بالعلم وسياقها للعلم

The verse commences with knowledge and the verse concludes with knowledge, and the context of the entire verse is the vast and comprehensive nature of Allah's knowledge. It encompasses what the people do, secretly and openly. This is the meaning of the verse and the benefit we derive from it - that Allah has knowledge. So His Presence with them is His knowledge and understanding

So, the apparent meaning of the verse is that Allah's *ma'iy-yah* includes His Knowledge about His servants, and that none of their actions can be hidden from Him. There is nothing in it to indicate that He is mixed in with them, or that He is with them on earth.

As for the verse in *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd*, then Allah has mentioned His *Ma'iy-yah* after He mentioned His Ascension above the Throne and the expansiveness of His Knowledge. Then, at the end of the verse, after the mention of His *Ma'iy-yah*, He mentions that He sees all the actions of His servants:

¹⁶⁹ This is an application of one of the most important principles of *tafseer* that *Shaykh al-Islām* mentions in his book, *Muqad-dimah fī Usūlit-Tafsīr*. To understand the meaning of the verse, one must look to the *sibāq* (what precedes it), the *liḥāq* (what comes after it), and the *siyāq* (the general context).

¹⁷⁰ Meaning: Do you not reflect? Do you not have knowledge? The meaning is 'ilm. Physical eyesight is not intended here: «Do you not see that Allah has knowledge» meaning: Do you not understand that Allah has knowledge of everything that is in the heavens and the earth?

¹⁷¹ *Sūrah al-Mujādilah* (58):7.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا

يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾﴾

«He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days. Then He ascend above the Throne. He knows all that goes into the ground (seeds, rain, etc.) and what exits from it. And (He knows) what comes down from the sky and what ascends up to it. And He is with you wherever you are. And Allah is an All-Seer of what you do.»¹⁷²

So then the apparent meaning of the verse is that this *ma'iy-yah* refers to His Knowledge of His Servants and His Seeing their actions, while He is high above them, above His Throne. It does not mean that He is mixed with them, or that He is with them on earth. If this was the case, then the last part of the verse would contradict the first part that proves He is above His Throne.

So when this becomes clear, the result of His being with His Servants include that He knows their situations, hears their statements, sees their actions, takes care of their affairs, give them life and causes them to die, makes them rich or poor, gives to whomever He likes, takes from whomever He likes, gives honor to whomever He likes, disgraces whomever He wants, and other things that are included in His Lordship and unrestricted Authority. Nothing at all screens Him from His Creation. Since this is the case, then He is truly with His Creation, while He is also truly above them, above His Throne.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

And so all of these statements that Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned, that He is above the Throne, and that He is also with us, are correct in their literal sense. There is no need to twist their meanings, rather they must be understood properly without false assumptions.¹⁷³

He also said:

The way to combine all of this is to know that the Book and the *Sunnah* contain complete guidance and light for those who contemplate over them, intending to follow the truth and turn away from twisting the meanings of the words to change their meanings to hold corrupt beliefs about the Names of Allah and His verses. No one can think that there is any contradiction found in them whatsoever, like the saying that what is found in the Book and the *Sunnah* about Allah being above the Throne contradicts what is apparent in His Statement:

﴿هُوَ مَعَكُمْ﴾

«And He is with you.»¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* (57):4.

¹⁷³ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (3/142), which is originally from *al-'Aqīdatul-Wāsiṭiyyah*, the section on *ma'iy-yah*.

¹⁷⁴ *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* (57):4.

And the statement of His Prophet, my Allah raise his rank and grant him peace:

((إِذَا قَامَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَبَلَ وَجْهَهُ.))

«When one of you stands for prayer
Allah is in front of him...»¹⁷⁵

And their likes, for verily, this is a mistake, since Allah is with us literally, just as He is literally above the Throne. Allah mentions both of these things together in His Statement:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ

مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾

«He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days. Then He ascend above the Throne. He knows all that goes into the ground (seeds, rain, etc.) and what exits from it. And (He knows) what comes down from the sky and what ascends up to it. And He is with you wherever you are. And Allah is an All-Seer of what you do.»¹⁷⁶

So He informed us that He is above the Throne, He knows everything, and He is with us wherever we are, just as His Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, said in (what is known as) the *ḥadīth* of the *aw'āl*:

((وَاللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ , وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ))

«...And Allah is above the Throne,
and He knows what you are doing.»¹⁷⁷

[End of quote from Ibn Taymiyyah]¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Collected by al-Bukhārī no. 753 and Muslim, no. 547 on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه).

¹⁷⁶ *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd* (57):4.

¹⁷⁷ The *ḥadīth* of the *aw'āl* that Ibn Taymiyyah referred to here is the *ḥadīth* collected by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and Aḥmad on the authority of al-'Abbās ibn 'Abdil-Muṭallib (رضي الله عنه), and at-Tirmithī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), and others, with variations in the wordings. Al-Albānī classified it as unauthentic in *Silsilatul-Aḥādithiḍ-Ḍā'ifah* (1247), as did the group of researchers in *Taḥqīq Musnad Aḥmad* (3/293-294). Ibn Taymiyyah defended his authentication of it in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (3/192).

However, the small part of it being quoted here, «...And Allah is above the Throne, and He knows what you are doing» has been reported with an authentic chain from the narration of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه), from the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace. It was collected by 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ad-Dārimī in his *Naqdh 'Alal-Mirrīsī* (98), aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (9/202), and others. Al-Haythamī said about it, "Its narrators are from the *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim)."

¹⁷⁸ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (5/102-103), which is originally from *al-'Aqīdah-Hamawiyah*.

You should know that explaining the *mai'iyah* by its apparent meaning, literally, in a way that is befitting to Allah, the Exalted, does not contradict what is established about the Loftiness of Allah, that He Himself is above His Throne. This is known by three ways:

Firstly, Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned them together in His clear Book that has no deficiencies in it. What Allah mentions in His Book does not contradict anything else in it.

If you find anything in the Qur'an that you think is contradictory at first glance, then you should ponder it until it becomes clear to you, due to the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴾^{١٧٩}

«Do they not ponder over the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions.»¹⁷⁹

If it remains unclear to you after that, then you must follow the way of those who are firm in knowledge, those who say:

﴿ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ﴾

«We have believed in it, all of it is from our Lord.»¹⁸⁰

Thereafter simply entrust the affair to the One who sent it down, the One who has knowledge of it, while you know that it is due to a shortcoming in your knowledge or your understanding, and that the Qur'an has no contradictions in it.

This is what *Shaykh al-Islām* was referring to when he said: "Allah mentions both of these things together."

Similarly, Ibn al-Qayyim, when mentioning an example of what some say is figurative speech, said: "And verily, Allah is with His Creation, while He is established above His Throne, and He mentioned them together..."

Then he mentioned the verses from *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd*, and said:

So, He informed us that He created the heavens and the earth, and that He ascended above His Throne, and that He is with His Creation, seeing their actions from above the Throne, as is found in the hadeeth of the *aw'āl*:

¹⁷⁹ *Sūrah an-Nisā*. (4):82.

¹⁸⁰ *Sūrah Āli-'Imrān*. (3):7.

Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī, may Allah preserve him, says here:

And this is the true way of submission to the Legislation of Allah and His Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, and to their reports. The believer in truth is the one who Allah has guided to honesty and acceptance of the truth. Allah has opened his heart to accept and act upon what he knows, and then to entrust rulings and reports that he does not understand to Allah, the Glorified and Exalted.

((وَاللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ, وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ))

«...And Allah is above the Throne,
and He knows what you are doing.»

So, His Loftiness does not contradict His *Ma'iy-yah*, nor does His *Ma'iy-yah* nullify His Loftiness, rather they are both true.¹⁸¹

Secondly, the reality of the meaning of *ma'iy-yah* does not contradict the meaning of Loftiness, and even in the creation, they can be combined. For example, it can be said, "We went on in our journey while the moon was with us." This is not considered a contradictory statement, nor does anyone understand from it that the moon came down to earth. So if this understanding is possible with regards to the Creation, then, even more so, it is definitely possible with regards to the Creator who encompasses everything while being above the Creation. This is because the reality of one's thing *ma'iy-yah* to another does not necessitate them being combined in one place.

Shaykh al-Islam referred to this, saying:

And this is because the word *with*, as understood linguistically, refers to a general kind of relationship between two things, not necessarily touching each other or being adjacent to one another, on the left or on the right. If it is mentioned in a way that specifies it to a certain understanding, then it takes on that specific meaning. It can be said: "We traveled on while the moon was with us," or, "while the star was with us." It can also be said, "I have this object with me," since you have it in your possession, even if it is above your head. So Allah is with His Creation in reality, while being above His Throne in reality as well.¹⁸²

He spoke the truth, may Allah have mercy on him. Surely, whoever is knowledgeable about you, aware of what you do, compelling you, hearing what you say, seeing what you do, taking care of all your affairs, then verily, He is truly *with* you, even if He is actually above His Throne, since *ma'iy-yah* does not necessitate being combined together physically in one place.

Thirdly, let us say for argument's sake that it is impossible to combine loftiness and *ma'iy-yah* within the Creation. This would not mean that it is impossible for the Creator, the One who mentioned them both together, since there is nothing similar to Allah, as He says:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

«There is nothing like Him,
and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.»¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Refer to *Mukhtasir as-Sawā'iq* of Ibn al-Mowsilī (p. 410), *al-Imām* printing (author's reference).

¹⁸² Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (5/103), originally from *al-'Aqīdatil-Ḥamawīyyah*.

¹⁸³ *Sūrah ash-Shūrā* (42):11.

Shaykh al-Islām referred to this, saying:

What is mentioned in the Book and the *Sunnah* about His Closeness and His *Ma'iy-yah* does not negate what is mentioned about His Loftiness and that He is above everything. For there is nothing like Him in any of His Attributes, He is High when He descends, and He is Close while being above everything.¹⁸⁴

To summarize and conclude, people are of three categories with regards to their understanding of Allah's *Ma'iy-yah*.

The first group are those who say: "Verily, the *Ma'iy-yah* of Allah means that He is knowledgeable of the Creation and that He encompasses them generally. He is also with (some of) them in a more specific way, granting them victory and support.¹⁸⁵ We affirm all of this, while affirming His Loftiness and that He has actually ascended above His Throne."

This is the position of the salaf, and their *math-hab* is the truth, as has been discussed.

The second group are those who say: "Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* means that He is with His Creation on earth, and we deny His Loftiness, and we deny that He is above His Throne."

These are the *Hulūliyyah*, from the *Jahmiyyah* and others. Their *math-hab* is falsehood and evil. The *Salaf* all agreed that this is falsehood and it must be rejected, as has been discussed.

The third group are those who say: "Allah's *Ma'iy-yah* means that He is with His Creation on earth, and we affirm His Loftiness and that He is above His Throne." *Shaykh al-Islām* mentioned this group.¹⁸⁶

These people claim that they have followed the apparent meanings of all the texts about Allah's Loftiness and His *Ma'iy-yah*, but they have actually erred and gone astray. The texts referring to His *Ma'iy-yah* do not have any support for what they say - that Allah is found within His Creation. This is falsehood, and it is not possible for the apparent meanings of the Speech of Allah and the speech of His Messenger to be falsehood.¹⁸⁷

When Allah ordered Mūsā (ﷺ) and Hārūn to go to Fir'awn, they were afraid, so Allah said to them:

﴿ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمِعُ وَأَرَى ﴾

«Do not be afraid, verily I am with you, I hear and see.»¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (3/143), originally from *al-'Aqīdatul-Wāṣitiyyah*.

¹⁸⁵ For further elaboration on the different types of *Ma'iy-yah*, refer to **Appendix I**.

¹⁸⁶ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (5/229).

¹⁸⁷ *Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī*, may Allah preserve him, says here: "I believe the author, may Allah have mercy on him, stressed this issue so much because of its great status and critical nature."

¹⁸⁸ *Sūrah Ṭā-Hā* (20):46.

So, how was Allah with Mūsā and Hārūn? Did He come from above His Throne and physically descend with His Actual Presence? Or was He with them by granting Mūsā miracles, aid, and victory over Fir'awn and his evil court?



THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH EXAMPLES

4.7 / 4.8 - THE CLOSENESS OF ALLAH OR THE ANGELS?

﴿وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ﴾¹⁸⁹

«And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.»¹⁸⁹

﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ﴾¹⁹⁰

«And He is with you wherever you are.»¹⁹⁰

[**Their claim:**] The closeness mentioned in these two Verses has been explained as the closeness of the Angels. [So this means that the Verses must have been explained based on other than their apparent meanings.]

The response: To explain the closeness mentioned in these two Verses as the closeness of the Angels is not an explanation based on anything but their apparent meanings, for those who contemplate it.

In the first Verse, the closeness mentioned is specified by the context, as Allah says:

﴿وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ﴾¹⁸⁹ إِذْ يَنْفَلِقُ الْمَتَلَقِيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ

وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ فَعِيدٌ¹⁹⁰ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ¹⁹¹

«And We are closer to him than his jugular vein. When the two receivers (Angels) take (him), (one) on the right and (the other) on the left, sitting, he (Mankind) does not utter a word except that there is a watcher with him, eager (to write).»¹⁹¹

So, the proof that the intended meaning is the closeness of the two Angels who take the soul is Allah's statements:

﴿إِذْ يَنْفَلِقُ الْمَتَلَقِيَانِ﴾¹⁹²

«When the two receivers (Angels) take (him).»¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Sūrah Qāf (50):16.

¹⁹⁰ Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57):4.

¹⁹¹ Sūrah al-Qāf (50):16-18.

¹⁹² Sūrah Qāf (50):17

It shows what Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is talking about when He refers to His Closeness; i.e. it is closeness of His Angels when they come by His Order to take the soul.

In the second Verse, the closeness is specified as the situation of a person who is near death, and the Angels are the ones who come to him at that time, as Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ﴾¹⁹³

«Then, when death comes to one of you, Our Messengers take him, and they are not neglectful (of their duties).»¹⁹³

Also, there is clear evidence that the Angels are the ones being referred to in the same Verse:

﴿وَلَكِن لَّا تُبْصِرُونَ﴾¹⁹⁴

«However you do not see (them).»¹⁹⁴

This shows that the closeness being referred to is within the same place, but we do not see it. This specifies the Verse to mean the closeness of the Angels, due to the impossibility of that referring to Allah, the Exalted.

But there still remains a question about this: Why then did Allah linguistically attribute this closeness to Himself in the Verses? Why does Allah refer to Himself and say "We are closer to him than his jugular vein" And has this kind of wording with the same meaning been found in any other Verses?

The response: Allah, the Exalted, linguistically attributed the closeness of the Angels to His own Self, since their closeness is only by way of His Order, as they are His deployed workers and Messengers.

This kind of wording, using the word We to refer to the Angels who act based on orders from Allah, is found in other places in the Qur'an, like in His Statement:

﴿فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ﴾¹⁹⁵

«So when We recite it, then follow its recitation.»¹⁹⁵

Meaning: When Jibrīl recites it by the Order of Allah.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Sūrah al-An'ām (6):61.

¹⁹⁴ Sūrah al-Wāqī'ah (56):85.

¹⁹⁵ Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75):18.

¹⁹⁶ Ahlus-Sunnah have never used this verse to say that Allah has the Attribute of Qirā.a (Recitation). They always understood verses in its correct context; Allah was not referring to a Qirā.a. of Himself, but rather He was referring to the Qirā.a. of the Angels, who were sent to make that recitation by His Order. Similarly, is the Closeness that He has described Himself with

The intended meaning here is Jibrīl's recitation of the Qur'an to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace. Allah has linguistically attributed the recitation to His own Self (using the word We), while Jibrīl was the one reciting to the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, by way of the Order of Allah, the Exalted. This shows how the recitation has been linguistically attributed to Allah, the Exalted (using the word We, meaning the Angels, not Allah Himself).

Similarly, about the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبَشْرَىٰ﴾

﴿يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ﴾

«So when the fear had left Ibrāhīm and the good tidings came to him,
he pleaded to Us on behalf of the tribe of Lot.»¹⁹⁷

Ibrāhīm had only pleaded to the Angels, who are the Messengers of Allah, the Exalted.

So, sometimes Allah may refer to Himself, and He may use a pronoun that looks like He is referring to Himself, but the intended meaning understood from the context is a reference to the Angels that have done an action or are referred to because they are doing the action by the order of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).



in the previous verses. This is a Qur'anic technique used by Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to refer to the actions of the Angels doing things by the order of Allah.

¹⁹⁷ Sūrah Hūd (11):74.

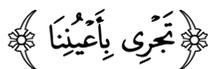
THE NINTH AND TENTH EXAMPLES

4.9 / 4.10 - REGARDING ALLAH'S EYES

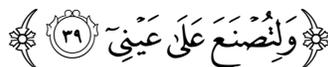
Issue: When we say Allah is *al-Baṣīr* (All-Seeing), without any proof of Eyes for Allah, can we affirm Eyes just because Allah is *Baṣīr*? No. That would necessitate affirming ears for Him just because He is *as-Samī'* (All-Hearing). This line of thinking is not permissible, it is the thinking of the *mushab-biha*. They say: Allah would not see except with eyes. Allah will not hear except with ears; because they understand Hearing and Seeing to be similar to human sight and Hearing.

So then, after this question, can we affirm Eyes for Allah? If we have a text to affirm eyes, we can affirm eyes for Allah, (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Can we affirm ears for Allah? No, we cannot affirm ears for Allah. Do we deny Ears? Denying Ears is speaking about Allah without knowledge. So what do we say about ears? We say: Allah knows best. We do not speak about it. We do not affirm it. And we do not negate ears. We affirm the attributes that are in the Book and in the *Sunnah*. We negate the Attributes that are negated in the Book and in the *Sunnah*. Beyond that, we make *tafwīd*, we relegate all knowledge about Allah to Himself.



«It (Nūḥ's ship) sailed forth in Our Eyes.»¹⁹⁸



«And so that you (Mūsā) would be raised upon My Eye.»¹⁹⁹

[**Their claim:** "The apparent meanings of these Verses are that Nūḥ's ship sailed inside of Allah's Eyes, and that Mūsā (Moses) was raised on top of Allah's Eye! Obviously, this is not intended, so they must have been explained based on other than their apparent meanings."]

The response: Both of these Verses are to be understood based on their literal and apparent meaning, but what exactly are the literal and apparent meanings of these words?

Can it be said that the literal and apparent meaning is that Nūḥ's ship sailed inside of Allah's Eye? Or that Mūsā (Moses) was raised on top of the Eye of Allah, the Exalted?

This seems to be a ridiculous claim. Why would anyone say that this is the first and foremost and most obvious meaning of this passage in the Qur'an?

¹⁹⁸ *Sūrah al-Qamar* (54):14.

¹⁹⁹ *Sūrah Ṭā-Hā* (20):39.

Or can it be said that the ship was sailing while Allah's Eye watched over it and protected it? Likewise, can it be said that the upbringing of Mūsā (Moses) was by way of the eye of Allah, as He watched over him and protected him?

Both are understood from the language, but which one of them is more obvious? Which one of them is more relevant to what we are talking since we are talking about Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)? Which one is more relevant to the context? The second one.

Verily, the first idea is falsehood from two angles.

Firstly, it cannot be understood from the phrases used, based on the Arabic language, while the Qur'an was revealed in the language of the Arabs. Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ﴾

«Verily, We have sent it down, an Arabic Qur'an, so that you might use your intellect.»²⁰⁰

And Allah, the Exalted, also says:

﴿ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١١٣﴾ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ

مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴿١١٥﴾ ﴾

«The trustworthy Spirit (Jibrīl) came down with it (the Revelation) upon your heart, so that you would become from the warners, in a clear Arabic tongue.»²⁰¹

Regarding someone's statement, (فلان يسير بعيني) "So-and-so traverses in my eye," no one understands from it that So-and-So is actually traversing inside of his eye.

Also, as for someone's statement, (فلان نخرج على عيني) "So-and-So graduated upon my eye,"²⁰² then no one understands from it that So-and-So graduated while riding on top of his eye!

If someone claimed that these were the intended meanings of these phrases, even the foolish people would laugh at him, not to mention the intelligent people.

²⁰⁰ Sūrah Yūsuf (12):2.

²⁰¹ Sūrah Shu'arā (26):193-195.

²⁰² These phrases are commonly used in Arabic, however they may sound strange to the English reader. The *shaykh* was using clear, everyday examples of how the Arabs use the word "eye" in the context similar to the verses mentioned. Similarly, we say in English, "I'm keeping So-and-So in my eye," or, "Keep an eye on So-and-So, he's trouble." Clearly, no one understands from it that So-and-So is actually inside or on top of anyone's eye from these utterances.

If someone insisted that "Keep your eye on him" absolutely means that you must remove your eye and put it on top of his head, -- even the most foolish of people would laugh at him and consider him to be a joke. No one could say that he really understands speech.

Imagine, if you were to say to someone: "Keep your eye on so-and-so," and they would respond with: "What you really intend is that I have to remove my eye and place it on top of his head?!" This is because I can read into the words and extract their true meanings!" That is ridiculous! That is foolish behavior. If we would react like that with people who speak with us, what about the people who approach the Book of Allah like that? What about the people who approach the book of Allah and say:



«It (Nūh's ship) sailed forth in Our Eyes.»²⁰³

Who in the world would believe that is the real and apparent meaning of the verse? The shipped sailed forth inside of Allah's eyes? Could there be something further from the glory that we are to attribute to Allah? That He is separate from His creation?

Some people say that Allah is in the creation, and this is a *bid'ah* in the *'aqīdah*. This is a mistake, and a horrible statement to make. "Allah is in his creation, enveloped inside the created realm that he created." This is called *ḥulūl*. It is a *bid'ah* in the religion. What about the creation being inside Allah? How much more ridiculous of an idea is that? It is even farther and more ridiculous than the idea of Allah Himself being inside of His creation. We ask Allah for His refuge from these kind of statements and from the people who make them.

Secondly, the first meaning mentioned is totally impossible, and no one who knows Allah and respects Him with the respects He is due, would understand something like this about Him. That is because Allah, the Exalted, is established above His Throne, separate from His Creation. Nothing He created is found within Him, nor is He found within His Creation. Allah is exalted far above such a thing.

When the futility of this becomes known from both a linguistic and contextual standpoint, then it is obvious that the specific meaning and apparent understanding is the second understanding - that the ship sailed while the Eye of Allah watched over it and protected it. Similarly, the upbringing of Mūsā (Moses) was done upon the Eye of Allah, as He watched over him and protected him.

This is the meaning of what some of the *Salaf* said, explaining the meaning of the Verses as, "By My Overseeing," since Allah, the Exalted, protected him with His Eye, which necessitates that He oversaw him. This direct conclusion of the meaning is correct, and it is to be considered part of the meaning, as is known by one's application of the evidences by way of *mutābaqah*, *tadam-mun*, and *iltizām*."

Meaning: The author of the exemplary *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* affirms the attributes of Allah, but if you came to the *tafsīr* of this verse, the eye of Allah, you would find the *tafsīr* as: "With Our Protection, with Our Watching." And one might say: Ibn Kathīr made *ta.wīl* here.

²⁰³ *Sūrah al-Qamar* (54):14.

For someone to explain something with its *lāzim* without negating the Attribute does not mean *ta.wīl*. So for example, if Allah is *Raḥīm*, and He has Mercy, then as a conclusion that must come with that is that the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, the Creator of the *Jannah* and the Hell-Fire, the Creator of Eternal Punishment and Eternal Reward - if He has Mercy on me, it must mean that He wants to reward me and place me in Paradise. So that is *Raḥmah*.

Raḥmah is mercy and we affirm mercy for Allah without saying it does not mean mercy, it means *irādatul-jazā* (the intention to reward someone). There is a difference between the *mu.awal* and the *muthabbit*. The *muthabbit* says: I affirm mercy for Allah, and it necessitates that Allah wants to reward me, that Allah wants my practice of Islam to be easy, and that Allah has legislated ease for me. All of these things are necessarily conclusions once you understand that Allah has mercy.

They do not replace the meaning of Mercy.

Similarly, Allah has Two Eyes, as the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, when talking about the Dajjāl:

«Verily, the Dajjāl is one-eyed, and your Lord is not one-eyed.»

Meaning: He has two eyes that are Complete and Perfect. We affirm this attribute for Him with the name "Eyes." How exactly are the Eyes of Allah? Tafweedh. Allah knows best about the *kayf* of his eyes. The *lāzim* that Allah has Eyes - in context - is that He sees everything we do and that He watches over us.

«It (Nūḥ's ship) sailed forth in Our Eyes» Meaning: Allah watched over the ship and took care of it and protected it from sinking. All of these are understood from the mention of the Eyes in that situation, and it doesn't mean that we negate the meaning of the Eye. So, when you find Ibn Kathīr saying, "The meaning of Allah's Eye, here, is that He oversaw and watched the ship of Noah" does not mean that Ibn Kathīr was saying: We do not ascribe an eye to Allah.

If someone was to say: How can we say that Allah has two eyes, when Allah has said:



«It (Nūḥ's ship) sailed forth in Our Eyes.»²⁰⁴

(أعين) is the plural of (عين), and as you know in Arabic, 'ayn is one and 'aynāni is two, and a'un, or 'uyūn is three. In Arabic, we have the singular, the dual plural, and the plural for three and more. If its two, we do not use plural like a'yun, we say: 'anāni. How is that *Ahlul-Sunnah* have understood that Allah has Two Eyes, and they did not say that He has three or four because the plural used in this verse? Again, it is relevant to the context; it is permissible in the Arabic language to use a plural and to make that plural *mudaaf* to something that informs you that it is only two.

²⁰⁴ *Sūrah al-Qamar* (54):14.

﴿إِنْ نُوْبًا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ﴾

«If you two (wives of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), namely 'Ā.ishah and Ḥafṣah) **turn in repentance to Allah**, (it will be better for you), **your hearts are indeed so inclined** (to oppose what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) likes).»²⁰⁵

Allah uses "Qulūb" and He means "Qalbānī" (two hearts) because of the relevance to the two hearts to the two wives the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). How many hearts do the wives 'Ā.ishah and Ḥafṣah have together? Two.

Does anyone have more than one heart in their body? No. Allah has even negated that in the Qur'an, there is no man with more than one heart in his body. So, then it is permissible for us to say *a'yun*, with the *idaafah* to Allah.

Meaning, it is being ascribed to Allah, so the Attribute of Perfection is understood to us to be two eyes. This is the *maslak* of *Ahlu-Sunnah*, and they said this is understood from the description of the Dajjāl. Allah is not *a'war*, so that is an indication that Allah has two Eyes that are Complete, Perfect, and Befitting His Majesty. We do not say Allah has three Eyes, for it is not a complete attribute, or rather, it is an oddity, and the Attribute of Perfection is two eyes.



²⁰⁵ *Sūrah at-Tahrīm* (66):4.

THE ELEVENTH EXAMPLE

4.11 - ALLAH WILL BE THE SERVANTS' FEET AND HANDS?

Allah, the Exalted, has said in a *ḥadīth qudsī*:

((وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ،
فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ،
وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا،
وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَنْ أَسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأُعِيدَنَّهُ.))

«And My Servant goes on drawing closer to Me with recommended acts of worship until I love him, and if I have loved him, then I will be the hearing that he hears with, the eyesight that he sees with, the hand that he strikes with, and the foot that he walks upon. If he were to ask Me for something, surely I would grant him it. And if he were to seek refuge with me, surely I would give him refuge.»

[**Their claim:** "The apparent meaning of this *ḥadīth* is that Allah becomes the actual hand and foot of one of His Servants, so it must have been explained based on other than its apparent meaning.]

Who, as a person who knows Allah and respects Him as He deserves to be respected, has knowledge of the Book and the *Sunnah*, and the Attributes of Allah, would have that as their description of Him? And believe Allah is physically his eye and that Allah has manifested Himself, not only in the creation, but within a body part of the created being?! Who could possibly understand that this is the meaning of the hadeeth, and thus there is a need to make a *ta.wil* of it? The *Ḥulūliyyah*, the people who say that Allah manifests within His Creation, like the Christians who say that 'Eesaa ibn Maryam was a manifestation of Allah; like the Nation of Islam, who say that Fard Muḥammad was a manifestation of Allah; like the *It-tihādiyyah* who say that everything is Allah and Allah is everything - use this *ḥadīth* as a proof for their math-hab, saying that Allah can be your sight, your hearing, your foot, and your hand.

This *ḥadīth* is known as the *ḥadīth* of al-Walī, and its nickname is derived from its very beginning;

((مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي
بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ.))

«Whoever has animosity for a *Walī* of mine,
then I declare war upon him.»

So now, the context of the *ḥadīth* is the *walī* (the righteous man who is close to Allah). The *ḥadīth* is an encouragement for us to become *awliyā*. The *walī* is not an old person with a grey beard who dedicates his entire life to the *'ibādah* of Allah. The *walī* is every Muslim who fears Allah, honors His rulings, practices his religion. This *ḥadīth* shows us what it necessitates to become one. You can become a *walī*, for example, by reading *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, learning the obligations, and implementing what you learn. A person can have little knowledge, but can become a *walī*, i.e. whenever he learns something, he implements it and he uses it to get closer to Allah.

In addition to Allah waging war upon your enemies, Allah will love you. In another *ḥadīth*, it has been reported that if Allah loves you, it will be called out to the residents of the heavens, "**Verily Allah loves so-and-so, so love him!**" All the residents of the heavens and those on earth will love you, and acceptance will be laid out for you upon the earth and granted to you. These are the signs of the *walī*.

And in this very *ḥadīth*, if Allah loves you, He will be the hearing that you hear with, the sight that you see with, and the hand that you strike with, and the foot that you walk upon.

The first thing that comes to mind, for one who understands Allah, is that Allah will maintain and preserve his sight, He will protect him from seeing things that are harmful to him and his religion; from seeing the books of innovation, from seeing acts of disobedience. Allah will protect His hearing and preserve His hearing in accordance to what is loved by Allah. He will hear the things that are pleasing to Allah, just as he sees the things that are pleasing to Allah. He will listen to the Qur'an and he will love it. He will listen to knowledge being spread and he will love it. His ears will all be for the obedience of Allah, protected by Him.

His hands will only stretch out for Allah's sake. He only gives for Allah's sake. He withholds for Allah's sake. He only strikes physically for Allah's sake. He only defends for Allah's sake. He only walks towards things that are pleasing to Allah. He only walks in a way that is earning the pleasure of Allah. He does not walk towards disobedience. The *walī* is in need of this additional protection because every time a person gets closer to Allah, He becomes the subject of *shayṭān*'s attack even more. Every time a person is weakened because he listens to the *shayṭān*, the *shayṭān* distracts him from the path of Allah. He has less work to do...because he has won him over. The servant of Allah who shuns the whispers of *shayṭān* and is diligent in worshipping Allah is the one the *shayṭān* has to focus upon even more.

So the closer you get to Allah, the more focused and more determined the enemy of mankind is in leading you astray and the more protection you will need. This is from the bounties of Allah, that is, Allah has given him different kinds of protection.

The response: This *ḥadīth* is indeed authentic. Al-Bukhārī collected it in his 'Chapter of Humbleness,' the thirty-eighth chapter of '*The Book of Raqā'iq*.'²⁰⁶

And the *Salaf*, *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, understood it based on its apparent meaning, and applied it literally. But what exactly is the apparent meaning of this hadeeth?

²⁰⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 6502.

Can it be said that its apparent meaning is that Allah, the Exalted, becomes the actual hearing, eyesight, hands, and feet of the one who gains nearness to Him? Or can it be said that the apparent meaning is that Allah, the Exalted, strengthens and makes the one who draws near to Him firm in his hearing, eyesight, hands, and feet, so that his actions are all for Allah's sake and done according to His Commands?

No doubt, the first idea is not the apparent meaning, nor could it be understood from the context by anyone who contemplates over the *hadith*, since the *hadith* itself would prevent this understanding from two angles.

Firstly, Allah has said:

((وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ ..
وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنِ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأُعِيذَنَّهُ.))

«And My Servant goes on drawing closer to Me with recommended acts of worship until I love him .. If he were to ask Me for something, surely I would grant him it. And if he were to seek refuge with me, surely I would give him refuge.»

He has affirmed the existence of two entities: a worshipper and also someone that is worshipped. He has affirmed someone who draws near and also someone who is drawn near to. Likewise, there is mention of someone who loves and someone who is loved, someone who calls upon another and someone who is called upon, someone who gives and someone who is requested to give, someone who seeks refuge and someone who refuge is sought from, and someone who is granted refuge and someone who grants refuge.

Thus, the entire context of the *hadith* shows clearly that there are two completely separate entities being referred to. This prevents us from understanding that one of them is an attribute of the other, or one of its components.

Secondly, the hearing of the one who draws near to Allah, his eyesight, hands, and feet are all attributes or parts of a created being that did not even exist (until it was created). So how could any person of intellect understand that the Creator, the First One with none before Him, could become the physical hearing, eyesight, hand, and foot of a created thing? This kind of thought makes a person's soul quiver and cannot be visualized, nor can the tongue even begin to mention it, even as a remote possibility!

Then how could anyone say that it is the apparent meaning of the *hadith* and that we have explained it based on other than its apparent meaning?! Glorified are You, O Allah, and the praise is Yours! We cannot enumerate the praise You deserve, You are as You have praised Your own Self!

When the futility and impossible nature of the first idea becomes clear, then the correct position must be the second one - that Allah, the Exalted, makes the one who draws near to Him firm in his hearing and eyesight, and in the actions of his hands and feet. Everything he hears, sees, and does with his hands and feet is for Allah, the Exalted, done sincerely for Him, while seeing His Help, according to His Legislation.

By this, his actions are done with total sincerity, seeking Allah's Assistance, and following His Legislation. This is the epitome of success.

This is how the *Salaf* explained it, and it is an explanation that is in accordance with the apparent wording, as specified by the context. There is no perversion of the texts in this understanding, nor is there a departure from their apparent meanings, and for Allah is the praise.



THE TWELFTH EXAMPLE

4.12 - ALLAH RUNS TO HIS SERVANTS?

Allah, the Exalted, has said in a *ḥadīth qudsī*:

((مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي شِبْرًا مِنْهُ ذِرَاعًا،
وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بَاعًا
وَمَنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً))

«Whoever draws near to Me by a hand-span, I will draw near to him by a cubit.²⁰⁷ Whoever draws near to Me by a cubit, I will draw near to him by an entire arms-pan. Whoever comes to Me walking, I will come to him running.»

[**Their claim:** The apparent meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that Allah draws near to His servant, walks, and runs like a human being. So then it must have been explained based on other than its apparent meaning."]

The response: This *ḥadīth* is authentic. Muslim collected it in his 'Book of *Thikr* and *Du'ā*.' on the authority of Abū Tharr (may Allah be pleased with him).²⁰⁸ Muslim also collected the same *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, as did al-Bukhaaree in the fifteenth chapter of his 'Book of *Tawḥīd*.'²⁰⁹

This *ḥadīth*, like many others, is a proof that Allah does certain chosen actions, and He does whatever He likes. Other examples of this are found in the following Verses:

﴿ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
أَجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ﴾

«And if My Servants ask you about Me, verily I am close,
I answer the prayer of the one who supplicates,
whenever he calls on Me (alone).»²¹⁰

Allah says, addressing the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace: «And if my Servants ask about Me, verily I am close.» He does not say: «And tell them, verily I am close.» This is an

²⁰⁷ **Cubit:** a measure of length equal to the distance between one's elbow and the tips of his fingers.

²⁰⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2687.

²⁰⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no.6970 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no.2675.

²¹⁰ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):186.

amazing point that gestures to the richness of Arabic and the Qur'anic passage. Allah did not use His Messenger as a medium to convey to us that He is close; He is so close to us that the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, was removed and He, the Most High, directly addressed us, showing His Closeness.

﴿ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ۚ ﴾

«And (when) your Lord has come with the Angels,
rank after rank.»²¹¹

﴿ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ ﴾

﴿ أَوْ يَأْتِيكَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ ۙ ﴾

«Are they looking for anything other than the Angels to come to them,
or (are they looking for) your Lord to come,
or some of the Signs of your Lord.»²¹²

﴿ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ۚ ﴾

«The All-Merciful ascended the Throne.»²¹³

Allah has ascended above His Throne. We ascend - from the first floor to the second floor. Does Allah Ascend the way we ascend? **No.** He Ascends **in a Perfect and Complete way that is not like the way we ascend.**

And the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, said:

((يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ ..))

«Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven
when only the last third of the night remains...»²¹⁴

((مَا تَصَدَّقَ أَحَدٌ بِصَدَقَةٍ مِنْ طَيِّبٍ - وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ -))

﴿ إِلَّا أَخَذَهَا الرَّحْمَنُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴾

«No one gives in charity, except that the Most Merciful takes it with His

²¹¹ Sūrah al-Fajr (89):22.

²¹² Sūrah al-An'ām (6):158.

²¹³ Sūrah Tā-Hā (20):5.

²¹⁴ Collected by al-Bukhārī, no. 45 and Muslim, no. 758.

Right (Hand), and Allah only accepts pure things.»²¹⁵

Will we read these *aḥādīth* and understand Allah to be a human being and have actions of human beings? Or are we followers of the *salaf* and the Prophet who would never dare to understand their Lord in a way that resembles a human being?

There are many other verses and narrations that prove that Allah does choose certain chosen actions whenever He likes.

As for Allah's Statement in this narration, that He will draw near to the Servant, and that He will come to him running, then the *salaf*, *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, applied these statements based on their literal and apparent meanings that are befitting to Allah, the Exalted, without *takyīf* (seeking after their specific details) or *tamthīl* (likening them to the actions of created beings).

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

As for His Descending and His Closeness to some of His Servants, then this is affirmed by those who affirm Allah's chosen Actions, His Coming on the Day of Standing, His Descending and Ascending above the Throne. This is the position of the *imāms* of the *salaf*, the well-known *imāms* of Islam, *Ahlul-Ḥadīth*. Their statements about this are widespread.²¹⁶

What prevents us from saying that Allah draws near to His servants however He likes, while He remains above them? And what would prevent Him from coming however He likes, without *takyīf* or *tamthīl*? Is this not from His Completeness, that He does whatever He likes in a way that is befitting to Him?

Some people have said that what is referred to in His Statement, «**I will come to him running**» is the speed of His Acceptance of their actions, His Turning to His Servants who draw near to Him with actions of the heart and limbs, and that Allah's Reward for them is more complete than the actual deed they performed.

What led them to say this is that Allah, the Exalted, has said: "**Whoever comes to me walking...**» And it is well-known that whoever draws near to Allah, hoping to gain nearness to Him, does not do so by walking alone. Rather, sometimes it is done by walking, like going to the mosque, performing *Ḥajj*, or fighting in *Jihād* in Allah's Way, etc., and sometimes it is done by bowing and prostrating, among other ways.

It has been authentically reported that the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, said:

((أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ))

«**The closest position a servant gets to His Lord is when he prostrates.**»²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Collected by Muslim, no. 1014 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him.

²¹⁶ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (5/466).

²¹⁷ Collected by Muslim, no.482 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, with the additional phrase at the end:

((... فَأَكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ .))

So, the Muslim who offers two *rak'ahs* of optional prayer is drawing closer to Allah. We can say figuratively: "He is walking to Allah. He is drawing near to Allah." We do not mean he is physically moving here, we do not mean he is walking, we mean he is doing an action which draws him closer to Allah. So, likewise, we do not have to understand that Allah is walking or running. We can understand that the *ḥādīth* is talking about offering deeds and deeds being accepted, and that is the apparent meaning.

Other times, a servant draws near to Allah, the Exalted, hoping to gain nearness to Him, while he is laying down, as Allah says:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ﴾

«Those who remember Allah standing, sitting,
and laying on their sides...»²¹⁸

And the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, said to 'Imrān ibn Ḥusayn:

((صَلِّ قَائِمًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَقَاعِدًا،

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَىٰ جَنْبٍ))

«Pray standing. If you are not able, then pray sitting.
If you are not able to do that, then pray laying down on your side..»²¹⁹

Thus, the meaning of the *ḥādīth* is that Allah, the Exalted, rewards the servant based on his actions, and that whoever is truthful in setting himself towards his Lord, even if he is slow, then Allah will reward him based on that with a reward that is better and more complete than his original action.

This may be understood as the apparent meaning of the text in light of a *Shari'ah* implication understood from the context. In this case, to explain it this way is not a departure from the apparent meaning, nor is it a perversion of the texts like the *ta.wīl* of the people who deny the Attributes of Allah. They only do this with no proof against *Ahlu-Sunnah*, and for Allah is the praise.

So those who hold this position have something to stand on, however, the first statement is more apparent, safer, and more in line with the *math-hab* of the *salaf*.

A response can be offered to what they say about the idea of drawing near to Allah, the Exalted, that it is not done by walking alone. They claim this proves that the literal meaning was not intended.²²⁰

«...Supplicate a lot (when prostrating).»

²¹⁸ *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* [(3):191]

²¹⁹ Collected by al-Bukhārī, no.1117.

The response is that walking has only been mentioned in the *ḥādīth* as a general example, not that drawing near to Allah is limited to acts that include walking. Thus, the *ḥādīth* mentions, "Whoever draws near to Me by walking, with a form of worship that includes walking as an action done before it, like walking to the mosque for Prayer, or as an integral part of the worship, like *tawāf* or going between the hills of *aṣ-Ṣafā* and *al-Marwah* (during *Ḥajj* or '*Umrah*), etc..."

And Allah, the Exalted, knows best.



²²⁰ It may seem that we made *ta.wīl* in this case. Someone may say: I understand what you have said here, the apparent meaning must be relative to Allah, the One we are speaking of, but it seems like you have made *ta.wīl*." However, we made *ta.wīl* with a proof.

Some of the scholars of *Ahlus-Sunnah* say: "We have made *ta.wīl* of the *ḥādīth*, but with a proof."

We say: «**There is nothing like unto Him.**» So we have a proof to make *ta.wīl*. This is what some of the scholars have to say about this.

However, the line of argument by *Shaykh* al-'Uthaymin is that we have not made *ta.wīl*. So if someone was to say, we have made *ta.wīl*, this is the response offered by the author.

THE THIRTEENTH EXAMPLE

4.13 - THE COMPANIONS' PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE TO ALLAH?

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ﴾

«Verily, those who pledge allegiance to you
are actually pledging allegiance to Allah.
Allah's Hand is over their hands.»²²¹

[**Their claim:** The apparent meaning of this verse is that Allah's Hand was directly on top of their hands, touching them. So then it must have been explained based on other than its apparent meaning.]

The response: This Verse consists of two sentences.

The first sentence is His Statement:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ﴾

«Verily, those who pledge allegiance to you
are actually pledging allegiance to Allah.»²²²

The *salaf*, *Ahlu-Sunnah*, understood it according to its literal and apparent meaning. It clearly shows that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, used to pledge allegiance to the Prophet, may Allah raise his hand and grant him peace, himself, as Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ﴾

«Verily, Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged
allegiance to you (Muhammad) under the tree.»²²³

And as for His Statement:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ﴾

«They are only pledging allegiance to Allah.»²²⁴

²²¹ Sūrah al-Fat-ḥ (48):10.

²²² Sūrah al-Fat-ḥ (48):10.

²²³ Sūrah al-Fat-ḥ (48):18.

²²⁴ Sūrah al-Fat-ḥ (48):10.

Then it is not possible for anyone to understand that they were physically pledging allegiance to Allah Himself. No one could claim that this the apparent meaning since it directly contradicts the first part of the Verse, as well as the historical reality of the situation. This is not a meaning that befits Allah.

Rather, Allah made their pledge of allegiance to the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, a pledge to Himself, since His Messenger had accepted their pledge of allegiance to fight in *Jihād* in the Way of the One who sent him, as he was His Messenger and the one who conveyed things from him.

Similarly, obedience to the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, is obedience to the One who sent him, due to His Statement:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ﴾

«Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah.»²²⁵

So when Allah had called the pledge given to the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, a pledge to Himself, it was something to honor the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, and aid him, and to confirm the importance of that pledge and its great status, and also to honor those who gave the pledge. This is the apparent meaning which is not hidden from anyone.

The second sentence is the Statement of Allah, the Exalted:

﴿يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ﴾

«Allah's Hand is over their hands.»²²⁶

This is also to be understood based on its literal and apparent meaning. Indeed, Allah's Hand was truly above their hands, as His Hand is one of His Attributes, and He is above them, over His Throne. So, yes, His Hand was really over their hands. This is the literal and apparent meaning of the text. It is a confirmation that indeed the pledge of allegiance to the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, was a pledge to Allah, the Exalted. This does not at all imply that Allah's Hand was with theirs in the same place, touching their hands.

Don't we say: "The sky is above us," whilst we are separate from it and it is far above us?

Thus, Allah's Hand was above their hands when they pledged allegiance to His Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, while He, the Exalted One, was separate from them and far above them. It is not possible for someone to understand that Allah's Hand means the Prophet's Hand, or to claim that this is the apparent meaning of the text, as Allah, the Exalted, had ascribed the Hand to Himself, and described it as being "over their hands." The Prophet's hand did not used to be over their hands when he accepted their pledges of allegiance, rather he would extend it to them and take hold of their hands like a normal

²²⁵ *Sūrah an-Nisā* (4):80.

²²⁶ *Soorah al-Fat-ḥ* (48):10.

handshake. So his hand, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace), would be with their hands, not above them.



A REFUTATION OF THE *ASH'ARĪS*

If someone says: "We are aware of the futility of the *math-hab* of the people who make *ta'wīl* of the Attributes, and it is well known that the *Ash'arīs*²²⁷ are from those who make *ta'wīl* of the Attributes..

[1] But how could their *math-hab* be false while it has been said that they make up about ninety-five percent of the Muslim population?

[2] And how could their *math-hab* be false when their founding role model was Abul-Ḥasan al-*Ash'arīs*?²²⁸

[3] And how could their *math-hab* be false while So-and-So and So-and-So are *Ash'arī* scholars, and they are well known for their sincerity to Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and the common folk?



²²⁷ They are a group of people who ascribe themselves to Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī. In his early part of his life, he was a *Mu'tazili*, among those who deny Attributes of Allah, explain them away, and negate the meanings found in the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*. He then knew this was incorrect and that the texts of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* were violated with this belief. So, he made progress and reached a middle point between the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Sunnah*, where he affirmed some of Allah's Attributes and explained away others. When he realized that was in contradiction with the Book and the *Sunnah*, he moved on and completed his rectification and repentance from innovated beliefs.

²²⁸ **Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī** [d.324H]: One of the early scholars of *Ahlu-Sunnah*. He fell into innovation in the early part of his life, and later corrected himself and became a true role model for those who repent from innovation. He wrote many books against the people of innovation, clarifying the falsehood of the innovations he had fallen into.

THE FIRST QUESTION

5.1 - "HOW COULD THE MATH-HAB OF THE *ASH'ARĪS* BE FALSE WHILE IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THEY MAKE UP ABOUT NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE MUSLIM POPULATION?"

The response: We do not agree that the *Ash'arīs* make up this much of the Muslim population, in light of all the existing sects out there. This claim needs to be substantiated with evidences of a proper and precise count.

Even if we accepted that they make up this amount of even more, this would not mean that they are protected from error by way of it,²²⁹ since it is the consensus of all the Muslims that protects us from error, not just the agreement of the majority of them.²³⁰

Furthermore, it is established that the Muslims were united a long time ago upon the opposite of what the people of *ta'wīl* are upon. The righteous salaf are the very core of this nation. They were the Companions, the very best generation, their students who followed them in righteousness, and the *imāms* of guidance after them. They were all united on the affirmation of the Names and Attributes that Allah had affirmed for Himself and what His Messenger had affirmed for Him. They also agreed that the texts are to be understood according to their apparent meanings that are befitting for Allah, the Exalted, without *tahreef* (distorting them), *ta'tīl* (negating them), *takyīf* (seeking after their specific details), or *tamthīl* (likening them to the attributes of the Creation).

They were the best generations due to the statement of the Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace,²³¹ and their consensus on an issue is a binding proof, since it represents the true

²²⁹ The fact that the majority of the Muslims believe something does not mean it is correct.

In the Qur'an, Allah mentions the majority as being disbelievers, unthankful, and do not use their intellects. And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) informed us that out of every one thousand of the descendants of Ādam, 999 would be in the Hell-Fire. The majority of the people would be punished. So, is the majority a proof now? In this light, no.

²³⁰ The author is referring to the *ḥadīth* related by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others, on the authority of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him):

((إِنَّ أُمَّتِي لَا تَجْتَمِعُ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ))

«Verily, my nation will not unite upon guidance.»

Al-Albānī authenticated it in his checking of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, no.173. See also: *Silsilatul-Aḥādīthiḍ-Ḍa'īfah*, no.2896.

²³¹ The author is referring to the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him):

((خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ))

«The best of the people are my generation, then those after them,
and then those after them.»

It was collected by al-Bukhārī, no.2652 and Muslim, no.2533.

understanding and application of the Book and the Sunnah. Proofs of their consensus on this issue have been presented in the fourth principle of Section Four, 'Principles Concerning the Textual Evidence for Allah's Names and Attributes.'



THE SECOND QUESTION

5.2 - "HOW COULD THE *MATH-HAB* OF THE *ASH'ARĪS* BE FALSE WHEN THEIR FOUNDING ROLE MODEL WAS ABUL-ḤASAN AL-*ASH'ARĪ*?"

The response: Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and others were from the early imaams of the Muslims who did not claim to be perfect. They did not become *imāms* in the Religion until after they had realized their own places and kept to them. They had such great honor in their hearts for the Book and the *Sunnah*, so much so that they deserved to be called *imāms*.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا
وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ﴾

«And We made some of them *imāms* who guided by Our Order, as they were patient and had conviction in Our Verses.»²³²

And Allah has said about Ibrāhīm:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾
شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ أَجْتَبَهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾﴾

«Verily, Ibrāhīm was an *ummah*, devoted to Allah, pure, and he was not from the polytheists, (he was) thankful for His blessings, so He (Allah) chose him and guided him to a straight path.»²³³

However, the later generations that claim to follow him do not actually follow him in a way that is proper, since Abul-Ḥasan went through three stages of belief.

The first stage was the stage of *i'tizāl*, when he had embraced the *math-hab* of the *Mu'tazilah* and remained upon it for forty years, affirming it and debating on behalf of it. He later left this *math-hab* and openly exposed the misguidance of the *Mu'tazilah*, and wrote many refutations against them.²³⁴

The second stage was when he was between *i'tizāl* and the *Sunnah*. During this stage, he followed the way of Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh b. Sa'īd b. Kullāb.²³⁵

²³² *Sūrah as-Sajdah* (32):24.

²³³ *Sūrah an-Naḥl* (16):120-121.

²³⁴ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (4/72).

²³⁵ There is a sect called *Kullābiyyah* named after him.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Al-Ash'arī, and those like him, were between the ways of the *salaf* and the *Jahmiyyah*, they took some correct things from *Ahlu-Sunnah*, and they took some principles of rhetoric from the *Jahmiyyah*, thinking them to be correct, but they were not."²³⁶

The third stage was when he embraced the *math-hab* of *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Ḥadīth*, following *Imām Aḥmad* b. Ḥanbal, as he explained in his book, *al-Ibānah 'an Uṣūlid-Diyaanaah*. This was one of the last books he wrote.

He said in the introduction of the book:

He (the Prophet) came to us with an honored book. Falsehood cannot approach it head on (and alter it), nor can falsehood come to it from the back (by adding things to it). It is Revelation from the Wise and Praiseworthy One.²³⁷ The knowledge of the ancients is found in it, combined with the completion of the laws and the religion. Thus, it is the Straight path of Allah, and His firm rope. Whoever grabs hold of it will be saved, and whoever leaves it goes astray and deteriorates in ignorance. In His Book, Allah has urged us to hold firmly to the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace. Allah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ﴾

«And whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it;
And whatever he forbids you from, then abstain from it.»²³⁸

..So He ordered them to obey His Messenger, just as He ordered them to obey Him. He called on them to hold firm to the *Sunnah* of His Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, just as He ordered them to act according to His Book. Many of those whose misery has overtaken them have tossed the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, behind their backs, and the *shaytān* has overpowered them. They have retreated to the ranks of those who came before them and blindly followed them in their Religion. They follow their ways and reject the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace. They have rejected it and turned away from it, inventing lies against Allah. Verily, they have gone astray, while they were not people adhering to right guidance.²³⁹

He, may Allah have mercy upon him, then mentioned some of the principles of the people of innovation, alluded to their futility, and then said:

If someone says: "You have rejected the positions of the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah*, the *Ḥurūriyyah*, the *Rāfiḍah*, and the *Murji'ah*. So then would you inform us of the position that you hold and the Religion that you worship Allah upon?"

²³⁶ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (6/471).

²³⁷ Refer to *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* (41):40-41. The translation of this passage is based on the meanings of the verse mentioned by aṭ-Ṭabari in his *Tafsīr*.

²³⁸ *Sūrah al-Ḥashr* (59):7.

²³⁹ Refer to *al-Ibānah 'an Uṣūlid-Diyaanaah*, p.35-36.

In this book, he rejected the various sects and beliefs, and then he established what his true beliefs were, which are in line with the Book of Allah. One of the ways that you can be absolutely clear with your beliefs is that you first reject falsehood and then affirm the truth. Meaning: when you say *Lā ilāha illa Allah*, you reject something before you affirm that Allah is your object of worship.

﴿فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمَرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ﴾

«Whoever disbelieves in *tāghūt* and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.»²⁴⁰

Some people say that we should only speak favorably about things; that we should speak about things we believe in, and we should not speak against what we do not believe in.

This is falsehood. Allah's Book is full of negations and refutations and identifying and exposing the false beliefs of the false claimants, about His Majesty, His Oneness, etc.

Both are needed for clarity. So when you say I am a Muslim, you are saying: I am not a *mushrik*. When you say I am a follower of a *Sunnah*, you are saying: I am not a follower of innovation and deviant ideas. When you say: I am a follower of the way of the *salaf*, that means I am not a follower of the innovations of the *khalaf* (the later generations).

So, you cannot affirm something without negating its opposite, it comes hand-in-hand. You must declare yourself from *shirk* to be upon *tawhīd*.

So, any person of *tawhīd* who is honest in his claim and in his ascription to *tawhīd*, must negate this claim and must speak against it and nullify it and declare himself free of it and from the people who make these kinds of claims. This is our *dīn*. This is clarity and this is *tawhīd*.

-This is one of the things Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī accomplished in his book. He set out to refute his previous ideas, the sources of his previous ideas, similar *math-thab*, all of the sects of innovation that he either previously believed in or didn't but he knew them to be falsehood.

So they asked, if you are refuting all these ideas, what is it that you believe in?

The response: The position that we hold and the Religion that we worship Allah upon is adherence to the Book of our Lord, the Exalted, and the *Sunnah* of our Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, and what was reported from the *tābi'ūn* and the *imāms* of *ḥadīth*. By taking this way, we are protected from straying. And we speak with what Abū 'Abdillāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal spoke with, may Allah beautify his face, raise his status, and increase his reward. Whoever opposes his position to be abandoned, since he was the virtuous *imām* and the complete leader.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):256.

²⁴¹ Refer to *al-Ibānah 'an Uṣūl ad-Diyānah*, p.43.

He went on to praise *Imām Aḥmad* because of the truth that Allah spread by way of his work.²⁴²

He then mentioned the affirmation of Allah's Attributes, along with issues related to *Qadr*, intercession, and other things. He confirmed all of these things with textual and intellectual evidences.

Those from the later generations that ascribe to his name [calling themselves *Ash'arīs*] only take from the second stage of his *'aqīdah*, when he was between *Ahlus-Sunnah* and the *Jahmiyyah*. They explain away almost all of the Attributes, only affirming the seven mentioned in the line of poetry:

حَيُّ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ وَالْكَلامُ لَهُ إِرَادَةٌ وَكَذَلِكَ السَّمْعُ وَالْبَصَرُ

**Living, Knowledge, Capable, and He has Speech,
A Will, and also (He has) Hearing and Seeing²⁴³**

[And when they make *ta.wīl*, they make *ta.wīl* of everything to have a meaning that goes back to one of these seven basic attributes that can be affirmed for Allah.]

With this, they still have differences between themselves, and other differences between themselves and *Ahlus-Sunnah*, about their way of affirming the Attributes they affirm.

After referring to the *Ash'arīs* and what is said about them, *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah said:

And when they say *Ash'arīs*, they mean those who negate the Attributes that cannot be deduced rationally and are only established by texts of revelation.²⁴⁴ Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī himself, the author of the book *al-Ibānah* that was written in the last years of his life, while nothing came from him after that to contradict what is in this book, is to be considered to be from *Ahlus-Sunnah*.²⁴⁵

He (Ibn Taymiyyah) also said:

As for *Ash'ariyyah* (the true teachings of Abul-Ḥasan), then it is the opposite of what they are upon, as their position necessitates *ta.tīl*, and that Allah is neither inside of the world nor outside of it. It also necessitates that all of Allah's Speech carries the exact same meaning, so *Āyatul-Kursī*²⁴⁶ carries the exact meaning as the Verse about debts,²⁴⁷ and the Torah (given to Mūsā) and the Injīl (given to 'Isā) is all one. The corruption of this is known naturally to everyone.²⁴⁸

And his student, Ibn al-Qayyim, said:

²⁴² The praise of *Imām Aḥmad* here, did not mean the dispraise of other scholars or blind fanaticism, but rather giving him respect because of the great dedication and contributions he made to the Islamic sciences and *'aqīdah* of Muslims.

²⁴³ The seven Attributes that the *Ash'arīs* affirm are [1]: Life, [2]: Knowledge, [3] Capability, [4] Speech, [5] Wanting, [6] Hearing, and [7] Seeing.

²⁴⁴ Some Attributes can be deduced rationally, a person could reflect and affirm them without any text, like Allah's Greatness, His Wisdom, or all-encompassing Capabilities. Others cannot be rationally deduced and can only be affirmed by revelation, like Allah's Shin, His Descending, etc.

²⁴⁵ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī*, no. 6/359.

²⁴⁶ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):255.

²⁴⁷ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):282.

²⁴⁸ Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwī* (6/310).

وَاعْلَمَ بِأَنَّ طَرِيقَهُمْ عَكْسُ الطَّرِيقِ قِي الْمُسْتَقِيمِ لِمَنْ لَهُ عَيْنَانِ

**And know that their way is the opposite of the
Straight way for the one who possesses two eyes²⁴⁹**

He also said later in the same poem:

فَاعْجَبْ لِعُمَيَّانِ الْبَصَائِرِ أَبْصَرُوا كَوْنِ الْمُقَلِّدِ صَاحِبِ الْبُرْهَانِ

**So be amazed at the blind men with no sight who view
the blind follower as a person of evidences..**

وَرَأَوْهُ بِالتَّقْلِيدِ أَوْلَى مِنْ سِوَا هُوَ بِعَيْرِ مَا بَصَرَ وَلَا بُرْهَانَ

**And they hold him to be more deserving of being followed blindly than
others, without having any insight or evidences..**

وَعَمُوا عَنِ الْوَحْيَيْنِ إِذْ لَمْ يَفْهَمُوا مَعْنَاهُمَا عَجَبًا لِذِي الْحِرْمَانِ

**And they were blind to the two revelations, as they did not understand
their meanings. How strange for someone who is deprived..²⁵⁰**

Muḥammad al-Āmin ash-Shinqīṭī said:

Know that many people have erred with regard to this, too many to count from the later generations. They falsely assumed that the apparent meanings of *Istiwā'* (Ascension) and the Hand that comes to one's mind, for example, from the Qur'anic Verses, is that Allah's Attributes and Actions are similar to those of His Creation. They say: "We must explain all these texts based on other than their apparent meanings.

And it is not hidden from anyone with the slightest bit of intellect that the reality of this statement is that (they are saying that) Allah has described Himself in His Book with things that, based on the apparent meanings that first come to mind, are considered disbelief in Allah and statements that do not befit Him.

And it was the Prophet, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, that was addressed with:

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ﴾

**«And We have sent down upon you the Reminder, so you could
clarify to the people what has been sent down to them.»²⁵¹**

²⁴⁹ Refer to *an-Nūniyyah* (2/551), printed along with the comments of *Shaykh Sāliḥ al-Fawzān*.

²⁵⁰ Refer to *an-Nūniyyah* (2/554), printed along with the comments of *Shaykh Sāliḥ al-Fawzān*.

²⁵¹ *Sūrah an-Naḥl* (16):44.

And he did not clarify one letter of what they are saying. The scholars who are relied upon have agreed on a principle - that it was not permissible for him, may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace, to delay clarification beyond the time of need for it. This applies even more so to issues of religious belief, especially with regards to texts that, as they claim, have an apparent meaning of disbelief and misguidance. It went on like this (in their belief) until they themselves came along in the later times and made their claims that Allah has given Himself descriptions that have unbecomingly apparent meanings, while the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), kept this hidden - that the apparent meanings were disbelief and misguidance that must be reinterpreted..! All of this is from their own whims, with no support from the Book or the *Sunnah*. Glorified are you, O Allah, for this is a great blasphemy! And it is not hidden from anyone that this claim is from the worst kinds of misguidance and the greatest lies against Allah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

And the truth that no one doubts, not even the least intelligent of people, is that each and every description that Allah has described Himself with, or that His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) described Him with, must be free of any similarity to His Creation. This is the apparent meaning that comes to mind for the one who has the slightest amount of faith in his heart.

..Could any intelligent person deny that the meaning that first comes to mind is based on the fact that the Creator is unlike the Creation, with regards to His actual Presence, and with regards to His Attributes as well? No, by Allah! Only an arrogant person could deny this!

The only thing that could lead such an ignorant liar to claim that the apparent meanings of the verses about the Attributes are unbecomingly to Allah, and that they are disbelief and *tashbih*, is the filth that has built up within his own heart because of his assumptions that the Creator is similar to the creation. Then, his false assumption of *tashbih* leads him to reject the Attributes of Allah and abandon having faith in them. All of this while Allah, the Exalted, is the very One who has described Himself with these things! So this ignoramus was first a *mushab-bih*, and then he became a *mu'aṭ-ṭil*, believing things unbecomingly about Allah from beginning to end.

And if his heart truly knew Allah, the exalted, as it should have and if he had glorified Allah as he deserves, staying away from the filth of *tashbih*, then the first thing that would have come to his mind would have been that Allah's Attributes are the epitome of Perfection and Majesty. This would have snuffed any doubts that could have come to the *mushab-bih* about Allah's Attributes being similar to that of his creation, and it would have caused his heart to be prepared to believe in Allah's Majestic and Perfect Attributes that have been established in the Noble Qur'an and the authentic *Sunnah*, while firmly rejecting any and all similarities between Allah and the creation. Allah says:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

«There is nothing like Him,
and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.»²⁵²

²⁵² Sūrah ash-Shūrā (42):11.

[End of quote from ash-Shinqīṭī].²⁵³

And even the original Ash'arī, Abul-Ḥasan that is, was upon the *math-hab* of *Ahlu-Sunnah* in the last part of his life, which is: To affirm the Attributes that Allah has affirmed for His Own self in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), without any *tahrīf* (distorting them), *ta'tīl* (negating them), *takyīf* (seeking after their specific details), or *tamthīl* (likening them to the creation).

And the *math-hab* of a person is his later position (when there are opposing positions), especially once he has clarified his previous position, as is the case with Abul-Ḥasan. This is known from his own words in his book, *al-Ibānah*.

Based on this, true following of him would necessitate following his final position, which was the *math-hab* of *Ahlul-Ḥadīth was-Sunnah*. It is the correct *math-hab* that is obligatory to follow, as Abul-Ḥasan did himself.²⁵⁴

To summarize, the *math-hab* of a person must be considered the latter of his two positions that he held on an issue. If a person retracts an earlier statement, whether it is from guidance to misguidance, or from misguidance to guidance, his true position is that which he clarified himself from. If he rejected his earlier statement, then we do not hold him accountable for that; rather we hold him accountable for his position now.

So Abul-Ḥasan recanted from *ta.wīl*, rejected it, and affirmed the Attributes without any *kayf*, without *tashbih*, and without *ta.ṭīl*. This is his *math-hab*.

²⁵³ Refer to *Aḍ-wā al-Bayān* (2/319)

Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī, may Allah preserve him, comments here: "What a great line of argument from an outstanding scholar whose virtue is known from his book *Aḍ-wā al-Bayān* and others. In his writings, may Allah have mercy upon him, he defended the way of the *salaf* with regards to the Names and Attributes and disproved the arguments of those who opposed their way.

²⁵⁴ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī, may Allah preserve him, concludes here:

So it is upon all those who claim to follow the way of Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and ascribe to his teachings as their *imām* who they name themselves after to speak bravely with the words that Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī spoke with and take the positions that he took, if he truly is their *imām*. Otherwise, they are known to be false claimants who are astray and lead others astray, or perhaps ignoramuses who do not even know who Abul-Ḥasan was, let alone the correct positions and upright beliefs he ended up with.



THE THIRD QUESTION

5.3 - "HOW COULD THE *MATH-HAB* OF THE *ASH'ARĪS* BE FALSE WHILE SO-AND-SO AND SO-AND-SO²⁵⁵ ARE *ASH'ARĪ* SCHOLARS?"

HOW COULD THEIR *MATH-HAB* BE WRONG WHILE THEY ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR SINCERITY TO ALLAH, HIS BOOK, HIS MESSENGER, THE LEADER OF THE MUSLIMS AND THE COMMON FOLK?"

The response: This can be answered from two angles.

Firstly, the truth is not to be judged based on the people. Rather, the people are to be judged based on truth.²⁵⁶

[No matter the status a person reaches, he is not infallible or protected from error. The only one protected from error was the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Aboo Bakr as an individual was not protected from error, and 'Umar, second best of this *Ummah*, was not protected from error as an individual. Collectively, their consensus was protected from error. So, no *imām* who has reached a status could be used as a proof in of himself, rather any scholar, no matter how big the status is subject to being incorrect based on comparing his statements to the Book and the Sunnah].

This is the correct way to measure the affairs, even when the status and position of some people will cause their statements to be accepted more easily. This is similar to how we accept the reports of a reliable person, and how we withhold from accepting an openly disobedient person's reports. However, this is not the rule for each and every affair, as a man is only a human being. He cannot have complete knowledge, nor can he have a firm understanding of all things. Even though he may be a religious man, or a person of good character, his lack of knowledge or proper understanding may lead him away from the correct position on some issues, based on the amount of information he is missing or the weakness of his understanding. Or he may have been raised in a place where a certain way or *math-hab* is widespread, thus he is not able to know about anything else, and believes that his is the correct position.

Secondly, if we compared the scholars of the *Ash'arīs* with the scholars who followed the way of the *salaf*, then we would find that those upon the way of the *salaf* were more outstanding, greater, more rightly guided, and more upstanding than those who took the way of the *Ash'arīs*. The *imāms* of the four different *math-habs*, for example, were not upon the way of the *Ash'arīs*.

Then, if you were to go back to those who came before the *imaams* - the *tābi'ūn* - you would not find them upon the way of the *Ash'arīs* either.

²⁵⁵ i.e. al-Bayhaqī, who made *ta.wīl* of the *Şifāt*; an-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, al-Qādī Iyād, Ibn Jawzī and many others were known for *ta.wīl*.

²⁵⁶ *Shaykh* 'Ubayd al-Jābirī, may Allah preserve him, quotes the statement of *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him: "Anyone who props up a man to be the basis of the people's alliance (other than the Prophet - may Allah raise his rank and grant him peace) and the cause of their animosity is from those who have split up their Religion and become sects." Refer to *Sūrah al-An'ām* (6):159 and *Sūrah ar-Rūm* (30):32.

And if you went beyond that, to the time of the Companions and the four rightly guided Caliphs, you would not find even a hint of what the *Ash'arīs* are saying about the Names of Allah, the Exalted, and His Attributes, nor would you find any of their other ideas that have caused them to stray from the way of the *Salaf*.

We cannot dispute the fact that some of the scholars who ascribed to the way of the *Ash'arīs* put forth truthful work for Islam and defended the religion, aiding the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), by their recording of the narrations and their contributions to the different sciences of Islam, being persistent in bringing benefit to the Muslims and guiding them. However, this does not mean they were protected from error or that we must accept their every statement. **Nor does it prevent us from exposing their mistakes and refuting them, since this clarifies the truth for the people and guides them.**

Nor can we dispute that some of them had good intentions in the positions they took, and that the truth was not clear to them in those affairs. However, this is not a reason for us to accept their mistakes, simply because they had good intentions in what they said. Rather, their statements must correspond with Allah's Legislation. We are obliged to reject their statements if they do not, no matter who they were, due to the statement of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

((مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ))

«Whoever does something that is not in accordance with our affair will have it rejected.»²⁵⁷

Furthermore, if he was well-known for his sincerity and truthfulness in seeking after the truth, then we can make an excuse for him regarding this mistake of his. Otherwise, he is to be treated according to his evil motives, and according to his actions and statements that contradict the Religion.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Collected by Muslim, no.1718 on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her.

²⁵⁸ It is important to distinguish between a scholar who erred and sticking to what is correct and not following them in that error. We can identify the mistakes of our scholars without insulting them and without declaring them to be innovators. This is balance in Islam. Our identifying of the mistakes and our warning against it, past and present, is assistance to the great scholars. It is true love and true support for the sake of Allah. It is not *fitnah* when you correct an error that spread amongst the people, even if the one who made the error is a great man from *Ahlu-Sunnah*. If people follow a leader in misguidance, then he bears a burden for all those who follow him in misguidance .. just like for all the people he guides, he gets a part of their reward without any of their reward diminishing at the least.

So when you come behind a mistake, clarify it, reject it and inform the people not to follow the mistake and to follow the truth instead, then in fact, you are aiding that person, since less people will come on the Day of Judgment claiming to have followed him because of your warning.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ