

al-‘Aqīdah al-Sanūsiyya

*Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf
al-Sanūsī al-Ḥusaynī al-Mālīkī (d. 795 Hijrah)*

Translation & Commentary by Abū Ādam al-Narūjīy

Released by www.marifah.net 1428 H.

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Introduction: The Disappearance of Knowledge and the Importance of the Science of Belief

In the Name of God, who is the Most Gracious, Most Merciful

I commence my writing by saying the name of Allāh, appealing for His help and blessing. All praise belongs in truth to Him, for He is the Creator of all and their actions like giving. I declare myself a believer in His Absolute Oneness, and that for those who deny this there is no forgiveness. O God of Abraham! You are the Creator of all, and by your mercy I stand or I fall. No one can question your actions, since anyone else is merely among your creations. I beg you to further raise the rank of the best of all you have made, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and that in his intercession I will find shade.

It was reported by Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī, al-Dārimī and al-Ṭaḥāwī that the Prophet ﷺ was asked, after telling them that knowledge of the religion will disappear in the future, “*O Prophet of Allāh, how can knowledge disappear when we have copies of the Qur’ān (al-Maṣāḥif) and we have learned what they contain, and we have taught our children and our wives and our servants?*” He raised his head in anger and said, “*These Jews and Christians have with them their scriptures, yet they did not learn from them what their Prophets brought them.*”¹

Abū Ja’far al-Ṭaḥāwī in *Mushkil al-Āthār* narrated from the companion of the Prophet ﷺ, Shaddād ibn ‘Aws² that the first knowledge that will disappear is *khushū’*, and that there will come a time when one will hardly ever see anyone with *khushū’* in the group prayer in the *Masjids*. al-Ṭaḥāwī defined *khushū’* as submission and humbleness to Allāh ﷻ. He stated that this appears on those who have it, because Allāh ﷻ said about the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ:

وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا
سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ³

Meaning: “*Those who are with him show no mercy for the blasphemers and are merciful toward one another (as Muslims). You see them bowing and prostrating in prayer seeking grace and reward from Allāh. Their mark is in their faces from the trace of prostration.*”

Al-Ṭaḥāwī said that this mark mentioned in the *Āyah* was stated by a number of the *Salaf* to be the appearance of *khushū’*.⁴

In *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam* Ibn Rajab expanded upon the meaning of *khushū’* and said that there are two types of knowledge, knowledge that benefits, and knowledge of the tongue. The first type of knowledge is a person’s knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, His names, His attributes and His actions which leads to fearing Him, glorifying Him, humbling oneself to Him, loving Him,

¹ P. 484, V. 1, ‘Alī al-Qārī. *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001.

² He was one of the companions that was known for knowledge and extreme piety. He used to go to bed at night, saying: “*O Allāh! The Hellfire is preventing me from sleep.*” Then he would get up again and pray until morning.

³ Ṣūrat al-Faṭḥ, 29

⁴ P. 281-282 V. 1, al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār*, Mu’assasat al-Risāla, Beirut.

Hoping for His Grace and Mercy, asking Him for one's needs, relying on Him and the like. The second type of knowledge is that of the tongue, that is, apparent knowledge of the Qur'ān and its meanings. This knowledge without the first is what was meant by Ibn Mas'ūd when he said: *"some people read the Qur'ān, but it does not reach beyond their collarbone."*

Then Ibn Rajab said: *"The first knowledge that is lifted away from earth is the beneficial knowledge, which is inside and mixes with the hearts and mends them. The knowledge of the tongue remains as a proof (i.e. apparent knowledge of the Qur'ān). Then people become careless with it, and do not perform what it requires; neither those who carry this knowledge, nor others. Then this knowledge disappears with its carriers, and nothing remains except copies of the Qur'ān in books, and there is no one around that knows its meaning, or its limits or rules. Then this also disappears at the end of days and there is nothing left at all of this knowledge, not in copies and not in hearts. After that comes the Day of Judgment, as the Messenger of Allāh said: 'The Day of Judgment comes when there are only bad people.'"*

The basis for beneficial knowledge then, the knowledge that leads to *khushū'*, is to know Allāh ﷻ as the Messenger ﷺ taught. This means to know Allāh's attributes, but it also means to know why they must be true of Allāh ﷻ. This is because faith not founded on the reason of the mind is susceptible to doubt when exposed to the arguments of those who spread it. Once the mind has accepted that there is no possible alternative to what one believes, no matter what new information one receives, then doubt will never have access. This is of course unless Allāh ﷻ has willed for one to accept falsehood due to a sickness in the heart.

The Islamic Sunni Science of Belief, or the Science of *Kalām*, serves this purpose: to remove doubts due to flaws in ones reasoning. This may be flaws in ones premises, arguments or conclusions. Once the purpose of *Kalām* has been achieved, then combining it with performing one's religious obligations and avoiding prohibitions, is the pathway to true *khushū'* and success in the Hereafter. This is because the mind has been satisfied, and now only the heart needs mending. Faith is now backed by flawless reason, a powerful combination that only Islam provides.

It is this that transformed the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to the greatest generation in history. It is the result of this combination Allāh ﷻ told us of when He said what means that the companions *"show no mercy for the blasphemers,"* the truth was now obvious to them both in the mind and the heart, and they had realized the extent of the crime of not accepting Islām. They took the enemies of Allāh ﷻ as enemies of their own, and the enemies of Allāh ﷻ are the blasphemers, absolutely and categorically:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ⁵

A literal translation would state, *"Verily Allāh is the enemy of the blasphemers."* Note, however, that when Allāh ﷻ is referred to as having enmity towards someone in Arabic, it means that He has cursed them and willed a bad destiny for them, not that He has emotions.⁶

This mercilessness of the companions was not due to a hardening of the heart, because they were also *"merciful toward one another."* Moreover, due to this same realization of the mind

⁵ Şūrat al-Baqarah, 98

⁶ This was stated by al-Bayhaqī in his book *"al-Asmā wa-l-Sifāt"*

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and heart together “*their mark is in their faces from the trace of prostration,*” for they sold this world for their Hereafter.

Mending the heart is achieved by the practical application of one’s knowledge. First by knowing Allāh ﷻ and thereby that He deserves to be worshiped, and that no matter how much He is worshiped, glorified, and submitted to, it can never be to the extent that He truly deserves. Second, one applies knowledge by first learning the way of worship that Allāh ﷻ accepts and how to avoid His prohibitions. This is by the knowledge of *fiqh*, which is learned through trustworthy scholars of one of its four schools, that of Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī or Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

Strictly speaking, knowing the *Kalām* proofs for the correctness of the Sunni belief is not an obligation for every individual Muslim. It is a communal obligation, in the sense that there must be enough people knowing these proofs to defend Islām. If this requirement is not met, then all those who were able to learn are sinful. In this day and age there are not enough people doing this, and many people are sinful for not learning. Not only that, but in light of the massive attack on certainty in belief at all levels of society today, there is no question that learning some of these proofs is a must for almost every individual.

English speaking teachers and writings on *Kalām* to make this science widely available is sorely needed. The following translation of the traditional *Kalām* text known as *al-Sanūsiyya* will hopefully fill some of this need. Knowledge in Islam, however, must be received through a properly qualified teacher, and not through reading alone. This was pointed out by Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ in the Ḥadīth mentioned in the first paragraph of this section.

The Sanūsiyya

Preface to the Translation of the Sanūsiyya

This is a translation of the meaning of the book “*Matn Umm al-Barāhīn*”, or “*The Text of the Mother of Proofs*” written by the Imām⁷ Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Sanūsī al-Ḥusaynī al-Mālikī, who was born around 830 of the Hijrah calendar, or about 600 years ago. He was a man of encyclopedic knowledge in many fields, including the sciences of belief, jurisprudence, Prophetic Traditions, logic, and the Qur’ān, and he wrote books on all of them. He was the head of the scholars in Tilmisān (Tlemsen), a capital of North Africa in Islamic history. It is located in what is Algeria today.

The book being translated here is actually a summary of his book “*Umm al-Barāhīn*,” which is one of the most important books explaining and proving the correctness of the Islamic belief. This summary of the Sunni doctrine is different from the two other major summaries, that of al-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Nasafī, in its focus on rational proofs explicitly within the summary.

The emphasis on rational proofs⁸ is particularly important today when religious beliefs in general are being attacked by agnostic and atheist propaganda. This propaganda falsely claims that freethinking is scientific thinking, something that has lured many away from believing firmly in the Creator, let alone Islām itself. The reason for the success of this onslaught is the general ignorance about the proofs of the correctness of the Islamic belief system. It is in fact a belief system superior to any other and it is more scientific than the philosophy of skepticism.

The translation is a translation of meaning, without highly contrived attempts to follow the style of Arabic while writing English, or translating word by word. The translation of the book itself is in bold brown print, while explanations and additions have been made in regular print. In certain places elaborations that are important in this day and age have been added.

⁷ The word *imām* in Arabic refers to someone who is followed by others in terms of what he says or does. It is used as a scholarly title meaning a great scholar who is followed even by other scholars.

⁸ The topic of what is called in Arabic *sam’iyāt* is not the focus of the Sanūsiyya. *Sam’iyāt* means literally, “what pertains to hearing,” or more accurately, “what is established by narration of the Qur’ān or the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ, and cannot be known by reason alone.” A good translation would be “narrational beliefs.” This term refers to the beliefs that cannot be known except by being told by a Prophet ﷺ and pertain mainly to what occurs after this life and towards the Day of Judgment. This topic is covered more thoroughly by al-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Nasafī.

The judgments of the sound intellect

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him and benefit us with his knowledge) says:

Praise be to Allāh and Peace and Blessings upon His Messenger.

Know that the judgments of the intellect are limited to 3 categories:

- 1) **what *absolutely must be*, or the *absolutely necessary*,**
 - 2) **what *absolutely cannot be*, or the *absolutely impossible*, and**
 - 3) **what *may be*, or the *possible*.**
-
- 1) **What *absolutely must be* is what the mind absolutely does not accept the non-existence of.** That is, to propose its non-existence would be absurd. In other words, Allāh's ﷻ existence.
 - 2) **What *absolutely cannot be* is what the mind does not accept the potential existence of under any circumstance.** That is, the proposition of its possible existence is absolutely absurd and logically incongruent. What *absolutely cannot be* does *not* refer to what is merely *practically impossible*, such as rivers flowing up a mountain, replacing the Atlantic Ocean with orange juice, or awaking the dead.
 - 3) **What *may be* is that which the mind alone can accept the existence or non-existence of.** All created things fall into this category.

Required knowledge for the accountable person

It is required of every accountable person to know what *absolutely must be* true of Allāh, what *absolutely cannot be* true of Allāh, and what *may be* true of Allāh. One must also know these things with regards to the Messengers, upon them Peace and Blessings.

An accountable person is someone who is sane, has reached Islamic puberty⁹ and has heard the Creedal Statement of Islām.

As for sanity and puberty, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said, “The pen is lifted off three; off the sleeping person until he wakes up, and off the child until it grows up and off the insane until he regains sanity.”¹⁰ The lifting of the pen is a figure of speech meaning that the sins of these three are not written to be answered for later.

As for hearing the Creedal Statement, Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān :

لِنَلَّا يَكُونَنَّ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۗ ۝۱۱

⁹ Puberty in Islām is by menstruation, pregnancy, ejaculation or reaching 15 lunar years of age.

¹⁰ Nasā’i No. 3432

¹¹ Ṣūrat al-Nisā’ 4,165

which means that Allāh ﷻ sent Messengers so that “*people would have no evidence of excuse for not having obeyed Him.*” In addition, Allāh ﷻ said:

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا¹²

which means that Allāh ﷻ does not punish “*until He has sent a Messenger.*” This condition is met by merely hearing the creedal statement. The scholars all agreed on this with consensus of the four schools of jurisprudence,¹³ because as narrated by al-Ḥākim and others, “*The Messenger of Allāh never fought a people until he had called them to Islām.*”

The accountable person will be held accountable by Allāh ﷻ for all his sayings, deeds and beliefs. He is required to perform all obligations prescribed upon him by Allāh ﷻ and avoid all that Allāh ﷻ has prohibited him from. He is threatened by Allāh’s punishment in the Hereafter if he does not. He is promised reward in the Hereafter for performing the obligations Allāh ﷻ has ordered and avoiding what He has forbidden.

If an accountable person is not Muslim, then he must become Muslim immediately by saying, “I firmly believe that no one and nothing deserves to be worshiped except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His Prophet and Messenger.” He must accompany this with the intent in his heart to become Muslim and abandon anything that contradicts that belief. He must say it with a voice that is loud enough to hear himself under normal circumstances.¹⁴ If someone can’t pronounce Muḥammad properly, then they may say: “*and Abul Qāsim is His Prophet and Messenger.*” Any other equivalent statement will also do.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur’ān:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا¹⁵

Meaning: “*Whoever does not believe in Allāh and His Messenger; verily Allāh has prepared for the blasphemers a fierce fire.*” Thereby we know that the blasphemer is anyone that does not believe in Allāh ﷻ or His Messenger ﷺ, and that this belief is an immediate obligation.

It is also stated in al-Qur’ān:

¹² Ṣūrat al-Isrā’ 17,15

¹³ Though some scholars, such as Abū Ḥanīfa, said that there is accountability for some issues even before hearing the creedal statement, because the mind alone is sufficient to figure out that there is a Creator and that He is One. Many scholars among those who put hearing the call of Islam as a prerequisite for accountability, such as al-Nawawī, said that some accountability come from merely hearing about any past Prophet ﷺ, because this should trigger him to think of the Creator and thus believe in Him, and that He does not have partner. After having heard about a Prophet he has no excuse for negligence any longer. Based on this the Arab pagans prior to the Prophet ﷺ are in Hell forever as indicated in many Ḥadīths. Source: Ibn al-Humām’s *al-Musāyara* and its explanation.

¹⁴ This is the most solid and safest view, and is the saying of the Ḥanafī Imāms as well as many Ash’arīs such as al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ. Other Ash’arīs had some further details on this, but it is a rather long discussion for another time and place *in shā’ Allāh.*

¹⁵ Ṣūrat al-Faṭḥ,13

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ¹⁶

Meaning: **“Those who blaspheme, among the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) and the idol worshipers, will be in the Hell-Fire and dwell there endlessly. They are the worst of creation.”** We thereby know that blasphemers are the absolute worst of Allāh’s creation, which signifies the enormity of their crime. We also know that their torture is endless. They are worse than the animals that Allāh ﷻ has created, because animals are not blessed with a mind and accountability.

The accountable is only accountable for his or her own acts. It must be kept in mind, however, that one of the obligations to act is to prevent the disobedience of others. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever among you sees something disapproved of by Allāh, let him change it by his hand. If unable, then let him do so by His tongue. If unable to do even that, let Him reject it in his heart, and that is the least (act) of faith.”¹⁷

This means that if we are able to do something to stop the sinner by an appropriate action, then we are required to do it, unless someone else does it. If we expect that using the hand will lead to more or worse sins, then we do not use the hand, as this defeats the purpose. Note that merely feeling embarrassed is not an excuse for remaining passive.

Second, if we are unable to use the hand, we are required to say something to stop the sinner.

Finally, if we are unable to do or say something to stop him, we are required to hate it in our hearts, and if able, leave the place where it is happening. This is the least we must do to avoid becoming sinful ourselves, and thus the least act that is a sign of faith.¹⁸

Before explaining the attributes of Allāh ﷻ that must be learned, it should be clear that Allāh ﷻ exists, and that He has attributes. They are all eternal and do not change. His attributes are not other than Him, nor are they Him Himself, because Allāh is One.

The Attributes that Allāh ﷻ must be attributed with

Among the attributes which *absolutely must be true* of Allāh are 20 as follows:

- 1) **Existence** (*al-Wujūd* / الوجود),
- 2) **Non-beginning existence** (*al-Qidam* / القدم),

Allāh ﷻ stated in the Qur’ān that:

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ¹⁹

¹⁶ Sūrat al-Bayyina, 98

¹⁷ Muslim No. 49

¹⁸ See 2/318, Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Beirut, Lebanon, Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī. See also 1/276, Badā’i’ al-Ṣanā’i. ‘Alā’uddīn al-Kāsānī. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1982.

¹⁹ Sūrat al-Ḥadīd ,03

“He is al-Awwal.” This means that He existed before everything else, and that He was not preceded by non-existence. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ غَيْرُهُ

“Allāh existed and there was nothing else”.²⁰ Allāh’s existence then, does not resemble the existence of created things, because it is beginning-less, a must and is not affected by anything.

3) Non-ending existence (al-Baqā’ / البقاء),

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ²¹

This may be interpreted as, **“Allāh Himself lasts,”** that is, absolutely. His existence does not have the possibility of ending.

4) Non-resemblance to all ‘events’ - all things that have a beginning (al-Mukhālafatu li-l-Hawādith / المخالفة للحوادث),

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ²²

“Absolutely nothing resembles Him, and He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.” Allāh ﷻ created everything, brought everything into existence, therefore He does not resemble anything. For example, He is not attributed with death, light rays, darkness, color, spirit, stillness, movement, shape, form, parts, divisibility, limits, countability, mode, mass, location or direction because these attributes need to be specified by a creator and must therefore have a beginning.

What one should keep in mind is that what all created things have in common, whether they are a substance or an attribute of it, is that everything about them has a beginning. This is because the definition of a created thing is that it is something brought into existence.

The rule is therefore that whatever you can imagine in your mind, Allāh ﷻ does not resemble it. It was narrated that the cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and famous companion Ibn ‘Abbās said, *“Ponder about everything, but do not ponder about the Self of Allāh.”*²³ He said this because this leads to one drawing resemblances between the Creator and the created, which is blasphemy. It contradicts the belief in Allāh’s

²⁰ Bukhārī No. 3019

²¹ Ṣūrat al-Raḥmān ,27

²² Ṣūrat al-Shūrā, 11

²³ Faṭḥ al-Bārī 13/383

Oneness, because it leads to the heretical belief that Allāh ﷻ has an equal. It also involves denying the Qur’ānic statement: **“Absolutely nothing resembles Him.”**

The great scholar of Islām Ibn ‘Asākir said *“It is neither said: ‘When was He?’ nor: ‘Where was He?’, nor: ‘How was He?’ He existed and there was no place, and He made everything exist and arranged time.”*

- 5) **Self-existence, meaning having no need of location or specification (*al-Qiyāmu bi-nafsihi* / القيام بنفسه),**

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ²⁴

It may be translated in meaning as, **“O People, you are the desolate in absolute need of Allāh, and Allāh is the One that does not need anything or anyone, and He is the One that deserves all praise.”**

- 6) **Absolute Oneness, having no second like Him in self, actions, or attributes (*al-Waḥdāniyya* / الودانية).**

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān :

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ²⁵

It may be translated in meaning as, **“Say! [O Muḥammad] He is Allāh, He is One.”** The word “One” here is absolute in meaning, as the statement is absolute. In other words, it is impossible that He should have an equal in His self, actions or attributes, or a partner or a part. It is also impossible that Allāh ﷻ should have two attributes of the same kind, e.g. two powers, or two attributes of knowledge.

The Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said that, “Allāh is One, not in the sense of a number; it is impossible that He should be divisible or have parts; He is One in every sense of the meaning, whereas everything else is one in one sense, but not in others.”²⁶

These attributes mentioned above are six. The first attribute, existence, is called an “Attribute of Self,” as it merely refers to what exists, without additional meaning. **The other five are attributes of negating imperfections** – namely having a beginning, the possibility of an end, resemblance to anything that has a beginning, a need, or having an equal in one’s self, actions or attributes.

²⁴ Ṣūrat Fāṭir, 15

²⁵ Ṣūrat al-Ikhlāṣ, 1

²⁶ P. 1/293, *I’tiqād al-Imām al-Mubajjal Ibn Ḥanbal*, Muḥammad ibn Abī Ya’lā. 2 vols. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ma’rifah Publishing & Distributing.

Then there are another 7 attributes that **absolutely must be true** of Allāh known as *ṣifāt al-ma'ānī* “Attributes of Meanings”. Linguistically speaking these are adjectives that refer to a meaning only, without telling you who the attributed is:

7) Power (*al-Qudra* / القدرة),

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ²⁷

It may be translated in meaning as, “*Verily Allāh is able to create anything.*”

8) and Will (*al-Īrāda* / الإرادة), both of which relate to all things that *may be*, whether they exists or not,

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ²⁸

Meaning: “*Verily Your Lord does whatever He wills.*”

The attribute of Power is an eternal attribute by which Allāh ﷻ brings what has the possibility of existence into existence, or annihilates it, according to His Will. His Will is an eternal attribute by which He specifies things with what is possible. All created things fall under His Will and Power. He created all actions of creation, such as blasphemy, belief, obedience, disobedience, sickness and health.

God’s power is related to those things which are *possible* to the sound intellect, even those things which are not currently in existence. It is not related to the *impossible*; that which cannot ever be. The *impossible* here refers to propositions of something existing that involves a contradiction in terms; such as if someone said that Allāh ﷻ is attributed with attributes of complete perfection and then said that He has a limit. The term “complete perfection” is incompatible with having a limit, so it cannot ever be that Allāh ﷻ has a limit. Note that impossible propositions refer to things that cannot ever be, so they are not really “things”, but mere verbal absurdities and contradictions of terms.

An example of such a contradiction of terms can also be shown by explaining why it is blasphemy to say that Allāh ﷻ has a son. The essential meaning of the word “son” is something begotten - something that is generated out of something else. In other words, if someone said that Allāh ﷻ has a son, then he is saying that Allāh ﷻ multiplies or divides, and this contradicts the belief that Allāh is One. It is impossible that something should be both one and many at the same time. Therefore, it is impossible that Allāh ﷻ should have a son.

²⁷ Ṣūrat al-Baqarah, 20

²⁸ Ṣūrat Hūd, 107

This is true of this blasphemous phrase, even as a figure of speech. This is because the word “son” contradicts the concept of ownership; it would be absurd to say that someone “owns” his “son”. Something can’t be someone’s son and personal property at the same time. In other words, to say that Allāh ﷻ has a son is to deny that He has absolute ownership of absolutely all created things,²⁹ and thus implies a flaw in His absolute ownership.

The concept of having a son then, is incompatible with the concept of believing in one Creator that has absolute ownership of His creation. That is why Muslims must believe that it is *impossible* that Allāh ﷻ should have a son; it has nothing to do with ability, because it is nonsensical and illogical. If someone asks, “*Can Allāh have a son?*” it is as if they are saying “*Can the number 3 be 4?*” The correct way of answering this then, is to say: “*It is impossible that Allāh should have a son.*”

Note based on the above, that it is blasphemy to say that Allāh ﷻ “can” have a son. This is because it implies a flaw in Allāh’s attribute of godhood - being the Creator and absolute owner of everything.

However, it is also blasphemy to say that He is “unable” to have a son, because saying this shows disrespect to Allāh’s power. The correct expression is to say that it is “impossible that Allāh should have a son” or “absurd to claim that Allāh could have a son”. Having a son has nothing to do with being the Creator, and therefore is not related to Allāh’s attribute of power. The power to create is the power to bring something into existence, and this does not pertain to things that are *impossible*.

Do you not see that if you say about something that it has a son, then you know it is not the Creator for the reasons mentioned above? Similarly if you say that Allāh ﷻ is the Creator, then you know that He does not have a son. It cannot be that something is the Creator and has a son at the same time, just as it cannot be that a circle is square.

Note also that all things in existence, past, present and future, belong to the possible category of things, and are therefore by Allāh’s Will and Power. Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ³⁰

which’s meaning might be translated as, “***You do not will anything unless Allāh has willed it.***” This is clear, because Allāh ﷻ knows everything, and no one is more powerful than Him. Therefore, whatever happens is by His Knowledge and Power.

With regards to the fact that all which exists is by Allāh’s Will, it is useful to recount the exchange between al-Qādī ‘Abdul Jabbār of the Mu‘tazilite sect, and the great Imām of

²⁹ Allāh ﷻ is the absolute owner of everything, because He brought it all from non-existence to existence. Our ownership is not absolute, but exists only because Allāh ﷻ prescribed it for us. This is why we cannot do whatever we want with the things we own, such as destroying our own valuable things for no reason, or distribute our inheritance in whatever way we wish. In other words the true owner of our things is Allāh ﷻ, and our own ownership is only figurative.

³⁰ Ṣūrat al-Insān, 30

the Sunnis of the time, Abūl Muṭḥaffar al-Isfarāyīnī. When the two met, ‘Abdul Jabbār said, “*Exalted is Allāh, who transcends the obscene.*” While this is a sound expression, he meant to say that Allāh ﷻ does not create evil, and this is blasphemous. Muslims must believe that Allāh ﷻ is the Only Creator, because it is stated in the Qur’ān that He created everything, and that no one wills anything except by His Will.

Imam al- Isfarāyīnī noticed his mockery, and responded, “*Exalted is Allāh, who nothing happens in His dominion but by His Will.*” The Mu‘tazilite then made another attempt and said, “*Does our Lord like to be disobeyed?*” al-Isfarāyīnī quickly replied, “*Could He be disobeyed against His Will?*” Upon that ‘AbdulJabbār tried again to defeat his adversary and said, “*If God denied me guidance, then ruled that I be destroyed for it, has He treated me fairly?*” al-Isfarāyīnī calmly answered, “*If He denied you something that is yours, then He would have been unfair, but if it is not rightfully yours, then Allāh does with His creation what He wills.*” ‘AbdulJabbār fell silent, and could not argue further, because Allāh ﷻ is the Owner of all creation.

- 9) **Knowledge (al-‘Ilm / العلم), which pertains to all that absolutely must be, cannot be, or may be.** That is, nothing is hidden from Allāh’s knowledge, including what must be, what has been, what is now, what will be, what could be and what cannot ever be. No quark or atom moves except by His Knowledge, Will and Power. Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ³¹

It may be translated in meaning as, “*Verily Allāh knows everything.*”

- 10) **Life (al-Ḥayāt / الحياة), which does not relate to anything,** and does not have the possibility of beginning or end, and does not resemble the life of created things; and is without a body or soul. Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān :

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ³²

Its meaning might be translated as, “*And rely on the One that is attributed with eternal Life and does not die.*”

- 11) **Hearing (al-Sam‘ / السمع),**

- 12) **and Sight (al-Baṣar / البصر), both of which pertain to all that exists,** Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān that,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ³³

“*Absolutely nothing resembles Him, and He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.*” From this we understand that His Hearing and Seeing is not like our hearing or seeing. They are not by an instrument, such an ear or an eye. They are not dependent on vibrations, distance

³¹ Ṣūrat al-Baqarah, 231

³² Ṣūrat al-Furqān, 58

³³ Ṣūrat al-Shūrā, 11

or light; unlike created hearing and seeing. This is because Allāh is One, and does not need anything. His hearing and seeing is also not sequential, because Allāh ﷻ does not change. Seen and heard things are sequential, but His hearing and seeing are not.

13) Speech (*al-Kalām* / الكلام), without letter or sound, which pertains to whatever His Knowledge pertains to.

Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا³⁴

It may be translated in meaning as, “*And Allāh spoke to Moses.*” That is, with His Speech that is not letters or sounds.

In the hereafter, Muslims will hear Allāh’s Speech, as Moses did. They will also see Him without Him being in a direction, place, at a distance or having a form. It was authentically narrated by Imam al-Bukhārī that the Prophet ﷺ said,

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا سَيُكَلِّمُهُ رَبُّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تُرْجَمَانٌ وَلَا حِجَابٌ يَحْجُبُهُ

“*All of you will be spoken to by His Lord without an intermediary. There will also be no flaw in your sight preventing you from seeing Him (without Him having a shape, or being in a direction or place.)*”

That is, all will hear His speech without His speech being letters, sounds, words, or being sequential or starting or stopping. It is eternal and thus does not have any beginning. This must be true, because Allāh’s Speech is not created. Each person will understand whatever Allāh ﷻ has willed for him or her to understand.

Likewise, as the Prophet ﷺ stated, Muslims will see Allāh ﷻ without Him being in a direction, at a distance, in a place, or having a body, shape or form. Non-Muslims will not have this privilege.

In other words, this is not like hearing or seeing a creation, because Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān that,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ³⁵

meaning: “*Absolutely nothing resembles Him.*”

Note that His Hearing, Seeing and Speech *absolutely must be*, and are not something that *may be*. It is therefore not said that Allāh is able to hear, see or speak, because that implies that He may be hearing, seeing or speaking, which is a blasphemous belief. Thus we say that Allāh ﷻ hears, or Allāh ﷻ sees, or Allāh ﷻ speaks, but one must never say, “Allāh can hear,” or “can see,” or “can speak.”

³⁴ Ṣūrat al-Nisā’, 164

³⁵ Ṣūrat al-Shūrā, 11

The last 7 of the 20 attributes are known as “*ṣifāt ma'nawīyya*,” or “Attributes pertaining to meanings,” Linguistically speaking *ṣifāt ma'nawīyya* refer to adjectives that tell you that the attributed has a certain attribute. That is, you cannot speak about these attributes without speaking about the meaning as well as the attributed at the same time. For example, the expression “being powerful,” which is an “Attribute pertaining to meaning,” tells you that the one attributed with the attribute of power is certainly powerful.

Having learned the “Attributes of Meanings,” the “Attributes pertaining to meanings” seem obvious. For example, having the attribute of power necessarily means “being powerful,” but because of its importance many scholars still insisted on mentioning them.

They are in agreement with the last seven mentioned above and are:

- 14) being *Qādir* (كونه قادر), or being attributed with Power,
- 15) being *Murīd* (كونه مرید), or being attributed with Will,
- 16) being *‘Ālim* (كونه عالم), or being attributed with Knowledge,
- 17) being *Hayy* (كونه حي), or being attributed with Life, that does not have the possibility of beginning or end, and does not resemble the life of created things; and is without a body or soul.
- 18) being *Samī‘* (كونه سمیع), or being attributed with Hearing,
- 19) being *Baṣīr* (كونه بصیر), or being attributed with Seeing,
- 20) being *Mutakallim* (كونه متکلم), or being attributed with Speech, which is not letters, sounds or language.

The attributes that are impossible for Allāh ﷻ to be attributed with and those that are possible

Among the attributes that are *impossible* to be true of Allāh are 20 attributes that are the opposites of the 20 mentioned above, including:

- 1) Non-existence,
- 2) Being an ‘event’ – that is: having a beginning ,
- 3) Having an end, or
- 4) Similarity to ‘events’, that is, all things that have a beginning, or traits of such things, for example, by being:
 - a body, or something with bulk, by being something which takes up space, place or direction,
 - an attribute that requires a body or bulk,
 - in a direction in relation to a body, or having a direction himself,
 - bound by time or place,
 - described by ‘events’, or by smallness or bigness, or to be
 - driven to take care of the beneficial or to prevent harm in His actions and rulings, as Allāh ﷻ has no needs to fulfill, and is not influenced by anything, since He does not have a beginning.

- This concept of non-resemblance can be summarized by saying that Allāh ﷻ is not attributed with quantity (e.g. size, weight, volume), quality (e.g. color, taste, smell) or relativity (e.g. sequence, family, shape, composition, time, place, position, or direction.)
- 5) **It is also impossible that Allāh should not be self-existent, by being:**
 - **an attribute of something, or**
 - **in need of someone to specify His attributes.**
 - 6) **It is also impossible that Allāh not be One by:**
 - **His self being composed (of parts), or**
 - **By there being someone resembling Him in His self or attributes, or**
 - **There being besides Him something with independent influence on any event or on Him.** Only Allāh ﷻ has the power to influence events in reality. This is illustrated by the miracle of Ibrāhīm, who stayed inside a huge fire without being harmed. The reason why is that fire in reality does not have the power to burn or make something hot. Fire only burns or heats if Allāh ﷻ has willed it; it does not have an inherent ability to do so. Allāh ﷻ is the Creator of all causes in every instance. There are no physical laws of nature in reality, for nothing happens except by His Will and Power.
 - 7) **It is also impossible that Allāh should be unable to bring into existence any event which has the possibility of existence, or**
 - 8) **to give existence to anything which He had not willed for, out of negligence, inattention, illness, or by cause or nature.**
 - 9) **It is also impossible that Allāh should be characterized by ignorance, or lack of knowledge of any matter. It is further impossible that Allāh should be characterized by:**
 - 10) **Death,**
 - 11) **Deafness,**
 - 12) **Blindness, or**
 - 13) **Lack of Speech,** or that His Speech would consist of letters, sounds, language, or be something sequential.

The opposites of the “Attributes pertaining to Meanings” are obvious from the above.

As for the *possible*, that which may be true of Allāh, it is doing anything possible or not doing it.

The proofs of Allāh’s attributes

His attribute of existence

The proof that Allāh exists is the fact that this world has a beginning. Anything with a beginning must have been brought into existence, and it could neither have created itself before it existed, nor have come into existence without something bringing it into existence. It follows then that it must have a creator.

The judgment of the intellect concerning both the existence and non-existence of the world are equal, as both are merely possible (not true by necessity). The existence of the world thus clearly indicates that there *absolutely must be* something (not inherent in it) that has power allowing it to override its non-existence. Otherwise one would be saying that one possibility

overrode the other without a reason, and that is absurd. Consequently, it *absolutely must be* true that the world has a Creator, for it has come into existence after non-existence and didn't create itself.

It is central to our proof of Allāh's existence to prove that the world has a beginning. Let us define the world as everything that exists other than Allāh ﷻ. The world is obviously composed of many components each of which must have a beginning. To see this, consider the fact that the world is constantly changing, these components move, grow, die, etc. It is our thesis that everything that changes must have a beginning. Scholars have mentioned several proofs to this.

One proof is to consider the statement, "you need 10 steps to reach that wall," which means it is not impossible to reach the wall. As for the statement, "you need infinite steps to reach that wall," it means that reaching the wall is impossible, as it is impossible to finish infinite steps before reaching the wall. Similar to this is the one who claims that the world has no beginning, for it would be like saying it takes infinite events to reach the present moment, which is a contradiction and thus impossible.³⁶ **Hence we know by the worlds adherence to incidental characteristics ('Arād), such as movement, and stillness and others, that the world itself must have a beginning, because what adheres to events, whatever has a beginning, must itself be an event. The proof that incidental characteristics have a beginning is by observing its adherence to the states of existence and non-existence.** Thus its existence is merely a possibility, and needs a reason for its existence.

From the fact that the world has a beginning, we have proven above that it must have a creator, and His name is Allāh in Arabic. If someone asks one, "Who created Allāh?" we say Allāh ﷻ does not have a creator, and does not need one as He has no beginning. If someone then asks, "how can you accept that Allāh ﷻ has no beginning, while you do not accept that the world has no beginning?" The answer is that we have shown that the world has a beginning based on the fact that it changes. We do not believe, however, that Allāh ﷻ changes. Rather, we believe He is One, and doesn't change and has no beginning.

His attribute of non-beginning existence

The proof that Allāh does not have a beginning is that if one believed Allāh to have a beginning, then one would believe Him to need a creator. This proposition would either lead to an argument that is circular, saying that the Creator has a creator who was created by Him, or one that entails proposing an infinite progression of creators, both of which are absurd. The argument of infinite progression of creators is when someone claims that the Creator has a

³⁶ Another way to state this proof, is to consider two points in time far apart from one another (for example, Noah's flood and the present time). To anyone claiming the world has no beginning, we say consider the number (A) of discrete events and changes that happened before Noah's flood and the number (B) of events and changes that happened before our present time. Which number, A or B is greater? Any two numbers *absolutely must be* equal or one *absolutely must be* greater than the other. If the world has a beginning (our thesis), it is clear that the second is greater than first. If one claims the world is without beginning (the counter thesis), then he cannot say that one is greater than the other, because both would be infinite counts of the same type. But he also cannot say that they are equal, as the second set of events includes the first set as well as events that happened after the flood. So he cannot say that they are equal nor can they say one is greater than the other, so it is impossible that the world would have no beginning since it is composed of events and changes.

creator, who again has a creator, who again has a creator, and so on. This infinite progression of claimed creators would have to finish before the creation of the world, and we have already shown this to be impossible.

It would also lead to saying that there is more than one god, which is impossible, because all of these would need each others agreement to get their will. This is weakness, and something with weakness does not deserve to be worshiped. Moreover, it could not have brought something as awesome as the cosmos from non-existence to existence.

His attribute of non-ending existence

As for the proof for Allāh’s non-ending existence, it is based on the fact that if He was not non-ending then he would have an ending. There is no third option. **This would be equivalent to claiming that Allāh was merely *possible in existence*, not *absolutely must be* existing. But anything that has possible existence must have a beginning, and we have already proved that Allāh is without beginning.** Alternatively, something that can cease to exist can change, and anything that changes must have a beginning, and we’ve already proven this to be impossible for Allāh ﷻ.

His attribute of non-resemblance to creation

As for Allāh’s non-resemblance to ‘events’, if He resembled events in any way, then He would also be an event and that is impossible, since He must be without a beginning or an end, as shown earlier. What all events have in common is a beginning, and since Allāh ﷻ has no beginning, He does not resemble created things in any way.

His attribute of self-existence

As for Allāh’s self-existence, it means that Allāh ﷻ has no need of anything else in order to exist, neither something to be in nor someone to give Him specification. This is unlike attributes of creation which need something to be in, such as whiteness, pain, or motion; they all require an object in which to exist. Allāh ﷻ however is not an attribute (hence it would be blasphemous to refer to Allāh ﷻ as *al-quwwat al-khāliqa*, the creating force). All this is understood from “self-existence.”

The proof of Allāh’s self-existence is that if He needed something to be in, then He would be an attribute. This is because attributes need something to be in. That is, attributes need the thing that they are an attribute of.

Moreover, an “Attribute of Meaning,” such as power or knowledge, **is not attributed with “Attributes of Meanings” or “Attributes pertaining to Meanings,”** such as being powerful or being knowledgeable, **and Allāh must be attributed with “Attributes of Meanings”.** He is not an attribute, because attributes of meanings, such as knowledge, power, or will, cannot be attributed with attributes of meanings. For example, you cannot say that power has will or knowledge, or that power is knowledgeable. It is therefore impossible that Allāh ﷻ should be an attribute, since He is necessarily attributed with power, will and knowledge.

The reason why it impossible for attributes of meaning to be attributed with attributes of meanings, is that if you say that knowledge is an attribute of another knowledge, then you are

saying that the latter can be the attribute of yet another knowledge and so on. In other words, it leads necessarily to saying that infinite progression coming to an end is possible. Since infinite progression coming to an end is not possible, we know that attributes of meaning cannot be attributed with attributes of meaning.

Moreover, if He needed someone to give Him specification, then he would have a beginning. After all, the specification has to happen at some point in time, and cannot be without a beginning. **It is impossible that He should have a beginning, as shown earlier.**

The proof of Allāh’s self-existence is that any attribute of creation must have a beginning, but Allāh has no beginning so He cannot be an attribute of creation. We believe that Allāh ﷻ exists and has attributes; He is not His attributes, nor is He other than His attributes, nor are His attributes part of Him. Allāh’s self-existence also entails that He does not need someone who gives specification (i.e. gives characteristics), for that would mean that Allāh ﷻ changed when specified, which is impossible.

His attribute of Oneness

As for the proof of Allāh’s Oneness: if He was not One, then nothing of the world could exist because He would be weak. If one claimed that more than one ‘creator’ existed, it would mean both were in need of one another. For if one of them willed something to be, and the other willed for it not to be, whose will would be fulfilled? If only one of their wills is fulfilled, it would mean the other is not a true creator. The only way for both their wills to be fulfilled is for them to agree as to what is to be, in which case, they are both *in need* of each other’s agreement. This would mean that neither is truly the Creator, who we’ve proven above to be not in need of anything.

His attributes of Power, Will, Knowledge and Life

As for Allāh’s Power, Will, Knowledge, and Life, it is clear that if it were not for these attributes, nothing in the universe would have come into existence.

His attributes of Hearing, Sight and Speech

As for Allāh’s Hearing, Sight and Speech, we believe in them because they are clearly stated in the Qur’ān, Ḥadīths, and there is *ijmā’* (scholarly consensus) on that. In addition, if He was not attributed with them, then He would have been attributed with their opposites, which is a weakness, and this is impossible. For example, the one who does not hear is deaf, which is an attribute of imperfection and neediness, which is impossible for Allāh ﷻ. The other two attributes are similarly proved to be necessary.

Here it is important to note that all the above attributes, which we have described using the same words which are used to describe attributes of creation, have nothing in common with the attributes of creation. Again, the words are the same, but the meanings are totally different. Also regarding our attributes, we may say “we can hear,” for example, but we may only say “Allāh hears,” for the opposite is impossible. Moreover, our speech, for example, is nothing like Allāh’s Speech, as our speech has a beginning and an end and is composed of parts such as letters, words, and sentences in sequence.

Our speech is an ability, and a possibility, whereas Allāh's attribute of Speech is an attribute of perfection and necessity. Therefore it is not allowed to say that Allāh *can* speak, but one must say instead that Allāh is attributed with Speech, and that it has neither beginning, nor end, nor is it composed of parts, nor does it have sequence, and has nothing in common with our attribute of speech.

Allāh's Speech is not sound, as our speech is, but it is possible that Allāh remove our inability to hear His Speech so we would hear it and understand from it what He has willed for us to understand. Beyond this, we are not required to, and if fact cannot, know Allāh's attributes.

It is important to note here that it would be prohibited to claim any attribute for Allāh ﷻ which is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, or agreed upon by *ijmā'* (scholarly consensus). But all the above words, or their meanings, are mentioned in the above three sources, so they are permissible to use, as long as we do not confuse them with human attributes with the same names.

Non-Arabic expressions can be used to refer to attributes of Allāh ﷻ, but only after making sure that the meaning is equivalent to the permitted Arabic expression. This is not, however, enough alone. One must also make sure that there is no connotation of impoliteness in using the word for Allāh ﷻ, and that it is not confusing or misleading so that someone might think it means something that does not befit Allāh ﷻ. In addition, it must carry the sense of awe and glorification.

Having said that, it should be known that there are two views on what is allowed to say about Allāh ﷻ and what is not. The first is that if the word used has a meaning that is known by reason to be true of Allāh ﷻ, then it is allowed to use it. This is the saying of the great Imam al-Bāqillānī,³⁷ the leader of the Sunni Muslims in his time.

The second is that this is only in the case of attributes, but not in names; names can only be stated as narrated in the Qur'ān, highly authenticated Prophetic statements, or as agreed by scholarly consensus. When such a narration exists it means it has permission for utterance. This

³⁷ Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, al-Qāḍī al-Bāqillānī (338 h. - 403 h.) was the head of the Ash'arīs of his time. He wrote many books, some of which are in print. (Source: al-A'lām). al-Dhahabī in his "*Tārīkh al-Islām*" V. 28, P. 89 relates that al-Bāqillānī was once sent by the Muslim ruler to debate the Christian scribes of the Roman Emperor. When he arrived to the emperor's hall they had made the entrance to the emperor very low, to the extent that one had to bow down in order to enter. Al-Bāqillānī realized that it was a trick to make him bow to the emperor, so he turned and entered back-end first. Once there, he turned to one of the monks and said, "How are the wife and kids?" Astonished, the emperor replied, "Do you not know that the monk elevates himself from having a wife or kids?" Al-Bāqillānī closed his trap by quickly replying: "You consider him above this, but you do not consider Allāh ﷻ to be clear of and above having a female companion and child?" He was also mockingly asked, "What happened to Ā'isha?" They were referring to the time that she, the Prophet's wife, was accused by the hypocrites of having been unfaithful. They wanted to make him lose his temper by their insinuations. Al-Bāqillānī answered: "As what happened to Maryam. (They were both accused of adultery), then they were both declared innocent by Allāh, and Maryam brought a baby, while Ā'isha did not." They could find no response to this, because he had shown them that permitting the slander of Ā'isha would imply permitting ugly and heretical slander of Maryam even more.

is the saying of most leaders of the Sunnis, including al-Ghazālī³⁸ and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī³⁹. They said it is only because of scholarly consensus we know that it is allowed to translate the name of Allāh to languages such as Persian and Turkish.⁴⁰ Other Arabic names of Allāh cannot be translated, because there is no consensus.

Both schools agreed that using another utterance than those narrated, must not be misleading, and must give a sense of glorification. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī said that there are three types of words that indicate attributes: First, those that indicate without question what is true of Allāh ﷻ, either by themselves only, in certain contexts only, or absolutely. Second, those that indicate without question what is not true of Allāh ﷻ. Third, those that indicate an attribute true of Allāh ﷻ, but have another meaning that is not.

If an utterance in the second category is narrated in the Qur’ān or highly authentic Ḥadīths, apparently referring to Allāh ﷻ, then it is not allowed to utter it except exactly as narrated; identical utterance, and identical context. It is not allowed to use a derived form of the narrated utterance. Moreover, it is forbidden to understand utterances of this kind literally. They should be understood as figures of speech meaning something other than their literal meaning. Examples are words like *nazala*, which’s literal meaning is “to descend”, or *jā’* which’s literal meaning is “to come”, or *ṣūra*, which’s literal meaning is “form”. To understand these literally when referring to Allāh ﷻ Himself is blasphemy without question, because movement and form need place and specification, and Allāh ﷻ does not need anything.

If an utterance of the third category is narrated, then it is only allowed to use it as narrated. One cannot use derivatives of it. For example, in the Qur’ān it is mentioned that Allāh ﷻ does something called *yastahzi’* to the hypocrites. The word *yastahzi’* means literally “to deceive/dupe”, but it has another meaning meant here, which is that the hypocrites will be

³⁸ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (450-505 Hijrī) was nicknamed Ḥujjat al-Islām for his brilliant scholarship, particularly in defending the Islamic Belief against deviations. He was initially one of the students of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, but quickly raised in the ranks of scholarship. He gained a reputation as a brilliant scholar and started authored books already in al-Juwaynī’s time. He stayed with his teacher until he died. After that he traveled to Baghdad and was made in charge of the prestigious Niḥāmiyya school by it’s founder, the minister Nithām al-Mulk, who was practically the ruler at the time. He had built this school from the greatest scholar of the time Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. Later al-Ghazālī left all of that behind to live an ascetic lifestyle and became one of the greatest scholars of Sufism after already having achieved that in the sciences of belief and jurisprudence. (al-Ziriklī 7/22; al-Ṣafadī 1/211-213).

³⁹ Fakhrud-dīn al-Rāzī (544-606 Hijri calendar) is by many regarded as the greatest scholar of his time, and the sixth renewer of the religion, for the beginning of the seventh century after the Hijrah. He is the Imām of the scholars of the belief sciences. He devastated the deviant sects with his arguments. The anthropomorphists made it their habit to leave notes for him containing various insults. One time a note said that his wife was an adulteress. He read the note to the crowd and then said (in summary), “all of this is possible, but at least I do not believe that Allāh ﷻ is in a place, which is impossible.” (al-Ziriklī 6/313; Tājuddīn al-Subkī 8/81-82; al-Ṣafadī 4/176).

⁴⁰ Perhaps based on this one could argue that this consensus also applies to translating Allāh’s name to “God” in English. In any case, necessity calls for going by al-Bāqillānī’s view on this particular name.

recompensed for their deception. Despite this, it is not allowed to use the word *mustahzi*, literally: “deceiver” about Allāh.⁴¹

In conclusion, the basis for knowing what is allowed to say about Allāh ﷻ, is the revealed texts, i.e. Qur’ān, highly authenticated Ḥadīths, or scholarly consensus. This can only be learned through trustworthy scholars who are exacting and careful about their student’s beliefs.

What may be true of Allāh ﷻ

Doing anything possible, or not doing it, is possible for Allāh; the proof is that otherwise, the possible would either be *absolutely necessary* or *impossible*, and this is a contradiction. That is, claiming otherwise would involve saying that this event is a must, and that is a contradiction, because an event can only be a possibility. Furthermore, for Allāh ﷻ to be obliged to do something or not to do it would be a flaw, and this is impossible for Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh is the Creator and thus the true owner of everything. Therefore, it is impossible that He should be unjust. Injustice can only be when someone does something to someone else’s property without a right. Since Allāh ﷻ is the true owner of everything, the concept of injustice does not apply to Him at all. Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

لا يُسألُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسألُونَ⁴²

Meaning: **“He is not asked about what He does to creation in terms of guiding and misguiding, or honoring and humiliating, but the creation is asked.”**

In other words, one is unjust when he disobeys the orders he must obey. In other words, the orders of his Creator. Since Allāh ﷻ does not have a Creator, there are no orders that He must obey. Hence it is impossible for Him to be unjust.

The Messengers of Allāh and their attributes

Definition of Prophet and Messenger

As for the Messengers, they are intelligent, free, male humans, that had a revelation of a teaching of religion.

Some of them have Heavenly books revealed to them, but it is not necessary that they be given a book.

They are chosen by Allāh ﷻ and protected from birth from characteristics or behavior that do not befit their rank, such as blasphemy, sins, meanness, foolishness or the like. It is not possible for someone to work himself up to the rank of Prophethood; Prophets are chosen from birth.

⁴¹ For all these details, see P. 33-36, *Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, al-Maktabat al-Azhariyya lil-Turāth, Egypt, 2000.

⁴² al-Anbiyā’, 23

Note that everything that is being said about Messengers also apply to Prophets. This is because the only practical difference between a Messenger and a Prophet is that the latter follows the laws of the Messenger prior to him, and does not bring new laws.

Attributes that Messengers must have

All Messengers must possess truthfulness, trustworthiness, and must have delivered their messages entirely. Allāh ﷻ is Wise, and gives the rank of being a Messenger only to those worthy of it. Accordingly, it is impossible for Messengers to be liars, treacherous, or fail to deliver any part of a message that they have been required to deliver.

Attributes that are impossible for Messengers to have

It is impossible that they should be attributed with the opposites of these attributes by:

1. **telling lies.** This is because if it was possible for them to lie, then what they say would be subject to doubt.
2. **or committing treachery by doing what their message forbids or dislikes,** or failing to act on what their message commands. The Prophet ﷺ said,

يُطَبِّعُ الْمُؤْمِنَ عَلَى كُلِّ خَلَّةٍ غَيْرِ الْخِيَانَةِ وَالْكَذِبِ ⁴³

which may be translated as, “*The complete believer may have any characteristic in his nature except treachery and lying.*”

Note that dislikes in the religion are not sins, because they have no punishment in the hereafter, but they are rewardable to avoid. The Prophets do not commit them, except that they may do them to show that it is not a sin. This act from them for such a purpose is not in itself disliked, because this is an excuse which makes the act free of any dislike.

Prophets do not commit sins before or after their Prophethood, but are protected from that. Allāh ﷻ ordered:

وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ⁴⁴

which means, “**follow him, so that you may be guided.**” These are absolute statements affirming that the Prophet ﷺ is of great moral character, without exception, and that he should be followed absolutely.

As for Prophet Adam’s eating from the tree in Paradise before descending to earth, this was for eating from the tree he had been told not to eat from, but it was in a state of forgetfulness. It was moreover followed by immediate regret and repentance before anyone could follow the act. Thus there is no treachery here.

⁴³ This Ḥadīth was narrated by al-Bazār, Abū Ya’lā, but also by others with similar wording. Its chain of narration is authentic. Source: V. 6/P. 463, al-Munāwī, ‘Abdul Ra’ūf. Fayḍ al-Qadīr, Egypt: al-Maktabat al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1980.

⁴⁴ Ṣūrat al-’A’rāf, 158

The wisdom in this story is that it serves as a grave warning against doing any kind of sin, no matter how small, for look at the consequences of this minor divergence from what is best only.

The serious consequence of this minor act, namely being taken out of Paradise to Earth, also shows the awesome rank of Adam. This is because it is the one of high status that usually suffers for minor breaches. In light of that a further wisdom in this historical incidence is that there is no escape from what Allāh ﷻ has predestined. Even Adam's intelligence and overwhelming fear of the Creator will not stop what Allāh ﷻ has willed to be. This teaches us not to be proud of our good deeds, and to remember that our acts are by the Will of Allāh only.

Note in particular that Prophets never commit blasphemy; they always believe that there is only one god. They always believe in the Creator, they are born with this belief and never contradict it. This is by the consensus of all Muslims.

One of its narrational proofs is that it was never narrated that a Prophet was ever blamed by his people for leaving the idolatry of their forefathers. This is a clear proof that they had never done it in the first place, for the enemies of the Prophets never left any opportunity to blame. For example, when Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was ordered to change the prayer direction to Mecca instead of Jerusalem, his opponents were quick to make an issue of it. In addition, not believing firmly in the Oneness of the Creator is known by reason as something blameworthy, a big flaw in one's moral character, and is therefore not suitable for the high rank of Prophethood.

3. **or keeping to themselves a message they have been ordered to deliver to creation.** They never do this, neither on purpose, nor by forgetting.

Attributes that Messengers could have

It is possible for the Messengers to have any human condition which does not imply flaw in their rank, such as getting married or falling ill. Examples are diseases that are not repulsive to other people, such as a headache or fever. Likewise, it is not impossible that they should be fought, spoken ill of, or even killed.

It is impossible for them to get repulsive diseases, such as leprosy or worms crawling out of their skin, because they are sent to attract and teach people. Similarly it is impossible for them to be stupid or slow minded.

Note that the first human being, Adam, was created from soil, and not from a monkey. He was also not a short primitive creature, but tall and beautiful. The Prophet ﷺ said:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ وَطَوَّلَهُ سِتُونَ ذِرَاعًا

which may be translated as, "Allāh created Adam 60 forearm lengths tall." Then he said:

فَكُلُّ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَى صُورَةِ آدَمَ

which may be translated as, “So all those that enter Paradise have the appearance of Adam.”⁴⁵ In other words, they have Adam’s incredible beauty and height.

Adam, like all Prophets was of great moral character, and was not running around naked like an animal, as the Darwinists would have you believe. Allāh ﷻ said about the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ⁴⁶

which means, “And verily you are of great moral character.” Other Prophets are not excepted from this, for the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said,

لَا تُخَيِّرُونِي مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

“Do not prefer me over other Prophets,”⁴⁷ that is, in a derogatory manner. It does not mean that there is no difference between the Prophets in rank. Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ⁴⁸

which means that He, “raised some of the Messengers in degrees of status over others.”

Proof that Messengers absolutely never lie

The proof that their truthfulness is a necessity is that lies would be a contradiction to the Prophetic miracles of the Messengers, which are like messages from Allāh that they are truthful in all that they convey. Each Messenger is known to have had at least one miracle, and this is the proof of their truthfulness.

Miracles and other extraordinary events

A Prophetic Miracle, or *mu‘jiza* in Arabic, is an extraordinary events that is joined with a claim of Prophethood. It cannot be imitated by an opponent or challenger.

There are also other types of extraordinary events, they are:

1. A preparatory wonder, or *irhās* in Arabic, is an extraordinary event that happens prior to the claim of Prophethood. For example, a cloud used to follow the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and give him shadow prior to his first revelation.

⁴⁵ Bukhārī No. 3148

⁴⁶ Ṣūrat al-Qalam, 4

⁴⁷ Bukhārī No. 4362

⁴⁸ Ṣūrat al-Baqarah, 253

2. A Walī's wonder, or *karāma* in Arabic, is an extraordinary event that happens to a very pious follower of a Prophet ﷺ, called a Walī. A Walī is someone who has worked very hard on doing good deeds and avoiding bad deeds. He is protected from ever committing blasphemy. He may commit sins, but repents immediately if this should happen. It is not joined with the claim of Prophethood, and does not establish it. Rather, it is a sign of the Walī's sincere following of his Prophet. It is a continuation of the miracles of the Prophet he follows.

An example is that 'Umar, during his time as Khalifah (ruler of all Muslims) shouted to the Muslim army in Persia, "The mountain! The mountain!" The army heard his warning, though 'Umar was in Medina on the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

When Khālīd ibn al-Walīd came to Hīrah in Iraq he was warned about being served poison by the Persians. He ordered them to bring it to him, said "*bismillāh*," drank it, but nothing happened to him.

It is important to note that a Walī showing *karāmahs* is not necessarily of a higher rank than the one that does not. This is because *karāmahs* serve to strengthen peoples faith, and that is why the *karāmahs* of the companions were relatively few. Note also that an extraordinary event at the hands of a person does not prove he is a Walī, because there are other possible explanations as follows:

3. Assistance, or *ma'ūna* in Arabic, is an extraordinary event that happens to a regular person which gets him out of a difficult situation. Sometimes this can be a *karāma* of a Walī that this person is associated with.
4. A lure, or *istidrāj* in Arabic, is an extraordinary event that happens to a blasphemous and sinful person. It may be according to his wish. For example, the Anti-Christ al-Dajjāl will split a person in half and then bring him back together alive. In addition, the people that follow him will live in ease while those that do not will have hard times. Note that he will claim to be a god, and is not able to claim Prophethood. This is all a test of peoples faith. Sometimes *istidrāj* happens to a blasphemous and sinful person against his wish. For example, when Musaylamah claimed Prophethood, a person came to him with a bad eye and when he touched it the other eye went bad also.⁴⁹

The proof that the Messengers do not sin

The proof that the Messengers are trustworthy, is that if the Messengers committed treachery by committing a sin or something disliked, then that sinful or disliked act would become obedience. This is true, because Allāh has commanded us to follow them in all that they say and do, and Allāh does not order sinful or disliked acts. The same proof holds for the necessity of them being attributed with conveying their messages entirely, since not obeying the order to convey would be a sin.

⁴⁹ See V. 2 P. 203. Sa'duddīn al-Taftāzānī. Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī 'Ilm al-Kalām. 2 vols. Pakistan: Dār al-Mārif al-Numāniyya, 1401.

The proof that the Messengers are exposed to human conditions that do not imply flaw in their rank

The proof of the possibility of human conditions for the Messengers, which do not imply flaw in their high rank, is that such conditions have been witnessed. The wisdom of these conditions may be understood to be the raising of the Messengers' ranks. That is, through their patience during tribulations. **Or it may be for the demonstration of sacred law,** by witnessing how they acted under various conditions. **Or it may be to show the insignificance of this world by showing it is not the abode of reward,** for otherwise the Messengers would be the most rewarded -in this world- due to their high rank.

Relating to everything mentioned in the creedal statement of Islām

The meaning of “there is no god but Allāh”

All of the above is summarized in “Lā’ ilāha ill-Allāh, Muḥammadu-r-Rasūl-Ullāh,” literally: “there is no God but Allāh, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh”.

This is **because** the word, *ilāh* in Arabic, translated as “god” in English, comes from the word *Ulūhiyya* in Arabic, or “godhood,” which **means, “being the One who needs nothing else and all else needs Him.”** So **“Lā’ ilāha ill-Allāh” means, “the only one that needs nothing else and all else needs Him is Allāh.”**⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The obvious consequence of this definition is that no one and nothing deserves to be worshiped except Allāh ﷻ. This is another way of defining the meaning of “*Lā’ ilāha ill Allāh*”. Consequently it is important to clarify the meaning of the word *‘ibāda* in Arabic, which is the word translated as “worship” in English. *‘ibāda* is defined as “obedience with humbleness,” in the scholarly dictionaries “*al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*,” “*al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*,” and “*al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*.” There is no question, however, that merely being humbly obedient to someone is not equivalent to worship. To reach to the meaning of actual worship, we would have to say: “the most extreme humility that is only deserved by the one that has the greatest status.” This is the definition stated by al-Aṣbahānī in his famous dictionary “*Mufradāt al-Qur’ān*”.

What is this extreme humility that is the meaning of worship? It is not merely the most extreme physical act of humility, which is to prostrate. This is true, because the Qur’ān states that the angels prostrated to Adam, and that the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf prostrated to him. Clearly this act of humility that constitutes worship then, needs an act of the heart.

What is this act of the heart? It can only be to believe that the one humbled to has an attribute of godhood, a divine attribute, such as the power to independently influence events. This is the most humble feeling the heart can have, and ultimate humility cannot be achieved without this.

Based on this preface we can define worship as: the most extreme humility with the belief that the one humbled to has an attribute of godhood.

It is essential to distinguish between the worship (*‘ibādah*) of something and taking something as a means (*wasīla*) to an end. The person who worships other than Allāh ﷻ to gain His acceptance is indeed a blasphemer, but the one that takes prescribed means to gain His acceptance has done

What it means that Allāh ﷻ does not need anything

The fact that Allāh does not need anything, necessitates that He *absolutely must be* existing, without a beginning, without an end, without resemblance to any events, without any needs, and without any flaws. It further means that He *absolutely must be* All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and attributed with Speech, that is neither letters, nor sounds. This is because He would otherwise be in need of something to bring Him into existence, or to exist in, or to remove an imperfection. These are the first six attributes explained in this article, as well as the 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th, 19th and 20th.

It also follows from the statement that Allāh does not have needs, that He is clear of being driven to take care of the beneficial or to prevent the harmful in His actions and rulings, as Allāh ﷻ has no needs to fulfill, and is not influenced by anything, since He does not have a beginning. This is because having drives means needing whatever it takes to reach ones aim. That cannot be, since He does not need anything.

Moreover, it entails that doing anything that belongs to the possible category of things is merely possible for Allāh, as He is neither obliged to do anything nor to leave it out. This is because if any of that was a must for Him by reason, such as e.g. giving reward, then He would need to do something to achieve it and clear Himself of the imperfection of doing the opposite. That is why nothing is a must with regards to Him except complete perfection and being clear of any flaws or limits. This is clear, because He does not need anything.

What it means that everything else needs Allāh ﷻ

As for the meaning that everything else needs Allāh, also contained in “*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh,*” this necessitates that Allāh has the attributes of Eternal Life, Power, Will and Knowledge. This is clear, because otherwise nothing with a beginning could exist, and thus nothing would need

something prescribed: Allāh said in the Qur’ān (al-Mā’idah, 35):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ

Interpretation: “*O You Who Believe, fear Allāh, and seek means (wasīla) to gain His acceptance.*”

The means (*wasīla*) mentioned in the Āyah must be something that complies with the teaching of Islām, that is, with the Qur’ān, Ḥadīths narrated, and confirmed *ijmā’* consensus of top scholars of a previous generation. One such means is to supplicate to Allāh by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, called *tawassul* in Arabic. This is by scholarly *ijmā’* consensus, and its denial was invented by some people some 700 years after the Hijrah.

To understand the meaning of *tawassul*, consider a person who has angered his bigger brother and asks him to forgive him saying: “*forgive me, not because of me, but because of mother.*” This does not mean that he is worshiping his mother, but that he is mentioning their mother as a reason for his brother’s forgiveness. He is reminding him that their mother loved both of them and would be pleased if they remained on friendly terms. He is using his mother as a means (*wasīla*) for getting his brother’s forgiveness. No one in their right mind would claim that this person has worshiped his mother.

Him. This cannot be, since everything does need Him. For example, saying that all things are in need of Allāh ﷻ, but not attributing Allāh ﷻ with Power to create those things which are in need of Him would be a contradiction. Similarly, Allāh ﷻ must have the attribute of Life for the one without life cannot give life, but His Life is nothing like ours and is not associated with a body, a soul, or the possibility of death.

In addition, it necessitates that He is One, for if He had a second, then nothing would need Him, since they would both be weak. That cannot be, since everything needs Him.

Moreover, we conclude from it that everything else has a beginning, for if something had no beginning, it would have no need for Allāh. This cannot be, since He is the One that everything necessarily needs.

We also know from it that nothing other than Allāh ﷻ creates or has any real influence on anything at all, otherwise that influence would not need Allāh for it to happen.

This cannot be since He is the one that everything other than Him needs in general and in all situations absolutely. In fact nothing else has the ability to create or influence anything, nor is it possible for it to be given that ability. Nonetheless, it is permissible to say for example, “fire burns.” But it is not meant literally, as fire does not create the effect of burning, rather Allāh ﷻ creates both the fire and the effect of burning which is conventionally attributed to the fire. Knowing this is the strongest means for *tawakkul*, or reliance on Allāh ﷻ.

This is if you figure that some existing thing influences by its inherent nature. If you figure instead that something has influence by a power created in it by Allāh, as many ignorant people claim, then beware that this is impossible as well. This is because He would in this case need an intermediary to create some actions. This is judged by sound reason as a fallacious claim based on what you know about Him being necessarily without need for something other than Him.

At this point it has become clear to you that the saying “there is no god but Allāh” includes the three categories that all accountable people are obligated to know as being true of Allāh. That is, what must be true of Him, what cannot be true of Him, and what is possibly true of Him.

The identity of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

As for the declaration “Muḥammadu-r-Rasūl-Ullāh,” Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.... Our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the son of ‘Abdullāh, who was the son of ‘Abdul Muttalib, who was the son of Hāshim, who was the son of ‘Abdul Manāf of the noblest Arab tribe, Quraysh. He was born in Mecca. He immigrated to Medina. He died in Medina, is buried there and his grave there is well known. Allāh gave our beloved Prophet Muḥammad miracles, which were as great as or greater than the miracles he gave to other Prophets. His greatest miracle is the Qur’ān.

Believing in Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ entails believing in all Prophets

This includes belief in all Prophets, the Angels, all heavenly scriptures, and the Last Day. al-Sanūsī hints here to a few of the narrational beliefs that come with the belief in the Prophet

Muḥammad ﷺ, since they are part of his teachings. These are beliefs established by narration of revealed knowledge, from the Qur’ān and Ḥadīths, and cannot be known by reason alone.

This is because he - *may Allāh raise his rank*⁵¹ - came to confirm the truthfulness of all of that.

All Prophets and Messengers are trustworthy

It also follows from this declaration that it must be that all the Messengers and Prophets -may Allāh raise their rank and protect their followers from all that they would dislike for them - are attributed with truthfulness, and that it is impossible that they should lie. Otherwise they would not be trustworthy Messengers of the One Who is Our Lord and knows all things hidden, He is All-Mighty and Great.

Prophets and Messengers never sin

It follows further that it is impossible that they should do anything prohibited at all, because they were sent to teach people by their words, actions and inaction, and this necessitates that none of these breach with the orders of the one Who is our Lord who is All-Mighty, who chose them above all His creation and entrusted them the secret of revelation.

Prophets and Messengers are exposed to human conditions that do not imply flaw in their rank

Moreover, it follows from this declaration that it is possible that they be subject to human conditions, because this does not affect their message, or their great status to Allāh. Rather, this is something that increases it, by letting them face difficulties as it befits a perfect worshiper.

It has now been made clear to you that the two-part declaration of the faith, despite its few letters, contains all that is obligatory for an accountable person to know in terms of the beliefs of true faith in Allāh and His Messengers.

The importance of remembrance by the creedal statement

Perhaps it is because it is brief and includes all that we have mentioned above, that the sacred law of Islām made it as an expression for what is of Islām in the heart. It does not accept the faith of anyone without it.

Thus it befits the rational person to make much remembrance of this noble phrase, while keeping in mind all of its meanings; the beliefs of true faith. This until they become part of his flesh and blood, for verily he will see from it secrets and wonders, if Allāh has willed it, in overwhelming amounts.

⁵¹ This is the meaning of the expression *ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam*, as stated by al-Qushayrī (P. 60, V. 2. al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ. *al-Shifā*. 2 vols. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1988.) This is a more precise translation than saying “peace be upon him” or the like, because he already has complete peace.

Conclusion

Success is by the will of Allāh only, there is no other true lord, and no other deserving of worship. We ask Him, who is clear of and above non-befitting attributes, to make us and our beloved ones utter and know the declaration of faith at death.

May Allāh raise the rank of our master Muḥammad, every time someone makes remembrance of him, or the negligent neglect it. May Allāh, who is above non-befitting attributes, reward all the companions of the Messenger of Allāh, as well as those that follow them in doing good, until the Day of Judgment. May Allāh give peace to the nations of the Messengers from what they feared for them. All praise to Allāh, who is the Lord of the Worlds.

Translators Afterword: the Proofs of the Mind in Islām

Through the study of *al-Sanūsiyya* it is clear that the Islamic belief in God is correct without question, and that the beliefs of atheism, agnosticism or other religions are invalid and false. Beware that some Muslim pretending philosophers falsely claim that the proofs of Kalām science for Allāh's existence are not self-evident but based on premises that could be questioned. This position does not reflect the Sunni belief at all, but is the deviant view of the philosophers of the school of 'equivalence of proofs' regarding the Sunni belief sciences. This sect claims that since debates are sometimes won by one side and at other times by another, there cannot be any certainty on the matter. One may ask them: if someone wins a debate claiming that the earth is flat, this means that the earth could be flat?

This claim of theirs is nothing but an attempt to reduce Islam to the level of other religions, for if the Belief in God cannot be proved beyond doubt by logical proofs, then what basis is there for certainty in faith? After all, the basis of the faith is this belief. This denial of certainty by proofs is also a plain contradiction of the Qur'ān, for Allāh ﷻ blames those who do not use their minds. In more than ten places in the Qur'ān:

أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

Meaning: **“Do you not use your minds?”** In fact, similar phrases encouraging the use of the mind are around 40 or so in the Qur'ān.

Al-Aṣḥāhānī in his book “*Mufradāt al-Qur'ān*” or “*The Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*” defined the Arabic “*al-aql*”, the mind, as: “*the ready power to accept knowledge. For this reason, it is said about knowledge that the human being gains from this power: ‘Aql as well. For this reason the Prince of the Believers said: the mind is two: imprinted and heard. The heard one does not benefit if there is no imprint, just as the light of the sun has no benefit if the eye’s perception of light is not there.*”

The Islamic faith teaches that the proof of Allāh's existence leaves no doubt, because Allāh ﷻ praises the mind, and tells that His Messengers told blasphemous people:

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ

Meaning: **“Is there any doubt about Allāh?”** This Āyah shows that certain knowledge of Allāh ﷻ is indeed self evident, i.e. achievable by the mind alone.

In fact, one of the proofs presented in the commentary on the Sanūsiyya above has only two premises: first, that we exist, and second, that before we existed there was a series of events leading up to that existence. If that is not self evident, then I do not know what is.

Rather, the real reason why the proofs of the Islamic belief sciences are not always effective in convincing people of the truth is a fault in the people, not in the proofs or their premises.

Al-Ghazālī described this situation eloquently in “*al-Iqtisād Fī-l-ʿIṭiqād*” in the second preliminary chapter explaining who the Kalām Science is important for. He defined groups of people in terms of their need for Kalām science, and for the second group al-Ghazālī said:

“The second group of people: a section that inclines away from the true belief, such as the blasphemers and deviant innovators. The averse and vulgar are among these; those of weak minds that are stuck in blind imitation and are argumentative based on falsehood from the beginning of their lives until old age. Nothing works on this group except the whip and the sword. Most of the non-Muslims became Muslims under the shadow of the sword, because Allāh does by the sword and the spear what He does not do by proofs and words. From this, if you read history, you will not read about any battle between Muslims and blasphemers without there being some of them that become Muslims, and you will not find a debate that did not just increase insistence and stubbornness. Do not think that this that we have mentioned reduces the status of the mind and its proofs. Rather, the enlightenment of the mind is a grace that Allāh does not grant anyone except a few of those who obey Him. The overwhelming state of creation is shortcoming and negligence, however, and due to their shortcoming, they do not sense the proofs of the mind, just as the sight of bats does not sense the light of the sun.”⁵²

It is thereby known that the Muslim pretending philosophers of the school of ‘equivalence of proofs’ are among those that to the group that al-Ghazālī labeled as those who are in the state of “*shortcoming and negligence.*” We ask Allāh to protect us from their evil and a bad fate. *Āmīn.*

About the Author

Shaykh Abū Ādam al-Narūjī converted from Christianity to Islām while living in China. He has since studied and received Ijāzahs in various works of Ḥanafī *fiqh* and Ash‘arī *‘aqīdah* from the *mashāyekh* of Damascus and Kuwait, including : al-Shaykh Muhammad Tāhir al-Afghānī (Abū Ḥasan), al-Shaykh Mustafā Chebaro (a student of Mawlānā al-Shaykh ‘Abdul Razzāq al-Ḥalabī), al-Shaykh Imād Nahlāwī, al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Shāmī (Shihābuddīn Abū ‘Amr), al-Shaykh Aḥmad Hajī al-Kurdī and Shaykh Muhammad Jumu‘ah (one of the prominent students of Mawlānā al-Shaykh ‘Abdul Razzāq al-Halabī).

⁵² *al-Iqtisād Fī-l-ʿIṭiqād*, al-Ghazālī