

The Right Belief Series | Vol-1

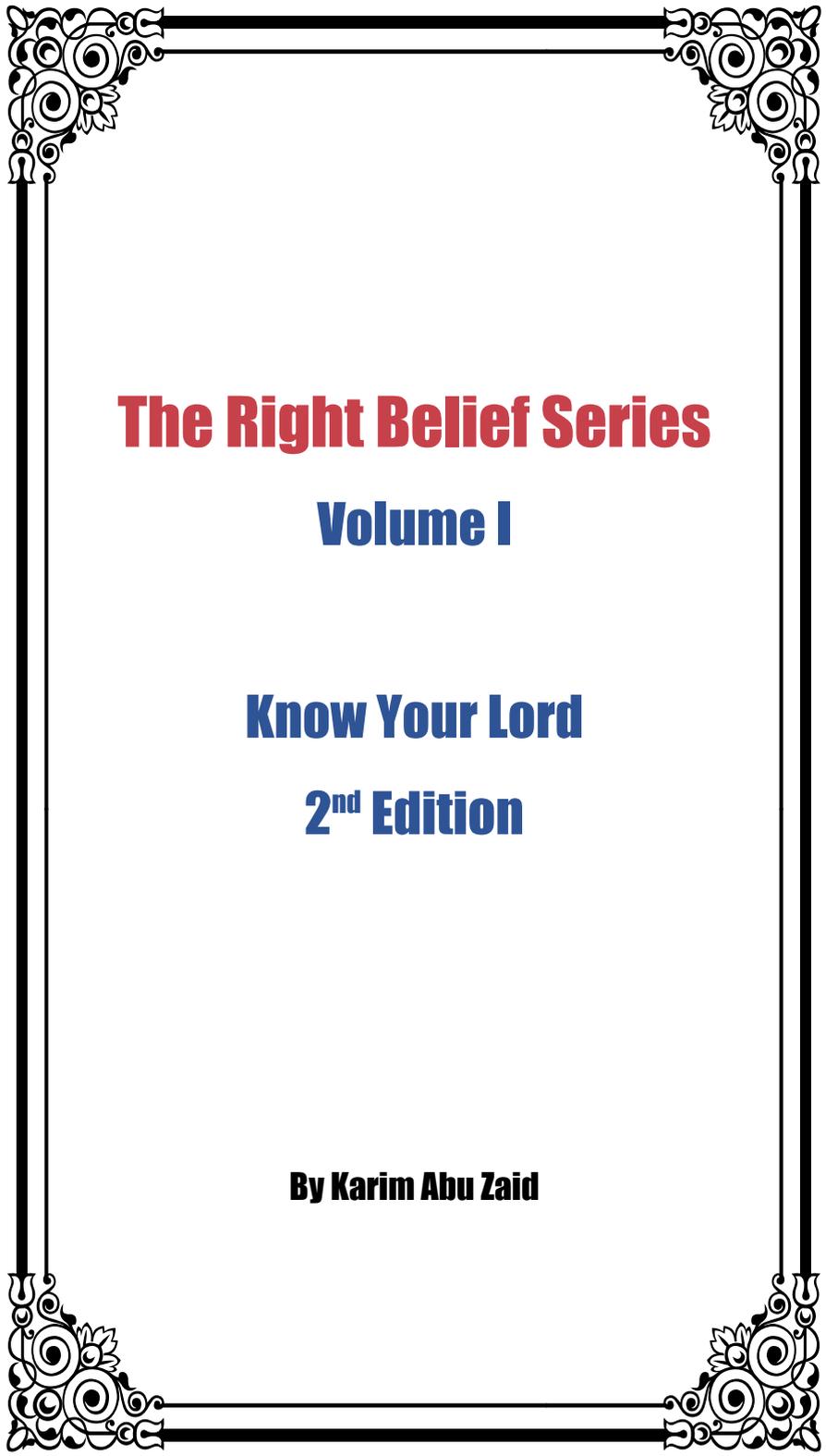
KNOW YOUR LORD

2nd Edition



Foreword by
Dr. Bilal Philips
Shaykh Jalal Abualrub

Karim Abu Zaid



The Right Belief Series

Volume I

Know Your Lord

2nd Edition

By Karim Abu Zaid



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Foreword

Foreword by Dr Bilal Philips & Shaykh Jalal Abualrub

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Shaykh Karim Abu Zaid's book *Know Your Lord* is a worthy addition to the growing body of Islamic literature in English available on Tawheed (Monotheism) and Aqeedah (Beliefs), from 40 years ago in the early 80s when I wrote *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*. In those days, the only available book was the translation of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahab's *Kitaab at-Tawheed*, which was a teaching manual on Tawheed with very little explanation, which he had prepared for his students. It consisted of a very concise compilation of Quranic verses and narrations (Ahadith) on various topics of Monotheism which the average English reader at that time would have difficulty following. In fact, when I wrote *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, which was based on various commentaries on Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab's teaching manual as well as other works like *Sharh al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyyah*, I couldn't find any Muslim publisher willing to publish it in either the UK or the USA. Eventually, I had to publish it myself.

Shaykh Karim Abu Zaid's book *Know Your Lord* is notable among the English Islamic literature available on Monotheism and Aqeedah, in that it is very comprehensive, yet concise. It covers many topics which are necessary for students of knowledge, as well as the average Muslim. It is a compilation from many classical texts, which are then related to contemporary issues, similar to the methodology used in my work on the subject.

The reader will greatly benefit from learning the proper methodologies of understanding the true principles of Islamic theological beliefs, realities, and characteristics of Allah ﷻ. Furthermore, extensive information, and instructions are provided to ensure that Muslims do not fall into error, and deviations regarding Allah ﷻ and His Names and Attributes.

In summary, it is a good effort of one of my students on the critical subject of knowing our Lord. May Allah ﷻ bless all who contributed to it and all who read it.

Dr Bilal Philips is an Islamic scholar, teacher, speaker, author, and the founder and chancellor of the International Open University.

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All thanks and praises are due to Allah ﷻ, Creator of all things, and may Allah's ﷻ Honor, Mercy and Blessings be on all of His Prophets, starting with Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, passing through Nuh (Noah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and ending with Muhammad ﷺ, Allah's ﷻ final Prophet and Messenger.

Knowing the Creator of everything is an essential part of *Iman*, that is, the Islamic Faith. By knowing Allah ﷻ, we, His creation, are able to recognize His Might, Majesty, infinite Power and Ability, and that He is the Only Creator and Sustainer of all creations.

Knowing that the Creator of everything is One, the only One, directs us to recognizing that He is the only One Who deserves to be worshiped, and that all acts of worship should only be directed at Him, Alone, without partners.

Knowing the Creator of everything by His Names and Attributes, fills our hearts with His Might, Power, Mercy, Forgiveness, Generosity, and His other infinite qualities, directing us to have fear of the Creator, and obedience to Him in anticipation for His aid, protection, and rewards.

Knowing that the Creator of everything is the One Who Alone guides His creation ultimately leads them to certain knowledge that He has sent a prophet to every nation that existed, and guides humankind through His Revelations to their One and Only Creator. Allah's ﷻ Prophets and Revelations inform His creation about His Names, Attributes, warnings, promises, actions, commandments, and news of the past, the present and the future, especially the greatest Day of all time, the Day of Judgment when all creations stand between the Hands of Allah for judgment. Therefore, knowing the Creator is an essential aspect of *Iman*, that is, the Islamic Faith. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran,

﴿ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَلِقُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾ [الأنعام:102]

“Such is Allah, your Lord! La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Creator of all things. So worship Him (Alone), and He is the Wakil (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc.) over all things.”⁽¹⁾

I have known Shaykh Karim Abu Zaid for well over a decade. We need people of knowledge like Shaykh Karim, those who have intimate knowledge of the original Islamic resources, all of which

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:102), Hilali trans.

are in Arabic, in addition to being apprised of Western culture and the English language. In addition to being an Imam of one of the biggest Islamic centers in Denver, Colorado, Shaykh Karim travels to various Islamic centers and masjids in the United States to deliver Friday speeches and give lectures on various aspects of Islam, preaching the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Sunnah.

Even though Shaykh Karim is busy being the Imam and teacher of his local community, he has authored several beneficial books in English teaching and explaining Islam. However, the Islamic library in English is very modest in size and scope in comparison to the Islamic library in Arabic, which consists of hundreds of thousands of books. Therefore there is a great need for people of knowledge to translate many more classical works on Islam, as well as, authoring books that discuss all aspects of Islam addressed to today's audiences and challenges.

I ask Allah ﷻ to reward Shaykh Karim for his efforts, and benefit Muslims and non-Muslims with his knowledge and the books he has authored and translated.

All thanks are due to Allah ﷻ, the Creator of all things, and may His Honor, Blessings, Peace and Mercy be on Muhammad ﷺ, Allah's ﷻ final Prophet and Messenger.

Shaykh Jalal Abualrub is an Islamic scholar, teacher, and author and translator of nearly 60 books under the project: Explaining Islam to the World.

www.islamlife.com



مقدمة

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره، ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا، من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضل فلا هادي له، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله.

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ؕ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ [سورة آل عمران: 102]

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ ؕ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ [سورة النساء: 1]

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾﴾ [سورة الأحزاب: 70-71]

فإن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله، وأحسن الهدي هدي محمد ﷺ، وشر الأمور محدثاتها، وكل محدثة بدعة، وكل بدعة ضلالة، وكل ضلالة في النار



Preface

The title *Know Your Lord* cannot be understood without defining the scope of the terms involved. The guided way a person may acquire knowledge about Allah ﷻ is through Revelation. No one can see Allah ﷻ in this world, so knowledge of Him must come through Revelation, not perception. This statement automatically discounts divinity from objects and humans, and brings us a big step closer to knowing our Lord through the pursuit of knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Be informed that none of you can see Allah until you die.”**⁽¹⁾ The Prophet ﷺ made that statement in the context of warning us against the Anti-Christ (Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal) who will try to convince people that he is God. The point of the Prophet’s ﷺ warning is that if a person claims to be God in this life, then that person is automatically a liar. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوفُونَ ﴿الطور: 35-36﴾

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.”⁽²⁾

The answer to these questions is clear to anyone with a sound mind.

When one looks at the creation of Allah ﷻ two conclusions are inescapable: there must be a Creator, and the attributes and qualities of the creation cannot be equal, or like the Creator. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿النحل: 17﴾

“Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded?”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ﴿البقرة: 255﴾

“And they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (7356); Tirmizi (2235).

⁽²⁾ Quran (52:35-36). Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (16:17), Sahih International trans.

This means that we cannot gain any knowledge about Allah ﷻ and the reward that ensues from fidelity to that knowledge except through that which comes to us from Allah ﷻ Himself through Revelation. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“There is nothing by means of which one may draw close to Paradise (Jannah) and move far away from Hell (Jahannam) but it has been explained to you.”**⁽²⁾

The means with which to know about our Lord is through learning His Names and Attributes. This subject has been a source of controversy for some Muslims throughout history. Some generations went astray from the methodology of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah) in comprehension of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

In Sha Allah (If Allah ﷻ Wills it), this work is meant as a tool for the current Ummah (Muslim community) to revive the accurate comprehension of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ as the three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) understood it.⁽³⁾ Qadhi Iyad ﷺ reported that Imam Malik ibn Anas ﷺ said, **“The latter part of this Ummah (Muslim community) will not be rectified except by what corrected its first part.”**⁽⁴⁾ Rectification of the correct understanding of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ will elevate our Faith (Iman), and is the best means to strengthen us and keep us steadfast.

The second significant term in the title of this work is ‘Lord.’ It refers to Allah ﷻ, Venerated and Elevated is He. Unfortunately, these days Muslims hardly use the word Lord which is a disservice and a failure in Dawah (invitation to accept Islam) to our not-yet-Muslim neighbors. The term ‘Lord’ is from among the beautiful Names of our Creator, and is endearing to the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab), although their understanding of the term differs from the understanding of a Muslim. The English word ‘Lord’ does not fully convey the meaning of the Arabic word for it. ‘Lord’ in English has a primary meaning of ruler or master.⁽⁵⁾ The Arabic rendering رب , in contrast, denotes the meanings: Creator, Sovereign, Provider, and Absolute Ruler, when referring to Allah ﷻ.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Quran (2:255), Sahih International trans.

(2) At-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (1647), Sahih by Al-Albani.

(3) The Sahabah, their successors, and the students of their successors; see Muslim (6469-6476); Bukhari (6428-6429).

(4) *Ash-Shifa' bi-ta'rif huquq Mustafa* (2/676).

(5) ‘Lord.’ *Merriam-Webster.com*. 27 June 2021.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lord>

(6) IPA /rab.ba/ based on the proto-Semitic root ر ب ب (r-b-b).



The Right Belief Series

Knowing Allah ﷻ means to comprehend His Divine Essence, Names, Attributes, and Actions of Lordship. This knowledge comes in the broader context of the title *Know Your Lord*, which is an essential and vital science of Monotheism (Tawheed).⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Tawheed is affirmation of the unique and indivisible monotheistic ‘Oneness’ of our Creator.

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Part One Introduction

Islam is an exceptional product that needs a skilled and qualified salesperson that knows his commodity and conveys it wisely and with pleasant teaching.

The West is a fertile field for the work of inviting non-Muslims to Islam (Dawah).⁽¹⁾ Many Westerners concern themselves with material items, thus craving for whims and desires. However, they still suffer from spiritual emptiness and an inner vacuum that they can only fulfill through spiritual nourishment, and this nourishment is perfected in Islam.

Despite the excellent commodity and the great demand, the harvest of the work of calling to Islam (Dawah) is still unsatisfactory. The call to Islam (Dawah) faces two vital and linked obstacles in the West. These obstacles are as follows:

A deficiency of knowledge of the callers (Du'aat) in the parts of Monotheism (Tawheed) that deal with the knowledge and perception of Allah ﷻ (actions associated with the Lordship of Allah ﷻ, His Names, and Attributes). Unfortunately, many Muslims in the West don't realize that they live in a predominantly Judeo-Christian (Ahl Al-Kitab) community who already believe in God. However, they distorted the concept of God. Outreach to the Jewish and Christian communities must begin from the foundation of their cultivated passion for knowing our Lord. Callers to Islam (Du'aat) must feed this passion with authentic knowledge of our Lord from Revelation. Inviting to know the Oneness of our Lord comes before inviting to the actions and symbols of Islam.

The following Narration (Hadith) confirms the above. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that Muaz رضي الله عنه said, **“The Messenger of Allah sent me [to Yemen] and said: 'You are going to some of the People of the Book. Call them to bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has enjoined on them five prayers to be offered each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has enjoined on them charity (Zakah) to be taken from their rich and given to their poor. If they accept that, then beware (of taking) the best of their wealth, and protect yourself from the supplication of the one who has been wronged, for there is no barrier between it and Allah.’”**⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Dawah (دعوة), is calling to individuals or groups of people towards the acceptance or adherence to Islam and the teachings it encompasses.

⁽²⁾ Muslim (121).

Many Muslims are deficient in calling to Allah ﷻ (Dawah) because they lack knowledge about Him, or they have an incorrect understanding of His Names, Attributes, and Actions of Lordship. This is the objective behind our first book of the Right Belief Series, *Know Your Lord*.

Poor conduct is another obstacle that stands in the way of a fruitful call to Islam (Dawah). Muslims must invite while conducting themselves with good character in all aspects of their lives. The excellence of good character is a vital component of the work of calling others to Islam (Dawah). A sign of possessing the correct knowledge of Allah ﷻ and excelling in performing the rituals of Islam is to have an exceptional character. Knowledge and character are linked together. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه is reported to have said, “**Acquire knowledge and teach people. Learn with it dignity, tranquility and humility for those who teach you; and humility for those you teach.**”⁽¹⁾

Sadly, we may frequently hear a Muslim say, “I would rather deal with Christians or Jews but not Muslims because of their bad character.” Of course, it is wrong to say that about Muslims despite the lawfulness of dealing with non-Muslims in general. This statement shows **two essential facts**:

1. **Good character radiates one’s Faith (Iman)** before its content testifies to truth or falsehood. Hence, regardless of the caller’s (Da’i) contents of Faith (Iman)—his good or bad character will radiate or degrade his Faith (Iman), respectively. Such is the case with many Christians and Jews in the West who build their faith on translated second-person testimonials, and thousands of conflicting manuscripts full of errors and contradictions.
2. **Bad character defames one’s Faith (Iman)** even if one holds the correct belief system (Aqeedah). Many Muslims do not realize that their first tool of calling others to Islam (Dawah) should be the excellence of character, which presents before the content of orthopraxy. The story of Abu Zarr Al-Ghifari رضي الله عنه, one of the first ten people to accept Islam, is a testimony to the prominence of good character.

Abu Zarr رضي الله عنه was distressed by the custom of idol worshiping that proliferated at the time in Arabia. He was one of those who abandoned idolatry to worship Allah ﷻ following the way of the patriarch and Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عليه السلام.

When the news reached Abu Zarr رضي الله عنه that a man in Makkah claimed prophethood, he immediately sent his brother Unais رضي الله عنه to Makkah to investigate. Unais رضي الله عنه spent days in Makkah carefully examining the Prophet’s ﷺ behavior and social interactions. He returned to his brother Abu Zarr رضي الله عنه and reported, “**I have seen him exhorting people to virtues and his speech was not like poetry.**”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (1650).

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (3522A).

Notice that the first attraction the Prophet ﷺ had was his excellent character. His speech was substantial and commanded virtues rather than indulgences like poetry and gossip. This is what non-Muslims should see in a practicing Muslim, and it will become the magnet that attracts them to Islam.

For the above reason and many other reasons, Allah ﷻ sent His Messenger ﷺ to teach his followers the excellence of good character. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ [الجمعة: 2]

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His Verses (Ayat) and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom—although they were before in clear error.”⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, the above Verse (Ayah) reveals one of the favors Allah ﷻ has bestowed on the believers, stating that He has sent them His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ to teach them the Quran and to purify them.

The Prophet ﷺ once declared, **“I was sent to perfect good character.”⁽²⁾** This statement clarifies that one of the reasons behind the Prophet’s ﷺ mission was to elevate and perfect the moral character of the individual and society at large.



⁽¹⁾ Quran (62:2), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Al-Muwatta (Book 47, Number 47.1.8); Bukhari in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* (273); Suyuti in *Jami' as-Saghir* (2584)

Chapter One

The Imperative to Know Your Lord

The title that I chose for this work is *Know Your Lord*. There are two keywords in this title, the commanding verb ‘Know’ and the object ‘Lord.’

The commanding verb ‘Know’ refers to acquiring knowledge through reading and studying. This means to apply the first command the Messenger of Allah ﷺ received from the Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. If one is unable to read, he can still obtain knowledge through attentiveness to one whose character exemplifies nobility. In the case of our Messenger ﷺ who was illiterate, he learned from the recitation of the Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْوَّحِيُّ الْيُحْيِي ۖ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾﴾ [النجم: 4-5]

“It is not but a Revelation revealed, taught to him by one intense in strength [i.e., Jibreel (Gabriel)]”⁽¹⁾

The object ‘Your Lord’ refers to Allah ﷻ, the Divine Lord of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, Who created us. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾﴾ [الصافات: 96]

“...Allah created you and that which you do?”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ facilitates all that we do, and He began His Revelation in the Quran with the command for us to read, and to learn with His permission. The first subject mentioned after the command to learn is knowledge of our Lord, Allah ﷻ—the One Who created us, and facilitates for us our ability to do all things—amongst them reading and learning. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (53:4-5), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (37:96), Sahih International trans.

[العلق: 1-3] ﴿أَقْرَأْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created—Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous—Who taught by the pen—Taught man that which he knew not.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah said, “Since Allah is the Lord and Sovereign of everything, and He is the Master and Giver of all knowledge, just as He is the origin of everything that exists, likewise, knowledge of Him is the root of all knowledge.”⁽²⁾ Ibn Al-Qayyim rahimahullah, the student of Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah, said, “Whoever knows Allah, knows everything other than Him. Whoever is ignorant of his Lord is even more ignorant of everything other than Him.”⁽³⁾

Imam Muhammad Ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari rahimahullah depicted the same understanding in the arrangement of his book *Sahih Al-Jamia*, the most authentic book after the Book of Allah ﷻ.⁽⁴⁾ Imam Al-Bukhari rahimahullah began his book with a section titled “*The Beginning of Revelation*,” and then he followed it with chapters on Faith (Iman), followed by the chapter on knowledge. This arrangement suggests that Al-Bukhari rahimahullah meant to emphasize that the first obligation upon a human being is Faith (Iman) and the way to attain it is through knowledge, and the source of Faith (Iman) and knowledge is the Revelation. This arrangement is not by accident. Al-Bukhari rahimahullah made some important points with such an arrangement.

In this chapter, we will briefly present three main reasons why we must learn about our Lord. We are aiming to inspire every Muslim to embark on the journey of acquiring knowledge of Faith (Iman), particularly the things which allows us to know Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter (Akhirah), including Paradise (Jannah) and Hellfire (Jahannam). The three reasons are as follows:

1. Knowing our Lord precedes the Quran.
2. Knowing our Lord inspires compliance.
3. Knowing our Lord is a means of Dawah (Call to Islam).

Knowledge of Faith (Iman) precedes the Quran

The following statements confirm that every Muslim must comprehend the basic tenants of Faith (Iman) before embarking on learning the explanation of the Quran (Tafsir Al-Quran).

⁽¹⁾ Quran (96:1-5), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*; similar by Ibn al-Qayyim in *Bada'i al-Fawa'id* (1/163).

⁽³⁾ Ibn Al-Qayyim in *Madarij al-Salikin Bayna Manazil Iyaka na'budu wa-Iyaka Nasta'in* (vol. 3, p. 351).

⁽⁴⁾ This is ‘Sahih Bukhari,’ *Al-Jami' al-Musnad as-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasul Allah wa Sunnanihi wa Ayyamihi*.

There are six Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman), which include belief in One God (Tawheed of Allah ﷻ), Angels, Divinely Revealed Books, the Prophets, the Day of Judgement (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), and the Divine Predestination (Al-Qadr). Notice that the first article of Faith (Iman) is the belief in Allah ﷻ. This belief begins with learning about Him, and this was the practice of the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ.

Jundub bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه said, **“We were with the Prophet ﷺ and we were strong youths, so we learned about Faith (Iman) before we learned the Quran. Then we learned the Quran and our Faith (Iman) increased thereby.”**⁽¹⁾

Similarly, Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه reported, **“A man came to the Messenger of Allah, and he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I recite the Quran, but I do not find that my heart understands it.’ The Prophet said, ‘Verily, your heart is filled with Faith (Iman), and Faith (Iman) is given to a servant before the Quran.’”**⁽²⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله commented on this concept. His position is that Allah ﷻ, the Lord and Sovereign of everything, the Master and Giver of all knowledge—remembrance of Him and knowledge of Him is the root of all knowledge. After this recognition, the Quran gives detailed knowledge and increases Faith (Iman), as Jundub bin Abdullah Al-Bajali رضي الله عنه and other Companions (Sahabah) said.⁽³⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, **“Accordingly, the more the heart knows, believes in, and practices [what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ have ordered], the more a person’s Faith (Iman) increases even if that person has a general adherence and general verbal confession. Similarly, if someone knows Allah’s Names as well as their meanings and believes in them, his Faith (Iman) is more perfect than that of someone who does not know but believes in them generally, or someone who knows only some of them. Hence, the more one knows Allah’s Names, Attributes, and Verses (Ayat), the more perfect his Faith (Iman).”**⁽⁴⁾

Knowledge of Faith (Iman) inspires a disciplined compliance

As mentioned above, Faith (Iman) increases from the knowledge in the heart, and the practice on the tongue and the lips. The practice is performed through the actions of worship as learned from Revelation. Who do we worship? Who do we bow to? Who do we prostrate to? The answer to all these questions must be Allah ﷻ alone, but this Certainty (Yaqeen) of Faith (Iman) is increased by

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Majah (61), Sahih by Al-Albani.

⁽²⁾ Ahmad (6568), Sahih by Shakir.

⁽³⁾ Abstract from Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah in *Kitab Al-Iman* (p. 240), Salman Hassan Al-Ani and Shadia Ahmad Tel trans.

what we know about Allah ﷻ, just as our actions improve from knowing and responding to our Lord. Now think if we know more about Him, how much we would enjoy our worship? We wouldn't do it just because it is mandatory but because our hearts would desire to worship our Lord.

The following are situations which confirm that knowing the Names of Allah ﷻ, His Attributes, Actions, and Sovereignty over the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) and the Hereafter (Akhirah) are inspirations and motivations for a believer to comply with the commands of Allah ﷻ. These are pieces of evidence of the necessity to know our Lord.

Hijab (Khimar) and Intoxicants (Khamr)

The mother of the believers, Aishah رضي الله عنها, confirms that knowledge of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman), such as the knowledge of Allah ﷻ, Paradise (Jannah), and Hellfire (Jahannam), inspires the Muslim to comply with the Commands of Allah ﷻ. The result is that the Muslim will have the intention and take the effort to save himself from the Hellfire (Jahannam) and enter Paradise (Jannah).

Aishah رضي الله عنها said, **“(Be informed) that the first thing that was revealed thereof was a Chapter (Surah) from *Al-Mufassal*⁽¹⁾ and in it was mentioned Paradise (Jannah) and the Hellfire (Jahannam). When the people embraced Islam, the Verses (Ayat) regarding legal and illegal things were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed was, ‘Do not drink alcoholic drinks,’ people would have said, ‘We will never leave alcoholic drinks,’ and if there had been revealed, ‘Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse,’ they would have said, ‘We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.’”⁽²⁾**

Our mother is hinting that knowing what a believer will receive of Allah's ﷻ bliss in Paradise (Jannah) can become positive enforcement to comply with the commands of Allah ﷻ. Likewise, the knowledge of the Hellfire (Jahannam) becomes the negative enforcement to abandon the disobedience of Allah ﷻ.

In the years 1920-1933, the United States underwent a national campaign to prohibit alcohol. The caring politicians initiated such a noble cause to decrease evil and corruption, solve social problems, reduce the tax burden created by prisons and poorhouses, and improve health and

⁽¹⁾ *Al-Mufassal* are a section of short chapters of Quran which when recited as a body are divided by regular repetition of the *Basmalah*.

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (4993); the text reflects a version narrated by Ibn Salil.

hygiene in America. Unfortunately, the results of that attempt indicate that it was a miserable failure on all counts. This failure was because the prohibition was not preceded by Faith (Iman).

A similar campaign took place in Makkah, which was gradually implemented over the same length of time. This campaign successfully motivated the Muslims to spill alcoholic drinks and abstain because of Faith (Iman). Anas Ibn Malik رضي الله عنه narrated, **“I used to offer alcoholic drinks to the people at the residence of Abu Talha. Then the order of prohibition of alcoholic drinks was revealed, and the Prophet ordered somebody to announce that. Abu Talha said to me, ‘Go out and see what this voice (this announcement) is.’ I went out and (on coming back) said, ‘This is somebody announcing that alcoholic beverages have been prohibited.’ Abu Talha said to me, ‘Go and spill it (i.e., the wine).’ Then it (alcoholic drinks) was seen flowing through the streets of Al-Madina.”**⁽¹⁾

The voice was announcing that a Verse (Ayah) was revealed which completely prohibited alcohol. Allah ﷻ said:

[المائدة: 90] ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Shaytan (Satan), so avoid it that you may be successful.”⁽²⁾

One should ask why the divine campaign to prohibit alcohol worked while the prohibition in the U.S. failed. The human initiative failed while the Divine prohibition succeeded as those who know Allah ﷻ, believe in Him, love Him, fear Him, and know that a manifestation of their exaltation of Allah ﷻ is to adhere to His commands.

Another statement by the mother of the believers, Aishah رضي الله عنها, confirms the decisive compliance of the early Muslims from the immigrants to a command such as wearing the proper Hijab (Islamic veil for women). The compliance was absolute since they were brought up in Monotheism (Tawheed) and had learned that Faith (Iman) in Allah ﷻ must be followed with action.

Aishah رضي الله عنها said, **“May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant (Muhajir) women. When Allah revealed:**

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (4620).

⁽²⁾ Quran (5:90)

﴿يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْنَّ مِنْ جَلْبِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا

رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ [الأحزاب: 59]

O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes or one eye to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ⁽¹⁾

They tore their coarse wraps and covered themselves with them.”⁽²⁾

The Qiblah

Another story to be told in this context involves the change of the direction of the Qiblah. The Qiblah is the direction towards the Kaabah in Makkah that Muslims face when performing Prayers (Salah). In fact, it is one of the conditions that must be fulfilled to validate the Prayers (Salah).

Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) was the divinely decreed Qiblah at the beginning of the Prophet’s ﷺ mission. The Muslims used to face Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) during their Prayers (Salah) while they were in Makkah. However, they would stand south of the Kaabah during Prayers (Salah) so that they could face both the Kaabah and Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) concurrently.

After the Migration (Hijrah) to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions (Sahabah) continued praying while facing the Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) and thus they had to turn away from the Kaabah since Madinah is located on the north of Makkah and south of Jerusalem. Al-Bara’ bin Azib رضي الله عنه explained, **“When the Prophet came to Al-Madinah, he stayed first with his grandfathers or maternal uncles from Ansar. He offered his Prayers (Salah) facing Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) for sixteen or seventeen months, but he wished that he could pray facing the Kaabah (at Makkah).”⁽³⁾**

Though the Prophet ﷺ would have loved to have had the Qiblah changed to the Kaabah, he did not utter a word of request and continued obeying the command of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (33:59), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Abu Dawud (4102), Sahih by Al-Albani

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (40).

﴿قَدْ رَأَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 144]

“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a Qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward Al-Masjid Al-Haram (in Makkah). And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]. Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.”⁽¹⁾

When the Qiblah was changed to the direction of the Kaabah, it became a test for the Muslims and the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) in Madinah. It was a test to see who truly obeyed Allah ﷻ and his beloved Prophet ﷺ and who disapproved. Al-Bara' رضي الله عنه explained in the same narration as above, “Jews and the people of the Scriptures used to be pleased to see (the Prophet) facing Jerusalem in Prayers (Salah), but when he changed his direction towards the Kaabah, (during the Salah), they disapproved of it.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ [البقرة: 143]

“And We did not make the Qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided.”⁽³⁾

True enough, there are those who ridiculed the Prophet ﷺ when he changed his prayer direction from Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bayt ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem) to the Kaabah in Makkah. However, those who truly believed in Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ immediately obeyed the command and faced the direction that pleased the Prophet ﷺ. Al-Bara' bin Azib رضي الله عنه said, “Then one of those who had offered that Prayer (Salah) with him came out and passed by some people in a mosque who

(1) Quran (2:144), Sahih International trans.

(2) Bukhari (40).

(3) Quran (2:143), Sahih International trans.

were bowing during their Prayer (facing Jerusalem). He said, addressing them, ‘By Allah. I testify that I have offered Prayer (Salah) with Allah’s Messenger ﷺ facing Makkah (Kaabah).’ (Hearing that), those people changed their direction towards the Kaabah immediately.”⁽¹⁾

Notice the disciplined compliance of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah), who immediately adhered to the commands without any hesitation.

Knowing our Lord is a means of Dawah

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Muaz رضي الله عنه to Yemen, he said to him: **“You are going to some of the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab). Call them to bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has enjoined on them five prayers to be offered each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has enjoined on them Charity (Zakah) to be taken from their rich and given to their poor. If they accept that, then beware (of taking) the best of their wealth, and protect yourself from the supplication of the one who has been wronged, for there is no barrier between it and Allah.”**⁽²⁾

It is very important to learn the fundamentals as the caller to Islam (Da’i) who knows Allah ﷻ can invite with conviction and with the most beautiful revealed words with which Allah ﷻ described Himself. He calls to a Lord who is in possession of the Most Perfect and Majestic Attributes. Hence, calling without knowledge is an injustice to the exalted status of our Lord.

The value of a subject is known by the virtues of the associated attributes. We see that medical doctors are highly paid because the subject of human well-being is valuable to ensure the dignity and honor of the creation to whom the Angels prostrated. The attributes of the human are exceptional as an intelligent creation who can choose to use its faculties for worship. A medical doctor is competent with his or her patient if he knows the attributes of the human subject. Any subject is described with a specialized language, and the one who is proficient in this language is the individual who begins with knowledge and invites others to appreciate its virtues.

In the following beautiful statement, Shaykh Ibn Al-Uthaymeen رحمته الله exemplifies the concept that is known by **Dawah**, that inviting to Allah ﷻ begins with knowing Him by His Attributes, **“Far is He removed from having anything comparable to Him or any equal; free from all kinds of defects and imperfections; qualified with every beautiful Name and every perfect Attribute; Doer of what He intends (wills); Above everything⁽³⁾ and with everything;⁽⁴⁾ the One who is**

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (40).

⁽²⁾ Muslim (121).

⁽³⁾ He is above everything, ascended (istawa) upon the ‘arsh above the seven heavens.

⁽⁴⁾ With everything by His all-encompassing Knowledge, Ability and Authority while not omnipresent in essence as the pantheists and animists allege.

Able to do everything; the One Who manages the affairs of everything. He commands and forbids. He speaks the legislative (Deeniyyah)⁽¹⁾ and universal (Kawniyyah)⁽²⁾ words. He is Greater than everything, and He is the Most Beautiful. The Most Merciful, the All-Able, the All-Wise.”⁽³⁾



⁽¹⁾ Deeniyyah: what Allah has decreed upon His servants through Shari’ah legislation.

⁽²⁾ Kawniyyah: what Allah decreed universally of all things in creation some of which *we* view as evil such as the existence of shirk, or the violence inherent in a wildlife food-chain, and some we view as ennobling like the mercy between a creature and its offspring.

⁽³⁾ Ibn Al-Uthaymeen in *Tafsir Ayat Al-Kursi*, Dr. Saleh As-Saleh arrangement and trans.

Chapter Two

How to Know Allah ﷻ

As we advance towards the subject *Know Your Lord*, we have presented just three significant demanding reasons why we must embark on the unpausing journey to know about Allah ﷻ. However, there are many other motives; knowing Allah ﷻ will lead to loving Him, fearing Him, relying upon Him, and hoping consistently in Him. All of these are forms of worship which are facilitated by knowing Allah ﷻ.

Knowing Allah ﷻ in Islam is unique since every Muslim has been given the tools to *truly* know Allah ﷻ and not in some vague, dry, philosophical sense. Instead, for example, the believer knows Allah ﷻ in detail via His Names and Attributes, the knowledge of which Allah ﷻ has graciously provided in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).

Every one of His Names should lead a person to greater love of Allah ﷻ as well as greater fear of Him. This is accompanied by attempting to get closer to Him through knowledge of those great Attributes applied in performing righteous deeds. These are some of the statements emphasizing the merits, virtues, and benefits of knowing our Lord.

Ibn Al-Qayyim rahimahullah said, **“From among the signs of experiential knowledge (Marifah) of Allah is veneration and awe (Haybah). As the servant’s experiential knowledge of his Lord increases, so too does his veneration and awe increase.”**⁽¹⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim rahimahullah also said, **“Whoever knows Allah, knows everything other than Him. Whoever is ignorant of his Lord is even more ignorant of everything other than Him.”**⁽²⁾

Furthermore, knowledge of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes is an explanation of everything in creation because He is the source of creation and the essence which pre-existed everything.

Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah said, **“Whoever knows the Names of Allah and their meanings, believing in them, will have a more complete Faith (Iman) than the one who does not know them but just believes in them in general.”**⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Rawdatul Muhibbeen*, Imam Ibn Qayyim, Abu Asma trans.

⁽²⁾ *Madarij al-Salikin Bayna Manazil Iyaka na'budu wa-Iyaka Nasta'in*, Ibn al-Qayyim (vol. 3, p. 351).

Ibn Sa'di رحمته الله also commented on the matter, **“Whenever a person’s knowledge of Allah’s beautiful Names and Attributes increases, his Faith (Iman) also increases, and his Certainty (Yaqeen) is further strengthened.”**⁽²⁾

To conclude, our Faith (Iman) and belief in Allah ﷻ begins with a definite affirmation of the heart. The heart develops surety, typically when knowledge of the subject is gained. That is why the first step to trigger definite affirmation in the heart, and the first step towards complete Faith (Iman) is to know Allah ﷻ.

Acquiring knowledge

In general, to acquire knowledge, we may employ our built-in faculties, such as intuition, logic, reasoning, or the scientific system of observation, testing, and repetition, which is not independent and still requires our in-built faculties. Absolute Certainty (Yaqeen) can only come from direct Revelation, which ended with the passing of the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad ﷺ. It follows a degree of Certainty (Yaqeen) which results from various methods of seeking knowledge that remain attainable.

Ibn Uthaymeen رحمته الله divided certainty of knowledge⁽³⁾ into quantitated levels, as a result of varied methods of seeking knowledge:

- ◆ Knowledge, or comprehension of a real thing with certainty.
- ◆ Settled belief, or comprehension of something, while contrary positions exist which are less likely to be true.
- ◆ Slight ignorance, or absence of full comprehension.
- ◆ Doubt, which is to think that you comprehend something, yet you are aware of contrary positions which could possibly be true or have some truth.
- ◆ Delusion, or to think that one comprehends something despite the presence of that which should cause you to realize that you are incorrect.

⁽¹⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, Ibn Taymiyyah. Abdul Rahmaan Qaasim ed. (vol. 7, p. 234); *Tahqeeq al-Uboodiyyah bi-Ma'rifah al-Asmaa wa al-Sifaat*, Fauz bint Abdul Lateef al-Kurdi. Daar Taibah ed. (p. 163).

⁽²⁾ *Tahqeeq al-Uboodiyyah bi-Ma'rifah al-Asmaa wa al-Sifaat*. Fauz bint Abdul Lateef al-Kurdi, Daar Taibah ed. (p. 164).

⁽³⁾ *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islam*, Ibn Uthaymeen. Al Hidaayah Publishing, Burbank trans.

- ◆ Compounded ignorance, or comprehension in a way contrary to true reality. You may not know that you are in ignorance.

What follows are the most effective means to certainty and settled belief, and an analysis of the means away from the darkneses of ignorance of our Lord. The specific means of gaining Islamic knowledge are specialized and detailed. They will be discussed, *In Sha Allah* (if Allah ﷻ Wills it), in the last section of part one of this work, *Know Your Lord*.

Intuition (Al-Fitrah)

Spiritual intuition involves believing what feels true because it inclines the heart to true serenity. It refers to inner spiritual insight and consciousness guiding us to attain knowledge. Since Allah ﷻ created us in the best form to distinguish right from wrong and truth from falsehood, we must strive to protect, maintain, and enhance the state of purity of spiritual insight. This is the purity of an individual who was born in complete submission to our Lord, and who retained that position of serenity and balance, and did not become corrupted by the man-made systems of religion.

However, if we fail to preserve our intuition, it will become defective and we will not make the proper judgment. Also, our instinct is greatly influenced and driven by personal biases rather than reasoning based on what is apparent of spiritual perception. The success of spiritual insight is dependent on sincerity, purity, and sensitivity rather than what is provable through the scientific method. What results is often compound ignorance, doubt, or delusion.

The intellect

It is a built-in faculty which is a crucial avenue through which we acquire knowledge. Through logic, we can evaluate and understand the relationship between events, ideas, people, qualities, and the like.

The intellect is a crucial avenue to acquire the truth when we employ reason to draw conclusions from observations, and identify whether those conclusions are valid or invalid, are necessary, or have potential. When it comes to the truth about Allah ﷻ, intellect leads us to substantiate His existence. However, to learn about His Names and Attributes, Certainty (Yaqeen) can only come from learning the Revelation in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Without the guidance of Revelation, the intellect can result in compound ignorance, slight ignorance, and even delusion based on unsubstantiated innovations.

The visual observation

Perception is another built-in faculty. It involves acquiring knowledge through the senses, in particular the eyes. It is one of the most creditable methods of acquiring knowledge. We often assess the visual observation based on the famous adage, “A picture speaks a thousand words,”⁽¹⁾ which means that we can convey the most complex knowledge by a single image, conveying its meaning or essence more effectively than a mere verbal description.

However, there are some examples of many visual illusions that trick our senses, and this introduces problems with relying on visuals alone to derive knowledge. We do have Muslims who claim to have seen Angels, divine lights or even Allah ﷻ Himself in the form of a magnificent being seated on a Throne (Al-Arsh). They claim it to be a true perception enabled by their evolved spirituality. Such an experience is usually followed by the individual abandoning basic Islamic practices like Prayers (Salah) and Fasting, under the mistaken opinion that such practices are only for ordinary people who had not had their type of experience.

Examine objectively, Saul of Tarsus (aka Paul the Apostle), who was not from the companions (Al-Hawariyun) of Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ. He never met Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ during the Prophet’s stay on the earth. In fact, he was an oppressor against the companions of Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ. Saul claimed to have seen Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ in a visual experience, which became the foundation of the innovations he introduced to the followers of the Prophet ﷺ. These innovations changed the practice of submission to Allah ﷻ which the early disciples (Al-Hawariyun) were upon, and institutionalized a Hellenic Christianity which contradicts the revealed descriptions of our Lord’s Names and Attributes.

Unquestionable acceptance (Taqleed)

Taqleed is ‘blind following,’ and accepting new knowledge or ideas because some authority figure stated or exhibited that they are true. Perhaps it is the most common and effective method of acquiring knowledge since primary intersubjectivity is a means of beginning the development of knowledge when we are born into this world. However, since this knowledge is obtained from our caregivers, it becomes the sturdiest hurdle that establishes a child on the path of inheriting ignorance or compound ignorance. As this method of gaining knowledge progresses, the child may become distanced from knowing their Lord if the caregiver does not have true and correct knowledge of His Names and Attributes.

These authorities from which an individual learns include parents, the media, doctors, imams, religious figureheads, the government, and professors. While in an ideal world, we should trust

⁽¹⁾ *The Post-Standard*, Tess Flanders, March 1911.

authority figures, history has taught us otherwise, and many instances of atrocities against humanity are a consequence of people unquestioningly following the authority.

In regards to those who must follow because of a lack of certainty in authentic Islamic knowledge, it is a permissible form of following for the common Muslim. The common Muslim will be led into error unless they follow the people of knowledge because our condition is close to compound ignorance. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا لَا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [النحل:43]

“You [people] can ask those who have knowledge if you do not know.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾ [التوبة:122]

“There should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.”⁽²⁾

The scientific method

The scientific method is a process of systematically collecting and evaluating evidence to test ideas and answer questions. While scientists may use intuition, rationalism, and visual observation to generate new ideas, they don't stop there. Knowledge derived upon the scientific method of geosystems, ecosystems, astronomy, climatology, and even our own physiology leads those who are honest and sincere to recognize the existence and nurturing influences of our Lord on our lives.

By using the scientific method of observation, testing, and repetition, we learn much truth about the world Allah ﷻ created. However, observation has its limits. Our misjudgment limits its potentiality.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (16:43), Haleem trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (9:122), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Excerpts of subsections under “Acquiring Knowledge” are extracted and/or modified from sources in the Creative Commons domain. See: *Methods of Knowing*, Paul C. Price, Rajiv Jhangiani, I-Chant A. Chiang, Dana C. Leighton, & Carrie Cuttler.

In conclusion, the knowledge we gain through perception is the most reliable, but the question returns, can we know our Lord by perception in this world?

Perceiving our Lord

Both the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) are explicit that believers will see and hear Allah ﷻ in Paradise (Jannah). The Prophet ﷺ, his Companions (Sahabah), and their successors from the righteous agreed upon this fact that the believers will see Allah ﷻ in Paradise (Jannah) and on the Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), if Allah ﷻ wills. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾﴾ [القيامة: 22-23]

“[Some] faces that Day will be radiant—looking at their Lord.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّحَجُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾﴾ [المطففين: 15]

“Nay! Surely, they (evil-doers) will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day.”⁽²⁾

Shaykh Al-Fawzan رحمه الله commented on the above Verse (Ayah), “They will be veiled from seeing Allah. So if the disbelievers will be veiled from seeing Allah, it is proof that the believers will see their Lord. This is because the believers believed in Him in this world without seeing Him. So Allah will honor them in Paradise (Jannah) by manifesting to them.”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ [يونس: 26]

“The righteous will receive good reward for their deeds and more.”⁽⁴⁾

(1) Quran (75:22-23), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (83:15), Mohsin trans.

(3) Shaykh Dr. Salih ibn Fawzan ibn Abdullah al-Fawzan in his commentary on Sharh as-Sunnah (p. 138).

(4) Quran (10:26), Sarwar trans.

The word ‘more’ renders زِيَادَةٌ and the Prophet ﷺ explained that it meant to see the Face of Allah ﷻ. Suhayb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“When the people of Paradise (Jannah) have entered Paradise (Jannah), Allah, Blessed is He and Most High, will say: ‘Do you want anything more?’ They will say: ‘Have You not brightened our faces, and admitted us to Paradise (Jannah), and saved us from the Fire?’ Then He will remove the Veil, and they will not be given anything that is more dear to them than gazing upon their Lord [the Mighty and Sublime].”**⁽¹⁾

Hammad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported similar and added: **“Then he ﷺ recited this Verse (Ayah):**

﴿لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ﴾ [يونس: 26]

‘For those who have done good is the best (reward) and even more’⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Jarir bin Abdullah Al-Bajali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated, **“We were with the Prophet ﷺ, and he looked at the moon on a full-moon night and said, ‘Certainly you will see your Lord as you see this moon and you will have no trouble in seeing Him.’”**⁽⁴⁾ The vision will be as clear and confident as seeing the full moon on a clear night or the sun on a cloudless day.

The goal of our current discussion is to know Allah ﷻ in this world (Dunya) based on an experienced perception. In a nutshell, we cannot see Allah ﷻ in this world, based on many pieces of evidence. From the Narrations (Ahadith) mentioned above, the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Be informed that None of you can see Allah until you die.”**⁽⁵⁾

Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported, similar to the Narration (Hadith) of Jarir bin Abdullah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, that some Companions (Sahabah) asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, **“Will we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection?”** He said, **“Do you have any doubt about seeing the sun on a cloudless day?”**

Obviously, from these Narrations (Ahadith), we can deduce that the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ were firm on the belief that they cannot see Allah ﷻ in this world, hence they were asking about the Hereafter (Aakhirah). The reports of seeing Allah ﷻ in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) are

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (449).

⁽²⁾ Muslim (450).

⁽³⁾ Quran (10:26), Darussalam trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Bukhari (554, 573).

⁽⁵⁾ Muslim (7356); Tirmizi (2235).

Mutawatir⁽¹⁾ as they have been reported by more than thirty Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ.

Furthermore, there is wisdom in the withholding of seeing our Lord in this life. Seeing Allah ﷻ will be a great blessing and joy. Indeed, it is the greatest blessing, so Allah ﷻ kept it for the place of ultimate grace and comfort, namely Paradise (Jannah). This world is a mixture of good believers and disbelievers, so the blessing of seeing our Lord is deferred until it will be given exclusively to believers in Paradise (Jannah). Reserving the blessing of seeing Allah ﷻ until the Hereafter (Aakhirah) also provides a strong motive to do good in this world (Dunya), so that one may see Allah ﷻ and feel secure and content in nearness to Him in the Hereafter (Aakhirah).

Another reason is that Allah ﷻ is testing us in this world (Dunya) with the belief in Him without seeing Him. There are things that many people believe in, but they cannot see, i.e., gravity and electricity. One can only see the effects or results of gravity, but not the gravity itself. Belief in Allah ﷻ, even more so, is to have surety of Faith (Iman) without the affirmation of sight. This is the quality of some of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) in Islam, which we cannot see or know in this world (Dunya), such as Allah ﷻ and His Angels.

We are tested daily in our belief, and accordingly, our Faith (Iman) goes up and down. To be a believer, we must believe in Allah ﷻ and the meeting with Him. We must affirm and remember His Angels, His Book, His Messengers, and believe in the Resurrection and Predestination (Al-Qadr)—and what we identify as good or bad of the divine decree. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾﴾ [البقرة: 2-3]

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen (Ghayb), establish Prayer (Salah), and spend out of what We have provided for them.”⁽²⁾

In these Verses (Ayat), we learn that the first quality of believers who are conscious of our Lord is to believe without seeing. Despite these points of wisdom, if we are to ask Muslims today the question, “Can we see Allah ﷻ in this world?” we will be amazed that some will say, “We don't know,” some will say, “Yes.” Others will negate seeing our Lord but will be unable to substantiate

⁽¹⁾ *Mutawātir*; means: (successive) narration. A successive narration is one which is conveyed by narrators so numerous that it is not conceivable that they have agreed upon an untruth thus being accepted as unquestionable in its veracity.

⁽²⁾ Quran (2:2-3), Sahih International trans.

their answer with evidence. This is because we do not know our Lord as the Companions (Sahabah) knew. Many Muslims have been influenced to know our Lord through a Judeo-Christian lens which is not built on what Allah ﷻ revealed to them, but rather is a layered perspective built on hundreds of years of exegesis based on ambiguous or mistranslated verses.

The cultural interpretation

The Western Judeo-Christian tradition affirms the ability to see Allah ﷻ in this world in contrast to the orthodox Islamic perspective. In fact, Muslims are prohibited from imagining Allah ﷻ at all. They have distorted and made unsubstantiated claims concerning an embodied Essence of our Lord, founded on altered verses or interpretive teachings rather than the affirmation of explicit revealed statements. This has been proven by statements that contradict the transcendent ‘Oneness’ of Allah ﷻ (Tawheed). For example, in Genesis 3:8, it said:

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”⁽¹⁾

The second example of a serious theological error is the attribute of theophany in Genesis 18:1-4 as quoted below:

“And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, ‘O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.’”⁽²⁾

The Islamic representation of our Lord is based on concrete and reliable explicit evidence as revealed without distortion, inference, or metaphoric interpretation. For example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبَشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَمًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّارَةً أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَّا تَصِلُ
إِلَيْهِ نَكَرَهُمْ وَأَوَّجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ ﴾ [هود: 69-70]

⁽¹⁾ *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, Genesis (3:8).

⁽²⁾ *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, Genesis (18:1-4).

“And certainly did Our Messengers [i.e., Angels] come to Ibrahim (Abraham) with good tidings; they said, ‘Peace.’ He said, ‘Peace,’ and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf. But when he saw their hands not reaching for it, he distrusted them and felt from them apprehension. They said, ‘Fear not. We have been sent to the people of Lut (Lot).”⁽¹⁾

Notice the phrase:

﴿قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ﴾ [هود:69]

“They said: ‘Salaman,’ He answered, ‘Salamun.”⁽²⁾

According to Ibn Kathir رحمه الله, when the Angels greeted Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, his response indicated his acknowledgment that they were Angels. The scholars of explanation (Tafsir) have said, “Ibrahim’s (Abraham) reply of 'Salamun' was better than that with which they had greeted him with because the subjective case (Salamun instead of Salaman) alludes to affirmation and eternity.”⁽³⁾ The attributes of Angels were given where they belonged; neither were the qualities attributed to humans nor were qualities of divinity bestowed upon them.

Consider the request of Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to see Allah جَلَّ:

﴿وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ، قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۗ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَىٰكَ وَلَٰكِنِ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ، فَسَوْفَ تَرَىٰ رَبَّنَا فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحٰنَكَ تُبَّتْ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ [الأعراف:143]

“And when Musa (Moses) arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.’ [Allah] said, ‘You will not see Me.”⁽⁴⁾

The above Verse (Ayah) indicates that in this corporeal world, Allah جَلَّ cannot be seen.

Rendering images of Allah جَلَّ in Islam is an impossibility and amounts to disbelief (kufr), as Allah جَلَّ tells us in the Quran that nothing resembles Him:

(1) Quran (11:69-70), Sahih International trans. See also: (15:51-56; 51:24-30).

(2) Quran (11:69).

(3) *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (vol. 12, p. 82), Darussalam abridged English, 2003.

(4) Quran (7:143), Sahih International trans.

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾ [الإخلاص: 4]

“And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.”⁽²⁾

Jewish and Christian teachings on God are confused partly because of anthropomorphic interpretation. In addition, their theology and exegesis are based on incomplete and distorted scriptures with depictions that negate the attributes of divinity or liken them to the attributes of the creation. Another excerpt from Genesis reads:

“And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day has broken.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ And he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ Then he said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.’ Then Jacob asked him, ‘Please tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.’”⁽³⁾

This depiction was embraced by the Hellenic-influenced European monotheists who appraised the use of anthropomorphic iconography from its pagan-polytheistic origins. Certain Christians put statues or images of an old, white-bearded man depicting God in their places of worship. Some of these were produced by the likes of Michelangelo, who depicted the face and hand ‘of God’ in the Sistine Chapel.⁽⁴⁾ This is an error in understanding called **Tamtheel** (Resemblance), and it is an impediment to understanding our Lord as He wants us to understand.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (112:4), Mohsin trans.

⁽³⁾ *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, (Genesis 32:24-30).

⁽⁴⁾ *Creazione di Adamo*, Michelangelo. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City (ca. 1512).

Contraindication to Seeing our Lord

There are many pieces of evidence to prove the impossibility of seeing Allah ﷻ in this world. Let's discuss some of them.

The limitation of the human mind

The human mind is limited in specific areas, one of which is the visualization of the Divine Essence of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ is different from anything the human mind can think of or imagine. Therefore, if the mind tries to picture Allah ﷻ, certain aspects will be ambiguous and open to indefinite interpretation. Allah ﷻ Himself said:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾ [الأنعام:103]

“Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.”⁽¹⁾

This is not a negation (Ta'teel) of seeing our Lord in the Hereafter (Aakhirah), but only a negation (Ta'teel) of *grasping* Him. He, the Exalted, did not say that eyes will not see Him in the Hereafter (Aakhirah). He said, ‘**No vision can grasp Him.**’ The negation (Ta'teel) of تُدْرِكُهُ (Al-Idrak; *grasping*) is not a negation (Ta'teel) of seeing. ‘Grasping’ contrasts ‘seeing’ like the difference between sensation and perception. A sensation is when an image is put into the eye and transferred to the optical nerves and transduced into the subtle electrical impulses of our nervous system.

Perception is the organization of the impulses to rationalize meaning in the brain. Perception describes the organization of input stimulus from any of the senses, including smell, touch, hearing, taste, kinesthesia, sight, and others. The image which is seen is sensed, and the understanding of this input is perception. This is grasping. An ungraspable image is a sensed input that is so great and powerful that it can't be processed by the limited circuitry of the nervous system.

The Prophet ﷺ directed us not to attempt to picture Allah's ﷻ Essence. Instead, we may try to imagine other things which Allah ﷻ created. Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Reflect deeply upon the blessings of Allah, but do not reflect upon the Essence of Allah.”⁽²⁾**

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:103), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, Tabarani (6489), Hassan by Al-Albani.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Reflect deeply upon the creation, but do not reflect upon the essence of the Creator. Verily, His essence cannot be known other than to believe in it.”**⁽¹⁾ Al-Manawi رحمه الله explained this statement in his book *Fa'id Al Qadir*. To ponder about the creation of Allah ﷻ means to reflect on the origin and creation of Allah ﷻ in totality, not in particular.

For instance, we look at the universal pieces of evidence (Al-Ayat Al-Kawniyah) of the Creator in the creation. The sky and whatever planets and stars it contains—their movement, their orbit, their rising and setting—and the earth and all the mountains, metals, rivers, seas, animals and plants, and whatever is between the sky and the earth: the atmosphere with its clouds, rain, thunder, lightning, thunderbolt, and other creatures of Allah ﷻ. There is not an atom that moves in all this creation, except that Allah ﷻ has many pearls of wisdom in it, which bear witness to the Oneness of Allah ﷻ, His Greatness and Might.⁽²⁾

The evidence that these universal signs are proof of a Creator and a means to know Him is in His statement:

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ [فصلت: 37]

“And of His signs are the night and day and the sun and moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah, who created them, if it should be Him that you worship.”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى﴾ (١) ﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى﴾ (٢) ﴿وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى﴾ [الأعلى: 1-3]

“Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who created and proportioned. And who destined and [then] guided.”⁽⁴⁾

This tells us that the intricate order and balance in the universe and its composite systems are sustained in a continuing balance by our Lord and are thus evidence of His greatness. Through

⁽¹⁾ *Musnad ar-Rabi'* (742), Hassan by Al-Albani.; *Silsilah al-Ahadeeth as-Saheehah* (1788); *Sahih al-Jami as-Saghir* (2975); *Hilyatul-Awliya' wa Tabaqat Al-Asfiya*, Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani.

⁽²⁾ *Faid Al Qadir*, Al-Manawi.

⁽³⁾ Quran (41:37), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (87:1-3), Sahih International trans.

contemplating this, we can know our Lord, and that He has given these universal pieces of evidence as a means of calling to us to Him. Therefore, it is more appropriate not to think about Allah ﷻ and His Essence or nature, but to learn of His Attributes through His creations. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ [الجاثية:3]

“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers.”⁽¹⁾

The Unquantifiable Stimulus

Below are a few examples characterizing the Greatness of Allah’s ﷻ Attributes and His creations:

The Throne (Al-Arsh) and the Footstool (Al-Kursi)

Contemplating the essence of Allah ﷻ and seeing Him in this life is an impossibility, and the nature of that impossibility is given through a reflection on the largest things in the creation, the Footstool (Al-Kursi), and the Throne (Al-Arsh).

Ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه narrated, “Between the first heaven and the one above it is (a distance of) five hundred years. Between each of the heavens is (a distance of) five hundred years. Between the seventh heaven and the Footstool (Al-Kursi) is (a distance of) five hundred years. Between the Footstool (Al-Kursi) and the water is (a distance of) five hundred years, and the Throne (Al-Arsh) is above the water. Allah is above the Throne (Al-Arsh), and nothing whatsoever of your deeds is hidden from Him.”⁽²⁾

Abu Zarr Al-Ghifari رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “The Footstool (Al-Kursi) compared to the Throne (Al-Arsh) is only like an iron ring thrown in a desert on earth.”⁽³⁾

The Prophet ﷺ tells us that the Footstool (Al-Kursi), despite its immense size is in comparison to the Throne (Al-Arsh), like an iron ring thrown in a boundless desert on earth. It indicates its Creator's greatness and absolute power. His two Feet are near the Footstool (Al-Kursi), and the Throne (Al-Arsh) is above it, and then He rose above the Throne (Al-Arsh) in a way that suits His majestic Greatness [Istawa above the Throne (Al-Arsh)]. None can fathom such great size and

⁽¹⁾ Quran (45:3), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *At-Tawheed*, Ibn Khuzaymah (p. 105); *Al-Asma' wa'l-Siffat* Al-Bayhaqi (p. 401). *Ijtima' al-Juyush al-Islamiyah*, (p. 100), Sahih by Ibn al-Qayyim; Sahih by Adh-Dhahabi in *Al-'Uluw* (p. 64).

⁽³⁾ Ibn abi Shaybah in *Musnaf*; Adh-Dhahabi in *Al-'Uluw*; At-Tabari (5794); Al-Bayhaqi, in *Al-Asma' wa'l-Siffat* (p. 404-405). All the chains are very weak, but the content is accepted because the Sahabah could not report issues of the unseen unless they were in connection to the teaching of the Prophet ﷺ.

majesty, but we can appreciate the Attribute of its Exalted Creator. The two Feet of Allah ﷻ are mentioned in the following statement by Abu Ismail Al-Harawi رَحِمَهُ اللهُ with his chain of narrations that lead to Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Ibn Abbas said رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, **“Indeed the Footstool (Al-Kursi) is the place of the two Feet [of Allah], and none is able to estimate the greatness of the Throne (Al-Arsh) with its true estimation.”** (The wording is from Waki’ ibn Al-Jarrah,⁽¹⁾ and it has been reported from Abu Musa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ,⁽²⁾ Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Ikrimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and Abu Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.)

The Prophet ﷺ said, **“I have been given permission to speak of one of the Angels of Allah, one of the bearers of the Throne (Al-Arsh). The distance between his earlobe and his shoulder is like the distance of seven hundred years’ travel.”**⁽³⁾ Note that it is one of the eight Angels who bear Allah’s ﷻ Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh), and not Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

The fingers

Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, **“A (Jewish) rabbi came to Allah’s Messenger and he said, ‘O Muhammad! We learn that Allah will put all the heavens on one finger, and the earths on one finger, and the trees on one finger, and the water and the dust on one finger, and all the other created beings on one finger. Then He will say, ‘I am the King.’ Thereupon the Prophet smiled so that his premolar teeth became visible, and that was the confirmation of the rabbi.**”⁽⁴⁾ Then Allah’s Messenger recited:

﴿وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّى قَدَرَهُ، وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ، سُبْحَانَهُ، وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾ [الزُّمَرُ: 67]

“They have not appraised Allah with true appraisal, while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand. Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.”⁽⁵⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Khuzaimah in At-Tawheed, p. 107-118; Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak: At-Tafseer* 2/282, and he said: This Hadith is Sahih upon the conditions of Bukhari and Muslim, and it was not reported by them, and Adh-Dhahabi agreed. Shaykh Al-Albani authenticated in his *Mukhtasar al-Uluww*, p. 102.

⁽²⁾ Ibn Jarir At-Tabari in At-Tafseer, 3/10 and it in there is an addition.

⁽³⁾ Abu Dawud (4727), Sahih by Al-Albani; Sahih by Adh-Dhahabi in *Al-Uluw*.

⁽⁴⁾ Bukhari (4811, 7414, 7415, 7451, 7513); Muslim (7046, 7047, 7048, 7049).

⁽⁵⁾ Quran (39:67), Sahih International trans.

The Veil

Allah ﷻ identified the method through which the beloved of His servants perceive Him in this life. There is abundant evidence in the Revelation that Allah ﷻ has speech which has been heard, but there is no authentic evidence that Allah ﷻ has been seen in this world.

Allah ﷻ exalted said that He spoke with Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام :

﴿وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقُصِّصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 164]

“And [We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you. And Allah spoke to Musa (Moses) with [direct] speech.”⁽¹⁾

Abu Umamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported, “A man once asked the Prophet ﷺ, ‘O Messenger of Allah, was Adam a Prophet?’ He answered, ‘Yes, with whom Allah spoke.’ The man [asked], ‘How much [time elapsed] between him and Nuh (Noah)?’ [Prophet Muhammad said, ‘ten Qurun (centuries or generations).’”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِشَيْءٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ

حَكِيمٌ﴾ [الشورى: 51]

“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by Revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.”⁽³⁾

We may all speak to our Lord, but our means of knowing our Lord in this world through *His* speech is indirect. Allah ﷻ told us that this is possible through Revelation, a Messenger or from behind a veil, as mentioned above. One meaning of ‘behind a veil’ is communication in our dreams. The evidence is the narration from Abu Qatadah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “A true

(1) Quran (4:164), Sahih International trans.

(2) *Al-Musnad as-Sahih at-Taqasim wa'l-Anwa`*, Ibn Hibban (14/69), Sahih by Al-Arna'ut. Translation ed.

(3) Quran (42:51), Sahih International trans.

good dream is from Allah, and a bad dream is from Satan.”⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, a true dream, a good dream of a righteous person, is a trace part of prophethood, which means it is a special form of communication.

The Prophet ﷺ said, **“When the Day of Resurrection (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) approaches, the dreams of a believer will hardly fail to come true, and a dream of a believer is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood (An-Nubuwwa) and whatever belongs to prophethood (An-Nubuwwa) can never be false.”**⁽²⁾

The Veil is also described as a visual anomaly in Narrations (Ahadith) of the Prophet ﷺ, specifically in descriptions of his journey in one night to Jerusalem and ascension from there into the heavens. Muslims must believe that this journey was a real event, even while we have no rational way to confirm this apparent impossibility. Allah ﷻ described this event:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَنَيْنَا لَهُ حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ [الإسراء: 1]

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram (in Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem), whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽³⁾

The Prophet ﷺ did not see Allah ﷻ on the Night of Ascension (Al-Mi’raj). Abu Zarr رضي الله عنه asked the Prophet ﷺ about this, to which he said, **“[There is] light, how could I see Him?”**⁽⁴⁾

The Prophet ﷺ did not see Him ﷻ, but he saw His Veil of light. The Veil prevented the Prophet ﷺ from seeing Allah ﷻ. The Veil separates and insulates. It is a liminal barrier that shields sensation and perception from the overwhelming stimulus of the sight of our Lord.

There is a profound explanation for this Veil in the following Narration (Hadith). Abu Musa رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, does not sleep and it is not befitting that He should sleep. He lowers the Balance and raises it; the deeds of the night are taken up to Him before the deeds of the day, and the deeds of the day before the deeds of the night; His Veil is the Light.”** Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه added that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Our Lord has a Veil**

(1) Bukhari (6985).

(2) Bukhari (7017), narrated from Abu Hurairah.

(3) Quran (17:1), Sahih International trans.

(4) Muslim (443); Musnad Ahmed, from Ibn Abbas.

of Fire, and if He were to remove it, the splendor of His Face would burn all of His creation, as far as His sight reaches.”⁽¹⁾

Seeing our Lord in a dream

We established that Allah ﷻ cannot be seen in this world (Dunya), but Allah ﷻ will enable believers to look at Him ﷻ in the Hereafter (Akhirah). However, it is possible to see a representation of Allah ﷻ in a dream.

The evidence for this is in a Narration (Hadith) from Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه who narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“During the night, my Lord, Blessed is He, and Most High, came to me in the best of appearances. He said: ‘O Muhammad! Do you know in what the most exalted group busy themselves with?’ I said: ‘No.’ So He placed His Hand between my shoulders, until I sensed its coolness between my breast (or he said—on my throat), so I knew what was in the heavens, and what was in the earth. He said: ‘O Muhammad! Do you know in what the most exalted group busy themselves with?’ I said: ‘Yes, in the acts that atone: and the acts that atone are; lingering in the Mosque (Masjid) after the Prayer (Salah), walking on the feet to the congregation, perfecting the ablution in difficulty (Isbagh Al-Wudu), and whoever does that, he lives in goodness and dies upon goodness, and his wrongs shall be like that of the day his mother bore him.”**⁽²⁾

Some of the scholars (Ulama) have commented that it is possible for other than the Prophet ﷺ to see Allah ﷻ in a dream. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said, **“A believer may see his Lord in a dream, in various forms according to his Faith (Iman) and belief. If his Faith (Iman) is correct, he can only see Him in a beautiful form, and if his Faith (Iman) is defective, it will be reflected in the way he sees Allah in the dream. Seeing Allah in a dream is not like seeing Him in reality. It may have different interpretations and meanings referring to something.”**⁽³⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله also said, **“Whoever sees Allah in a dream sees Him in a form that corresponds to his state. If he is righteous, he will see Him in a beautiful Form, which is why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw him in the most beautiful Form.”**⁽⁴⁾

Shaykh Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Baz رحمته الله was asked about the ruling concerning the one who claims to have seen the Lord of Glory in a dream. It was said, for example, that Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal رحمته الله had

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (445).

⁽²⁾ Tirmizi (3233), Hassan Gharib, text included the statement that one of the narrators added it was a dream; Ahmad (16026); *Talbis Al-Jahmiyah* (7/205), Sahih by Ibn Taymiyyah.

⁽³⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa* (3/390).

⁽⁴⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa* (5/251).

seen the Lord of Glory more than one hundred times in visions. Shaykh Ibn Baz رحمته said, **“Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and others said that it is possible to see Allah in a dream, but what he sees is not reality, because there is nothing like Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted.”**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽¹⁾

Nothing in His creation is like unto Him. A person may dream that his Lord is speaking to him, and no matter what kind of image he sees, that image is not Allah ﷻ, because nothing can be like Allah ﷻ in any way whatsoever.

Shaytan (Satan) may deceive a person and make him imagine that he is their Lord. It was reported that he made Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jeelani رحمته see him. The Shaykh said, **“Once I saw a dazzling light which filled the entire sky. Then a human frame appeared therein and said, ‘O Abdul Qadir, I am Lord, thy God I have made everything prohibited lawful unto thee.’ Abd Al-Qadir refused. He later reported he knew it was the enemy of Allah because Allah’s commands are not to be suspended for anyone.”⁽²⁾**

The means to know our Lord

If we cannot see Allah ﷻ or hear Him, how can we know of Him? We want to know about Allah ﷻ and learn about Him, but we cannot see Him. So, we are left with two means, and one leads to the other:

1. The magnificent creation

The first means to know our Lord is to ponder over the creation, which points to the greatness of the power of Allah ﷻ and perfection of His creation. Allah ﷻ commands us to use our senses and intellect to reflect upon the creation. The evidence is in many Verses (Ayat) in the Quran that invites us to travel on Earth and to observe and ponder the creation. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* (vol. 1, p. 183), Abu Hassan Ali Nadwi, Mohinddin Ahmed trans.

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ ١١٠ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١١١﴾
 [آل عمران: 190-191]

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], ‘Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.’”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ mentioned in the above Verses (Ayat) that we know our Creator through contemplating the signs in the universe. We also gain clarity about the purpose of creation and the Attributes of their Creator through contemplating the creation. Allah ﷻ mentioned qualities of Lordship in these Verses (Ayat) that Lordship involves creating everything, and sustaining and ordering balance in the creation.

Creation by our Lord is an Attribute of perfection which involves an originated creation from nothingness as humans do not create in any sense, but only reshape materials that were endowed existence by our Lord. This contemplation is a means to know our Lord if we do not restrict our thinking to the apparent but extend our contemplation to the mighty Attributes of Lordship. People of understanding utilize their senses—sight, hearing, and intellect—to reach this conclusion.

Allah ﷻ the Most Merciful, guides us to this conclusion through Quranic Verses (Ayat) that enable us to acquire this great knowledge. Allah ﷻ says about His signs in the universe:

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ﴾ ٢١ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَنُكُوتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُسْمِعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُحْيِي بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ [الرؤم: 21-24]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (3:190-191), Sahih International trans.

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge. And of His signs is your sleep by night and day and your seeking of His bounty. Indeed in that are signs for a people who listen. And of His signs is [that] He shows you the lightning [causing] fear and aspiration, and He sends down rain from the sky by which He brings to life the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed in that are signs for a people who use reason.”⁽¹⁾

Guidance through these signs is only cultivated by those who have the intellect and are sincere to know our Lord. The disbelievers do not evaluate what they perceive in the universe beyond the realm of watching. They do not contemplate the Maker and the Creator. They have alienated themselves from the wisdom behind this creation. As Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾ [الروم: 7]

“They know only the outside appearance of the life of the world (i.e. the matters of their livelihood, like irrigating or sowing or reaping, etc.), and they are heedless of the Hereafter (Aakhirah).”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿قُلْ أَنْظَرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُعْنِي الْآيٰتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾﴾ [يونس: 101]

“Say, ‘Look at what is in the heavens and on the earth.’ But what use are signs and warnings to people who will not believe?”⁽³⁾

The evidence in the creation of Allah ﷻ demands that we concede two principles. The **first principle** is that creation must have a Creator, and the **second principle** is that we cannot originate anything in creation. This must be accepted as a fact intellectually because of the complexity, balance, and interconnectivity present in the evidence of the creation. A failure to accept the reality of divine creation is resignation to one of two illogical premises which Allah ﷻ mentioned. Allah ﷻ presented a question in the Quran:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (30:21-24), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (30:7), Haleem trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (10:101), Haleem trans.

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ﴾ [الطور: 35]

“Is it that they are created by none, or are they themselves the creators?”⁽¹⁾

Both conclusions are irrational. Evidence drives the rational mind to assimilate to another principle: the Attributes and Qualities of the Creator as identified in His Sustaining and Organizing of the creation are far higher than the ability of humans to organize and create. This principle is also mentioned in the Quran. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ [النحل: 17]

“Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded?”⁽²⁾

The creation can neither fabricate a single grain of dust from nothing nor organize or sustain anything by independent ability. We are deficient, while the Creator is Self-Sufficient. There is nothing in creation similar to the Creator. Everything in the creation is evidence of our Lord, the Originator, the Sustainer. His Manifest Lordship is the cause for His right to be worshiped, although He has no need and does not benefit from our worship. We are in need of worshiping Him, Who alone facilitates our success. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 21]

“O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous.”⁽³⁾

Hence, the creed of Muslims is to worship the Creator, not the created, and the focus of Islamic Monotheism (Tawheed) is to isolate the Creator in worship without associating any partners with Him.

2. Revelation

The second means to know our Lord is to understand through Revelation through the Quran and the authentic Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). These Revelations speak directly about Allah ﷻ, His

⁽¹⁾ Quran (52:35)

⁽²⁾ Quran (16:17), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (2:21), Sahih International trans.

Divine Essence, Actions of Lordship, Names, and Attributes. We cannot see Allah ﷻ in this world (Dunya), nor is there an equivalent, or similitude to Allah ﷻ in His creation, therefore, we must learn about Allah ﷻ from what He revealed to us.

Understanding the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ is challenging without the firmness of Faith (Iman), sincerity, and knowledge. Intellect alone is not security against misunderstanding our Lord. Many Muslims have gone astray concerning this subject. We learn from history that Muslims first differed regarding the definition of Faith (Iman), then later debated the issue of Predestination (Al-Qadr), which is part of the Lordship of Allah ﷻ as we will learn later on, *In Sha Allah* (If Allah ﷻ Wills it).

To know the qualities of Lordship of Allah ﷻ, we must gain knowledge of the Names and the Attributes of Allah ﷻ the way the three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) understood them.



Part Two
Dimensions of Faith (Iman)

Chapter One
The Reality of Faith (Iman)

In the previous two chapters of part one, we presented why we must know our Lord and the methods to acquire knowledge of Allah ﷻ, especially the three effective methods: observation, logic, and Revelation. In this chapter, we need to bring into light the relevant subject that is the nature and reality of Faith (Iman). However, we need to emphasize that the manifestation of the intended sound knowledge of Allah ﷻ is that it must lead to Faith (Iman), Certainty (Yaqeen), and conviction.

The verb ‘know’ in *Know Your Lord* must reflect that the purpose of acquiring knowledge of Allah ﷻ is not just to develop recognition. Instead, knowledge must lead to unshakable Certainty (Yaqeen) about Allah’s ﷻ Divine Existence and absolute affirmation through our actions. Consequently, we will strive to always display our heart's inner attestation in actions and sayings because Faith (Iman) must manifest virtuous actions.

The nature and reality of the increase in Faith (Iman) is a process that begins with the heart, followed by the tongue, and then the limbs. Therefore, it is essential to understand Faith (Iman) as a concept before developing an action plan to draw nearer to our Lord. Just to reiterate, we are not discussing the six Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman), but instead, we are explaining the nature and reality of Faith (Iman) as a path to establish perfect Certainty (Yaqeen) and submission to our Lord.

The first condition of the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah) is awareness of our Lord with basic knowledge. Affirming His role in our lives negates ignorance and begins the path to Certainty (Yaqeen), then to acceptance and compliance. We must carry out our submission and compliance with sincerity, truthfulness, and love. The process begins with knowledge and follows with action. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فَأَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدُنْيَاكَ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلِّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴾ [محمد: 19]

“So (be firm in your) knowledge (O Muḥammad) that none has the right to be worshiped except Allāh (alone). And seek forgiveness for your sin and for (the sin of) the believing men and women. And Allāh knows of your movement (during the daytime, or in this world) and your resting place (during the night, or in the Hereafter).”⁽¹⁾

In this statement, Faith (Iman) is portrayed with awareness of the most basic knowledge of our Lord, ‘Know that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah.’ Action follows in seeking forgiveness which is an action of the heart and disavowal of ignorance by changing the action of the limbs. Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿لَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الرَّخْرُف: 86]

“And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] Intercession (Shaf’ah); but only those who testify to the truth [can benefit], and they know.”⁽²⁾

This Verse (Ayah) refers in part to Angels who may intercede with Allah ﷻ and mention to Allah ﷻ the merits of believers (while He already has knowledge of them). The believers are described as those who testify to Monotheism (Tawheed), the unique Divinity of Allah ﷻ ‘while they know’ with their hearts, and finally, they pronounce its meaning with their tongues.

Hence, Faith (Iman) is not a mere testification in the heart but is a process that entails many aspects of securing Certainty (Yaqeen). Not every Muslim who submits to Allah ﷻ always has strong Faith (Iman), yet they are still Muslims under the fold of Islam. This is explained by understanding that Islam and Faith (Iman) have subtle differences. We hope that knowing our Lord goes beyond recognizing Him and becomes knowing with a Certainty (Yaqeen) of Faith (Iman).

The relation between Islam and Faith (Iman)

The true meaning of Islam is to submit to Allah ﷻ, obey His commands, and perform outward actions as a Muslim. Hence, Islam is associated with external symbols, actions, or deeds of the limbs. Faith (Iman) is a set of beliefs instilled in the hearts manifested by Islam as active submission. Faith (Iman) is the panorama of beliefs revealed in the implementation of Islam.

Several pieces of evidence emphasize the vital distinctions between Islam and Faith (Iman) if they are cited in the same context. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (47:19), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (43:86), Sahih International trans.

﴿ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَأَمْنَا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [الْحُجْرَات: 14]

“The bedouins say, ‘We have believed.’ Say, ‘You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for [Iman] has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.’”⁽¹⁾

The Prophet ﷺ also differentiated between Islam and Faith (Iman) as is reported in a well-known Narration (Hadith), called **“The Hadith of Jibreel (Gabriel).”** The Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ appeared in the guise of a traveler and asked the Prophet ﷺ, “What is Islam?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “To worship Allah alone and none else, to perform the Prayers (Salah), to pay the Obligatory Charity (Zakah) and to observe Saum [fasts (according to Islamic teachings)] during the month of Ramadan.” Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ also asked, “Oh Messenger of Allah! What is Faith (Iman)?” He ﷺ replied, “Faith is to believe in Allah, His Angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Messengers, [and Books] and to believe in Resurrection.”⁽²⁾

Faith (Iman) has inherent qualities of Certainty (Yaqeen) and conviction in the heart which guard and protect the Muslim. Having submitted in Islam does not necessitate the deep germination of Faith (Iman) that secures one’s heart. Amir bin Sa’d bin Abi Waqqas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported from his father that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ distributed (some wealth) among some people, and Sa’d رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was sitting among them.

Sa’d رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ left out some of them and did not give them anything, although they were better (more deserving) in my view. I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what about so-and-so? For by Allah, I think he is a believer.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Or a Muslim.’ I kept quiet for a while, then what I knew got the better of me and I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what about so-and-so? For by Allah, I think that he is a believer.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Or a Muslim.’ I kept quiet for a while, then what I knew got the better of me and I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what about so-and-so? For by Allah, I think that he is a believer.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Or a Muslim. I may give to one man although someone else is more beloved to me, for fear lest he be thrown on his face into the Fire.’”⁽³⁾

This Narration (Hadith) tells us first that the Prophet ﷺ made a distinction between Islam and Faith (Iman) as it related to conviction in the heart.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (49:14), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (50); Muslim (97, 99). Quotations taken from the narration of Abu Hurairah in Bukhari.

⁽³⁾ Abu Dawud (4683, 4685); Muslim (378-381, 2433); Bukhari (27, 1478); Ahmad (176/1).

Secondly, the Narration (Hadith) tells us that the trials of wealth may be unmitigated in the heart of a Muslim while the individual with Faith (Iman) can manage their affairs with dignity and moderation even amongst the temptations of excess wealth. This material world has many tests which the believer is empowered to endure if they have knowledge of their Lord Who guides their actions.

Among the scholars (Ulama) in the chain of narrators of the above Narration (Hadith) is Imam Zuhri رحمته الله. He explained, “**You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted.’**”⁽¹⁾ We think that Islam is the uttering of the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah or Kalimah) and Faith (Iman) is the action.”⁽²⁾

Definition of Faith (Iman)

The value of Faith (Iman) and its significance as a benchmark for spiritual health is apparent from many statements of the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ. These statements also reflect their vigilant and careful treatment of their Faith (Iman). They would learn Faith (Iman) from remembering Allah ﷻ in good company. They understood that they might increase in Faith (Iman) by sitting with those who would increase them in knowledge or remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه and Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه used to invite the noble Companions (Sahabah) to sit together to increase their Faith (Iman). Muaz رضي الله عنه said to Aswad bin Hilal رضي الله عنه, one of his companions, “**Let us sit for a while so that we may dedicate that period of time to Faith (Iman).**”⁽³⁾

We must also tend to our Faith (Iman), and we should begin with the correct concept of Faith (Iman) and then strive to hold it in our hearts. Faith (Iman), as understood by the three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih), is further discussed here.

Faith (Iman) is to attest (make Tasdeeq) and affirm (make Iqrar) something, which leads to having the Concrete Belief (**Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem**). The mark of having such firmness in the heart upon a belief is to comply and submit, and then engage in action to attest to that faith, such as actively submitting to fulfill the Commands of Allah ﷻ in the five Pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam).

Furthermore, we must protect our Attestation (Tasdeeq) from doubts and suspicions through the fidelity of Intention (Niyyah) before each Action (Amal). Actions (Amal) that immediately follow the firmness of the heart are the statements of the tongue or the articulation of Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem) by uttering the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah) with the tongue. The actions upon Attestation (Tasdeeq) extend beyond that of the tongue to fingers, limbs, and the

⁽¹⁾ Quran (49:14), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *Sahih Muslim*, Imam Nawawi, Introduction to Kitab al-Iman.

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (vol. 1, Book 2, Chapter 1 introduction).

entire body. Bodily actions begin with sincere Intention (Niyyah) in the heart, followed by utterances of the tongue, and the actions of the rest of the body are facilitated by the Mercy of Allah ﷻ.

Faith (Iman) increases through compliance and submission, and decreases due to not complying. This is the definition that was known by the four Imams (Abu Hanifah ﷺ, Malik ﷺ, Ash-Shafi'i ﷺ, and Ahmad ﷺ) and the scholars of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) before and after them. Abdur-Razzaq as-San'ani ﷺ said, **“I met sixty-two Shuyukh (religious leaders), amongst them were: Ma'mar, Al-Awza'i, Ath-Thawri, Al-Walid Ibn Muhammad Al-Qurashee, Yazeed Ibn as-Saa'ib, Hammaad Ibn Salamah, Hammaad Ibn Zaid, Sufyaan Ibn 'Uyainah, Shu'ayb Ibn Harh, Waki' Ibn Al-Jarrah, Malik Ibn Anas, Ibn Abi Layla, Isma'il Ibn Ayash, Al-Walid Ibn Muslim and those I have not named. All of them said, ‘Faith consists of speech and action; it increases and decreases.’”**⁽¹⁾

Muhammad Ibn Abi Hatim ﷺ, the scribe of Imam Al-Bukhari ﷺ, said, **“A month before his death, I heard [Al-Bukhari] say, ‘I have written Narrations (Ahadith) from a thousand and eighty men; all of them reported Narrations (Ahadith). They all used to say, ‘Faith (Iman) is statement and action, it increases and decreases.’”**⁽²⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ brought the principle of the people of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) and the community that the religion and Faith (Iman) consist of sayings and actions: the sayings of the heart and the tongue, and the actions of the heart, tongue, and limbs. Shaykh Al-Fawzan ﷺ said, **“Belief requires confirming (what has preceded) with the tongue and being totally sincere in every act of worship whether it is a physical action, a verbal one or a matter of belief.”**⁽³⁾

Ibn Abi Al-'Izz Al-Hanafi ﷺ said, **“Malik, Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, Al-Awza'i, Ishaq Ibn Rahaway, the scholars of Ahl Al-Hadith, and the scholars in Madinah, may Allah bless them, as well as the Thahiris⁽⁴⁾ and a faction of theologians, think that Faith (Iman) is to affirm (to make Tasdeeq) in the heart, profess with the tongue and to act with the body.”**⁽⁵⁾

Proceeding towards Faith (Iman)

The caller to Islam (called Da'i, calling for Dawah) must identify and understand the stages of awakening, which an individual will move through from the place of ignorance until the place of Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem).

⁽¹⁾ *Sharh Usool I'tiqad Ahl us- Sunnah*, Al-Lalilka'i (5/958).

⁽²⁾ *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*, Adh-Dhahabi.

⁽³⁾ *Sharh Al-Aqeedat ul-Waasitiyya*, Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan, Rafiq trans. (p. 3).

⁽⁴⁾ **Thahiris** is a school of Islamic jurisprudence founded by Dawud Al-Zahiri in the ninth century, characterised by reliance on the outward (Zāhir) meaning of expressions in the Quran and Hadith.

⁽⁵⁾ *Sharh Al-Aqidah At-Tahawiyah* (p. 282) Ansari trans. He was Sadr ad-Din Abu'l Hasan Ali ibn Abi al-'Izz (d. 731 AH). He was a student of Ibn Kathir from a family that were strictly Hanafi in fiqh.

Stages of awakening the heart

The heart must wake up from its state of heedlessness since the heart is the first seat where Faith (Iman) begins. Faith (Iman) in Allah ﷻ begins with Attestation (Tasdeeq), which evolves into definite Affirmation (Iqrar) which we call the heart's Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem), which together make the statement of the heart.

- 1) To know Allah ﷻ is the first step that triggers *Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem*. The heart typically develops Attestation (Tasdeeq), thus leading to Affirmation (Iqrar) when knowledge of the subject is made available. Hence, the first step towards the complete Faith (Iman) is to know Allah ﷻ and to approach that knowledge—ideally through learning His Names and Attributes.
- 2) We may first acquire the necessary knowledge to instill in the hearts the Attestation (Tasdeeq) and definite Affirmation (Iqrar) by employing our intellectual faculties to reflect upon Allah's ﷻ creation.
- 3) By reflecting upon the signs of Allah ﷻ in creation, we will conclude two key principles: the first is there must be a Creator, and the second is that the Creator's Attributes and Qualities must be superior to His creation.
- 4) The next step is to learn about the Creator through His Revelation and to formalize a means of following and organizing the heart, tongue, and limbs according to the Revelation.
- 5) One believes in the statement of the heart without any shadow of doubt, suspicion, or uncertainty. One believes in the six Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). One believes that Allah ﷻ exists as the Lord who created everything, The Sovereign, The Provider, and The Ruler. Our Lord has no equal or similitude to His Divine Essence, Names, and Attributes. He is the One to be worshiped and obeyed without any partners, and the only religion He will accept is submission to Him alone. This statement of the heart with Attestation (Tasdeeq) is the foundation of belief or Faith (Iman).
- 6) The heart's definite Affirmation (Iqrar) may read as follows: "Allah created me to worship and comply with His commands by implementing the five Pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam) based on my firm belief in the six Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman)."

The statement of tongue (Iqrar Al-Lisan)

This is the articulation by the tongue of the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah) for the one who wishes to embrace Islam and can speak. It is one of the conditions for the correctness and validity of Faith (Iman).

- 1) After developing the statement of the heart, through the employment of the intellectual capacity, one must turn to Allah's ﷻ Revelation and signs to learn about the Creator, His Names, Attributes, Actions, Angels, Jinn, Books, Messengers, the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), and the Predestination (Al-Qadr).
- 2) One begins recognizing that Allah ﷻ did not create the heavens, the earth, and the servant aimlessly. Instead, one becomes sure that there is a purpose behind life in this world (Dunya), and there will be consequences to how they conduct their lives.
- 3) He begins to say to himself the following: "I am in this world for a short while, and after I die, there will be Paradise (Jannah) or Hell (Jahannam). What does it take to save me from Hell (Jahannam) and be admitted into Paradise (Jannah)?"
- 4) One responds to this query by turning to the Commands of Allah ﷻ, and to the first of five Pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam). This stage is the definitive Affirmation (Iqrar) of the tongue upon the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah).

The action of the heart, tongue, and limbs

- 1) In the next step, once the heart, which is the king of the body, is incited and mobilized to act, one will strive to become a good Muslim in this world (Dunya) since it is the path to Paradise (Jannah).
- 2) One recognizes that compliance and submission to the Commands of Allah ﷻ make him or her a true believer.
- 3) The heart begins to be sincere and truthful in adhering to the commands until it adheres due to love.
- 4) Once the heart is full of Allah's ﷻ love, fear, and hope, it will mobilize the rest of the limbs to act, and the tongue will begin imploring and glorifying Allah ﷻ. The rest of the bodily parts will comply as well.

Protecting the stature of the heart

The stature of the heart is regarded as the foundation of our Faith (Iman). One who believes must protect the heart from three defects:

1. Delusion/illusion (Al-Wahm)

It is the state of the heart oppressed by falsehood, delusion, or an incomplete acceptance of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). Delusion/illusion (Al-Wahm) is the inability to distinguish between what is real and what only seems to be real, often as the result of a disordered state of mind. In some cases, the heart completely lacks the knowledge of Faith (Iman), which is the requisite for Attestation (Tasdeeq) and Affirmation (Iqrar).

Allah ﷻ tells us the Jews uttered the following statements without any basis:

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴾

صَدِيقَاتِ ﴿١١١﴾ [البقرة: 111]

“And they say, ‘None will enter Paradise (Jannah) except one who is a Jew or a Christian.’ That is [merely] their wishful thinking, Say, ‘Produce your proof if you should be truthful.’”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرِيُّ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾

[المائدة: 18] ﴿١٨﴾

“But the Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of Allah and His beloved.’ Say, ‘Then why does He punish you for your sins?’ Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:111), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (5:18), Sahih International trans.

These qualities of self-praise are hindrances from developing true Faith (Iman) because they are in ignorance of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). These are statements that deny the Justice of Allah ﷻ and belie knowledge of one of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman), which is the accountability on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah).

2. Doubt (Ash-Shak)

It is the state when the heart harbors Attestation (Tasdeeq) mixed with ignorance. An individual will question the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) out of a disorderly understanding by the use of rhetoric, philosophy, and conjecture. This is not a foundation that will reach Affirmation (Iqrar) or Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem).

Doubt is the mental confusion that occupies the heart⁽¹⁾ about the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). This can be in the form of partial rejection or intellectually critical doubts in pillars such as belief in the existence of Allah ﷻ, the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), or the Predestination (Al-Qadr). Doubt can result in a denial if it proceeds untreated. The devastating danger of doubt is that it easily leads to sin and the normalization of prohibited (Haram) actions.

In the state of doubt, the heart lacks the part which perfects Attestation (Tasdeeq) and establishes definite Affirmation (Iqrar). Instead, the heart entertains doubts that hinder its ability to evolve to Affirmation (Iqrar) and *Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem*.

The origin of doubt in a Muslim heart stems from learning Monotheism (Tawheed) from deviant sects that emphasize philosophical thought and have strayed from the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). To save the heart from doubts, one must acquire knowledge of Monotheism (Tawheed) through trustworthy sources: the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), and the explanation (Tafsir) of these pieces of evidence by the righteous predecessors of the Muslim Community (Ummah).

There are many Quranic Verses (Ayat) stating that believers should abstain from doubt. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ أَفَعَيَّرَ اللَّهُ أَبْتِغَىٰ حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ

﴿ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴾ [الأنعام: 114]

⁽¹⁾ Mind and heart are both mentioned by the author in association with conceptualization and reflection; evidence from the Quran and Sunnah emphasize the heart as foundation of knowledge. For example, Quran 22:46 and Bukhari (7498). The process of the heart toward Faith (Iman) is independent and precedential to the intellectual process. The heart can lead to Faith (Iman) and Attestation (Tasdeeq) while the independent intellect cannot; see Bukhari (52), ed.

“[Say (O Muhammad)] "Shall I seek a judge other than Allah while it is He Who has sent down unto you the Book (The Quran), explained in detail." Those unto whom We gave the Scripture [the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] know that it is revealed from your Lord in truth. So be not you of those who doubt.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَسْئَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ﴾ [يونس: 94]

“If you (people) have any doubt about what We have revealed to you (about the Day of Judgment and other matters of belief), ask those who read the Book that was revealed (to the Prophets who lived) before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord. Thus, do not doubt it (in your heart).”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ﴾ [الحجرات: 15]

“The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.”⁽³⁾

3. Conjecture (At-Thann)

The essential knowledge of the religion is knowable, and those aspects of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) which are unseen and unknowable, are not essential to the state of heart in which one recognizes the Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem). Those who accept the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) but have uncertainty with conjecture have fallen into an error of the heart involving the mixing of truth with falsehood.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:114), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (10:94), Sarwar trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (49:15), Sahih International trans.

One still does not have firm convincing beliefs regarding the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). His definite Affirmation (Iqrar) in the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) may range from falling short of Certainty (Yaqeen) to an almost complete lack of conviction or knowledge. An example of this is when one says, “I do believe in the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman) but still have some reservations.” The individual then rationalizes missing components to resolve his doubts. This can have devastating consequences because conjecture is a deviant methodology not based on revealed evidence. The method and the conclusion based on conjecture may both be in opposition to the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), even if it arrives at some aspects of reality. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾﴾ [النجم: 27-28]

“Verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter (Aakhirah), name the Angels with female names. While they have no knowledge thereof. They follow but a guess, and verily, guess is no substitute for the truth.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ نَظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُستَقْبِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾ [الجناب: 32]

“And when it was said: ‘And when it was said: Lo! Allah’s promise is the truth, and there is no doubt of the Hour’s coming, ye said: We know not what the Hour (Day of Resurrection) is. We deem it naught but a conjecture, and we are by no means convinced.’”⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Quran (53:27-28), Mohsin trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (45:32), Pickthall trans.

Chapter Two

Conjecture in Faith (Iman) was the First Deviation (Ilhad)

Despite the abundance of clear evidence regarding the definition and nature of Faith (Iman), the subject was the first upon which Muslims differed and disputed. Abu Safwan Farid Ibn Abdul Wahid Haibatan ﷺ wrote in the translator's notes of *Causes Behind the Increase and Decrease of Iman* about the devastating consequences of cherishing a corrupt perception of Faith (Iman). He wrote that the nature of deviant innovation (Bid'ah) is that the individual is content with what they have established, and they will neither build knowledge on increasing Faith (Iman) and obedience to our Lord nor will they avoid what weakens Faith (Iman) and displeases our Lord. Two extremes fomented among those who held a corrupt perception of Faith (Iman). One group held that since Faith (Iman) does not increase and decrease, actions do not affect it, and hence, they concluded that sins have no bearing upon one's Faith (Iman) whatsoever.

The other group held that Faith (Iman) is affected by actions. However, since they did not recognize that Faith (Iman) was of levels and parts, they believed that a person who committed a major sin was no longer a Muslim and that he would reside in the Fire (Jahannam) forever since his Faith (Iman) completely vanished on account of the sin as it cannot decrease, according to their false belief. Look at how Shaytan (Satan) deceives and plots against humankind to drive them towards disobedience in belief and action; we seek Allah's ﷻ protection from the constant bombardment of his whispers (Waswas).⁽¹⁾

Faith (Iman) is the greatest of all blessings, the source of true happiness in this world (Dunya), and the leading cause of success on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah). Sufficient it is that Allah ﷻ makes the hearts strong and content wherein Faith (Iman) dwells, and with it, one can taste its sweetness. Those with Faith (Iman) receive guidance from Allah ﷻ; as He takes them from darkness to light, He defends them and provides them with protection. Faith (Iman) is the source of the good life that people are seeking in this world (Dunya). Also, success in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) is contingent upon having Faith (Iman).

The Prophet's ﷺ Companions (Sahabah) used to pay close attention to the correct type and level of their Faith (Iman). Many Narrations (Ahadith) report how they regularly checked on their Faith (Iman), inspected it, and advised one another regarding its quality. This is a comprehensive sense of

⁽¹⁾ *Causes Behind the Increase and Decrease of Eemaan*, Shaykh Abdur-Razzaak al-Abbaad, Abu Safwan trans., (p. 5).

Faith (Iman) that goes beyond the accumulated system of belief surrounding the six Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman).

The first subject Muslims disagreed upon was the definition of Faith (Iman). Hence, it is crucial to understand the meaning of Faith (Iman) according to the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) as the righteous predecessors understood. Misguided definitions of Faith (Iman) in early Islamic history have caused several problems that persist even now. However, our righteous predecessors had a clear understanding of Faith (Iman) which we must adhere to as well.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته said, “Faith is Affirmation (Iqrar), and not merely the Attestation (Tasdeeq). Affirmation (Iqrar) includes the words of the heart, which is belief without any shadow of a doubt, and the actions of the heart, which is Compliance (Inqiyad).”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ specified that Faith (Iman) of the heart necessitates overt work.⁽²⁾ Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّىٰ فِرْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَٰئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ بَلْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ﴾ [النور: 47-51]

“But they [i.e., the hypocrites] say, ‘We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey;’ then a party of them turns away after that. And those are not believers. And when they are called to [the words of] Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, at once a party of them turns aside [in refusal]. But if the right is theirs, they come to him in prompt obedience. Is there disease in their hearts? Or have they doubted? Or do they fear that Allah will be unjust to them, or His Messenger? Rather, it is they who are the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust]. The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, ‘We hear and we obey.’ And those are the successful.”⁽³⁾

Despite clarity in the definition of Faith (Iman), we still find misguided and distorted descriptions of it which were introduced by different sects. The twisted definitions are centered around two elements. The **first element** is whether actions are part of Faith (Iman) or not. The **second element** is whether Faith (Iman) fluctuates or if it is fixed and constant.

⁽¹⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*.

⁽²⁾ *Kitab al-Iman*, Ibn Taymiyyah, Hassan & Ahmad trans., (p. 228-229). Iman Publishing House: Malaysia.

⁽³⁾ Quran (24:47-51), Sahih International trans.

Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah⁽¹⁾ define Faith (Iman) as:

- ◆ Attestation/affirmation of the heart.
- ◆ Affirmation of the tongue (speech).
- ◆ Actions of the limbs, including the heart and tongue.
- ◆ Subject to increase and decrease.

One cannot be a believer until he assimilates his understanding of Faith (Iman) to these qualities. This position is supported by the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) based on the understanding of the Prophet ﷺ, his Companions (Sahabah), and the first three generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih).

Affirmation of the heart

The evidence that Affirmation (Iqrar) of the heart is an essential condition of Faith (Iman) is based on Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْكَرُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا بِإِيمَانِنَا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِينَا هَذَا فَحَدُّهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ نُؤْتُوهُ فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنْ أَلَيْهِ
شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرْ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

[المائدة: 41]

“O Messenger, let them not grieve you who hasten into disbelief of those who say, ‘We believe’ with their mouths, but their hearts believe not, and from among the Jews. [They are] avid listeners to falsehood, listening to another people who have not come to you. They distort words beyond their [proper] usages, saying, ‘If you are given this, take it; but if you are not given it, then beware.’ But he for whom Allah intends **Fitnah**—never will you possess [power to do] for him a thing against Allah. Those are the ones for whom Allah does not intend to purify their hearts. For them in this world is disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) is a great punishment.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah are those who adhere to the Prophet's Tradition (Sunnah) and who unite upon it, not turning to anything else, whether that be in matters of belief (Aqeedah) or matters of actions, which are subject to Shari'ah rulings. Hence, they are called Ahl us-Sunnah because they adhere to it (the Sunnah), and they are called Ahl al-Jama'ah because they are united (Mujtami'oon) in following it.

⁽²⁾ Quran (5:41), Sahih International trans.

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ [النحل: 106]

“Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in Faith (Iman). But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment.”⁽¹⁾

Statement of the tongue

The evidence that statement of the tongue is an essential condition of Faith (Iman) lies in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

﴿قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا
أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (١٣٦) فَإِنِ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا
فإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ [البقرة: 136]

“Say, [O believers], ‘We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) and Ishaq (Isaac) and Yaqub (Jacob) and the Descendants [al-Asbat] and what was given to Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) and what was given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.’ So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”⁽²⁾

Actions of the limbs

The evidence that actions of the bodily limbs are an essential condition of Faith (Iman) is in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (16:106), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (2:136-137), Sahih International trans.

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَرْكَعُوا وَسَجَدُوا وَعَبَدُوا رَبَّهُمْ وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [الحج:77]

“O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good, that you may succeed.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الزُّخْرُف:72]

“And that is Paradise (Jannah) which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.”⁽²⁾

Furthermore, Allah ﷻ associated some actions such as Prayer (Salah) with Faith (Iman), as in the following Verse (Ayah):

﴿وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَنَكُمْ﴾ [البقرة:143]

“And never would Allah have caused you to lose your Faith (Iman).”⁽³⁾

The meaning of the above Verse (Ayah) is that the reward of Prayers (Salah) towards Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) before the changing of the direction of Prayers (Salah) towards Makkah would not be lost with Allah ﷻ.⁽⁴⁾

The association between Faith (Iman) and action is known from the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Faith (Iman) has seventy-odd (or sixty-odd) branches, the best of which is saying *La ilaha illallah*, and the least of which is removing something harmful from the road, and modesty (Al-Haya’) is a branch of Faith (Iman).”⁽⁵⁾

(1) Quran (22:77), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (43:72), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (2:143), Sahih International trans.

(4) *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2:143).

(5) Muslim (153).

Sectarian differences

Al-Khawarij⁽¹⁾ and Al-Mu'tazilah⁽²⁾ have agreed with Ahl us-Sunnah that actions are part of Faith (Iman). However, they differed in ruling on a man who commits a major sin. The Khawarij regarded him as an apostate in this world, but he could return to Islam by Repentance (Tawbah). The Mu'tazilah said that in this world, the person who committed a major sin is in a place between disbelief (kufr) and Faith (Iman) unless he repents. However, both sects agree that this person will be in Hellfire (Jahannam) forever.

Al-Khawarij

Al-Khawarij was the first sect to emerge in the Muslim world, and they had a presence during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Zhu'l-Khuwaysirah At-Tameemi⁽³⁾ was a man from Banu Tameem who objected to the Prophet ﷺ for his method of distributing wealth. **Zhu'l-Khuwaysirah said, “Fear Allah, O Muhammad!’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Who will obey Allah if I disobey Him? Would He trust me with the people of Earth but you do not trust me?’ Then the man turned and left.”**⁽⁴⁾

Zhu'l-Khuwaysirah was the ideological forefather of Al-Khawarij. They follow a belief that any deficiency in deeds causes a Muslim to be an apostate (kafir) and out of the fold of Islam. Muslims today who have inherited this ideology are called ‘Takfiri,’ which means: ‘those who excommunicate [without right].’ The original Khawarij are long gone, but the ideology persists and its dangers towards Faith (Iman) are quite real.

Al-Mu'tazilah

They emerged towards the beginning of the second century. The founder of the sect was Wassil bin Ata, who was a student of Al-Hassan Al-Basri ؒ. Wassil separated from Al-Hassan ؒ after a discrepancy that appeared between them on the fate of the one who commits a major sin. Wassil held a position taken from Hellenic philosophy (Greek philosophical inventions known as the speculative speech—*Ilm Al-Kalam*) rather than Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Al-Mu'tazilah propagated many innovations (Bid'ah) which they adopted from other sects: takfiri over sinful action, denial of the Divine Will of Allah ﷻ, His creation of the servants' actions, and denial or distortion (Tahreef) of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

⁽¹⁾ **Khārijite**, Arabic **Khawārij**, is an early Islamic sect, which formed in response to a religio-political controversy over the Caliphate.

⁽²⁾ **The Mu'tazilites—The so-called Rationalistic Sect:** The *Mu'tazilah* (from *i'tazala*, “to remove oneself” or “to withdraw”) is one of the philosophical schools whose doctrines were affected by Greek philosophy.

⁽³⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (9:58).

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (1064); Bukhari (3610).

Actions (Amal) and Faith (Iman)

The next differing position regarding Faith (Iman) is the untrue and unfounded belief that Actions (Amal) are not part of Faith (Iman). It is a belief held by the numerous sects, all of whom have a common error called **Irjaa**, which refers to delaying or holding back from attributing actions to Faith (Iman). The names of the sects may be obscure to the average American Muslim. However, regardless of the naming, it is incumbent on every Muslim to identify the correct definition of Faith (Iman), because the majority of Muslims may be in the fallacy of **Irjaa** unknowingly, and party to the beliefs of these sects. The innovated beliefs of these sects are many and diverse; below is a summarization only of their errors in understanding Faith (Iman).

Al-Murji'ah: The Murji'ah appeared at the end of the first century after Migration (Hijrah) in Kufa. The group is guilty of severe religious innovations (Bid'ah). Its name might have been derived from the first innovation (Bid'ah) that affects the definition of Faith (Iman) since they excluded the acts of worship from the reality of it.

Abu Amina Elias wrote, **“Their intention was to make the religion more ecumenical in the face of extreme partisan in-fighting, but their creed, besides lacking basis in scripture, diluted the concept of faith to the point that it was nearly meaningless.”**⁽¹⁾ Aspects of their creed which deviated were their claim that acts of worship are a result of Faith (Iman) but not an element of it. They also claim that Faith (Iman) does not increase or decrease.

Abu Al-Hassan Ali Ibn Isma'il Al-Ash'ari رحمہ اللہ in his book *Al-Ibanah 'an usul Id-diyaanaah*, named several primary sub-sects of Al-Murji'ah based on the way they defined Faith (Iman):

1. **Al-Jahmiyah** were the followers of Al-Jahm bin Safwan, the head of the Jahmiyah sect. They defined Faith (Iman) as a mere acknowledgment of Allah ﷻ in the heart, while disbelief (kufr) is the state of being ignorant about Allah ﷻ. This is **Irjaa**. They believed every other acknowledgment such as the statement of the tongue, affirmation, and submission of the heart, love of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ are not part of Faith (Iman). They claimed that Faith (Iman) and infidelity are in the heart, not in words and deeds. According to their definition, Abu Talib, Shaytan (Satan), and the Pharaoh were perfect believers.
2. **Al-Karamiyah** were the followers of Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Karram Al-Sijistani. They went further in misguidance with a definition of Faith (Iman) as the spoken testimonial while an acknowledgment in the heart is not necessary. According to them, hypocrites (munafiqun) who confess the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah) with their tongues while concealing disbelief (kufr) are perfect believers.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.abuaminaelias.com/the-definition-of-faith-in-islam/>

3. **Al-Ash'ariyah:** The foundation of their belief is derived from Abdullah bin Sa'eed bin Kullab Al-Qattan Al-Basri, who lived in the time of Imam Ahmad rah. He was the leader of those who practiced European dialectics and rhetorical debate to approach speculative theology. The school of thought later followed Abu Al-Hassan Al-Ash'ari rah, who went through various religious phases. When he was young, he studied Mu'tazali theology with his stepfather Abu Ali Al-Jubai. He then repented from it when he noticed his distance from the way of the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ. He openly announced Repentance (Tawbah) by saying that the Quran was NOT created, and he swore to refute the teachings of the falsehood. Al-Ash'ari rah wrote, **“We have now argued for the validity of our belief that the Quran is uncreated...We have not found any scholar...who ranks as an authority, believing that the Quran is created.”**⁽¹⁾

Al-Ash'ari rah also wrote: **“The belief we hold and the religion we follow are holding fast to the Book of our Lord, to the Sunnah of our Prophet, and to the traditions related on the authority of the Companions (Sahabah) and the Successors and the imams of the [Hadith]—to that we hold firmly, professing what Abu Abdallah Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanbal professed, and avoiding him who dissents from his belief.”**⁽²⁾

However, his followers defined Faith (Iman) as mere Attestation (Tasdeeq), with no need for definite Affirmation (Iqrar). They also claimed that Faith (Iman) neither increases nor decreases.

4. **Al-Murji'ah Al-Fuqaha' Hanafiya** are among the jurists from Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah of the Hanafiya school of thought. They adopt the Murji'ah definition of Faith (Iman) in exclusion of Actions (Amal). They also claim that Faith (Iman) does not increase or decrease and is acknowledgment in the heart accompanied by a declaration of the tongue. Of the four classes of the Murji'ah, namely Jahmiyah, Karamiyah, Ash'ariyah, and Murji'ah Al-Fuqaha' Hanafiya, this latter is of a lesser degree of **Irjaa**⁽³⁾ but is widespread among the Muslims today. However, their interpretation was not known among the four Imams, or the orthodox scholars of the Islamic belief system (Aqeedah) before or after them.
5. **Al-Maturidiyah** have similar beliefs to the Murji'ah. They are the followers of Abu Mansour (d. 944 C.E.), who was also influenced by Ibn Kullab. The Maturidiyah say Faith (Iman) is Affirmation (Iqrar) of the heart only and some added speech of the tongue. They negated that Faith (Iman) increases and decreases. They believe in knowing our Lord based on reason as precedence before textual evidence. As for Islam and Faith (Iman), the Maturidiyah view them as the same with no difference between them.

⁽¹⁾ *Al-Ibanah 'an Usul ad-Diyanah*, Abul-Hasan Al-Ash'ari, Klein trans. (p. 79). Kraus Reprint Corporation: New York.

⁽²⁾ *Al-Ibanah 'an Usul ad-Diyanah*, Abul-Hasan Al-Ash'ari, Klein trans. Kraus Reprint Corporation: New York. (p. 49).

⁽³⁾ See *Sharh Rasaail Al-Imaam Muhammad bin Abdil-Wahhab* (Explanation) by Shaykh Saalih Al-Fawzaan, Q&A (p.116). Muhammad Ibn Adnaan Abouharb trans.

Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah must follow the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) upon the understanding of the first three praised generations of Muslims (Al-Salaf Al-Salih). This means they will stand between the extremism of the Murji'ah and the Khawarij. Deeds are essential to Faith (Iman) such that a person who never acted at all on their belief in Allah ﷻ while having the ability and time to do so, never had Faith (Iman) to begin with, while at the same time a deficiency in deeds, or presence of many sins, does not necessarily nullify the Faith (Iman) of a Muslim. The strength of a Muslim's Faith (Iman) is equivalent to the inward and outward good deeds they perform.

Faith (Iman) fluctuates

Faith (Iman) increases and decreases. This is the last area of Faith (Iman) upon which deviant groups differ, and it is essential to affirm because it increases through obedience and decreases through sin and disobedience. Allah ﷻ has made this clear in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴾ [الأنفال: 2]

“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His Verses (Ayat) are recited to them, it increases them in Faith (Iman); and upon their Lord they rely.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى وَالْبَصِيصَ الصَّالِحِ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴾ [مريم: 76]

“And Allah increases those who were guided, in guidance, and the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for recourse.”⁽²⁾

﴿ وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴾ [التوبة: 124]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (8:2), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (19:76), Sahih International trans.

“And whenever a Chapter (Surah) is revealed, there are among the hypocrites those who say, ‘Which of you has this increased Faith (Iman)?’ As for those who believed, it has increased them in Faith (Iman), while they are rejoicing.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَبَعُوا لَكُمْ فَأَخْشَوْهُمْ فَرَّادَهُمْ إِيْمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾
[آل عمران: 173]

“Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, ‘Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them.’ But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: ‘Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us).’”⁽²⁾

Evidence from the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) supports the reality of fluctuating Faith (Iman). Abu Sa’eed Al-Khudri رضي الله عنه reported that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say, “Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by hating it and feeling it is wrong), and that is the weakest of Faith (Iman).”⁽³⁾

Faith (Iman) can become weak and diminished to the size of a small seed, but it is still present and capable of growth. This is mentioned in an authentic Narration (Hadith). “After Allah puts the people of the Fire (Jahannam) into the Fire (Jahannam), He will say to the Angels, ‘Look, and whomever you find with a mustard seed’s weight of Faith (Iman) in his heart, bring him out.’ They will bring out people who have been burned, like charcoal, then they will be thrown into the River of Life (Al-Hayat), or Rain (Al-Haya), from which they will emerge like seeds sprouting at the banks of the flood.”⁽⁴⁾

The three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) considered that recognizing the fluctuation of Faith (Iman) is a condition for the correctness and validity of Faith (Iman). The major Imams and jurists agreed that Faith (Iman) fluctuates. Bukhari رضي الله عنه wrote in his book of Faith (Iman), “Faith increases and decreases,” followed by pieces of evidence to support his statement.⁽⁵⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Faith (Iman) increases by acts of obedience and decreases by acts of disobedience.”⁽⁶⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (9:124), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (3:173), Mohsin trans.

⁽³⁾ Muslim (177).

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (457).

⁽⁵⁾ Bukhari (Vol 1, P. 76).

⁽⁶⁾ Sharh Al-Aqida Al-Wasitiyya (Pp. 96-97), Abu Rumaysah trans. Daar us-Sunnah Publishers.

This means that a Muslim who has a pure Intention (Niyyah) and performs regular good deeds will increase his Faith (Iman). Whereas a Muslim who is spiritually ill and does not perform good deeds will have weak Faith (Iman). What is equally important is to not dismiss a Muslim who appears to have weak Faith (Iman), as he is still a Muslim contending with the unique challenges of his experience, and thus his good qualities should not be dismissed.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good.”**⁽¹⁾

This relative position of Faith (Iman) in the life of a believer is a fact that was made crystal clear in the Quran and reliable Narrations (Ahadith) from the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Despite this, deviant beliefs existed and still exist amongst Muslims, such as:

- ◆ Faith (Iman) is solid, fixed, and constant.
- ◆ Faith (Iman) does not increase or decrease.
- ◆ Faith (Iman) is not made up of parts.
- ◆ Every Muslim holds the same amount and quality of Faith (Iman).

The heart is the place where our Faith (Iman) increases and decreases. To be specific, it is in the statement of the heart, which refers to both the Attestation (Tasdeeq) and the Affirmation (Iqar), and these two are combined to be called the heart's Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem). Hence, our Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem) may increase and decrease in the **three domains**, namely **delusions, doubts, and suspicions**. Therefore, we must be vigilant regarding any elements of the Articles of Faith (Arkan Al-Iman). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الصَّادِقُونَ ﴾ [الخُجُرَات: 15]

“The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.”⁽²⁾

As seen above, Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem) is not fixed, but a believer is not deterred by doubts because of his consistent efforts in sincerity. The heart has strong Faith (Iman) which may go up and down between the following three levels, which we call **‘Levels of Certainty’ (Yaqeen)**, as known from the position of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah concerning Hellfire (Jahannam):

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (6774).

⁽²⁾ Quran (49:15), Sahih International trans.

1. **‘Ilm ul-Yaqin’ (knowledge of certainty)** is merely hearing a description of the Paradise (Jannah) or Hellfire (Jahannam), and believing because it is sure knowledge revealed from Allah ﷻ and related from His Messenger ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ﴾ [التكاثر: 5]

“No! If you only knew with knowledge of certainty...”⁽¹⁾

2. **‘Ain ul-Yaqin (visualization of certainty)** or certainty of sight is actually to see the horrors of Hellfire (Jahannam). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ﴾ [التكاثر: 7]

“Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty.”⁽²⁾

3. **Haqq ul-Yaqin (truth and absolute reality with certainty)** or experiential certainty in the true reality of the Hereafter (Akhirah), which is the final stage when we enter Paradise (Jannah) and taste its pleasures or enter the suffering in Hellfire (Jahannam) (and we seek refuge with Allah ﷻ from the Hellfire). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ﴾ [الواقعة: 95]

“Indeed, this is the true Certainty (Yaqeen).”⁽³⁾

Knowledge and sound belief cannot go below the first level without risking supplantation by suspicion, doubts, or delusion. Loss of an article of Faith (Iman) by one of the three critical failures may take a person out of the fold of Islam. Those critical failures, we mention once again, are **delusions, doubts, and suspicions.**



⁽¹⁾ Quran (102:5), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (102:7), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (56:95), Sahih International trans.

Chapter Three

Faith (Iman) in Our Lord

Now that we know what Faith (Iman) is, we can take this conversation to the next level, which is to analyze what it means to believe in our Lord.

Faith (Iman) in our Lord requires **four necessities**, the knowledge of which are essential for Invitation (Dawah) of those who are sincere in searching for our Lord:

1. The belief that Allah ﷻ exists with His Divine Essence, above the Throne (Al-Arsh), in a manner that suits His Majesty.
2. Belief in His Actions of Lordship, such as: He created, He is The Provider, and He is the absolute Ruler and Owner of creation.
3. Affirmation that no one is equal to Him or like Him when it comes to His Divine Essence, Names, Attributes, and Actions of Lordship.
4. Affirmation that Allah ﷻ as Sovereign has ordained life for all of the children of Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, will cause death, will resurrect the dead on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), and is the only Judge who will admit whom He chooses into Paradise (Jannah) by His mercy.

The evidence for the above four points is in Chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah, and the details of application of Fatihah to these four points is in the known Interpretation (Tafsir). Allah ﷻ said:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ① الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ② الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ③ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ④ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ⑤
 أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ⑥ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ⑦ [الفاتحة: 1-7]

“In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds—The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight

path—the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.”⁽¹⁾

Once the heart has developed Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem) upon the above four points, one must articulate Affirmation (Iqrar) of the Shahadah with the limb of the tongue, and then submit the rest of the bodily limbs and heart, to what entails of the Divine Guidance.

The example of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام went through a process of affirming belief in our Lord while in discourse with his father and people. In this rendering of the discourse, he assimilated the four necessities of Faith (Iman) in our Lord. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام disowned their association of other than Allah ﷻ in worship and disassociated from them in an action called **Al-Bara'** (Disavowal or Disassociation). His story is mentioned in the Quran:

﴿ قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ وَالْأَقْدَامُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاتَّبِعْهُمْ عَدُوًّا لِيِ الْإِلَهِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾
[الشعراء: 75-77]

“He said, ‘Then do you see what you have been worshipping, You and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me.’”⁽²⁾

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام negated worship of false deities. Then, he affirmed his loyalty and association to Allah ﷻ in another action called **Al-Wala'** (Loyalty or Association). He said:

﴿ فَاتَّبِعْهُمْ عَدُوًّا لِيِ الْإِلَهِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾ [الشعراء: 77]

“Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds.”⁽³⁾

Then, he established the evidence, mandating the action by referring to Allah ﷻ by Actions of His Lordship. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام affirmed that it is Allah ﷻ:

(1) Quran (1:1-7), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (26:75-77), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (26:77), Sahih International trans. Italics added.

﴿فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيَ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾ [الشعراء: 77-82]

“The Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and He [it is Who] guides me. And it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink. And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me. And Who will cause me to die and then bring me to life. And Who I aspire that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense.”⁽¹⁾

Finally, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عليه السلام established the worship of Allah ﷻ through making Supplication (Dua’) which is the essence of worship as the Prophet ﷺ mentioned.⁽²⁾ Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عليه السلام prayed:

﴿رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقِّيقِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَأَجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَأَغْفِرْ لِأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾﴾ [الشعراء: 83-89]

“My Lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous. And grant me a mention [i.e., reputation] of honor among later generations. And place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Pleasure. And forgive my father. Indeed, he has been of those astray. And do not disgrace me on the Day they are [all] resurrected. The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”⁽³⁾

From this example is an essential point, that if we invite a doubter or denier to acknowledge the existence of Allah ﷻ, we should establish the logical and intellectual evidence. However, when talking to someone who believes in our Lord but fails to establish Monotheism (Tawheed), such as the Christians, their cognitive failure lies in misattributing the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ to other than Him. For this person, the Invitation (Dawah) needs to begin with the Names and the Attributes of Allah ﷻ to draw them closer to our Lord while not becoming distracted trying to prove how our Lord exists. This is the difference between talking to an atheist and talking to the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab), namely the Christians and Jews.

(1) Quran (26:77-82), Sahih International trans.

(2) “Supplication is worship.” (الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ) See Abu Dawud (1479), Tirmizi (3372).

(3) Quran (26:83-89), Sahih International trans.

Building a foundation of Monotheism (Tawheed)

Faith (Iman) and Monotheism (Tawheed) are synonymous in some contexts and differ in others with semantically obligated hierarchy. They are like the cognate terms Faith (Iman) and Islam, or Obligatory Charity (Zakah) and Voluntary Charity (Sadaqah). Hence, the monotheist is a believer, and the believer is a monotheist (Al-Muwahid Mu'min, wal Mu'min Muwahid). The semantically obligated hierarchy between Faith (Iman) and Monotheism (Tawheed) indicates a need to define Monotheism (Tawheed), which means unifying, making something one, or asserting oneness. The word **Tawheed** comes from the Arabic verb *Wahada*, which itself means to unite, unify, or consolidate. However, when the term **Tawheed** is connected to Allah ﷻ, then this is **Monotheism**, or asserting the indivisible and unique solitary Essence of our Lord without any partner or similitude. Monotheism (Tawheed) is the Concrete Belief (Al-Itiqad Al-Jazem) by believing that:

1. Allah ﷻ is One in Lordship, without a partner in His dominion and His Actions (Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah).
2. Allah ﷻ is One without similitude in His Essence and Attributes (Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifat).
3. Allah ﷻ is One without rival in His Divinity as the only real focus or center of worship (Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah *or* Tawheed Al-Ibadah).

Conceptual categories of Monotheism (Tawheed)

Monotheism (Tawheed) falls into **two categories**. The **first category** is knowledge or information about Allah ﷻ (At-Tawheed Al-'Ilmi Al-Khabari), which includes both His Actions of Lordship (Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah) and His Names and Attributes (Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifat).

The **second category** is Monotheism (Tawheed) in worship (Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah) which includes both intention (Niyyah) and pursuant action (At-Tawheed Al-Iradi At-Talabi).

Derivation of the meaning of Monotheism (Tawheed) into two conceptual categories forms the basis into which the science of Monotheism (Tawheed) has been traditionally divided.

We must realize that conceptually categorizing Monotheism (Tawheed) into two, three, or more descriptive classes does not divide Monotheism (Tawheed) or the Essence of Divinity but rather organizes our perception of Divinity. The conceptual categories overlap to such a degree that whoever omits any aspect has failed to complete the requirements of Monotheism (Tawheed) and is guilty of polytheism (shirk), which is the opposite of Monotheism (Tawheed). To know our Lord, it is essential to develop a complete and correct understanding of them both.

The main mission of the Messengers

Despite the broad implications of the first category of Monotheism (Tawheed) of knowledge—qualities of *Rububiyah*—correct knowledge of our Lord is not sufficient to fulfill our obligatory duty of establishing Monotheism (Tawheed) and eschewing polytheism (shirk). The complements of *Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah* and *Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifat* accompany *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*.

Consequently, the most important aspect of Monotheism (Tawheed) is that of *Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah*. Allah ﷻ emphasized the importance of directing worship to Him alone by pointing out that this was the primary purpose of the creation of humanity and the essence of the message brought by all the Prophets. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾ [الذاريات:56]

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾ [النحل:36]

“We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ sent all the Messengers to call people to implement worship of the One true Lord—*Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah*. Look how much significance this expression of Monotheism (Tawheed) holds. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فسيروا في الأرض فانظروا كيف كان عقبة المكذِبين ﴾ [النحل:36]

“‘Serve Allah and shun false gods.’ Then some of them (there were) whom Allah guided, and some of them (there were) upon whom error had just hold. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequence for the deniers!”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (51:56), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (16:36), Khattab trans.

Common misconceptions

There are several misconceptions Muslims have regarding the subject of Monotheism (Tawheed). These misconceptions manifest **delusions, doubts, and suspicions** resulting in gradual and orchestrated negligence of teaching the subject of Monotheism (Tawheed) and striving to learn it. Sometimes, the orientalist⁽²⁾ generate some of these misconceptions to confuse Muslims about Islam's most important topic. One of the devices orientalist use is to portray the Quran as mere literature, and then valuate it through anthropological theories. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلِمًا إِلَهِيًّا لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُكَ مُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ﴾ [الأنعام: 25]

“And among them are those who listen to you, but We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness. And if they should see every sign, they will not believe in it. Even when they come to you arguing with you, those who disbelieve say, ‘This is not but legends of the former peoples.’”⁽³⁾

Among the misconceptions of Monotheism (Tawheed) are those raised by Christian polemicists and some poorly informed Muslim apologists who claim that categorizing Monotheism (Tawheed) into three categories violates the concept around it and think that it is likened to the trinitarian schema in Christianity.

The Christian trinity speaks of three separate entities: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all of whom express a share of the attributes of divinity. **Tawheed** is the purest form of Monotheism in which divinity is indivisible and belongs only to the One Creator; division of descriptors of Monotheism (Tawheed) into three classes clarify the solitary nature of divinity as the one and only Divine Essence of Allah ﷻ.

Among the critics of the study of Monotheism (Tawheed) are modernists who claim that since the word *Tawheed* was not mentioned literally in the Quran, it is an unsubstantiated or innovative reference.

(1) Quran (16:36), Pickthall trans.

(2) Western scholars who deliberately or ignorantly misrepresent Islam or Eastern religions and cultures in general by applying culturally biased critical theories while ignoring Eastern source documents and authentic indigenous references. See *Orientalism* 1978, by Edward Said.

(3) Quran (6:25), Sahih International trans.

To refute this misconception, the Quran is replete with Monotheism (Tawheed). Every Verse (Ayah) in the Quran has a direct or indirect reference to it. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته said:

“For indeed, every Verse (Ayah) in the Quran comprises of Monotheism (Tawheed) or as an attestation of it—a caller to it. Indeed, the Quran is:

1. **Either information (news) regarding Allah and of His Names and His Attributes and His Actions, so it is: the Monotheism (Tawheed) of knowledge and that which is informative (regarding Him) (At-Tawheed Al-'Ilmi Al-Khabari).**
2. **Or it is a call to worship Him alone—and not attributing any partners to Him, as well as to reject everything that people may worship besides Him. So it is Monotheism (Tawheed) of intention and pursuant action (At-Tawheed Al-Iradi At-Talabi).**
3. **Or it is command and prohibition and a requisite of having obedience to Him in His prohibitions and His commandments. So, it is the rights of Monotheism (Tawheed) and fulfillment of it.**
4. **Or it is information regarding the dignified esteem of the people of His Monotheism (Tawheed) —and obedience to Him and that which occurred with them in the life of this world—as well as that which Allah will grant them in the Hereafter (Akhirah). So, it is the reward of having Monotheism (Tawheed) concerning Him.**
5. **Or it is information regarding the people of polytheism (shirk) and that which occurred with them in the life of this world by way of exemplary punishment, as well as that which will descend upon them in the retribution by a form of punishment (in the Hereafter). So, it is information concerning the one that exited from the ruling of Monotheism (Tawheed).**

Hence, all the Quran is about Monotheism (Tawheed) and of its rights and its reward, as well as of the affair of polytheism (shirk) and its people, and their recompense.”⁽¹⁾

A model of Monotheism (Tawheed)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾ [الإخلاص:1]

“Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One.’”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ (Madarij as-Salikeen, Ibn al-Qayyim (3/450, 3/417-418).

The above is the opening Verse (Ayah) of Chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته wrote, **“Despite the small number of its letters, [Al-Ikhlās] is equivalent to a third of the Quran because within it is Monotheism (Tawheed). Thus, now we know that all the Verses (Ayat) of Monotheism (Tawheed) in the Quran are superior than others.”**⁽²⁾

Also, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته described Monotheism (Tawheed) as a third of the content of the Quran. He said, **“It is equivalent to a third of the Quran due to it comprising a third which is Monotheism (Tawheed). Since the Quran’s Verses (Ayat) concern: Monotheism (Tawheed), commandments, and stories [of past Prophets].”**⁽³⁾

Monotheism (Tawheed) is emphasized in the Sunnah as seen in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ when he sent Muaz bin Jabal رضي الله عنه to Yemen. The Prophet ﷺ told him, **“You are going to some of the People of the Book, so let the first thing to which you call them be the worship of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime (alone). If they acknowledge Allah (as One), then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers to be offered every day and night.”**⁽⁴⁾

Categorizing Monotheism (Tawheed) is not innovation (Bid’ah)

Indeed, categorizing Monotheism (Tawheed) into aspects of Lordship, Worship, and Names and Attributes was not done by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah). There was no need for such an approach because even the polytheists (mushrikun) at the time understood the nature of Monotheism (Tawheed). Regardless, one will find the foundations of the categories of Monotheism (Tawheed) implied in the Verses (Ayat) of the Quran and the explanatory statements of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah).

Scholarly work is a response to ignorance, and scholars of Islam are mandated to develop effective instruction to shatter ignorance without establishing innovation in the religion. It is appropriate for a scholar to use wisdom to simplify complex concepts of Monotheism (Tawheed) for the layman provided that the source of this methodology is the Quran and authentic Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) according to the understanding of the first three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih).

It should be noted that there was no original need for the first generations to apply such a categorization of Monotheism (Tawheed) because the meaning of Revelation was known to those who lived amongst the Prophet ﷺ and the monotheistic legacy of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عليه السلام was remembered in the vicinities of the Kaabah. The necessity for an analytical approach to the principles of Monotheism (Tawheed) arose after Islam spread into Egypt, Byzantium, Persia, and India, and absorbed the cultures of these regions. It was only natural to expect that when the people

⁽¹⁾ Quran (112:1), Sahih International.

⁽²⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa* (17/190).

⁽³⁾ *Al-Istiqamah* (2/199).

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (123); Bukhari (4347).

of these lands entered the fold of Islam, they would carry some of the remnants of their previous beliefs. Therefore, the scholars of Islam taught the Quran and the fundamentals of Monotheism (Tawheed) in a structured manner that could be universally understood.

This specific categorization of Monotheism (Tawheed) is also vital for the work of inviting others to Islam (Dawah). It is effective for calling others to Monotheism (Tawheed) because it differentiates between an atheist and those who believe in the existence of some deity or god. If we call an atheist to Allah ﷻ, then we exclusively talk about His existence, which is part of His Lordship—we isolate the evidence that points to *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*. However, if we are calling someone who believes in the existence of a deity like a Christian, or a Jew, we know they have a concept of Monotheism (Tawheed), but it has been distorted and influenced by cultural interpretations and philosophical inclusions. Consequently, we focus on presenting the Names and the Attributes of Allah ﷻ to restore the correct understanding of His characteristics. This is the approach that will be used in this book, *In Sha Allah* (If Allah ﷻ Wills it).



Chapter Four

Enjoining the Significance of Monotheism (Tawheed)

Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah and his student Ibn Al-Qayyim rahimahullah were two scholars who excelled in explaining the concepts of Monotheism (Tawheed) and calling people to it. From their scholarship comes a reminder for the Muslims who have strayed or who have favored a cultural interpretation of Islam which is in violation of some aspects of Monotheism (Tawheed). These reminders are organized into **thirteen lessons**:

1. Islam has two fundamental principles

Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah said, “Allah built the religion of Islam upon two fundamental principles. The first is that Allah is to be worshiped alone and that nothing is to be associated with Him, and the second is that no one has the right to be worshiped except Allah and He is to be worshiped only according to that which He legislated as conveyed by the tongue of His Prophet.”⁽¹⁾

2. Monotheism (Tawheed) is the first and last affair

Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah said, “The beginning of the religion and its end, and its outwardness and its inwardness is Monotheism (Tawheed), and making the whole of the religion sincerely for Allah. It is the actualization of the statement: ‘La Ilaha Illa Allah.’”⁽²⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim rahimahullah said, “Monotheism (Tawheed) is the first thing that is entered into Islam with, and the last thing one departs with from the life of this world.”⁽³⁾

The Prophet salallahu alaihi wasallam said, “Whoever’s last words are ‘La Ilaha Illa Allah’ will enter Paradise (Jannah).”⁽⁴⁾ Therefore the Prophet salallahu alaihi wasallam said, “Prompt your dying ones to say ‘La Ilaha Illa Allah.’”⁽⁵⁾ It is easier to die upon what has been known and practiced in this life; hence we are advised to keep one's lips wet with La Ilaha Illa Allah and one’s actions consistent upon the testament.

⁽¹⁾ *Qa'idah Al-Jaleelah fi at-Tawassul Wal-Waseelah*, excerpt trans. by Abu Haatim M. Farooq (p. 305).

⁽²⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (10/264).

⁽³⁾ *Madaarij as-Saalikeen*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (3/328).

⁽⁴⁾ Ahmed (247/5 (21529)); Abu Dawud (3116), Sahih by Al-Albani.

⁽⁵⁾ Muslim (2123), reported by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri.

3. Monotheism (Tawheed) is the basis of good

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Monotheism (Tawheed) is the basis of the welfare of the people, and committing polytheism (shirk) is the basis of their corruption—because justice is associated with Monotheism (Tawheed) and because Monotheism (Tawheed) is the origin of justice. In contrast, desiring elevated status is associated with corruption because it is the origin of oppression.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله also mentioned, “The basis of good is Monotheism (Tawheed) and Faith (Iman), and the basis of corruption is polytheism (shirk) and disbelief (kufr).”⁽²⁾

He also stated, “Indeed, the foundation of the religion is enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and the peak of good is Monotheism (Tawheed), and the peak of evil is polytheism (shirk).”⁽³⁾

He also said, “Polytheism (shirk) is the greatest corruption just as Monotheism (Tawheed) is the greatest good.”⁽⁴⁾ The product of manifest polytheism (shirk) is destruction and failure. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله reminds us of the words of Allah ﷻ:

﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا﴾ [الأنبياء: 22]

“Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined.”⁽⁵⁾

4. Monotheism (Tawheed) and seeking Forgiveness (Istighfar)

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Monotheism (Tawheed) is the aggregation of the religion which is its foundation, and its branches, and its essence, and it is good—all of it, and seeking Forgiveness (Istighfar) removes evil—all of it. So, from these two emanates all good as well as the cessation of all evil.”⁽⁶⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله also mentioned, “Whoever actualizes Monotheism (Tawheed) and seeking Forgiveness (Istighfar), then evil must be removed from him. It is due to this that Yunus (Jonah) evoked his Lord with Monotheism (Tawheed) while in the belly of the fish.”⁽⁷⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (18/165).

⁽²⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (18/163).

⁽³⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (27/442).

⁽⁴⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (18/162).

⁽⁵⁾ Quran (21:22), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁶⁾ *Jaami' A-Maas-il*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (6/274).

⁽⁷⁾ *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (10/262).

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾﴾
[الأنبياء: 87]

“He called out within the darkesses, ‘There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.’”⁽¹⁾

Also, Prophet Nuh (Noah) ﷺ called his people to Monotheism (Tawheed) to seek Forgiveness (Istighfar) to remove harm from falling upon them. Allah ﷻ reported that Prophet Nuh (Noah) ﷺ said:

﴿قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُوا ۖ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾﴾ [نوح: 2-4]

“Worship Allah, fear Him and obey me. He [i.e., Allah] will forgive you of your sins and delay you for a specified term. Indeed, the time [set by] Allah, when it comes, will not be delayed if you only knew.”⁽²⁾

Monotheism (Tawheed) is enjoined along with the seeking of Forgiveness (Istighfar) in multiple places in the Quran, such as the statement of Allah ﷻ:

﴿فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾﴾ [محمد: 19]

“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows of your movement and your resting place.”⁽³⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ stated, “Monotheism (Tawheed) removes the origin of polytheism (shirk), and seeking Forgiveness (Istighfar) erases its branches. So, the most profound praise is saying ‘There is no God but Allah’ (La Ilaha Illa Allah), and the most profound Supplication (Dua’) is saying ‘I seek Allah’s forgiveness’ (Astaghfirullah).”⁽⁴⁾

(1) Quran (21:87), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (71:2-4), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (47:19), Sahih International trans.

(4) *Majmu’ Al-Fatawa*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (11/697).

5. Great emphasis was given to Monotheism (Tawheed)

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “The Prophet would actualize Monotheism (Tawheed) and teach it to his Ummah, such that a man said to him, ‘As Allah wills and as you will.’⁽¹⁾ So he said, ‘Have you made me an associate with Allah? Rather as Allah alone wills.’”⁽²⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, “Indeed, the Prophet guarded the aspect of Monotheism (Tawheed) with the most exceptional protection. For example, he forbade Muslims from the observance of the voluntary prayer for Allah, The Glorified, at the rising of the sun and its setting so that it should not be a means to the resemblance of the worshippers of the sun, those that prostrate to it in these two circumstances. Likewise, by (His) obstructing the means to polytheism (shirk) by prohibiting prayer after Asr and the Fajr due to the connection of these two timings with the two timings in which the polytheists prostrate for the sun.”⁽³⁾

6. Monotheism (Tawheed) expands the chest

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, “Nothing expands the chest more than Monotheism (Tawheed), and this expansion varies according to the completeness of Monotheism (Tawheed).” Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ، يُضَيِّقْ صَدْرَهُ، ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَقُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: 125]

“So, whoever Allah wills to guide, He expands his breast to Islam. and whomever He wills to send astray, He makes his chest tight and constricts as though he were climbing into the sky.”⁽⁴⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said in *Zad Al-Ma'ad*, “As Monotheism (Tawheed) and guidance are amongst the greatest causes of an expanded chest, polytheism (shirk) and misguidance are amongst the greatest causes of a constricted chest. The light of Faith (Iman) also expands the chest and pleases the heart. Consequently, one who is deprived of this light is imprisoned.”⁽⁵⁾

(1) Abu Dawud (4980); Ahmad (384/5); similar in Darimi (2741) and Nasa'i (3804).

(2) Majmu' Al-Fatawa, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (3/397).

(3) *Ad-Daa' wa-d-Dawaa*, Hamid trans. (p. 292-293).

(4) Quran (6:125).

(5) *Zad al-Ma'ad*, Abdus Salaam trans. (p. 120-121).

7. Monotheism (Tawheed) repels worldly afflictions

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, “Nothing prevents the misfortunes of the world like Monotheism (Tawheed). That is why the supplication of distress is done with Monotheism (Tawheed), and as an example of this, we remember the Supplication (Dua’) of Zun-Noon [Yunus (Jonah)].”⁽¹⁾

﴿وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغْرَضًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ

الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ [الأنبياء: 87]

“And [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darknesses, ‘There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.’”⁽²⁾

This Supplication (Dua’) is so empowered with the virtues of Monotheism (Tawheed) that no distressed person used to supplicate with [it], but Allah ﷻ drove his distress away. On the other hand, nothing causes great distress like polytheism (shirk), and nothing saves man from it except Monotheism (Tawheed). Therefore, it is the refuge and the fortress of all creation.⁽³⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said in *Zad al Ma’ad*, “As for the Supplication (Dua’) of Zun-Noon [Yunus (Jonah)], then indeed there is within it from the perfect completion of Monotheism (Tawheed) and declaring The Lord, The Mighty and Majestic, of being free of imperfection and deficiency, as well as an acknowledgment of the servant of his wrongdoing and sin—that which is from the most far—reaching supplications of distress, and anxiety, and grief. It is likewise the most far-reaching of means to Allah, The Glorified, in securing one’s needs.”⁽⁴⁾

8. Monotheism (Tawheed) couples with safety and security

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, “Monotheism (Tawheed) is the greatest bastion of Allah which, whoever enters it, then he is from those that are secure.”⁽⁵⁾ He stated that it means, “Fear is always alongside polytheism (shirk), and safety is always alongside Monotheism (Tawheed).”⁽⁶⁾ Actualizing Monotheism (Tawheed) is essential to those who seek security. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله also said, “Monotheism (Tawheed) is from the most potent of factors for protection

⁽¹⁾ *Al-Fawa'id*, Bayan trans. (p. 82).

⁽²⁾ Quran (21:87), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ *Al-Fawa'id*, Bayan trans. (p. 82).

⁽⁴⁾ *Zad al-Ma’ad*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (4/208).

⁽⁵⁾ *Al-Fawa'id*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (2/76).

⁽⁶⁾ *Miftah Darus Sa’adah*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (3/1600).

from fears, and polytheism (shirk) is from the most potent of factors for the occurrence of fears.”⁽¹⁾

9. Monotheism (Tawheed) is shelter from distress

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, “**Monotheism (Tawheed) is the refuge of its enemies and its supporters. It saves its enemies from the distress and misfortunes of the life of this world.**”⁽²⁾ Meaning that the people of polytheism (shirk) will call out to Allah ﷻ alone when in distress. Allah ﷻ may answer them, but He also knows they will return to polytheism (shirk). Refuge for them is transitory in this life unless they die upon Monotheism (Tawheed), and Allah ﷻ is the Most Merciful and accepts sincere Repentance (Tawbah). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ﴾ [العنكبوت: 65]

“**And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him.**”⁽³⁾

As for the beloved servants of Allah ﷻ, an emphasis on Monotheism (Tawheed) during times of trial saves its supporters from the distress and misfortunes of this world and the Hereafter (Aakhirah). That is why Prophet Yunus (Jonah) عليه السلام resorted to it, and Allah ﷻ saved him from the darkness of the whale’s belly.⁽⁴⁾

Monotheism (Tawheed) brings ease as a matter of perspective and a matter of reality; this is Allah’s ﷻ way with His servants. Nothing prevents the misfortunes of this world like Monotheism (Tawheed). Nothing causes great distress like polytheism (shirk).⁽⁵⁾

10. Monotheism (Tawheed) and the sins of the servant

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said when speaking about the varying forms of sins, “**A servant upon sound Monotheism (Tawheed) mixed with lesser sins is better than an individual who has only the**

(1) Ibid.

(2) *Al Fawa'id*, Bayan trans. (p. 81).

(3) Quran (29:65), Sahih International trans.

(4) *Al-Fawa'id*, Bayan trans. (p. 82).

(5) *Al-Fawa'id* (p. 82), Bayan trans.

sin of polytheism (shirk) and is without any other sin.”⁽¹⁾ He also wrote, “Monotheism (Tawheed) that has with it lies is better than polytheism (shirk) that has with it truth.”⁽²⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim ؒ said, “The greater the Monotheism (Tawheed) of the servant, then the forgiveness of Allah is complete. So, whoever meets Him not having associated anything with Him at all, then his sins will be forgiven for him—all of them, whatever they may be, and Allah will not punish him due to them.”⁽³⁾

Ibn Al-Qayyim ؒ also said, “So the Muslims—their sins are the sins of a person of Monotheism (Tawheed), that Monotheism (Tawheed) erases their traces in totality. Otherwise, that which is with them from Monotheism (Tawheed) will exit them from the Fire if Allah is to punish them on account of their sins. As for the polytheists and the disbelievers, then indeed their polytheism (shirk) and their disbelief thwart their good deeds. So, they will not meet their Lord with a single valid act from which they hope for salvation, and nothing from their sins will be forgiven for them.”⁽⁴⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 48]

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin.”⁽⁵⁾

Therefore a polytheist or disbeliever will be bereft of benefit in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) because the benefit of lesser good is nullified by the tremendous injustice of polytheism (shirk). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَىٰ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ وَيَقُولُونَ حَجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا﴾ [الفرقان: 22-23]

﴿هَبَاءٌ مَّنشُورًا﴾ [الفرقان: 22-23]

(1) Al-Istiqamah (1/466).

(2) Majmu' Al-Fatawa (1/81), excerpt trans. M. Farooq.

(3) Madarij as-Salikeen (1/247), excerpt trans. M. Farooq.

(4) Hidayah al-Hiyara fi Ajwibah al-Yahud wan-Nasara, Extraction trans. M. Farooq (p.302).

(5) Quran (4:48), Sahih International trans.

“On the Day they will see the Angels—no glad tidings will there be for the Mujrimun (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners) that day. And they (Angels) will say: ‘All kinds of glad tidings are forbidden to you,’ [none will be allowed to enter Paradise (Jannah) except the one who said: La ilaha illa Allah (none has the right to be worshiped but Allâh), and acted practically on its legal orders and obligations.] And We shall turn to whatever deeds they (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners) did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.”⁽¹⁾

11. Monotheism (Tawheed) is the key to Paradise (Jannah)

There is an appropriate means for everything which is desirable, and the individual with wisdom who desires to enter Paradise (Jannah) will apply the appropriate means to attain it. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته said, **“Allah, the Glorious, has made for every desired matter a key to open it. He made Purification (Taharah) the key of Prayers (Salah). In the same way, the key of the Pilgrimage (Hajj) is entering into the state of Ihram⁽²⁾—the key of piety is telling the truth; the key of Paradise (Jannah) is to believe in the Oneness of Allah.”⁽³⁾**

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته stated similarly that without Monotheism (Tawheed), there is no expectation of gaining Paradise (Jannah). **“For indeed, Monotheism (Tawheed) is the key to its door, so whoever does not have a key with him, then its door will not open for him. Likewise, is the case if he came with a key that has no teeth for it—the opening will not be possible with it.”⁽⁴⁾**

12. The devils have no authority

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته wrote that the devils have no authority over the hearts of the people of Monotheism (Tawheed).⁽⁵⁾ This is a testament to the might of that which Monotheism (Tawheed) attributes. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته mentioned likewise, **“When Monotheism (Tawheed) becomes manifest, the devils flee, and are rendered futile and diminish. So, they become manifest in places wherein the influence of Monotheism (Tawheed) is hidden.”⁽⁶⁾**

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته said, **“The enemy of Allah [(Shaytan) came to know that Allah, The Highest, does not allow him to gain ascendancy over the people of Monotheism (Tawheed), who possess sincerity.”⁽⁷⁾** The following Verse (Ayah) reveals Shaytan’s (Satan) statement:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (25:22-23), Mohsin trans.

⁽²⁾ In Islam, Ihram is a sacred state which a Muslim must enter in order to perform the major pilgrimage or the minor pilgrimage. A pilgrim must enter into this state before crossing the pilgrimage boundary, known as Mīqāt, by performing the cleansing rituals and wearing the prescribed attire.

⁽³⁾ *Driving the Souls to the Abodes of Happiness*, Hamid trans. (p. 73).

⁽⁴⁾ *Al-Waabil as-Sayyib*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (p. 41).

⁽⁵⁾ *Majmu’ Al-Fatawa* (13/217).

⁽⁶⁾ *An-Nubuwaat* excerpt trans. M. Farooq (2/1019).

⁽⁷⁾ *Ighathatul Lahfan*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (1/170).

﴿ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾ [ص: 82-83]

“[Iblees] said, ‘By Your might, I will surely mislead them all. Except, among them, Your chosen servants.’”⁽¹⁾

This is evidence that the devils have no authority over the people of Monotheism (Tawheed) as, **“The enemy of Allah knew that whoever adheres and has recourse to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and makes himself sincere to Him, and places his reliance upon Him, that he will be unable to lead him astray and misguide him.”**⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ قُلْنَا أَهْبَطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ [البقرة: 38]

“And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance—there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ ﴾ [النحل: 99]

“Indeed, there is for [Shaytan] no authority over those who have believed and rely upon their Lord.”⁽⁴⁾

13. Inviting to Monotheism (Tawheed) is inviting to our Lord

The statement of Monotheism (Tawheed) “La Ilaha Illa Allah” (meaning: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah ﷻ) is a statement incumbent on all of the creation among those who are sincere to know their Lord. It means that the science of Monotheism (Tawheed) is undetachable from those who pursue our Lord in love and sincerity. Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ said, **“The earth and the heavens were founded. The creation was created, and by way of it, Allah The Most High sent His Messengers, and revealed His Books, and legislated the prescriptions of religious law, and because of it, the scales were erected and the registers were set up, and the souk of Paradise**

(1) Quran (38:82-83), Sahih International trans.

(2) *Ighathatul Lahfan*, excerpt trans. M. Farooq (1/170).

(3) Quran (2:38), Sahih International trans.

(4) Quran (16:99), Sahih International trans.

(Jannah) and the Fire (Jahannam) came to arise, and by way of it, the creation was divided into the believers and the disbelievers, and the righteous and the wicked.”⁽¹⁾

The calling to this is a calling to accountability and the acknowledgment that our Lord has a Divine right to judge and that the dispensing of justice neither benefits nor harms Him. Rather, the significance of fidelity to Monotheism (Tawheed) is for our own benefit, and calling to it is a mercy.



⁽¹⁾ *Zad al-Ma'ad*, extract trans. M. Farooq (1/34).

Part Three
Belief in Allah's ﷻ Lordship

Chapter One
Evidence of Our Lord

It is sad to consider that the fastest-growing ideology in this world right now is atheism. The breeding ground for atheism is materialist doctrine in the education system and the moral failure of educators in schools and universities. Imagine a human being who was born a Muslim then placed into an environment where the slogan is a separation between God and life. Judeo-Christian democracies may have referred to this as “separation of church [instituted religion] and state,”⁽¹⁾ and by it, they meant to protect the individual right to choose and follow *any* faith without compulsion or persecution. According to this ideal, faith “lies solely between Man & his God.” This theory is a breeding ground for disbelief (kufr), as without guidance and reminder, even free individuals are at risk of losing Faith (Iman). Allah ﷻ inferred the institution of teaching, reminding, and establishing principles of Faith (Iman):

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ [التوبة: 71]

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish Prayer (Salah) and give Charity (Zakah) and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those—Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [آل عمران: 104]

⁽¹⁾ Thomas Jefferson, in an 1802 letter to some members of Danbury Baptists Association of Connecticut.

⁽²⁾ Quran (9:71), Sahih International trans.

“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.”⁽¹⁾

This is the condition Allah ﷻ requires for His servants to come to know Him. Unfortunately, Faith (Iman) is absent from the lives of most individuals when they live under the doctrine of autonomy from a Faith (Iman) community and detachment from moral cultivation. The message that is instilled day in and day out is that our Lord is not part of our life. It should be no surprise that the core message of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah is the antithesis to this. We call to community and we call to morality by inviting towards our Lord.

Calling such individuals back to the natural states they were born into (Fitrah) is the mission of every Muslim living in this environment. But we must realize that we must start from the fundamentals of Faith (Iman). We must prove to self-identified atheists that there is God. While doing so, we should be aware that the use of Revelation as evidence is usually only effective after they acknowledge that God exists.

In this chapter, we will furnish intellectual and logical pieces of evidence in **five categories**, each of which establishes the existence of our Lord. These are areas of emphasis for the caller to Islam (Da’i):

1. The intuition (Al-Fitrah).
2. The intellect.
3. The invocation (Dua’).
4. The guidance.
5. Miracles of the Messengers.

The Intuition (Al-Fitrah)

The natural state in which Allah ﷻ created humankind is called the **Fitrah**. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“There is no child who is not born in a state of Fitrah. Then he said, ‘Recite:’⁽²⁾**

﴿ فَأَقْرَبُ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِن مَّا أَكْثَرُ النَّكَاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ [الروم: 30]

Allah's Fitrah with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah, that is the straight religion.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (3:104), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (30:30).

The Prophet ﷺ informed us that every child is born on the **Fitrah** (natural human disposition to worship Allah ﷻ alone). This means that he or she is free from wrong beliefs, and is prepared to accept Monotheism (Tawheed) and the inherent truths in recognizing our Lord. The **Fitrah** does not mean that the people embrace Islam and adhere to its rulings from birth. Another report of the above Narration (Hadith) from Abu Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه included the wording, **“There is no child who is not born in a state of Fitrah, until he begins to speak.”**⁽²⁾

The meaning may be that she or he remains in the state of **Fitrah** until they have learned from their parents the religions, symbols, and testifications of Judaism, Christianity, or other beliefs instead of Islamic Monotheism (Tawheed). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلًا ﴾ [الأحزاب: 67]

“They will say, ‘Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and elders and they caused us to go astray.’”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ ﴾ [الزخرف: 23]

“In the same way, whenever We had sent a Messenger before you to warn a town, the rich ones therein said, ‘We found our fathers following a certain belief and we follow in their footsteps.’”⁽⁴⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله explained that humans have an inherent capacity to understand submission to the Creator. He defended a position in which mankind naturally perceives *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, just as our eyes are created to perceive light. The natural order inherent in the creation is to know the Creator—those who go astray from the correct response to *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah* worship other than Allah ﷻ because of deviant enculturation.

Amazingly, every human being has Islam inside them. Unfortunately, parents, the educational system, the social norms, or cultural practices divert this natural state. Moreover, most human beings throughout history and across religious traditions have affirmed the existence of the

(1) Muslim (6758).

(2) Muslim (6759); Bukhari (6599).

(3) Quran (33:67), Sarwar trans.

(4) Quran (43:23).

Almighty Creator. It is merely part of our nature to recognize these signs because Allah ﷻ has created us this way. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فَأَقْرِبْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ [الروم: 30]

“So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the **Fitrah** of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.”⁽¹⁾

The Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) tell us that this natural state in which all humans were born is reconciled with our enculturation when we go through two extreme moments: excessive joy or intense sorrow/distress.

For example, Anas Ibn Malik رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Allah rejoices more over the Repentance (Tawbah) of His servant when he repents to Him than one of you who was on his mount in the wilderness, then he lost it, and his food and drink are on it, and he despairs of finding it. He goes to a tree and lies down in its shade, having lost hope of finding his mount, and while he is like that, there it is standing in front of him, so he takes hold of its reins and says—because of his intense joy: ‘O Allah, You are my servant and I am your lord,’ making this mistake because of his intense joy.”⁽²⁾

This Narration (Hadith) shows how distress reminds us of the **Fitrah** (natural state of belief in which we were born). Allah ﷻ is pleased with our return to **Fitrah**, and provides us the experiences of excessive sorrow and desperation as the liquid which polishes the **Fitrah** on which we were born. This is exemplified in the story of Ikrimah رضي الله عنه, who had been one of the fiercest opponents to the Muslims. **On the day of the conquest of Makkah, Ikrimah traveled by sea, and he was caught in a storm. The crew of the ship said: ‘Turn sincerely toward Allah, for your (false) gods cannot help you at all in this situation.’ Ikrimah said: ‘By Allah, if nothing came to save me at sea except sincerity toward Allah then nothing else will save me on land. O Allah! I promise You that if You save me from this predicament I will go to Muhammad and put my hand in his, and I am sure that I will find him generous and forgiving.’ So he came, and accepted Islam.**⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (30:30), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Muslim (6960).

⁽³⁾ Nasa’i (4072).

Understanding this element of Fitrah is essential in calling others to Islam (Dawah) because everyone is inclined to submit to our Lord. It can be nurtured by calling them to Islam (Dawah), where the role of the caller (Da'i) is to awaken the ignorant to their Fitrah. It is similar to when installing new software onto our computers. The purchased software typically searches inside the central processing unit for a matching component. Likewise, for Islam to be assimilated and functional, there is a Fitrah inside everybody that needs nurturing, so continue calling people to Islam (Dawah), never give up on them, and do it in the best manner possible.

Intellect

Some modernists malign the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) as something unsophisticated and negligent of humankind's intellectual capacity; this is wrong. Revelation defines where intellect may be very beneficial and where it has no benefit at all. In some circumstances, intellect could become an obstacle if it belies Revelation.

Here is the essential subject—in proving that the All Mighty exists, the default is to use the intellect. Confirmation that a Creator exists is in the creation, which points to His Greatness and Perfection. Then ask yourself the following question: Who created all of what we perceive in its complexity? There must be a Creator. Otherwise, you will have to conclude the two intellectually false conclusions: Either the creation was created out of nothing, or it established itself. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ﴾ [الطور: 35]

“Have they been created from nothing or are they themselves their own creators?”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَا خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا﴾ [مريم: 67]

“Does man not remember that We created him before, while he was nothing?”⁽²⁾

The universe must necessarily have a Creator because it is impossible for the world to have created itself, or to have spontaneously originated as energy and mass from nothing. Therefore, there must have been a Creator who provided the initial force and energy needed to set the universe in motion. It is sometimes called the cosmological argument or argument from existence.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (52:35), Sarwar trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (19:67), Sahih International trans.

A well-known Narration (Hadith) has been reported in various forms that Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله used the motion of the universe to establish the existence of the Creator in his debate with the atheists. While the validity of the Narration (Hadith) comes under question, the method of rational thought is brought as a means of knowing our Lord.

Ibn Abu Al-'Izz رحمه الله reported⁽¹⁾ this familiar anecdote, **“Abu Hanifah, may Allah have mercy on him, was approached by some speculative theologians who intended to discuss Allah’s Lordship and Oneness. He said, ‘Before we discuss this question, tell me what you think about a boat in the Euphrates which goes to shore, loads itself with food and other things, then returns, anchors and unloads all by itself, without anyone sailing or controlling it?’ They said, ‘This is impossible.’ Abu Hanifah said: ‘If it is impossible with a boat, how is it possible for the world to move by itself in all its vastness?’”**⁽²⁾

Ibn Kathir رحمه الله mentioned a classical formulation of this argument. **Once a bedouin was asked about the evidence of the existence of Allah, so he responded, “All praise is due to Allah! The camel’s dung testifies to the existence of the camel, and the track testifies to the fact that someone was walking. A sky that holds the giant stars, a land that has fairways and a sea that has waves, does not all of this testify that the Most Kind, Most Knowledgeable exists?”**⁽³⁾

Ibn Kathir رحمه الله further commented, **“Ash-Shafi’i said: The leaves of a berry bush all have one taste. Worms eat it and produce silk. Bees eat it and produce honey. Goats, camels, and cows eat it and deliver offspring. Deer devour it and produce musk. Yet, all of these come from one thing.”**⁽⁴⁾

Allah ﷻ refers to the diversity in creation from a common source as evidence of His Divine plan. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَةٌ وَجَنَّتْ مِنْ أَعْتَابٍ وَزَّرَعَ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنَوَانٌ وَعَيْرُ صِنَوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنَفِضَلٌ بَعْضُهَا عَلَى

بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ [الرعد: 4]

⁽¹⁾ *Sharh al-'Aqidah at-Tahawiyah*. Ibn Abi al-'Izz, Bayrut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1997, (1:36).

⁽²⁾ The Narration (Hadith) has also been reported by other than Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله, and contains wordings in its chain which are ambiguous such as "يُقال" أو "يُحكى" meaning the Narration (Hadith) was reported or it was said. This language means the Narration (Hadith) has no specific attribution to a reliable source and cannot be taken as authentic (Sahih). In addition, the content has been criticized as anachronistic due to the relative scarcity of atheists in intellectual circles who would have had access to Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله for debate.

⁽³⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:21, Abdul-Rahman trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibn Kathir (2:2; P. 312), Qurtubah: 2000. No authenticating chain appears to exist for the athar and it is not prominent in any English translations of Tafsir Ibn Kathir, however the content is correct, informative, and present in the Arabic manuscripts.

“And within the land are neighboring plots and gardens of grapevines and crops and palm trees, [growing] several from a root or otherwise, watered with one water; but We make some of them exceed others in [quality of] fruit. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reason.”⁽¹⁾

The first intellectual argument a caller to Islam (Da'i) must use is that there must be a Creator because of the evidence of creation. The second argument is an assumption of the nature of the Creator based on qualities and attributes which must be of higher status than those of the creation. To learn intellectually about the qualities and characteristics of the Creator is beyond our grasp; use of intellect is limited to experiential and perceptual competence, but our Lord is greater than what we can experience and perceive in this life. Instead, Revelation is necessary to comprehend and conceptualize our Lord as He describes Himself.

The Invocation (Dua')

Allah ﷻ answers the supplication of the distressed, whether they are believers or otherwise. Allah ﷻ asks the disbelievers about their own experiences in the Quran:

﴿أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ أَأَلِهَةٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾
[النمل:62]

“(Are the idols worthier or) the One who answers the prayers of the distressed ones, removes their hardship, and makes you the successors in the land? Is there any lord besides God? In fact, you take very little heed.”⁽²⁾

In this Verse (Ayah), Allah ﷻ makes it clear to the disbelievers that when they sincerely asked Him for help at times of distress or dire need, they felt a certainty that there is a higher power out there ready to help when invoked. This higher power is Allah ﷻ, The Divine. Hence, every human being will call out to Allah ﷻ during times of calamity, as it is an innate instinct to turn to the Creator in times of distress. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّكُمْ مِنَ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّيِّنًا أَنجِنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾
[الأنعام:63]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (13:4), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (27:62), Sarwar trans.

“Say, ‘Who rescues you from the darkneses of the land and sea [when] you call upon Him imploring [aloud] and privately, ‘If He should save us from this [crisis], we will surely be among the thankful.’”⁽¹⁾

When the distressed sincerely calls to the Creator, and He answers, who then can deny Allah ﷻ as Lord and Sovereign over our affairs except those who reject guidance? Therefore, the individual who is sincere in her or his search for our Lord need only ask Him for guidance to gain a clear understanding of who our Lord truly is and which religion He intends for humanity.

The Guidance

Allah ﷻ created us with a deliberate design. He revealed the manual, guidelines, and manuscript for us to implement, and if we choose to do so, we will become content with our lives in this world and thriving high in the Hereafter (Akhirah). If we refuse guidance out of arrogance, contentment will be elusive. This is a legacy of wisdom known since the time of our parents Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and our mother Hawa. The story is mentioned in the Quran as:

﴿ قَالَ أَهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ﴿١٢٣﴾ ﴾
[طه:123]

“[Allah] said, ‘Descend from Paradise (Jannah) —all, [your descendants] being enemies to one another. And if there should come to you guidance from Me—then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter (Akhirah)].’”⁽²⁾

How many people live in dysfunction and self-abuse, maybe smoking, and consuming drugs or alcohol, or have many other behavioral problems? Once they start implementing guidance from their Creator, their lives will improve, and they will gain ease. There is a profound example in Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ before and after Islam. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ﴾ [الأنعام:122]

“And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:63), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (20:123), Sahih International trans.

Ease will certainly come after asking for guidance. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ أَهْدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَانَّهُمْ وَقَوْهُمْ﴾ [محمد: 17]

“And those who are guided—He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.”⁽²⁾

Divine Guidance is extended to all of humanity, but it is upon the individual to recognize it and follow willingly—then Allah ﷻ may ease their further process. Such is the case with moral inclinations, which are constructs of Divine Guidance for those who are aware. Human nature recognizes the existence of the Creator by recognizing objective moral values shared across religions and cultures throughout time. This is known to philosophers as the “natural law” of the Creator. This is sometimes called the moral argument. Recognizing that the moral argument or “natural law” is proof of a Creator is only one part of success.

The second necessity to achieve success is to follow the authentic guidance from that Creator, since morality is not relative, nor can it be interpreted by the whims of sectarianism. True loss is to recognize that the moral argument is evidence for Allah ﷻ and then distort or reject the evidence. Allah ﷻ refers to the moral argument:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ﴾ [المدثر: 38]

“Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds.”⁽³⁾

Moralists recognize that action or inaction has an effect on self and environment, and the accountability for this effect can only be universally rendered by Al-Wakeel, the One who is free from accountability and the Disposer of all affairs of creations.

The miracles of the Messengers

Allah ﷻ has sent down miracles, Revelations, and Messengers to give clear proof that He exists, and more importantly, what we should do once we come to this realization.

(1) Quran (6:122), Sahih International trans.
 (2) Quran (47:17), Sahih International trans.
 (3) Quran (74:38), Ali trans.

Allah ﷻ has sent Prophets and Messengers with many proofs throughout the ages. These were expressly designed for people to see clearly with their own eyes. Miracles were also sent to their other senses to help mankind experience them as evidence that Allah ﷻ exists.

Miracles of Prophets and Messengers have come to people through the ages. Prophet Musa (Moses) ﷺ showed many wonders to the Pharaoh and the children of Israel. Plagues, locusts, water turning to blood, his stick becoming a snake, the voice in the burning bush, and the parting of the Red Sea are manifest miracles for the people of his time.

Christians among the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) acknowledge that Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ, the son of Mariam bint Imran, with miracles as evidence for the people of his time. He spoke from the cradle while he was still a newborn infant, animated birds from clay, cured the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised a dead man back to life—all clear signs by the permission and empowerment of Allah ﷻ to direct the people to know that Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ was a Messenger of our Lord, as was Prophet Musa (Moses) ﷺ before him.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the last and final Messenger of Allah ﷻ and sent him with evidence to all of humankind. Allah ﷻ sent him ﷺ with several miracles, but the one miracle which stands out with continuity is the Quran. If someone who did not see the other physical wonders is to ask, what is his miracle? The Quran is the answer to anyone even after the time of the Prophet ﷺ. The nature and qualities of the Quran as evidence of the existence of our Lord are voluminous. It suffices to invite to our Lord using His own words so that the sincere and intelligent seekers may discover the Exalted through His Own Attributes.



Chapter Two

Monotheism in Allah's ﷻ Lordship

As mentioned in part two, chapter three, scholars initially explained Monotheism (Tawheed) with two categories, and later sub-divided one of the two categories. The sub-division is an organization of the information about the Oneness of Allah ﷻ (At-Tawheed Al-'Ilmi Al-Khabari), which includes both His Actions of Lordship (At-Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah) and His Names and Attributes (At-Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifat). The second category, Monotheism of intention and pursuant action (At-Tawheed Al-Iradi At-Talabi), is known as Monotheism of worship (At-Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah).

Description of Monotheism (Tawheed) in three semantic classes has become standard. These **three categories** are:

1. *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, which points to actions of Lordship of Allah ﷻ.
2. *Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifat*, which elucidates Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
3. *Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah*, which describes our actions of monotheistic response to His Lordship.

The caller to Islam (Da'i) must understand the division of Monotheism (Tawheed) into two classes because the first logical step of the call is to understand our Lord before acting on our knowledge. Secondly, Monotheism (Tawheed) is taught by different means to different groups of people. Therefore, there is practicality in organizing this knowledge in separate categories.

Calling to Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah

Christians and Jews, who are the majority of the people of the West and of North America, are familiar with the use of the term Lord. Their understanding of the term refers to something other than a complete monotheistic understanding. Their understanding varies in accuracy, but the majority of Christians, for example, ascribe divinity to Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام by referring to him as Lord. They are sincere in seeking to understand Monotheism (Tawheed). Still, They have an incomplete understanding of the qualities of Lordship, and this has led them to infidelity. Lack of knowledge of polytheism (shirk) can ultimately lead to it. This is why Huzaifah ibn Al-Yaman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

said, “**The people used to ask Allah’s Apostle about good, but I used to ask him about evil for fear that it might overtake me.**”⁽¹⁾ Huzaifah ibn Al-Yaman رضي الله عنه then reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that evil would come in which a people who appeared ostensibly to be from the Muslims would be leaders calling to other than the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, knowing our Lord according to the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) should come before calling to Islam. Calling the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) away from evil is calling them to our Lord through the use of the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).

This chapter furnishes the knowledge which refers to the Oneness of His Lordship, known *At-Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*.

The term **Rabb** has many linguistic meanings, but the Islamic meaning comes under these **four primary aspects**:

- 1- *The Creator*, Who precedes all His creation.
- 2- *The Owner*, Who alone has complete sovereignty.
- 3- *The Provider*, Who nourishes and sustains creation.
- 4- *The Absolute Ruler*, Who alone has the right to legislate.

Asserting *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah* can only be achieved by singling out Allah ﷻ as the sole Creator, the Owner, the Provider, and the One who has the right to rule and legislate. Acknowledgment of some of these qualities independent of complete acceptance of all the qualities of Lordship is incomplete Faith (Iman) in the Lordship of Allah ﷻ. Moreover, *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah* also necessitates denying the above qualities as absolute attributes of anyone or anything from among the creation of Allah ﷻ.

Under the four main actions of Lordship, there are other characteristics, all of which are distinct qualities that cannot be possessed by anyone or anything in the creation. He alone is the Originator of everything, the Possessor of everything, the Controller of all affairs, the sender and facilitator of mercy, the One who can administrate the needs of His creation, the One who can do everything, who knows everything, is the subjugator over His creation, and the only absolute ruler capable to rightfully judge and to do so with complete justice.

The Sole Creator

Allah ﷻ is the Creator of everything and the Originator of everything from non-existence. While an individual human may assemble an item from existing parts of creation, only Allah ﷻ can bring a thing out of non-existence. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (3606, 7084). Similar in Muslim and Abu Dawud.

﴿بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾ [البقرة: 117]

“Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾ [الزُّمَر: 62]

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs.”⁽²⁾

One may wonder why there is so much emphasis in the Quran regarding this issue while the disbelievers at the time never denied the existence of Allah ﷻ or his Attribute as The Creator of everything. There are **two reasons** for it.

First, the Quran is the last guiding Revelation from Allah ﷻ to humankind until the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah). Allah ﷻ, in His Eternal Knowledge and Wisdom, knew that generations would come, like our own, who will be the product of an educational system which denies Allah ﷻ His Attribute as The Creator of everything; hence Allah ﷻ emphasized the subject. We believe that Allah ﷻ had foreknowledge of everything before creating anything, and ‘wrote’ preordainment in the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz).⁽³⁾ He willed to bring to creation what was preordained and He created it with the command, ‘Be.’

Secondly, *At-Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, including the belief in Predestination (Al-Qadr), is part of Allah’s ﷻ Lordship. All things happen by the decree of Allah ﷻ. The **four aspects of Predestination (Al-Qadr)** are:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:117), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (39:62), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Preserved Tablet is a nominative referent to divine preordainment and foreknowledge; it is from the unseen (Ghayb), protected and unchangeable, and not referent to a physical writing surface as we understand in the corporeal world; its true nature is knowable only by Allah.

1. Divine knowledge

Allah's ﷻ Knowledge encompasses everything. He knows what has occurred, what will happen, and all that which has not happened yet. He knew everything about His creation before He created them. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴾ [الأنعام: 59]

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen (Ghayb); none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darknesses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ إِنْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ عَدِلْهُمُ الْغَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴾ [فاطر: 38]

“Indeed, Allah is Knower of the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and earth. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.”⁽²⁾

2. Pre-recording (Al-Kitabah)

The belief that Allah ﷻ recorded everything in The Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz).

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴾ [الحج: 70]

“Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed that, for Allah is easy.”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:59), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (35:38), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (22:70), Sahih International trans.

Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As رضي الله عنه reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, “Allah decided the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.”⁽¹⁾

3. Divine Will

The belief is that no action from Allah ﷻ or from His creation can occur without His permission. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ﴾ [القصص:68]

“And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses; not for them was the choice.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ [الإنسان:30]

“And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.”⁽³⁾

4. The creation

The belief that Allah ﷻ created all that exists, all the effects, attributes, and actions of creation. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ [يس:81]

“Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator.”⁽⁴⁾

Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (6748).

⁽²⁾ Quran (28:68), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (76:30), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (36:81), Sahih International trans.

﴿ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ نَقْدِيرًا ﴾ [الفرقان: 2]

“...He has created all things with precisely accurate planning.”⁽¹⁾

Also, Allah ﷻ said on the tongue of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, addressing his people:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ [الصافات: 96]

“While Allah created you and that which you do?”⁽²⁾

The creation is the fourth aspect of Predestination (Al-Qadr). Any individual who rejects, denies, or is deviant in these Attributions of Predestination (Al-Qadr) in His Lordship has rejected all four elements of it: Eternal Knowledge, the Writing, the Divine Will, and then the creation.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْتَهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴾ [القمر: 49]

“Indeed, all things We created with Predestination (Al-Qadr).”⁽³⁾

Lordship is ownership

Allah ﷻ indicated His creation as evidence of Lordship to challenge those who associate others in worship with Him:

﴿ هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾ [القمان: 11]

“This is the creation of Allah. So, show Me that which those (whom you worship), besides Him have created. Nay, the Zalimun (polytheists, wrong-doers and those who do not believe in the Oneness of Allah) are in plain error.”⁽⁴⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran: (25:2), Sarwar trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (37:96), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran 54:49, Sahih International trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (31:11), Mohsin trans.

﴿ وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا فِي يَدِهِ بِمِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ [النمل: 88]

“And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds. The Work of Allah, Who perfected all things, verily! He is Well-Acquainted with what you do.”⁽¹⁾

Also, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكَمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ [غافر: 64]

“It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape- and made your shapes beautiful,- and has provided for you Sustenance, of things pure and good;- such is Allah your Lord. So Glory to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ، وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِن طِينٍ ﴾ [السجدة: 7]

“Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay.”⁽³⁾

Creation of humanity

The surface meaning of the following Verse (Ayah) may cause one with little knowledge to consider that there are other creators—which is a violation of *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*. This Verse (Ayah) is also an indication of the necessity to gain knowledge of the Quranic language to understand our Lord. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴾ [المؤمنون: 14]

(1) Quran (27:88), Mohsin trans.

(2) Quran (40:64), Ali trans.

(3) Quran (32:7), Sahih international trans.

“So blessed be Allah, the best to create!”⁽¹⁾

First, linguistically, the nominative adjective ‘**Ahsanu**’ (أَحْسَنُ) modifies the nominative to become *the best* of creators. Many among humanity can create something in the sense of assembling or making, but among those who assemble or make, only one can be the best, and that is Allah ﷻ alone as Creator in Lordship. The Attribute of being the best among other creators is incomparable in a theological sense because the context of creation in Chapter (Surah) Al-Mu’minun Verses (Ayat) 12-15 is the creation of life out of death, and then the creation of death itself. In this sense, what isolates Allah ﷻ in Lordship is His ability to bring something into existence from nothing. This is distinct from others who create only in the sense of assembling things together. An analysis of the semantic class of the phrase “best of the creators” taken from the context of these Verses (Ayat) makes this distinction clear:

1. Allah ﷻ creates life from nothing, and humanity makes or assembles from what Allah ﷻ created.
2. Allah ﷻ creates what He knew, wrote, and willed to come into existence. Meanwhile, human creation can have defects in deliberation, and is not preordained and perfect.
3. The creation of Allah ﷻ is in pairs, male and female, and Allah ﷻ placed inside each a gamete which contributes with its alternate to become a new creation, a zygote—and only Allah ﷻ can cause this to have life.
4. Allah ﷻ has absolute control and sovereignty over His creation, including the end of the creation in death, while humans may lose life, and the human control of life is only perceptual while they cannot control death.
5. Allah ﷻ provides a manual for what He created before creating, while the human assembler develops the manual after the making and still has defects.

These qualities are inherent in the expression “best of the creators,” and are essential distinctions to know our Lord and call others to Him.

An interesting story

At one time, an atheist professor was teaching a class that included a group of Muslim students within an educational system that promoted atheism and materialist thought under the banner of academics. By the permission of Allah ﷻ, the Muslim students were well-grounded in their Islamic

⁽¹⁾ Quran (23:14)

belief system (Aqeedah). The professor wanted to confuse them and raise doubt about Allah ﷻ. He brought a jar and placed inside it pieces of dead meat and dirt and closed it very tight, and he left it for three days inside the classroom. After three days, the professor opened the jar and found it full of worms. He looked at his Muslim students and said, “I created worms.” One of the students stood up and started interrogating the professor. She said, “**O Professor! How many (worms) parasites are inside the jar? How many of them are males, and how many of them are females? And how long will they live?**”

The point here is that the qualities of Creator which Allah ﷻ has are unique to Him alone in His Lordship. These qualities, as indicated in the story, were Divine knowledge, preordainment, Divine Will, and the ability to create life from nothing by deliberation. Allah ﷻ made the manuals for what He created before bringing them into existence.

Consider the sequence in Chapter (Surah) Ar-Rahman:

﴿عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾﴾ [الرحمن: 4-2]

“**The Most Merciful. Taught the Quran, Created man, [And] taught him eloquence.**”⁽¹⁾

This order may signify that Allah ﷻ spoke the Quran before the events which it describes were experienced by those who witnessed Revelation. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported, “**Allah sent the Quran down all at one time from the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz) to the House of Might (Baytul-Izzah), which is in the heaven of this world. Then it came down in parts to the Messenger of Allah based upon the incidents that occurred over a period of twenty-three years.**”⁽²⁾

The reality is certainly true that Revelation came as a guidebook for the Companions (Sahabah) and for us before we were created, and its accuracy and efficacy in our lives are real. Moreover, the greatest virtue of the Revelation is the guiding of the servant to our Lord for those who have understanding.

The concept of recall

Another reality which we experience in the modern world is product recalls. Frequently, car manufacturers build a car model, and after selling many fleets of it, they may find a defect in one or

⁽¹⁾ Quran (55:2-4), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *Al-I'tiqan*, Resalah edition: 2008 (p. 93-94). Ibn Kathir refers it to Nasa'i in Tafsir of Surah Al-Qadr (97:1-5); Al-Hakim (222/2, 223/2, 242/2); Bayhaqi (310/2); At-Tabarani (11839, 12382), also mentioned by ibn abi Shaybah, Aud Ubayd and Al-Bazzar.

two parts. In such a case, they recall the parts to fix or replace them. Have you ever heard of Allah ﷻ recalling an element of His Creation to revise or redesign? Everything in the creation of Allah ﷻ is in perfect balance—precisely designed and holistically integrated at both a macro and micro level. Consider the precision of the design of our solar system. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾
 لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿يس: 38-40﴾

“And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.”⁽¹⁾

Earth has been placed at a favorable average distance of 150 million kilometers—around 93 million miles—from the heat of the sun to sustain life. Any closer and humans would burn, and if any further, all life would freeze. The precision in the force of gravity is perfectly implemented to allow humanity to grow and propagate lifestyle, and culture; any increase or decrease in the force of gravity would make life as we know it burdensome or impossible to contend. The above Verses (Ayat) also mentions the sun running on its fixed course floating in orbit; critics and doubters of the Quran have pointed to the claims in these Verses (Ayat) as erroneous, however recent scientific observations have shown that the sun is not, in fact, the center of the solar system. A new discovery claims, **“The planets and the Sun actually orbit around a common center of mass. And for the first time, a team of astronomers has pinpointed the center of the entire Solar System down to within 100 meters, the most precise calculation yet.”⁽²⁾**

Atheists boastfully promote a theory of an accidental universe. Not only is this claim incorrect, but it is also illogical. Waheed Ud-Deen Khan cited the American scientist, Chressi Morrison, who proposed that accidental development of the universe is statistically impossible, **“Suppose you take ten pennies and mark them from 1 to 10. Put them in your pocket and give them a good shake. Now try to draw them out in sequence from 1 to 10, putting each coin back in your pocket after each draw. Your chance of drawing No. 1 is 1 to 10. Your chance of drawing 1 and 2 in succession 1 in 100. Your chance of drawing 1, 2, and 3 in succession would be one in a thousand. Your chance of drawing 1, 2, 3, and 4 in succession would be one in 10,000, and so on, until your chance of drawing from No. 1 to No. 10 in succession would reach the unbelievable figure of one chance in 10 billion. The object in dealing with so simple a problem is to show how enormously figures multiply against chance.”⁽³⁾**

⁽¹⁾ (Quran 36:38-40)

⁽²⁾ <https://www.inverse.com/science/center-of-solar-system>

⁽³⁾ *God arises: evidence of God in nature and in science.* Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Khanam trans. (p. 106).

It is logically impossible for a greater complexity such as life in the universe to happen accidentally or haphazardly. What we observe of creation must be the work of an Ever-Knowing, All-Aware, and Ever-Innovating Creator, who decreed everything, and guides every creature to all that benefits and sustains life.

The Sole Owner of everything

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾ [فاطر: 1]

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth.”⁽¹⁾

He Who originated the universe from nothingness is the Creator. He is the Owner of what He created. One may say, “We own things which Allah created,” but Allah ﷻ will inherit everyone and everything in the end because after you possess material in this world, one of two things will happen: either Allah ﷻ will take it away from you, or you will be taken away from it by death. Allah ﷻ does not die while all of creation is perishable; hence He will inherit us all, Al-Aakhir, Al-Waarith.

On Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), and in between the two blows of the trumpet, everyone will perish. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾ [التقصص: 88]

“Everything will perish save His countenance. His is the command, and unto Him ye will be brought back.”⁽²⁾

Without any doubt, The Day will come on which Allah ﷻ will ask the following question: Where are the people who used to be kings in this world?

⁽¹⁾ Quran (35:1), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (28:88), Pickthall trans.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah will grasp (or hold) the whole (planet of) earth (in His Hand) and will roll up the heaven with His Right Hand, and then He will say, ‘I am the King! Where are the kings of the earth?’”⁽¹⁾

Ponder over this saying of Allah ﷻ:

[الفاحة:4] مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

“*Maalik of the Day of Recompense.*”⁽²⁾

In an acceptable rendering, the [æ:] from the Hafs recitation style can become the shortened /æ/ sound in the Warsh style of recitation: “*Malik of the Day of Recompense.*”

One can identify a remarkable layering of meaning in which both pronunciations of *Maalik* and *Malik* are taken into consideration. Al-Maalik is more comprehensive than Al-Malik with regards to the organization of the universe because the meaning of Al-Malik may exclude the action of control. Allah ﷻ named Himself with both Al-Malik and Al-Maalik, and thus the meaning becomes more profound and exclusive. This exclusivity is a part of Monotheism (Tawheed) in His Lordship. Hence the worst name in the sight of Allah ﷻ is someone who calls himself the king of kings. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, “The most perfidious (awful) name with Allah, on the Day of Resurrection, will be (that of) a man calling himself *Malik Al-Amlak (king of the kings).*”⁽³⁾

The Sole Provider

Allah ﷻ created everything, He owns everything, and He sustains, nourishes, and provides for all creation. Indeed, one of the greatest Actions of the Lordship of Allah ﷻ is the Attribute of provision without any loss. We benefit from internalizing the belief that Allah ﷻ is our Sole Provider; contemplating Ar-Razzaaq puts our hearts to rest and incites ourselves to sincerely rely on the providence of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (6519, 4812); Muslim (7050).

⁽²⁾ Fatiha (1:4), Karim Abu Zaid trans.

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (6205), Muslim (5610).

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَذْكَرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَآفَ﴾

﴿تُؤْفَكُونَ﴾ [فاطر:3]

“O mankind, remember the favor of Allah upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ﴾ [الذاريات:58]

“Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.”⁽²⁾

These Quranic Verses (Ayat) are a reminder for us that Allah ﷻ is the One who provides for us. Generally, we assume that provision is only for material things, especially money. The Attribute of Allah’s ﷻ provision is immense, and it reveals that Allah ﷻ is the Provider of everything including spiritual guidance and bestowment of wisdom.

Provision from Allah ﷻ includes all material things, such as money, food, water, air, shelter, and protection. Besides meeting our physiological needs, Allah ﷻ also provides for our psychological needs. Sometimes, He gives us love through the love of others. Sometimes, by means of isolation and loneliness, He gifts us tranquility and a sense of His nearness. By giving us responsibilities, He fulfills our needs for autonomy and competence; we are not self-sufficient, but we rely on Him.

Allah ﷻ created us with a body and a soul, and He sends down the rain to sustain and nourish the body, and sends down the Revelation to nurture the soul. And he taught us a balance between our body and soul through asking for provisions as a means of our continuous deprivation to Him, so we always return to Him in in supplication (Dua’).

The Absolute Ruler

Allah ﷻ alone has the right to legislate. Logically, if Allah ﷻ creates, owns, and provides, then He has the right and power to legislate. In Chapter (Surah) Al-A’raf, Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (35:3), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (51:58), Sahih Intenational trans.

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ [الأعراف: 54]

“Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne (Al-Arsh). He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.”⁽¹⁾

The point of reference in this Verse (Ayah) is what Allah ﷻ said about Himself:

﴿أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ﴾ [الأعراف: 54]

This infers that because to Him belongs all the creation, He alone has command of the right to legislate. Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾ [يوسف: 40]

“Legislation is not but for Allah.”⁽²⁾

The emphasis of this point is what some call **Tawheed Al-Hakimiyah** which means that Allah ﷻ alone has the right to legislate. The meaning of the right of Allah ﷻ to legislate is the same whether it is known as a separate fourth category of Monotheism (Tawheed) or through a two or three-term categorization. Political-minded individuals champion the phrase *Tawheed Al-Hakimiyah*, and they classified it as a separate category based on its importance. Nevertheless, it is a part of *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah* because it is a quality of Allah’s ﷻ Lordship.

The disbelievers affirmed Allah’s ﷻ Lordship

The disbelievers affirmed the Lordship of Allah ﷻ according to several pieces of evidence. Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan ﷻ wrote, “Even Iblees, who is the head of disbelief (kufr), said, ‘My Lord!

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:54), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (12:40), Sahih International trans.

For allowing me to stray...’⁽¹⁾ and ‘By Your Glory! I will certainly mislead them all.’⁽²⁾ So he confessed the Lordship of Allah ﷻ and took an oath by His Might. Similarly, all the disbelievers confessed the Lordship of Allah ﷻ like Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, and other heads of disbelief (kufr).”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ said about the polytheists (mushrikun):

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴾ [الزخرف: 87]

“And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say, ‘Allah.’ So how are they deluded?”⁽⁴⁾

Allah ﷻ also mentions some of His qualities of Lordship, and the response of the polytheists to *At-Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*. It is in the form of a discourse that the caller to Islam (Da’i) may invite to Monotheism (Tawheed). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ مِ يَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُحْيِيهِ وَلا يُمِيتُهُ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ [المؤمنون: 88]

“Say, ‘In whose Hand is the realm of all things—and He protects while none can protect against Him—if you should know?’ They will say, ‘[All belongs] to Allah.’ Say, ‘Then how are you deluded?’”⁽⁵⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يَدْبُرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تُنْقِنُونَ ﴾ [يونس: 31]

“Say, ‘Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?’ They will say, ‘Allah,’ so say, ‘Then will you not fear Him?’”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (15:39), Khattab trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (38:82), Khattab trans.

⁽³⁾ *Mujmal aqeedah as-Salaf*. Salih ibn Fawzan ibn Abdullah al-Fawzan. Aziz trans. In *What you must believe about your Creator*. QSEP. (p. 25).

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (43:87), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁵⁾ Quran (23:88-89), Sahih International trans.

Yet, if the polytheists and rejectors acknowledge His Lordship but refuse to establish Monotheism (Tawheed) of worship, we may invite them to consider the temporal and delicate nature of our existence.

It was mentioned in part three, chapter one that Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl رضي الله عنه had been among the enemies of Islam who knew Allah ﷻ as Lord, and he was from a people who recognized *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*. He fled from the Muslims at sea until his ship encountered a life-threatening storm. Had he perished at sea while believing in the Lordship of Allah ﷻ, he would have been like the Pharaoh. Pharaoh rejected the invitation (Dawah) of Prophet Musa (Moses) عليه السلام and persecuted the Muslims of the time. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَجَوْرْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ، بَغِيًّا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْعَرَقُ قَالَ ءَأَمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي ءَأَمَنْتَ بِهِ، بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ ءَأَلْتَنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ ﴾ [يونس: 90-91]

“Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, ‘I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims.’ Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters?”⁽²⁾

Pharaoh’s belief was incomplete. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فَوَقَّعَهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتٍ مَّامَكُرُوا وَحَاقَ بِثَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾ النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٦﴾ ﴾ [غافر: 45-46]

“The people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment—The Fire (Jahannam); they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the day the Hour appears [it will be said], ‘Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.’”⁽³⁾

Ikrimah رضي الله عنه reformed his concept around Monotheism (Tawheed). He purified himself with an act of worship by calling out to our Lord in the storm. Furthermore, he repented as an action of

(1) Quran (10:31), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (10:90-91), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (40:45-46), Sahih International trans.

Tawheed ul-Uluhiyah, and went to the Prophet ﷺ as an action of belief of the limb. He lived the remainder of his life in service for the sake of Allah ﷻ and died in a battle for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

Belief in Lordship alone is insufficient

Whoever believes and affirms only the Lordship of Allah ﷻ does not enter Islam and will not be saved from the Fire (Jahannam). For instance, it is known from the historians and the life of the Prophet ﷺ (Seerah) that the disbelievers of Makkah who persecuted the Muslims acknowledged Allah's ﷻ Lordship, but this position did not enter them into Islam, neither did it inviolate their blood and wealth.

Allah ﷻ called them disbelievers and polytheists (*mushrikun*) while they admitted He alone was their Creator, and Allah ﷻ affirmed that they will be in the Fire (Jahannam) despite their belief in His Lordship. Take as an example the following Verse (Ayah):

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ﴾ [البينة: 6]

“Indeed, they who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures.”⁽¹⁾

The grouping in this Verse (Ayah) of disbelievers among the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) is significant. It is known that the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) affirmed Allah ﷻ as The Creator, and it did not remove them from disbelief (*kufr*). However, the polytheists of Makkah knew their Lord but endorsed the worship of idols alongside Him. This is a crucial point to raise when calling to the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab), and it necessitates knowledge and courage. Calling those who claim *Rububiyah* to establish *Uluhiyah* was the mission of all the Messengers:

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ﴾ [النحل: 35-36] ﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ﴾ [النحل: 35-36]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (98:6), Sahih International trans.

“And those who associate others with Allah say, ‘If Allah had willed, we would not have worshiped anything other than Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything through other than Him.’ Thus did those do before them. So is there upon the Messengers except [the duty of] clear notification? And We certainly sent into every nation a Messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allah and avoid Taghut.’⁽¹⁾ And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So proceed [i.e., travel] through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers.”⁽²⁾

Shaykh Al-Fawzan  wrote: **“It becomes manifest the mistake of those writers who follow the philosophers’ way—when they explain Monotheism (Tawheed) to mean affirming the Existence of Allah and affirming that Allah is the Sustainer, etc. Allah did not send the Messengers just to ask people to declare that Allah is the Creator, the Sustainer, who gives life and causes death because this is not enough and does not save one from the punishment.”⁽³⁾**

While asserting the Lordship of Allah  is insufficient in itself to save one from the Fire (Jahannam), it is the ground upon which Allah  demands His rights of worship upon people, and is the common ground to call the hearts to return to our Lord.

Monotheism (Tawheed) concerning the Lordship of Allah  the Almighty can be achieved through the guidance of the Quran, which urges us all to ponder. It makes the realization of *Tawheed ul-Uluhiyyah* contingent on the recognition of Monotheism (Tawheed) concerning the Lordship of Allah  the Almighty. This is why the caller to Islam (Da’i) must emphasize the imperative to *Know Your Lord*.



⁽¹⁾ “False objects of worship,” Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (16:35-36).

⁽³⁾ *Mujmal aqeedah as-Salaf*. Salih ibn Fawzan ibn Abdullah al-Fawzan. Aziz trans. In *What you must believe about your Creator*. QSEP (p. 26).

Chapter Three

Polytheism (Shirk) in
Allah's ﷻ Lordship

The study of Monotheism (Tawheed) is incomplete without the study of its opposite—polytheism (shirk). It is a critical failure—an infidelity, and consequently a topic of importance which Allah ﷻ attested to in the Quran. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 48]

“Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.”⁽¹⁾

Linguistically, **shirk** means a partnership, sharing, or association; from the Arabic roots ‘ش-ر-ك’. Islamically, it refers to the act of assigning partners to Allah ﷻ in whatever form it may take, whether implicit or explicit.

The meaning in common English usage is as a transitive verb: “to go stealthily (sneak) or to evade the performance of an obligation.”⁽²⁾ For the purpose of calling others to Allah ﷻ, this is useful, as mankind has a responsibility to fulfill in asserting Monotheism (Tawheed), implementing its benefits in our lives, and calling to it with patience.

Polytheism (shirk) in *Rububiyah* is to believe that others, besides Allah ﷻ, create or share control over His creation. This belief means that someone other than Allah ﷻ can bring them benefit or protect from harm.

A simple example of this type of polytheism (shirk) is to believe an item or object brings good luck. People often have “good luck” rings or similar items they think will instigate good in their lives. Others tie unique strings around themselves or their children, believing that if they recite the Quran over the strings, the talisman will protect them from evil. However, only Allah ﷻ can protect us from what we identify as evil, and we must seek His protection in ways He mentioned in the Quran,

⁽¹⁾ Quran (4:48), Mohsin trans.

⁽²⁾ Merriam-Webster, 2021. Thesaurus entry.

or the means which the Prophet ﷺ taught us in the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), because seeking protection is an act of worship.

Types of polytheism (shirk) in Rububiyah

One must identify **two categories** of polytheism (shirk) concerning *Rububiyah*. They are as follows:

I. Polytheism (shirk) by negation (Ta'teel)

This is to deny the existence of Allah ﷻ either explicitly or implicitly. In some cases, atheism is the expression by an individual of purported non-existence of Allah ﷻ, while the reality of His existence may be internalized in the individual. In other instances, His existence is claimed, but how an individual assimilates an understanding of Allah ﷻ negates His existence, such as in pantheism. This is apparent in the saying ‘mother nature,’ or actions based on perceived luck, divination, or astrology.

Polytheism (shirk) by negation (Ta'teel) exists in the assertions of the European philosophical traditions, in those who subscribe to them, and the nihilism and infidelity that resulted. They build various intellectual innovations on the premise that “attributes ascribed by theists to God are attributes derived either from human consciousness or from nature... [and] that God has no existence apart from the existence of human consciousness and of nature.”⁽¹⁾ In essence, this belief is the human worship of self.

There are a few ancient religious systems in which God does not exist. Buddhism today has more than 500 million adherents.⁽²⁾ It is a movement that evolved from Hinduism with social reform characteristics. It was founded in the 6th century B.C. during the same period as Jainism. In the 3rd century B.C, it became the state religion but was assimilated by Hinduism as an act to reduce the Hindu loss of social/political influence. Buddha himself then became one of the idols in the Hindu pantheon. Buddhism disappeared from India but became dominant in China and other regions of Asia. Most forms of Buddhism are built on “the doctrine that there is no permanent creator who superintends creation and takes care of his creatures ... a doctrine of fundamental importance within Buddhist religious philosophy rather than a mere accretion acquired through historical accident.”⁽³⁾

The Pharaonic model is a negation (Ta'teel) of Allah ﷻ by an individual claimant who has the material power and influence to install upon his or herself the rights of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ

⁽¹⁾ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ludwig-feuerbach/#LateTheoReli>

⁽²⁾ Pew Research (2010): 488 million Buddhists worldwide, representing 7% of the world's total population.

⁽³⁾ *Principled atheism in the Buddhist scholastic tradition*. Richard P. Hayes, 1999, (p. 16).

mentioned in the Quran that Pharaoh negated the existence of God and claimed to Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and the people of Egypt that he was the only true ‘lord of all creation.’ He said to Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام:

﴿قَالَ لِيِنِ اتَّخَذَتِ اِلٰهًا غَيْرِي لَاجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُوْنِيْنَ﴾ [الشعراء: 29]

“[Pharaoh] said, ‘If you take a god other than me, I will surely place you among those imprisoned.’”⁽¹⁾

﴿فَقَالَ اَنَا رَبُّكُمْ الْاَعْلٰى﴾ [النازعات: 24]

“And said, ‘I am your most exalted Lord.’”⁽²⁾

II. Polytheism (shirk) by association

Polytheism (shirk) by association is to believe that God or a Supreme Being exists while believing that other lesser gods, spirits, mortals, heavenly bodies, or created objects share in His dominion or partner in His function. Such beliefs are commonly referred to by the theologians and philosophers as either monotheistic (having one God) or polytheistic (having more than one God), although both forms are partnerships without right. Polytheism (shirk) by association is apparent in many subtle examples.

1. The Arab polytheists (mushrikun)

The polytheists of Arabia believed in Allah ﷻ as the Sole Creator and inherited this foundation from Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام but they thought that intermediaries (idols) could bring them closer to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ told us that they said:

﴿اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقْرَبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفَىٰ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِى مَا هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِىْ مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ [الزمر: 3]

“‘We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.’ Indeed, Allah will judge between them concerning that over which they differ. Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (26:29), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (79:24), Sahih International trans.

2. Hinduism

Hinduism recognizes a supreme being whom they name as Brahman. He is omnipresent, omnipotent, but impersonal and abstract to the point of being unapproachable. Assuming Brahman is a name in reference to Allah ﷻ, Hinduism falls into infidelity of polytheism (shirk) in *Rububiyah* by describing and delegating Allah's ﷻ creative, destructive, and preservative powers to a trinity of Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu. As for Hindu polytheism (shirk) in worship, they assert that comprehension and approach of divinity can only be through intermediaries because Brahman is incomprehensible to human capability.

Swami Sivananda said, **“The mind which knows the external objects through the avenues of the senses, cannot know the Atman or Brahman, because Brahman is the source for the mind also, and the mind is gross, inert and finite. How can the finite know the Infinite? The gross, impure mind cannot approach Brahman.”**⁽²⁾ Hindus use idols or lesser gods as a means of approaching an unapproachable divinity, and a means of focusing in worship on what is uncontainable by the intellect and unfathomable by human reference.⁽³⁾

3. Christianity

Christianity has many permutations which divide Allah ﷻ into several entities sharing in duality, or trinity; stricter monotheistic sects identify Allah ﷻ as One and indivisible but ascribe to Him a son who inherits divinity. This is, of course, polytheism (shirk).

4. Extreme Mystic Sufis

The veneration of saints (Awliya) is not too far removed from Hindu beliefs. Through their statements and actions, these extremists establish that individual saints among the most pious can create life, decree death, and govern the earth and the universal functions along with Allah ﷻ. Some of these extremists believe the souls of dead saints and other righteous humans can affect the affairs of this world, even after their deaths. Adherents call upon the souls of the saints (Awliya) to fulfill their needs, remove calamities, and render aid to the supplicant. Their claim is that as individuals who are not pious, the means of approaching Allah ﷻ is done through the pious, whether dead or alive.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (39:3), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ *Wisdom of the Upanishads*, Swami Sivananda.

https://www.sivanandaonline.org/?cmd=displaysection§ion_id=757

⁽³⁾ *Idolatry (Hinduism)*, Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi in P. Jain et al. (eds.), *Hinduism and Tribal Religions, Encyclopedia of Indian Religions* (2018).

5. Grave Worshipers

Grave worshipers deserve this epithet because of their veneration of the inhabitants of the grave. This deviant belief is common in Hinduism, Christianity, and extreme Sufis, who attribute to a human soul the divine ability to cause events in this life even from its grave. Grave worshipers call on the dead and attribute to them knowledge and ability which only Allah ﷻ can possess. The dead are unable to help their own selves. As for helping the affairs of the living, Allah ﷻ does not need any intermediaries to hear or respond to the calls of His supplicants. Furthermore, what the grave worshiper ascribes to the dead of sentient awareness and interaction with the living is false. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ﴾ [فاطر: 22]

“And not equal are the living and the dead. Indeed, Allah causes to hear whom He wills, but you cannot make hear those in the graves.”⁽¹⁾

6. Al-Qadariyah

The Qadariyah deserve the label of polytheist because they remove from Allah ﷻ some of His Attributes and ascribe it to humanity; this is a deviation in the area of preordainment. Their methodology in the first consists of negating preordainment over the actions of the servant, and they say that human desire and ability are independent of the Ability of Allah ﷻ. Their head was Ma'bad Ibn Abdullah Al-Juhani, from Kufa, in the last part of the praised era (the era of the first three praised generations). He learned denial of Predestination (Al-Qadr) from a Magian (Majusi) man from Al-Basrah. The Qadariyah were two main groups that became more than 22 sects. One group denies Allah's knowledge, and the other believes that everyone creates his own acts. This is contrary to what Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الصافات: 96]

“While Allah created you and that which you do?”⁽²⁾

To Allah belongs ﷻ everything, the good and that which we identify as bad. They have been described as similar to the Magians (Majusi)⁽³⁾ because of the duality which they use to describe the good and evil from preordainment.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (35:22), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (37:96), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ See Abu Dawud (4692), Hassan by Al-Albani; Al-Hakim (286), Al-Bayhaqi (21391).

7. People who claim the knowledge of the unseen

The claim of knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) is an act of polytheism (shirk) because an individual ascribes for his or herself an attribute that only Allah ﷻ could have. They have given themselves some part of divinity. The Prophet ﷺ described involvement with a fortune teller as an affront to the natural order, and he disassociated himself. He said, **“Whoever has intercourse with a menstruating woman, or with a woman in her rear, or who goes to a fortune teller and believes what he says, he has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad.”**⁽¹⁾

This person has earned a share of disbelief (kufr) by transgressing against what Allah ﷻ affirmed in the Quran that the knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) is exclusive to Him. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾ [النمل:65]

“Say, ‘None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.’”⁽²⁾

‘Unseen’ refers to knowledge of the created things that we cannot see in this life, such as Angels, and knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) future, which belongs only to Allah ﷻ. The claim of having knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) is so serious that if a Muslim consults an individual who claims this attribute, his or her worship may be nullified. The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Whoever goes to a fortune teller and asks him about something, his Prayer (Salah) will not be accepted for forty nights.”**⁽³⁾ This warning comes in a statement that does not contain the condition that the Muslim asks and believes the fortune teller.

8. The belief in the stars

Zayd bin Khalid رضي الله عنه reported from the Prophet ﷺ that Allah ﷻ said, **“This morning some of My servants believe in Me and some disbelieve. As for the one who said: ‘We got rain by the bounty and Mercy of Allah,’ he is a believer in Me and a disbeliever in the stars. But as for the one who said, ‘We got rain by virtue of such and such a star,’ he is a disbeliever in Me and a believer in the stars.”**⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Majah (639), Sahih Al-Albani; similar in Abu Dawud (3904); Tirmizi (135).

⁽²⁾ Quran (27:65), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Muslim (5821).

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (231), Bukhari (1038).

9. Worship of jinn

Allah ﷻ referred to the crime of establishing the worship of jinn as a partner alongside the worship of Allah ﷻ in the following Verses (Ayat):

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهَؤُلَاءِ إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّنَا مِنْ دُونِهِمْ بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿سبأ: 40﴾﴾

“On the Day He gathers them all together, He will say to the Angels, ‘Was it you these people worshiped?’ They will reply, ‘May You be exalted! You are our supporter against them! Really, they worshiped the jinn—most of them believed in them.’”⁽¹⁾

10. Other forms

Many other acts or forms of worship are considered part of polytheism (shirk) because of violation of *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, such as reading horoscopes, coffee cup readings, palm readings, and belief in luck or omens. In the absence of knowledge, unfortunately, every culture produced its own set of mediums which indicate their polytheism (shirk) in Allah’s ﷻ Lordship.

The monotheistic position

Allah ﷻ 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 ﴿٩١﴾﴾ [المؤمنون: 91]

“Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him].”⁽²⁾

This exceptional argument has bright and precise wording. The true God must have the attributes of creating and doing, giving benefit to His servants, and protecting the servant from harm. If there were another god with Allah ﷻ sharing in His kingdom, then it too would be creating and doing. In this case, the partnership would be unacceptable, a power struggle would ensue in which one would

⁽¹⁾ Quran (34:40-41), Haleem trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (23:91), Sahih International trans.

be dominant, or one would withdraw with his part of creation as the kings of the earth do when retreating and fortifying the lands they control. Then this scenario requires one of three possibilities:

1. That each God withdraws with his creation and authority.
2. That one of them defeats the others.
3. That any and all lesser creators would be under the control of one who does with them as he wills, and the others would have no say in the matter. One would be their god, and they would be his servants, lorded over and subdued in every sense of the word.

Such possibilities of partnerships or hierarchies in divinity which are suggested in the man-made and deviant religions mentioned above, would certainly result in chaos, disorder, and instability in all of creation. The creation, however, has an order, intricate balance, and no uncertainty; instead, everything is perfectly administrated with a singular purpose. Administration of the affairs of the creation is evidence of the might and power of Allah ﷻ. It is also evidence that there is no god of creation other than Him; the Creator of the universe is One, Al-Khaaliq; there is no Lord other than Him and no god equal to Him.

Just as the world can't have two similar creators, it is also inconceivable that there would be two gods to be worshiped. Assertion of Oneness of Lordship necessitates that we worship our Lord without associating any partners in worship of Him. Among the greatest means of securing and protecting *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, and establishing Monotheism (Tawheed) of worship is to know and use our Lord's Names and understand His Attributes.



Part Four
Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

Chapter One
Calling to the Names and Attributes

A caller to Allah ﷻ (Da'i) should begin with attracting those who are sincere by teaching them about our Lord. They should employ their intellectual capacity to prove the existence of the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign, the Disposer of the affairs, and the Absolute Ruler over His creation. After acknowledging His singular Lordship, they should invite the non-Muslims to the imperative of worshiping only our Lord. Now the next step is to turn to the Revelation to secure the turning hearts unto submission to our Lord. The caller to Islam must know more about Allah ﷻ through His Names and Attributes.

Growth is a word that we usually quote in several contexts, such as growth in wealth, children, and status growth. But there is a vital forgotten context of growth: our knowledge of Allah ﷻ. The most crucial thing in this world is to grow in our knowledge of Allah ﷻ as this is the lasting benefit. The greatest value should be given to the greatest of knowledge. Shaykh Salih Al-Usaymi ؒ wrote, **“The amount of knowledge that a person gains is dependent upon the amount that his heart reveres it and honors it.”**⁽¹⁾ This is a reason why we first call to *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah* to find the sincere hearts which are ready to gain knowledge of Allah ﷻ. Imam Nawawi ؒ said in his book *Etiquette of the Quran*, **“The heart is made wholesome for knowledge, just as the earth is made wholesome for cultivation.”**⁽²⁾ Actualizing the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ in our daily lives is the best way to grow our knowledge of Him. We must affirm what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ affirmed for Allah ﷻ from His Names and the Attributes. We only negate what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ negated from the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ. We must strive to understand the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ the way the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah) understood them. We must place the Names of Allah ﷻ into action by imploring, exalting, glorifying, and invoking Him through His beautiful Names.

⁽¹⁾ *Keys to knowledge 4th edition*, Salih ibn Abdillah ibn Hamad al-'Usaymi, Kalemeh publishing (p. 7).

⁽²⁾ *Al-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalat al-Quran*, Imam Abu Zakariya Yahya al-Nanawi, Islamosaic publishers (p. 20).

Finally, we must remember that each of the Names of Allah ﷻ has a respective servitude relevant to its meaning. We must submit ourselves to these meanings and implement this in our lives. The question arises, why must we learn, know, and grow our knowledge of our Lord?

Importance of the Names and Attributes

Below is a list of a few reasons out of many why we take a scientific approach towards the Names and Attributes:

1. We are about to meet Allah ﷻ

We are all on an inevitable journey to meet Allah ﷻ the Creator, the Glorified and Exalted. We believe this meeting as it is declared in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), and we must believe in it without any shadow of a doubt. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ﴾ [الانشقاق: 6]

“O man! Verily, you are returning towards your Lord with your deeds and actions (good or bad), a sure returning, so you will meet (i.e. the results of your deeds which you did).”⁽¹⁾

Adi bin Hatim رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“There will be none among you but his Lord (Allah) will speak to him, and there will be neither any interpreter nor any screen between them to screen.”⁽²⁾**

The question here is: should we get to know Allah ﷻ, the One we are about to meet? Is this not important?

2. The purpose of the whole creation

Allah ﷻ created the entire universe and subdued its elements to us to come to an explicit knowledge that He is Allah ﷻ the All-Knowing, All Able, All Wise. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِئَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾ [الطلاق: 12]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (84:6), Hilali & Khan trans.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Bukhari (7443); similar with additional text (1413, 3595); Mulsim (2348).

“It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.”⁽¹⁾

3. The knowledge of Allah ﷻ is the Essence of Monotheism (Tawheed)

Knowing His Actions of Lordship (creation, sustainment, nourishing, and rule), His Names and Attributes, is the foundation on which we build our conviction. This is because the unique qualities of His Actions of Lordship, Names, and Attributes necessities that we worship Him. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الرُّخُوف: 86]

“And those [beings] whom some invoke besides God have it not in their power to intercede [on Judgment Day] for any but such as have [in their lifetime] borne witness to the truth, and have been aware [that God is one and unique].”⁽²⁾

4. The foundation of the knowledge of Islam

If we look at the corpus of knowledge in Islam, we find it has two main parts:

- I. Knowing Allah ﷻ which means knowing Him based on what He revealed about Himself, believing it with a full acceptance, and acting upon that knowledge. Philosophers went astray in this area by using their intellect to redefine the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
- II. Worshiping Allah ﷻ, which means to worship Him with sincerity, truthfulness, and loving Him while following the method of worship He revealed for our guidance. Extreme Sufis went astray in this area; they innovated their own culture of worshiping Allah ﷻ based on emotions, dreams, and the esoteric, which often contradicts what has been revealed.

There is a clear connection between knowing Allah ﷻ and worshiping Him. The one who knows Allah ﷻ with the correct knowledge will have the path of acceptable worship facilitated with ease.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (65:12), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (43:86), Asad trans.

5. Thirty commands in the Quran to know Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ gifted us with more than thirty direct commands to know Him; these Verses (Ayat) are tools for contemplation and avenues for engaging non-Muslims in learning about their Lord. As an example, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ [المائدة: 98]

“Know that Allah is severe in penalty and that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ [الحجر: 49]

“Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful.”⁽²⁾

6. The noblest of all science

Studying Allah’s ﷻ Names is the noblest of all sciences because what dictates the nobility of science is the virtue of the subject matter. The subject matter here is Allah ﷻ, the One who created us, and provides for us, and there is no nobler subject than this one. Of the most important of all subjects is His spoken word. Therefore, those inviting others to Allah ﷻ should be using the Quran, as Allah ﷻ intended the Quran to be His words organized to open hearts. Some key aspects of this science are a contemplation of:

Surah Al-Fatihah, the greatest Chapter (Surah) of the Quran; the central theme of which is Monotheism (Tawheed).

Ayat-ul-Kursi, the greatest Verse (Ayah) in the Quran; the focus of this Verse (Ayah) is on the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

Surah Al-Ikhlās equals a third of the Quran. This Chapter (Surah) focuses exclusively on understanding the nature of Allah ﷻ. It is considered one-third of the Quran because technically, one-third of the content of the Quran is information about Allah ﷻ. Therefore this Chapter (Surah)

⁽¹⁾ Quran (5:98), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (15:49), Sahih International trans.

has summarized that content. Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrated the story of the Companion (Sahabi), who loved this Chapter (Surah). Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا related that the Prophet ﷺ placed a man in command of an expedition. He would finish every recitation with ‘Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad’—Chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās. When they returned, the Companions (Sahabah) mentioned this to the Prophet, so he said, “Ask him why he does that?” He said, “Because it is the Description of the Most Merciful (Sifat Al-Rahman), and I love to recite it.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Inform him that Allah loves Him.”⁽¹⁾

7. Forgetting Allah ﷻ will lead to forgetting oneself

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ [الحشر: 19]

“And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”⁽²⁾

The central concept of the above Verse (Ayah) is if someone forgets Allah ﷻ, it will result in neglect of self, and loss of reward in this life and the next. This is the wisdom for which Chapter (Surah) Al-Hashr closes the final three Verses (Ayat) with a reminder of numerous Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ. When we remember Allah ﷻ is All-Mighty, we will see ourselves as vulnerable, and if we know Allah ﷻ to be the richest, we will see ourselves as impoverished. If we know Allah ﷻ to be the Possessor of Pride and Dignity, we will find humility. Allah ﷻ the Possessor of Pride and Dignity said:

﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلِيمٌ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ [٢٢] ﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾ [٢٣] ﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ [الحشر: 22-24]

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (7375).

⁽²⁾ Quran (59:19), Sahih International trans.

“He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”⁽¹⁾

8. Calling upon Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ instructed us to invoke Him using His Names, and we can praise Him as well using His Names. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الأعراف:180]

“For Allah there are the most beautiful names. So, call Him by them, and leave those who deviate in (the matter of) His names. They shall be recompensed for what they have been doing.”⁽²⁾

The best example of how the Prophet ﷺ used the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ is in the supplication of Al-Istikharah,⁽³⁾ which refers to seeking advice and guidance from Allah ﷻ when making decisions. It is the best manifestation of how the Prophet ﷺ taught us to associate the proper Name with a respective request:

“O Allah, I consult You as You are All-Knowing, and appeal to You to give me power as You are Omnipotent, and ask You for Your Great Favour, for You have power, but I don’t, and You have knowledge, but I don’t have, and You know all hidden matters. O Allah, if You know that this matter is good for me in my religion, my livelihood, and for my life in the Hereafter (or said: For my present, and future life), then do it for me; and if You know that this matter is evil (not good) for me in my religion, my livelihood, and for my life in the Hereafter (or said: For my present and future life), then keep it away from me and take me away from it, and choose what is good for me wherever it is, and please me with it.) The Prophet added that then the person should name (mention) his need (matter).”⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (59:22-24), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (7:180), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Salat al-Istikhaara, which translates to Prayer of Seeking Counsel, is a prayer recited by those who are in need of guidance from Allah Almighty when facing a decision in their life.

⁽⁴⁾ Bukhari (1162).

One can see that learning the Names of Allah ﷻ will facilitate the use of the right Name, which best fits the need, and this is the correct etiquette to approach Allah ﷻ and the most beautiful means by which to obtain our needs. The beauty of it is that supplicating is a form of remembrance of Allah ﷻ, and it is the best way to praise Him through His Names and Attributes which He has affirmed for Himself.

9. Means to invite others to Islam (Dawah)

Focus on the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ while inviting others to Islam (Dawah) is the noblest act one may do. Living in the West is a golden opportunity for many of us to call others to Islam. As mentioned above, the invitation of an atheist to Islam must begin with establishing the pieces of evidence for the existence of Allah ﷻ. Invitation to someone from the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) begins with *Tawheed Ar-Rububiyah*, and His Names and Attributes.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Muaz رضي الله عنه to Yemen, and he رضي الله عنه said to him, **“You will go to the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians). So, when you reach there, invite them to testify that La ilaha illallāh (none has the right to be worshiped but Allah), and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger (Islamic Monotheism). And if they obey you in that, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them five Salt (prayer) in each day and night (24 hours). And if they obey you in that, tell them that Allah has made it obligatory on them to pay the Charity (Zakah) which will be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor among them. If they obey you in that, then avoid taking the best of their possessions, and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah.”**⁽¹⁾

10. A means to enter Paradise (Jannah)

Learning the Names of Allah ﷻ will bring abundant reward in the Hereafter (Aakhirah). The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Allah has ninety-nine Names, one-hundred less one; and he who memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise (Jannah). To count something means to know it by heart.”**⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (1496); Muslim (121); Ibn Majah (1783).

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (7392); Muslim (6809, 6810).

11. To avoid deviation (Ilhad)

Allah ﷻ commanded us to avoid deviation (Ilhad) regarding our understanding of His Names and Attributes. The only way for us to do so is to learn the different types of deviation (Ilhad), and how someone may end up falling into error. Allah ﷻ said in Chapter (Surah) Al-Araf:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الأعراف:180]

“And to Allah belong the best Names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation (Ilhad) concerning His Names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.”⁽¹⁾

Occupying Oneself with Allah’s ﷻ Names

There is a heavily circulated Narration (Hadith) believed to be a ‘Hadith Qudsi,’ meaning a statement related to having come from Allah ﷻ, **“Whoever is diverted by remembering (Zhikr) Me, from asking of Me, I would grant him the best of what I grant those asking.”⁽²⁾**

The account is inauthentic, according to many of the experts of Narration (Hadith). The scholars (Ulama) have degraded this Narration (Hadith) because the surface meaning of the content appears to misrepresent the concept of remembrance (Zhikr) of Allah ﷻ, which is a form of invocation in this context. The surface meaning suggests that supplication is less virtuous than remembering. However, on the contrary, the Narration (Hadith) emphasizes the significance of praising Allah ﷻ through His Names and Attributes.

Of course, the adequate understanding of these Names and Attributes will undoubtedly increase the reverence, and exaltation we have in our hearts towards Allah ﷻ when articulating them during the supplication. Secondly, remembrance of His Names while expecting the best from Him may be more powerful for the seeker than asking from Him without referring to His unique Attributes. Consider what Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾ [الأعراف:180]

“The most beautiful Names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them.”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:180), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Tirmizi (2926). The narration (Hadith) is graded weak by Al-Albani.

⁽³⁾ Quran (7:180), Ali trans.

Allah ﷻ tells His servants to ask Him by His beautiful Names. This manner of asking is superior to the supplication which is bereft of His praise.

Below are **three pieces of evidence** to establish that simply praising Allah ﷻ through His Names and Attributes is a form of supplication (Dua’).

1. The supplication (Dua’) on the Day of Arafah

The Prophet ﷺ said, **“The best of supplications (Dua’) is the supplication (Dua’) of the Day of Arafah. And the best of what I and the Prophets before me have said is: ‘None has the right to be worshiped but Allah, Alone, without partner, to Him belongs all that exists, and to Him belongs the Praise, and He is powerful over all things.’”**⁽¹⁾

The significance of this piece of evidence is that the statement the Prophet ﷺ quoted is not in the form of what would be known as the supplication (Dua’) of request. It is a statement of remembrance invoking Allah ﷻ by reference to five of His Names. Yet, the Prophet ﷺ inferred that it is the best of supplications (Dua’) at Arafah. It supports the meaning of the Hadith Qudsi, **“Whoever is diverted by making Remembrance (Zhikr) of Me from asking of Me, I would grant him the best of what I grant those asking.”**⁽²⁾

2. The supplication (Dua’) of distress

The supplication (Dua’) one should say at times of distress, according to the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), is not in the form of a supplication of request. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ used to say at times of distress, **“None has the right to be worshiped but Allah, the Majestic, the Most Forebearing. None has the right to be worshiped but Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and the Lord of the tremendous Throne (Al-Arsh).”**⁽³⁾

Again, the virtues of calling these words when in distress are consistent with the meaning of the Hadith Qudsi, **“Whoever is diverted by making Remembrance (Zhikr) of Me from asking of Me, I would grant him the best of what I grant those asking.”**⁽⁴⁾ This stresses the virtue of calling out to Allah ﷻ using His Names, expecting the best from Him in the knowledge that He is aware of the servants’ needs, and He responds to the one who worships Him.

⁽¹⁾ Tirmizi (3585). Hassan by Al-Albani.

⁽²⁾ A slightly different wording is in Tirmizi (2926), Hassan; Shu’ab al-Iman, Bayhaqi (573), Hassan by Ibn Hajar.

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (6345).

⁽⁴⁾ Tirmizi (2926). The narration (Hadith) is graded weak by Al-Albani.

3. The supplication (Dua') of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام

The supplication (Dua') of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام is a third example of the virtues of remembering the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ and the preference of this upon the one in need. Prophet Yunus (Jonah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام called out in distress from the darknesses:

﴿لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ [الأنبياء: 87]

“There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”⁽¹⁾

Now, we understand the fact that when we praise Allah ﷻ using His Names and Attributes, it is a type of supplication (Dua'), because technically, Allah ﷻ knows our needs, so we do not have to name them. Allah ﷻ knows what we need even if what we ask of Him differs. Sometimes, we ask Allah ﷻ to give us things which will be of harm to us in the long term, like wealth. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ نُنزِّلُ بَقْدَرٍ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ﴾ [الشورى: 27]

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Acquainted and Seeing.”⁽²⁾

If one takes time and exerts their efforts to understand the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, it is to be considered a form of worship very similar to supplicating. Now that we understand this, we must avoid deviation (Ilhad) in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes when calling upon Him ﷻ, because worship must be according to the Quran and Sunnah (Tawqifiyah). Learning the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ is a gate to remembering, glorifying and magnifying Him with a deep understanding of these Names and Attributes.

The virtue in striving to achieve through remembering Allah ﷻ by His Names is exemplified in a story of Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, who spoke to Allah ﷻ at Mount Sinai for the first time. Allah ﷻ commanded him to go to the Pharaoh to call him to Islam. Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام asked

⁽¹⁾ Quran (21:87).

⁽²⁾ Quran (42:27), Sahih International trans.

Allah ﷻ for four things to enable him and his brother to glorify and remember Allah ﷻ and to increase their remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ told us:

﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ﴿٢٥﴾ وَبَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةَ مِنِّ لِسَانِي ﴿٢٧﴾ يَقْفَهُوا قَوْلِي ﴿٢٨﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٢٩﴾ هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣٠﴾ اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي ﴿٣١﴾ وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي ﴿٣٢﴾ كَيْ تَسْبِحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَتَذَكَّرَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ [طه: 24-35]

“Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed [i.e., tyrannized].’ [Moses] said, ‘My Lord, expand [i.e., relax] for me my breast [with assurance]. And ease for me my task. And untie the knot from my tongue. That they may understand my speech. And appoint for me a minister [i.e., assistant] from my family. Haroon (Aaron), my brother. Increase through him my strength. And let him share my task. That we may exalt You much. And remember You much. Indeed, You are of us ever Seeing.’”⁽¹⁾

Then Allah ﷻ said:

﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا مُوسَى ﴿٣٦﴾ [طه: 36]

“[Allah] said, ‘You have been granted your request, O Musa (Moses).’”⁽²⁾

In the next statement, Allah ﷻ advises Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to continue praising and magnifying Him, and He will respond by providing for the Prophet عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام without the premise of him mentioning his needs. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿٣٨﴾ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَنْ أَذْفَبِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَأَقْذِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوُّهُ. وَالْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِي ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُ. فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَقَلَّتْ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا فَلَبِثْتَ سِتِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَيَّ قَدْرًا يَمْوَسَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾ وَأَصْطَفَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤١﴾ أَذْهَبَ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا نِنْيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴿٤١﴾ [طه: 38-41]

(1) Quran (20:24-35), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (20:36), Sahih International trans.

“When We inspired your mother with that which We inspired. Saying: ‘Put (Musa, the child) into the Tabut (a box, a case, or a chest) and put it into the river (Nile), then the river shall cast it up on the bank, and there, an enemy of Mine and an enemy of his shall take him.’ And I endued you with love from Me, so that you may be brought up under My Eye, When your sister went and said: ‘Shall I show you who will nurse him?’ So, we restored you to your mother that she might cool her eyes and not grieve. Then you did kill a man, but We saved you from great distress and tried you with a massive trial. Then you stayed several years with the people of Madyan (Midian). You came here according to the fixed term I ordained (for you), O Musa (Moses)! And I have Istana’tuka⁽¹⁾ for Myself.”⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ ‘Chosen (or prepared) you for myself.’ See: Bukhari (3409).

⁽²⁾ Quran (20:38-41), Hilali & Khan trans.

Chapter Two

Concepts in Faith (Iman)

The previous chapter presented several sources of motivation for Muslims to engage in growing their knowledge about the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ. This chapter expounds on two significant reasons why our understanding must have the correct theological basis, without which the Names and Attributes become obstacles away from the straight path. Those two reasons are:

1. The Names and the Attributes of Allah ﷻ are one of the means to enter Paradise (Jannah).
2. The proper understanding of Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes will protect us from falling into deviation (Ilhad).

They are the Means to Enter Paradise (Jannah)

Our goal of Paradise (Jannah) has one path, which relies on the expectation of the best from Allah ﷻ. He has not abandoned us or made the narrow path difficult. Rather, Allah ﷻ has given us many means of understanding Him so that we might perfect our worship and improve our hearts to meet Him. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated, **“Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, ‘Allah has ninety-nine Names, one-hundred less one; and he who memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise (Jannah).’ To count something means to know it by heart.”⁽¹⁾**

This Narration (Hadith) may cause those with poor understanding to limit the Names of Allah ﷻ to ninety-nine; this is an example of why a student should be guided on the path of knowledge by a scholar. The first point is that counting something does not limit its volume; the verb **‘Ahsaha,’** which is normally rendered as ‘count,’ can be seen as a verb with continuity. In that sense, continuing to count means to secure without restriction or actualization. Such as in the phrase ‘count your pennies,’ which means to save and continue to accumulate. The proper translation in this connotation is to actualize these Names in our lives by using them and keep on increasing their use until they are well-known and assimilated.

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (7392); Muslim (6809, 6810).

Enumeration of the Names

We know for a fact that the Names are far more numerous than ninety-nine just by counting those which are mentioned in the Revelation. We also know from other accounts that the Names of Allah ﷻ are immeasurably extensive. The following are **two pieces of evidence** to support this statement:

1. Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“There is no one among you who when he is stricken with distress and grief, says [the Dua’ below] but Allah will remove his distress and his grief and will give him joy instead: ‘O Allah, I am Your servant, son of Your servant, and son of Your maidservant, my forelock is in Your Hand. Your command over me is forever executed, and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every name belonging to You which You named Yourself with, or you taught to any of your creation, or revealed in Your Book, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Quran the life of my heart and the light of my breast, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety.’”**⁽¹⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said concerning this Narration (Hadith), **“This [the text of the supplication] indicates that Allah has more than ninety-nine Names.”**⁽²⁾ In fact, the number of Allah’s ﷻ Names are unknown to us and known only to Him Alone.

2. There is a lengthy Narration (Hadith) regarding the great Intercession (Shaf’ah) on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah). The Prophet ﷺ said, **“I will ask for my Lord’s permission, and it will be given, and then He will reveal to me to praise Him with such praises as I do not know now. So I will praise Him with those praises and will fall down prostrate before Him. Then it will be said, ‘O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your Intercession (Shaf’ah) will be accepted.’”**⁽³⁾

Those who are unskilled in interpreting the divine texts may be confused when there is an apparent contradiction, like the case we have here. We have multiple Narrations (Ahadith) regarding the matter. One Narration (Hadith) says His Names are ninety-nine, and the other says Allah’s ﷻ Names are immeasurably extensive, but the two can be reconciled. Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen رحمته الله said that the Narration (Hadith) of Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه does not limit Allah ﷻ to ninety-nine Names, **“Rather it means that whoever learns *these* ninety-nine Names of His Names will enter Paradise (Jannah). This is like when the Arabs say: ‘I have one hundred horses which I have**

⁽¹⁾ Ahmed (3582), Sahih Al-Albani; Ibn Hibban (972).

⁽²⁾ Majmu’ Al-Fatawa (6/374).

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (7510).

prepared for a [battle].’ This does not mean that the speaker has only these hundred horses, rather these hundred are prepared for this purpose.”⁽¹⁾

Out of the totality of the number of Names Allah ﷻ has, we might actualize what has been revealed of them (Ahsaha), and by His Mercy enter Paradise (Jannah).

We have another controversy regarding this subject. In one Narration (Hadith) in Sunnan At-Tirmizi,⁽²⁾ there is a report of ninety-nine definitive Names. Numerous scholars of the Narration (Hadith) are of the opinion that they are not from one inclusive Narration (Hadith), but one of the sub-narrators Al-Walid bin Muslim and Abdul Malik bin Muhammad have added Names from various Quranic Verses (Ayat) and Narrations (Ahadith). The Narration (Hadith) is considered weak by most, although the author of Fath ul-Majid wrote that it is Hassan Gharib⁽³⁾ and Ibn Hajar ر classed the chain found in Tirmizi to be the closest chain to authenticity. The content is correct in that all of the Names mentioned are in other sources of the Quran and Narrations (Ahadith). However, the Narration (Hadith) is problematic because, by the standards of Narration (Hadith) science, it is unacceptable, and also because the content suggests Allah ﷻ has only ninety-nine Names.

These ninety-nine Names are culturally pervasive. These Names are accepted by the masses, which may keep them hanging on the walls of family rooms or added at the end of the Quranic scriptures (Mus’haf), but they are not authentic, definitive ninety-nine Names of our Lord.

Numerous scholars have identified more than ninety-nine or 100-104 Names or more using various systems of classifying the acceptability of evidence. Therefore we must continue to encourage the Muslims to understand, actualize and implement all of the authentic Names of Allah ﷻ to coincide with the intention of reaching ninety-nine. If we struggle with this goal, we may enter Paradise (Jannah), by the Will of Allah ﷻ (*In Sha Allah*). This struggle is similar to our resolve in identifying Laylat ul-Qadr (Night of Power), which scholars agree may be any one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan. To be sure we observed that auspicious night, we must strive throughout the last ten nights of the month, and not just the odd nights or the twenty-seventh night.

⁽¹⁾ Majmu’ Al-Fatawa, Ibn Uthaymeen (1/122).

⁽²⁾ Tirmizi (3507).

⁽³⁾ Fath ul-Majid, authored by Shaykh AbdurRahman al-Hasan ash-Shaykh, is an explanation of Kitab at-Tawhid by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab.

Incipient deviation (Ilhad)

The proper understanding of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ will protect us from deviation (Ilhad). Allah ﷻ mentioned the word **Ilhad** in Chapter (Surah) Al-Araf Verse (Ayah) 108, which has been quoted throughout this book in different contexts. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الأعراف:180]

“And to Allah belong the best Names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation (Ilhad) concerning His Names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.”⁽¹⁾

Deviation (Ilhad) is the opposite of the proper understanding of the Names of Allah ﷻ, like polytheism (shirk) is the opposite of Monotheism (Tawheed). It is essential to first understand the negation (Ta'teel) before the affirmation to clarify the expected scope of understanding. If we look at the Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah), **“There is no deity worthy of my worship except Allah,”** it begins with negation (Ta'teel), so the individual can close the door on what could nullify Monotheism (Tawheed) before explicating the rightful qualities. Likewise, it is necessary to understand what will distort or deviate the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

Owing to the nobility and great importance of the subject of the belief system (Aqeedah), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave more considerable attention to explaining it than he did with any other matter. For this reason, we find that the Companions (Sahabah) did not disagree concerning any of these matters. At the same time, there was some permissible disagreement amongst them concerning some of the religious ruling and legal ordinances (Ahkam).

After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslim Community (Ummah) started declining from theological clarity and certainty. The first subject the Muslims began to debate was the nature and reality of Faith (Iman). This was incipient in those of poor constitution or weak scholarship even though the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) clearly defined the Islamic belief system (Aqeedah), and scholars (Ulama) of the first three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) remained firmly grounded. The question of the nature of Faith (Iman) was discussed in the opening sections of this book to define what belief in our Lord entailed.

As Islam spread across greater expanses of geography, the various ideologies of those who reverted to Islam affected and influenced the thinking of Muslim society. Consequently, those who were not

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:180), Sahih International trans.

well-guided started entertaining the idea of redefining a semantic subject, like the definition of Faith (Iman).

Throughout history, the innovators belittled and de-emphasized perpetrating deviation (Ilhad) in properly comprehending and interpreting Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes following the path of the righteous predecessors from amongst the first three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih). It is imperative to possess the proper knowledge about our Lord and never compromise it in any form or shape under manipulative unity calls. Scholars (Ulama) must emphasize the devastating consequences of deviation (Ilhad) regarding the understanding of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes through highlighting and detailing the following facts:

- The subject of knowing our Lord through His Names and Attributes is regarded as the foundation of Monotheism (Tawheed). Monotheism (Tawheed) has two main branches: the first is knowing Allah ﷻ, and the second is singling out Allah ﷻ in our actions. Consequently, we find the most significant Chapter (Surah) of the Quran is Al-Fatihah, which is centered around Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. Also, the most significant Quranic Verse (Ayah) is one known by the “Verse of the Throne” (Ayat ul-Kursi), which comprises nineteen of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. Furthermore, Chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās equals a third of the entire Quran.
- The Universal Declaration of Faith (Shahadah) states that there is no deity worthy of our worship except Allah ﷻ. It begins with negation (Ta’teel), so the individual can close the door on what could nullify Monotheism (Tawheed) before explicating the rightful qualities. Likewise, it is necessary to understand what will distort or deviate us from the proper understanding of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes before we affirm them.
- The following three historical disputes are evidence that the first generations of Muslims, namely the Companions (Sahabah) and their successors (Tabi’un), took the subject of negating, denying, distorting, or manipulating Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes with utmost seriousness, and they never tolerated the perpetrators. These three incidents display the Companions’ (Sahabah) and their successors’ (Tabi’un) consistent position to those who attempted to manipulate the subject of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes:

1. Abdullah ibn Umar’s ﷺ position of the negator of Predestination (Al-Qadar)

The doctrine of the Predestination (Al-Qadar) is based primarily on the belief in Allah’s ﷻ beautiful Names and Attributes, such as Divine Knowledge, writing, Divine Will, and

the Divine Ability to create. Hence, denial of any of these Attributes will nullify our belief in Predestination (Al-Qadar). Early Muslims denied Allah’s ﷻ prior knowledge of what happens, and they claimed that Allah ﷻ only knows things after occurring, which incited the following response by Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه.

It is narrated on the authority of Yahya bin Ya’mur رضي الله عنه that the first man who deviated from Predestination (Al-Qadr) was a man in Basra named Ma’bad Al-Juhani. Yahya رضي الله عنه and Humaid bin Abdur-Rahman Himyari رضي الله عنه set out for Pilgrimage (Hajj) or Umrah and said, “Should it so happen that we meet one of the Companions (Sahabah), we shall ask him about what is talked about Divine Decree (Taqdir).” They met Abdullah ibn Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه while he was entering the mosque. Yahya رضي الله عنه said, “Abu Abdur-Rahman! There have appeared some people in our land who recite the Quran and pursue knowledge...such people claim that Allah does not ordain any such thing as a Divine Decree (Taqdir) and events.” Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه said, “When you happen to meet such people tell them that I have nothing to do with them, and they have nothing to do with me. And surely, they are in no way responsible for my Faith (Iman).” Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه swore by Allah ﷻ, “If any one of them who does not believe in the Divine Decree (Taqdir) had with him gold equal to the bulk of the mountain Uhud and spent it in the way of Allah, Allah would not accept it unless the man affirmed his Faith (Iman) in the Divine Decree (Taqdir).” Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه then reported the Narration (Hadith) of Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) عليه السلام which affirms the correct belief in Predestination (Al-Qadr).

2. Imam Malik’s رضي الله عنه (d. 179) position on Divinity: Attributes of Allah ﷻ affirmed, modality unknown

Abdullah ibn Nafi’ رضي الله عنه reported, “Malik رضي الله عنه was asked about the saying of Allah Almighty, ‘The Most Merciful rose above the Throne.’⁽¹⁾ The man said, ‘How is His rising?’ Malik رضي الله عنه said, ‘The rising is acknowledged, its modality is unknown, and asking about it is an innovation. I see you are a man who intended evil with this question.’”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (20:5)

⁽²⁾ Al-Istidhkār 2/529

Ibn Abdul Barr رحمته الله said, “The people of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) agreed upon affirming the Divine Attributes as related in the Book and the Sunnah, interpreting them as reality and not as a metaphor, except that they do not ask ‘how’ the modality of any of that is.”⁽¹⁾

3. Imam Ahmed’s رحمته الله (d. 241/855) Inquisition (Mihna)

Present-day Muslims may periodically hear about the saga of the creation of the Quran, which was widespread in the Muslim world in the 3rd and 4th century at the hands of Ja'd ibn Dirham and Jahm, and Al-Jahm ibn Safwan (heads of Jahmiyyah sect). However, they never connect the tale to Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. The Jahmiyyah sect stated that “Allah...does not speak, that the Quran is created, and that He did not speak to Musa (Moses), nor does He ever speak. Allah created a talk and a speech (Khalaqa Qawlan wa-Kalaman).”

Imam Ahmed رحمته الله realized the gravity of the saga and stood firm against it, enduring all types of chastisement at the hands of the imperial power (the Abbasid), who adopted the distorted and misleading position of the early Jahmiyyah sect's position. Imam Ahmed رحمته الله argued that the Quran is part of Allah’s ﷻ Knowledge (Ilm) and that Allah’s ﷻ Knowledge must be co-eternal with God.⁽²⁾

Deviation (Ilhad) and its types

Linguistically, **Ilhad** refers to inclination, to turn aside, and to deviate. It is used in this and other contexts to denote inclining towards some falsehood. Deviation (Ilhad) suggests a fatal error. Technically, deviation (Ilhad) from the belief system (Aqeedah) concerning the Names of Allah ﷻ, is to deviate from the correct beliefs concerning them.

The correct understanding of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah is to refer issues of the belief system (Aqeedah) to what was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and the explanation of Revelation from him and his Companions (Sahabah). They believed that Attributes of Allah ﷻ are actual and not representational—they are true Attributes and free from imperfections or deficiencies. His

⁽¹⁾ Al-‘Ulūw lil-‘Alī al-Ghaffār 1/250

⁽²⁾ Book titled "The origins of the controversy concerning the creation of the Koran" by Wilferd Madelung, published in *Orientalia Hispanica sive studia F.M. Pareja octogenario dicata*, edited by J.M. Barral, vol. I/1. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), pp. 504-525.

Attributes are not similar to the creation, and there is no resemblance or similitude even when a common linguistic referent may be used.

The correct belief in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes are as follows:

We affirm whatever Names and Attributes Allah ﷻ has established for Himself in His Book and we affirm whatever the Messenger ﷺ described of Him. The affirmation must be without deviation (Ilhad), whether subtle or intellectually intriguing. We affirm His Attributes without the following:

1. Negation (Ta'teel).
2. Distortion (Tahreef).
3. Corrupt interpretation (At-Ta'weel Al-Fasid).
4. Questioning their nature and reality (Takyeef).
5. Making resemblance and likeness to creation (Tamtheel).

There are **four major classes of deviation (Ilhad)**:

1. Negation, rejection, and denial (Ta'teel)

It means to negate, reject, or deny some or any of Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes. The people of ignorance (Jahiliya) used to reject the Name Ar-Rahman from the Names of Allah ﷻ because it was culturally incongruous to them. Another error or negation (Ta'teel) is to recognize the Name but deny the Attribute it infers. The people of innovation (Bid'ah) say Allah ﷻ is As-Samee' (All Hearer) but without Sam' (Hearing). An example relevant to calling others to Islam (Dawah) in the West are People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab), who also claim that God is One (Ahad) but without giving Him the unique qualities of Monotheism (Tawheed).

2. Designation of names without evidence

It means to refer names to Allah, which He did not affirm for Himself. This is considered deviation (Ilhad) because the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ are derived from the Quran and the Sunnah (Tawqifiyah). No one can assert or deny distinguishing characteristics or nominations of Allah ﷻ without evidence from Revelation.

It is impermissible for anyone to designate a name to Allah ﷻ which He did not assert for Himself. For example, philosophers have named Allah ﷻ "the actual cause." the Masons have named Allah ﷻ "The Great Architect of the Universe," and Christians call Him "The Father" to distinguish Allah ﷻ from other embodiments of shared divinity to which they profess.

3. Making resemblance of likeness with the creation (Tamtheel)

Tamtheel means to ascribe qualities of the creation to the Names which Allah ﷻ asserted for Himself. It is considered deviation (Ilhad) as well. Ibn Uthaymeen ؒ said, “**Whoever believes that the Names of Allah denotes likening of Allah to His Creation, then he has made the Words of Allah and His Messenger infer unbelief.**”⁽¹⁾ This is unbelief because it is a rejection of what Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like Him: He is the All Hearing, the All Seeing,”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا﴾ [مريم: 65]

“Do you know of anyone equal to Him?”⁽³⁾

Al-Khuza’i ؒ said, “Whoever likened Allah to His creation, then he has disbelieved, and whoever denied the Attributes by which Allah qualified Himself with, then he has also disbelieved. And the Names by which Allah Named Himself as well as the Attributes by which He qualified Himself, will not be called Tashbih (declaring Allah to be like His Creation).”⁽⁴⁾

This infers a correct middle position wherein we do not refer to the Attribute of Allah ﷻ to be like an attribute of a human, neither do we deny the Attribute of Allah ﷻ to remove it from any possible resemblance to a human attribute.

(1) *Understanding Worship—Fiqh ul-‘Ibadah*. Ibn Uthaymeen. Dr. Saleh as-Saleh trans.

(2) Quran (42:11), Haleem trans.

(3) Quran (19:65), Haleem trans.

(4) *Mukhtasar Al-‘Uluw lil ‘Aliy Al-Ghaffar*. Al Hafidh Adh-Dhahabi, (p. 184), Sahih Al-Albani.

4. Designating the Names of Allah ﷻ to the created

The pagan Arabs were notorious for committing this error. They rendered the Names ‘Allah,’ ‘Al-Azeez’ and ‘Al-Mannan’⁽¹⁾ into names for their idols as “Al-Lat,” “Al-Uzza,” and “Al-Manat.” Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ﴾ [النجم: 19-20]

“So have you considered Al-Lat and Al-Uzza? And Manat, the third—the other one?”⁽²⁾

The basis that this is considered deviation (Ilhad) is that the Names of Allah ﷻ are particular to Him. Ibn Uthaymeen رحمه الله said, “It is not allowed to ascribe the meanings denoting these Names to any created being for the sake of offering him (her, or it) that which only Allah deserves from worship.”⁽³⁾

Historical evolution of deviation (Ilhad)

We must emphasize that the subject of Predestination (Al-Qadr) is associated with the matter of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. **Predestination (Al-Qadr)** was described above as having **four categories**: the knowledge, the writing, the Divine Will, and the creation. These four categories are related to the Attributes of Allah ﷻ. The denial of Predestination (Al-Qadr) denies some or all these four categories. Therefore the response of the scholars of the three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) to deviation (Ilhad) from Predestination (Al-Qadr) and other early deviations of belief system (Aqeedah) was to organize and teach the correct understanding of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

According to Muslim historians, the first Muslim to deny Predestination (Al-Qadr) was an Iraqi convert from Christianity named Abu Yunis Sinbuya or Abu Yunis Al-Asawari. Christianity in its time was infected by denial of Predestination (Al-Qadr) because of the Hellenic influence of the European philosophers. Sinbuya later reverted back to Christianity but not before infecting his student Ma’bad bin Khalid Al-Juhani from Al-Basra. Ma’bad spread the teachings of his master until he was stopped as he met his demise by execution, which alone tells us the gravity of his deviation (Ilhad). During that time, the younger Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ who remained alive like Abdullah bin Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Abdullah bin Abi Awfa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ advised the people not

(1) “Al-Mannaan (the Beneficent Bestower of bounties), the One such that all favours and blessings originate from Him, He is the One Who granted them and favoured the creation with them,” *Sharh al-Kitab at-Tawheed*, Shaykh Abdul-Rahman as-Sa’di, Burbank trans.

(2) Quran (53:19-20), Sahih International trans.

(3) *Understanding worship—Fiqh ul-‘ibadah*. Ibn Uthaymeen. Dr. Saleh as-Saleh trans.

to attend the funeral of Ma'bad. That also tells us the seriousness of his deviation (Ilhad) as the Companions (Sahabah) shunned those who deviated from the belief in Predestination (Al-Qadr).

Philosophical innovations in the doctrine of free will continued to find new supporters, which in part lead to spreading the denial that Allah ﷻ has knowledge of what He created—one of the aspects of Predestination (Al-Qadr). Ghailan bin Muslim from Damascus studied under Ma'bad, and championed the cause of free will until he was brought before Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz ﷺ. He recanted his beliefs publicly, but on the Caliph's death, he again resumed teaching free will.

The spreading philosophy of free will not only led to a reinterpretation of the Quran-based neo-platonic philosophy but also an open denial of some of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, like His Seeing and Hearing.

Jahm bin Safwan inherited the torch of the Hellenic method and promoted it until his execution by Nasr bin Sayyar in 743 CE.

From the above historical background and the evolution of deviation (Ilhad) in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes, we can specify **three elements** that contributed greatly to the spread of corrupt beliefs in later generations.

I. The Corrupt Rulers

Early generations of Muslims organically resisted the growth of innovation (Bid'ah) because they lived closer to the time of the Companions (Sahabah). Evidence from the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) was embodied in the culture that they nurtured. Early leadership was quick to arrest the spread of deviant teachings by corporal or capital punishment. Individuals such as Abu Yunis Sinbuya, Ma'bad bin Khalid Al-Juhani, Ghailan bin Muslim, and Jahm bin Safwan were managed as criminals of the most catastrophic proportion.

In later generations, the leaders supported and encouraged research into philosophy and rhetoric and even persecuted the people of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) for opposing the innovations (Bid'ah).

II. Decentralization

Early generations united behind their Caliph based on an understanding of opposition to division. The early community (Ummah) was centralized around Madinah. The Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) was standardized in Madinah, and its students were dispatched from Madinah to call mankind to Islam (Dawah). The affairs of the people were united around the inherited leadership in Madinah. The people of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) eschewed rebelling against leadership even when the leadership after the first four righteous Caliphs (Rashidun) decayed to brutality because the understanding was to unite upon the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) in patience and perseverance.

After the Umayyad dynasty gained the reins of power, internal pressures and sectarian resistance grew. Persians and other groups began to contribute to complex political machinations which were not based on the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), partly because of resistance to xenophobic Arab favoritism. Foreign concepts of philosophy were used as rallying points to manipulate the political emergence of decentralized power. Special interest groups began to write theology that enforced Machiavellian manipulations of regional powers and changing confederacies.

III. Abandoning knowledge

Early generations were closer to the origins of knowledge. The Companions (Sahabah) lived amongst Revelation, the Tabi'un⁽¹⁾ (Successors or Followers) learned about Revelation, their students documented and organized, but those that came afterward abandoned the knowledge. As greater numbers of diverse people accepted Islam, the Muslim community (Ummah) spread and absorbed increasing numbers of outlying nations. The influence of foreign concepts became a growing threat. The spread of knowledge and the respect for its pursuit became lost among the common Muslims. Execution and corporal punishment were abandoned as a means of controlling deviancy because the higher aim of holding to the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) and destroying innovation (Bid'ah) was not supported or spread as a standard of nation-building. Neither was a decentralized government able to standardize Islamic teachings based on the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) as the Companions (Sahabah) understood them.

The task of opposing growing innovations (Bid'ah) became the responsibility of a dwindling group of scholars of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) who could only oppose innovation (Bid'ah) through intellectual struggle, preaching, and patience. They challenged the spread of deviant theology by categorizing innovations (Bid'ah), identifying intellectual errors, and affirming the principles of theology as found in the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). They demonized any approach to speculative thought or innovation (Bid'ah) in theology, although they had no executive power to enforce restraint against deviant teachings. Imam Shafi'i رحمته الله said, **“My ruling regarding the people of theological rhetoric is that they should be beaten with palm leaves and shoes and be paraded amongst the kinsfolk and the tribes with it being announced, ‘This is the reward of the one who abandons the Book and the Sunnah and turns to theological rhetoric (Kalam).’”**⁽²⁾

Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله said to his son about the people of theological rhetoric such as those who manipulate and deviate the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, that they are **“from amongst those who you will see that they used to be upon one word and one religion, until Shaytan (Satan) came between them. So now you find amongst them enmity and differing, so be upon clarity...”**⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ The Tabi'un are the generation of Muslims who followed the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

⁽²⁾ *Sharh 'Aqeedah at-Tahawiyah*, Ibn Abi al-'Izz, (p. 75).

⁽³⁾ *Manaqib Abi Hanifah*, Muwaffaq al-Makki (183-184).

In short, the spread of deviation (Ilhad) in the understanding of the belief system (Aqeedah) is from the loss of the method of the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih). Defense of Monotheism (Tawheed) is through returning to the understanding of our Lord, which the Companions (Sahabah) were upon. In these times of growing strife (Fitnah), the way of the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) in the understanding of the Names and Attributes of our Lord is the benchmark of a minority of Muslims who stand apart from the great masses of Muslims. That means, the scholars of Monotheism (Tawheed) and the students of knowledge are the strangers referred to by Imam Malik  when he said, **“Nothing will rectify the last part of this Ummah except that which rectified its first part.”**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ *Tanqih at-Tahqiq fi Ahadith at-Ta'liq*, Ibn Abdelhadi al-Hanbali (2/423).

Chapter Three

Monotheism (Tawheed) in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

Monotheism (Tawheed) regarding the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ is perhaps the most important area of monotheistic study. This is because the nature of innovation that arose surrounding theology involved intangible and unknowable details—the essence and true reality of our Lord. The clarity in understanding our Lord must involve distinguishing between His Names and Attributes to establish structural rules that prevent delving into fabrications and constructs. There are **four differences between Allah's ﷻ Names and His Attributes**:

1. The Names of Allah ﷻ refer to Allah ﷻ Himself and one or more of His intrinsic perfect Attributes, such as Names which can refer only to Allah ﷻ Himself, and His qualities of power, knowledge, wisdom, hearing, and sight.
2. We may derive Attributes from the Names, but we **cannot** derive Names from the Attributes. Allah ﷻ affirms the Attribute of plotting to Himself when He said:

﴿وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ﴾
[الأَنْفَال:30]

“And (remember) when the disbelievers plotted against you (O Muhammad) to imprison you, or to kill you, or to get you out (from your home, i.e. Makkah); they were plotting and Allah too was planning, and Allah is the Best of the planners.”⁽¹⁾

Hence, we cannot derive the name “The Plotter” from the Attribute because He did not refer to Himself as such.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ described Allah ﷻ with the Attribute of ‘Descending.’ Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes down every night on the nearest heaven to us during the last third of the night and He says, ‘(Is there anyone) who invokes Me, (demands anything from Me) so that I may respond to his**

⁽¹⁾ Quran (8:30), Sahih International trans.

invocation?””⁽¹⁾ The ‘Descending’ is affirmed, and we believe it, but we cannot derive the name “The Descender” for Allah ﷻ from this evidence. This would be a deviant innovation (Bid’ah) because it is naming Allah ﷻ without textual evidence. This differs from denoting an Attribute from a Name that has been textually affirmed.

3. Our knowledge of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ is greater than that of His Names since each Name refers to textual evidence of at least one Attribute, but not all His Attributes can refer to a Name. This means that many Actions are referred to Allah ﷻ in textual evidence such as His coming, going, taking, catching, and using force. We believe these actions as attributable to Allah ﷻ in a manner that befits His Majesty, but because we do not ascribe Names to Him based on those Attributes, the number of authentic Attributes are greater than His Names.
4. We may call upon Allah ﷻ using His Names directly, but if we call upon Him by use of His Attributes, we must be inclusive of supporting language to avoid implying an innovated nomination. Say, for example, **“O Allah, by Your knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) and Your power over creation, keep me alive so long as You know that living is good for me and cause me to die when You know that death is better for me.”⁽²⁾** We may not say, “O you, the designer of my life, keep me alive,” because it is shaped on referent to Attributes that are used as nominals.

Establishing Monotheism (Tawheed) in the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ necessitates to *affirm*, *negate*, and to *refrain* without *distortion*, *resemblance* or *similitude* only by use of the Quran, or on the tongue of His Messenger ﷺ. This is done by acknowledging the textual evidence depicts a manner of perfection which suits His Majesty and Greatness. One must avoid speculative theology on the nature of the Attributes.

The First Necessity: Affirmation

We affirm with complete submission everything which Allah ﷻ affirmed for Himself in His Book, or which His Messenger ﷺ declared for Him without the fatality of the following errors:

1. Negation (Ta’teel)

Negation (Ta’teel) refers to canceling the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ by refusing to affirm them whether entirely or partially. Ibn Al-Qayyim ﷺ stated, **“The source of polytheism (shirk)**

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (1145); Muslim (1777).

⁽²⁾ Nasa’i (1306).

and its foundation is negation (Ta'teel)—and it is of three categories.”⁽¹⁾ These **three categories** are understood from explanations of numerous reliable scholars based on an inherited scholarship:

- **The negation (Ta'teel) of the Creator completely** such as the negation expressed by the atheists. They deny the existence of the Creator, The Sovereign, The Controller, The Provider, and The Absolute Ruler. Our response to atheism was introduced in part two, chapter three. Now, we begin by reference to the evidence of the complexity of creation.
- **The negation (Ta'teel) of Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes** is the diminution of Allah ﷻ, the One who is free of all imperfections, and Most Perfect. Negators may affirm His existence but negate His Names, Attributes, and Actions by denying them or attributing them to the created beings. Such negation (Ta'teel) is done by the grave worshipers who deny Allah ﷻ an Attribute but give the quality to their interred saints, the Shi'ite (Shia) to their imams, and the extreme Sufis to the head of their spiritual path (Tarikah).
- **The negation (Ta'teel) of Allah's ﷻ worship** instead of directing it to other than Allah ﷻ such as is done by the grave worshipers today, or the pagan Arabs at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Those who negate worship refuse to conduct themselves with Allah ﷻ in a manner obligatory upon the servant from the actualization of Monotheism (Tawheed) which is the manifestation of *La Ilaha Illa Allah* (worship of Allah).⁽²⁾

There are **two main types of negation (Ta'teel)**:

- **Complete negation (Ta'teel)** is to completely strike out Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes, such as that of the Jahmiyah, who deny the Names and Attributes entirely. The first person to be known for negation (Ta'teel) in this Muslim community (Ummah) was Ja'd bin Dirham and then his disciple Jahm Ibn Safwan. The reader should take warning that one may belong to this sect by adopting their intellectual method even without deliberately opting to be a blind follower (Muqallid) of them.
- **Partial negation (Ta'teel)** is to accept some of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ and deny others selectively, to support a fabricated ideology. This is evident in the selective negation (Ta'teel) of the Mu'tazilah, the Zaydiyyah, Rafidah, and the Ibaḍiyyah. All of them use speculative theology to negate Attributes while affirming the Names.

⁽¹⁾ *Jawab al Kafī*, Ibn al-Qayyim, (p. 299).

⁽²⁾ Refer to *The Sufficient Answer (Al-Jawaab Al-Kaafi)*, Ibn Al-Qayyim, for a detailed explanation of this list.

Another type of partial negation (Ta'teel) is practiced by the majority of the Muslims of the Ash'ari and Maturidi sects. They affirm the Names and negate the attributes with the exception of only seven Attributes, including ability, knowledge, divine will, life, hearing, sight, and speech. The Ash'ari and Maturidi have partially negated the balance of Attributes by distorting their meanings from the contextual revealed meanings.

2. Distortion (Tahreef)

The second error is partially or completely distorting the meanings of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ. It means to change the words from their correct meanings to innovations based on ignorance, desire, and speculation. Scholars called this *Ta'weel Al-Fasid*, which means corrupt or distorted interpretation. An example of this is the distorted interpretation of the Hand of Allah ﷻ to be His power or generosity.

Distortion (Tahreef) is a form of deviation (Ilhad) in interpreting the Divine Names and Attributes. The meaning taken from the texts is not the apparent meanings, nor is it supported by explanations from the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih). It is impermissible to interpret a hidden meaning without evidence.

The sects which engage in distorting the meanings claim that they are changing the meaning from one probable understanding to one that is more probable based only on the intellectual suppositions of men while belying revealed evidence. Among those who fall into this error are those who are sincere yet ignorant. The Ash'aris begin by assuming a Verse (Ayah) establishes resemblance between Allah ﷻ and the creation. This is problematic because they changed the meaning of the Verse (Ayah) to disassociate from resemblance. The premise they suggest is that Allah ﷻ put forth a resemblance or that His language is arbitrary and symbolic. Allah ﷻ refuted this false interpretation with a decisive statement:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽¹⁾

Therefore, we must understand the Attributes based on this premise without denying or distorting them. He sees, but not like anything else may see.

There are **three types of distortion (Tahreef)**:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

A. Alteration refers to altering the wordings of Names and Attributes by adding to them or subtracting from them. The Jahmiyah⁽¹⁾ sect changed the Arabic word ‘**Istawa**’ (to rise above) to ‘**Istawla**’ (to take over) in the following Verse (Ayah). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿سَمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ﴾ [الحديد:4]

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne (Al-Arsh) established.”⁽²⁾

The Jahmiyah distorts the meaning of **Istawa** (to rise above). The result is a change in our understanding of who our Lord is, from the understanding known by those who witnessed Revelation, the Companions (Sahabah).

One can also see a difference between the belief system (Aqeedah) of the righteous predecessors who inherited the understanding of the Companions (Sahabah) and the people of distortion (Tahreef) by reflecting on the response of Imam Malik ﷺ to the attribute of **Istawa** (to rise above):

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ﴾ [طه:5]

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne (Al-Arsh) established.”⁽³⁾

Ibn Wahb ﷺ reported: “A man asked Imam Malik, ‘O Abu Abd Allah! *al-Rahman ala arshi stawa*, how is His Istiwa?’ Malik lowered his head and began to sweat profusely. Then he lifted up his head and said: ‘*Ar-Rahman ala arshi stawa* just as He described Himself. One cannot ask *how*. *How* does not apply to Him. And you are an evil man, a man of innovation. Take him out!’ The man was led out.”⁽⁴⁾

Ibn Kathir ﷺ mentioned, “We follow the way that our righteous predecessors took in this regard, such as Malik, Al-Awza’i, Ath-Thawri, Al-Layth bin Sa’d, Ash-Shafi’i, Ahmad, Ishaq bin Rahwayh and the rest of the scholars of Islam, in past and present times.”⁽⁵⁾

⁽¹⁾ As mentioned above, the followers of Jahm ibn Safwan (d. 743 C.E.). They indulged in speculative theology, a preference for their own intellect over the explanations of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Those who fall into this error today are not one cohesive group but are individuals of many sects who share the quality of the Jahmiyah.

⁽²⁾ Quran (57:4), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (20:5), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁴⁾ *Al-Asma’ wa al-Sifat*, Bayhaqi (2:304-305 #866); *Fath al-Bari* Ibn Hajar (13:501), 1989 ed.

⁽⁵⁾ *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azim*, Ibn Kathir (7:54).

B. Changing grammatical constructs is a distortion of the interpretation of the text to fit an unconventional meaning in support of deviant ideology. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 164]

“And Allah spoke to Musa (Moses) with [direct] speech.”⁽¹⁾

The innovators decline to affirm the attribute of speaking to Allah ﷻ; rather, they render: “Moses spoke to Allah.” This is a form of negation (Ta’teel) through distortion (Tahreef) because the changing of the grammar negates the speech of Allah ﷻ.

C. Metaphorical distortion (Majjaz) is the most deviant type as it interprets based on an ideological representation detached from the literal context which Allah ﷻ presented. They render Allah’s ﷻ hand to represent His power or His bestowal of bounty because they *intend* to negate the contextual Attribute.

Imam Shafi’i ؒ established a position consistent with the understanding of the Companions (Sahabah). He said, “**I believe in Allah, and in what Revelation talks about Him, in the manner He intended, and I believe in the Prophet, peace be upon him, in the manner he intended.**”⁽²⁾

3. Resemblance (Tamtheel, Tashbih, Tajsim)

This error is to suggest a resemblance or likeness of Allah ﷻ to His creation. It is an error in interpreting the meaning of the Names and Attributes to have similarities to things of the creation. It is to affirm the likeness with something, such as if a person were to say the Hand of Allah ﷻ is like the hand of a human. Subhan Allah (All praise be to Allah)! Allah ﷻ the Most High is above all this.

Allah ﷻ is eternal with no beginning or an end. Although we also have life (Haya), we cannot say Allah ﷻ has life like ours. Allah ﷻ has a life which always existed, and no existence preceded Him. Our lives have a beginning and ending while Allah ﷻ does not die. The quality of our life while we experience it is not in any way like the characteristics of His Living; our life which Allah ﷻ created is short, limited, imperfect and followed by our death. Allah ﷻ stated:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (4:164), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ The belief system of the four renown Imams

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”⁽¹⁾

After Allah ﷻ negated His likeness and resemblance to anything in creation, He affirmed for Himself Attributes of hearing and seeing. We have hearing and sight which Allah ﷻ created, and is limited in perception, and weakens over time; our perception cannot encompass except short distances in our present time and place. Allah ﷻ is aware of everything at once across time and place while He is above the Throne (Al-Arsh). None of our attributes are comparable with Allah ﷻ, the Perfect, the Most Merciful, All-Powerful, and All-Knowing Creator. He is just as He has described Himself, the Highest, and there is nothing like unto Him. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾ [الإخلاص: 4]

“And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.”⁽²⁾

4. Defining the Nature (Takyeef)

Takyeef is to question or define how an Attribute of Allah ﷻ is, such as to consider the modality of the Hand of Allah ﷻ, to affirm the Hand, and to identify it. Another example is to question the modality of the descent of Allah ﷻ to the lowest heaven. A person does not intend to compare Him to a specific created thing, but he delves into ‘how’ he can perceive the Divine Attribute. This delving is forbidden; how an Attribute is in the true nature of the Attribute is not known except to Allah ﷻ.

Sometimes a person may combine this concept of defining nature (Takyeef) with resemblance (Tamtheel). He will question the nature of an Attribute of Allah ﷻ by using rhetoric, only to describe it with linguistic qualities of the creation, such as suggesting Allah’s ﷻ modality is restricted by the verb ‘descend,’ as the rain descends. Allah ﷻ is the Most High and far removed from such descriptions.

It is arrogance to assume that humans must know the ‘how’ of the Attributes of our Lord—how they take form or action in the absolute Essence of our Lord. The student may remember this

⁽¹⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (112:4), Mohsin trans.

maxim which many of the major scholars of Islam have referred to as a refutation of asking ‘how’ are the Attributes of Allah ﷻ. As a basic rule:

لا يعلم كيف الله إلا الله

“Only Allah Knows How Allah is.”

This is a principle called **Tafweed Al-Kayfiyah**, leaving the modality of Attribute to Allah ﷻ Alone. We believe these Attributes have an actuality because we understand the referents of the Arabic language, but we do not dictate how the referent indicates, and we cut off all hopes to reach that.

Also remember this rule:

أن تقطع الأمل في الكيفية تقديراً بالجنان، أو قولاً باللسان، أو تحريراً بالبنان

It would be best if we cut off every hope and desire to discover the formation, nature, reality, and functionality of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ. Thus, “we avoid grazing our sheep near the king’s pasture”⁽¹⁾ by fortifying the mind against the production of Allah ﷻ in attribute by image, spoken narrative, drawing or painting. If Shaytan (Satan) comes to suggest a picture of Allah ﷻ in any certain way, remember the rule, “**Only Allah knows How He is.**” Hence, we stop any inspiration from Shaytan (Satan) right away with the statement “**Subhan Allah,**” which means “**Allah is above that.**” Consequently, any insinuation Shaytan (Satan) gives to us into speculative theology regarding our Lord, we say, “**Amantu Billah**”⁽²⁾ as a reaffirmation of our Faith (Iman).

Tafweed Al-Kayfiyah has a correct and an incorrect method. It is correct to affirm the wording and the meaning of the Attribute of Allah ﷻ which is in reference. However, we leave the knowledge of the nature, reality, and shape of these Attributes. So, we affirm Allah’s ﷻ beautiful Names and sublime Attributes, and we acknowledge and believe in their meanings, but we do not know how they are. We affirm the wording and say that we do not know their meanings other than what is apparent in our understanding of the Arabic language. What is incorrect is to abandon a position and ignore the linguistic referent. Consider the example we mentioned earlier. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾ [طه:5]

⁽¹⁾ See Muslim (4094); Bukhari (52).

⁽²⁾ See Muslim (343).

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne (Al-Arsh) established.”⁽¹⁾

However, incorrect **Tafweed Al-Kayfiyah** is to affirm the Attribute of **Istawa** (to rise above) and then claim that we abandon any meaning because only Allah ﷻ can know. Indeed, we do know the meanings of the words, which gives us the Attributes of Allah ﷻ. Abandoning the meaning is worse than negation (Ta'teel) because it suggests that Allah ﷻ sent Revelation which has no meaning or purpose. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾ [النحل: 89]

“And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.”⁽²⁾

We could not be judged on our submission to Revelation if the Revelation came without meaning and explanation—Allah ﷻ is above that.

The correct **Tafweed Al-Kayfiyah** (leaving the modality of Attribute to Allah ﷻ Alone) is to affirm the Attribute of **Istawa** (to rise above) in wording and meaning and refrain from dictating the nature of the Attribute. We do not dictate how Allah ﷻ does **Istawa** (to rise above). ‘**Istawa**’ is known, but the ‘how’ part of it is unknown. Moreover, believing in it is mandatory, and to ask about it is an innovation (Bid’ah).⁽³⁾

The Second Necessity: Negation (Ta'teel)

The position of what is affirmed of our Lord’s Attributes has been supported by evidence. Likewise, it is required to have evidence for what to negate from Allah ﷻ. We rely on evidence to negate from Allah ﷻ the attributes of deficiencies which He has negated from attributing to Himself. We affirm its contrary with the qualification of perfection. We refer to the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) as parameters of what to negate from Allah ﷻ because He knows better about Himself, and His Messenger ﷺ was the most informed of all the people about his Lord. Allah ﷻ said regarding injustices:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (20:5), Mohsin trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (16:89).

⁽³⁾ This is the credal formula derived from Imam Malik’s answer to “How does Allah Istawa?” *Al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, Bayhaqi (2:304-305 #866); *Fath al-Bari* Ibn Hajar (13:501), 1989 ed.

﴿وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُوتِلْنَا مَالٌ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا

أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يُظْمِرُ رُبَّكَ أَحَدًا﴾ [الكهف: 49]

“And the record [of deeds] will be placed [open], and you will see the criminals fearful of that within it, and they will say, ‘Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?’ And they will find what they did present [before them]. And your Lord does injustice to no one.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ has negated for Himself, in truth, any negative quality such as injustice. Denying these from Allah ﷻ is obligatory because Allah ﷻ has denied them from Himself. However, affirming their most perfect opposites for Allah ﷻ is mandatory since negation (Ta'teel) is not complete until it consists of an affirmation. Thus, it is obligatory to negate from Allah ﷻ the attribute of injustice while affirming (the opposite) for Him, based on the most perfect perspective.

Likewise, negation (Ta'teel) of death for Allah ﷻ is necessary because death is a weakness and a sign of deficiency. This negation (Ta'teel) requires the affirmation of His perfect Life.

The Third Necessity: To Refrain

The path of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah regarding the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, which must involve neither affirmation nor negation of texts, is to refrain from any articulation or supposition. We never articulate or produce words such as to say Allah ﷻ is an engineer or a designer.

Our method involves **three positions**: (1) if the intended meaning is false and opposes the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), then we reject it and free our Lord, the Highest, from false ascriptions. (2) However, if the intended meaning is to follow the Book and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), we will accept the explanation. (3) Furthermore, we must refrain with regard to vague terms that we cannot find evidence for. Familiarity with these three positions is relevant to the caller to Islam (Da'i). For example, the caller (Da'i) may be challenged with insidious questions:

1. Does Allah ﷻ hear with two ears?
2. Does Allah ﷻ hear without ears?

⁽¹⁾ Quran (18:49), Sahih International trans.

We cannot confirm or deny any of the above possibilities because we do not have evidence to establish that Allah ﷻ has ears. We affirm the Attribute of hearing for Allah ﷻ since He called Himself the All Hearing (As-Samee'). Another application of our three positions to a controversial topic encountered during calling others to Islam (Dawah) might be: Does Allah ﷻ have a spatial direction?

The caller to Islam (Da'i) should clarify the question before attempting any answer because we must refrain ourselves from vague and ambiguous concepts concerning the Attributes of Allah ﷻ. If the questioner says that she or he means "Does Allah have a place which contains Him?" then we say that this is something false and rejected, and Allah ﷻ is to be declared free from this. Allah ﷻ is unrestrictedly above, as supported by multiple Verses (Ayat) and Narrations (Ahadith). We affirm this position and oppose its negation (Ta'teel).

In summary, establishing Monotheism (Tawheed) in the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ requires:

1. Belief in the Names and Attributes established in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) without the four violations: negation (Ta'teel), distortion (Tahreef), resemblance (Tamtheel), and dictating or questioning the modality.
2. Placing Allah ﷻ above any likeness to human beings and beyond any imperfections. In other words, no resemblance (Tamtheel).
3. Refraining from what cannot be affirmed or denied while abandoning any desire to distinguish the form of attributes.
4. Belief that the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ are in the perfect sense, expression, and reality.



Chapter Four

Polytheism (Shirk) in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

Polytheism (shirk) in the Names and Attributes includes both the common pagan practice of giving Allah ﷻ the attributes of His creation as well as the act of giving created beings the Divine Names and Attributes which thus unite Divinity with creation. These violations have different manifestations under **three categories:**⁽¹⁾

1. Anthropomorphism
2. Deification
3. Denial

Polytheism (shirk) by anthropomorphism

Allah ﷻ is perfect and above the transient and dependent nature of His creation. It is impermissible and grave infidelity to name Allah ﷻ with names from His creation, or attribute to Allah ﷻ something from the characteristics of creation. Some examples of this are calling Him ‘The Father’ as the Christians do, ‘the effective cause’ as philosophers do, or using the label ‘Mother Nature’ while He is Maalik-ul-Mulk and The Disposer of all affairs. These are examples of labeling Allah ﷻ or His Attributes with qualities that are imperfect and perishing. In another example, Allah ﷻ informed us that a group of Jews violated His Attributes when they said:

﴿قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ﴾ [آل عمران: 181]

“(They) said ‘Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich.’”⁽²⁾

The above statement of the Jews is a tremendous example of gross infidelity. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ﴾ [الأعراف: 180]

⁽¹⁾ *Belief in Allah: In the Light of the Quran and Sunnah*, al-Khattab trans. IIPH: Riyadh, 2005 ed. (p. 330-332).

⁽²⁾ Quran (3:181), Sahih International trans.

“And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation (Ilhad) concerning His Names.”⁽¹⁾

Ilhad means deviation,⁽²⁾ and in the context of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, it is polytheism (shirk). Qatadah رحمته الله عليه stated that deviation (Ilhad) refers to associating others with Allah ﷻ in His Names, such as calling an idol ‘Uzza.’ This is based on the Name of Allah Al-Azeez. Mujahid رحمته الله عليه said that to belie Allah's ﷻ Names includes naming an idol ‘al-Lat,’ a derivation from the name Al-Ilah.⁽³⁾

Alleged images of our Creator are often painted, molded, or carved in the shape of human beings possessing the physical features of those who worship them. This anthropomorphism is a destructive error because of **three violations**:

1. It projects what Allah ﷻ negated for Himself

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [النحل:74]

“So do not assert similarities to Allah. Indeed, Allah knows and you do not know.”⁽⁴⁾

With this statement, Allah ﷻ negates attributes that imply imperfection or fault in some way. For instance, that He has a son, that He has lineage, that He becomes tired, or that He sleeps, or has any resemblance to need or dependency of corporeal bodies. As we have seen, Allah ﷻ has the right to assert and negate specific Attributes to characterize Himself.

2. It likens Allah ﷻ to the created beings

When individuals refer to Prophet Isa (Jesus) عليه السلام as the son of Allah ﷻ, they have committed polytheism (shirk) in Allah’s ﷻ Attributes. Far removed is Allah ﷻ from what they claim! Allah ﷻ refers to this error by the Christians at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:180), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ See the definition (p.194-195).

⁽³⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (7:180).

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (16:74), Sahih International trans.

﴿ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ ﴾ [المؤمنون: 91]

“Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity.”⁽¹⁾

Contemporary Christians have a diversity of beliefs and many differing sects. Among the majority of Christians is a common belief that Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was God incarnate, who became part of the creation so that he could understand and interact with people. This is polytheism (shirk) because of many grave errors. First, it makes a similitude between Creator and creation. Second, it denies from Allah ﷻ His sublime distinction, and it denies from Allah ﷻ the ability to know and understand His creation from above the heavens.

Western culture has standardized depictions of Allah ﷻ as a Caucasian man with flowing white hair and beard such as the iconic painting alleged to be of Allah ﷻ and Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام by Michelangelo⁽²⁾ on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. These pictures have, in turn, been held by the Christian world in the highest of esteem. Those who depict Allah ﷻ in image or sculpture have likened Him to the creation which is polytheism (shirk) because it is impossible for them to imagine or know the characteristics of Allah ﷻ outside the realm of their experience. In this way, they have affirmed for Allah ﷻ a likeness to creation, while Allah ﷻ has negated or rejected that likeness from Himself. Christianity falls into the error of anthropomorphism by portraying Allah ﷻ with human qualities, while Buddhists and Hindus depict countless idols of humans and animals as depictive of Allah ﷻ. The error is critical regardless of sincerity, even if it is implicit or explicit.

3. It denies Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

Denying any of the Names or Attributes of Allah ﷻ is also one of the fundamental violations of Monotheism in Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ (Tawheed Al-Asma was-Sifat). It is clearly a violation to deny His Names and Attributes entirely, but it is a grave error to disbelieve in some of the characteristic Attributes of Allah ﷻ while claiming Monotheism (Tawheed). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا ۖ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۗ ﴾ [النساء: 150-151]

[النساء: 150-151]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (23:91), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Creazione di Adamo, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City, ca. 1512.

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His Messengers and say, ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between. Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”⁽¹⁾

It is imperative to believe in the complete Revelation and accept with full submission everything that comes to us about Allah ﷻ and His religion (Deen). Whatever Allah ﷻ revealed concerning His Names and Attributes must be affirmed. Denial of even one quality is like denying the entirety, which constitutes disbelief (kufr). Consider the example of Christians who ascribe the quality of divine mercy to Allah ﷻ but deny His Attribute of Judgment over their behavior. They instead say that substitutional atonement has removed the need for their actions to be brought to Allah ﷻ on the Day of Accountability. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفْتَوْمُنُونَ بَعْضَ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 85]

“So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”⁽²⁾

Shaykh Abdul-Rahman As-Sa’di ﷻ mentioned, “The basis of Faith (Iman) and its foundational guidelines are belief in Allah, in His Names, and His Attributes. The stronger one’s knowledge of these while worshiping Allah, the stronger his Monotheism (Tawheed) belief. So when he knows that Allah is singled out by the perfect Attributes, alone in His magnificence, majesty and splendor, there being no comparison to Him in His perfection, then it becomes more realistic that by this means he will know and fulfill his belief that He is the true God, and divinity other than His is false. So whoever denies any of Allah’s Names or Attributes, he initiates what contradicts and nullifies Monotheism (Tawheed), and this is a branch of disbelief (kufr).”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (4:150-151), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (2:85), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ *Sharh al-Kitab at-Tawheed*, Shaykh Abdul-Rahman as-Sa’di, Khaliyl trans. (p. 199-200).

Polytheism (shirk) by deification

This form of polytheism (shirk) in Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes (Al-Asma was-Sifat) relates to errors wherein created beings or things are falsely assigned Names or Attributes which belong only to Allah ﷻ. Below are some examples:

1. The ancient Arabs

It was the practice of the ancient Arabs to worship idols whose names were derived from the Names of Allah ﷻ. Their main three idols Al-Lat, Al-'Uzza, and Al-Mannat were named after three of the lofty and unique Names of Allah ﷻ. During the Prophet's ﷺ time, there arose a false prophet in a region of Arabia called Yamamah, who took the name Rahman which can only belong to Allah ﷻ.

2. Shi'ite (Shia)

Among the Shi'ite (Shia) sects is the Nusayriyah or Alawiyah of Syria, who believe that the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ cousin and son-in-law, Ali bin Abi Talib علي بن أبي طالب, was a manifestation of Allah ﷻ, and they ascribe to him many attributes which can belong only to Allah ﷻ Alone.

3. The Isma'ili sect

The Isma'ili, also known as Agha Khanis, consider their leader, the Agha Khan, to be God incarnate.

4. Druze of Lebanon

The Druze of Lebanon believe that the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim Bi-Amrillah was the last manifestation of Allah ﷻ among humankind.

5. Extreme Sufis

The claim of Sufi mystics like Al-Hallaj is that they can become one with Allah ﷻ and as such, exist as manifestations of the Creator within His creation. They are involved in multiple aspects of polytheism (shirk), including in the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ (Al-Asma was-Sifat).

6. Einstein's theory of relativity

Einstein's theory of relativity states that energy is equal to mass times the square of the speed of light. This is taught in all schools as scientific truth. It is an expression of polytheism (shirk) in

Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ (Al-Asma was-Sifat). The theory states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed but merely transforms into matter and vice versa. However, both matter and energy are created entities, and they both will be destroyed as Allah ﷻ clearly states:

﴿وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾ [القصاص: 88]

“And do not invoke with Allah another deity. There is no deity except Him. Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”⁽¹⁾

The theory implies that mass and energy are eternal, having no beginning or end, are uncreated, and transform into each other. The mathematical relationship between these two is a proven reality, but their supposed independence from Allah’s ﷻ All-Encompassing Power is falsehood. Attributes of Divinity belong only to Allah ﷻ, and He alone is without beginning or an end.

7. Darwin’s theory of evolution

It is an attempt to explain that the evolution of life and the origin of all life forms is an adaptation from lesser matter without the intervention of divinity. One of the leading evolutionists of the 20th century, Sir Julian Huxley, went beyond scientific theory to dismiss divine origin altogether. Huxley inherited his secular scientific tradition from his grandfather, a contemporary of Darwin. Sir Julian said, **“Darwinism removed the whole idea of God as the Creator of organisms from the sphere of rational discussion.”⁽²⁾**

8. Malik Al-Amlak (King of Kings)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“The most wretched person in Allah’s sight is someone whose name is the king of the kings.”⁽³⁾** Similar might be said about ‘judge of judges’ or ‘strongest of the strong.’ This is because Allah ﷻ alone can possess the highest superlative. Such phrases are especially problematic when they involve derivatives of the unique Names of Allah ﷻ such as Maalik-ul-Mulk.

Shaykh Sa’di رحمه الله wrote, **“One is not to be called with a name that implies some type of partnership with one of Allah’s Names or Attributes, like the judge of judges, the king of kings, etc., or, the ruler of rulers, or Abu Al-Hakam [the father of rule], etc. All of this is out**

⁽¹⁾ Quran (28:88), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Sol Tax, ed., Issues in Evolution. University of Chicago Press, 1960, (p. 41).

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (6205); Muslim (5610).

of precaution for Monotheism (Tawheed), and Allah's Names and Attributes, and defending against what leads to polytheism (shirk).”(1)

9. Al-Hakam (The Judge)

Definitive names, which refer to Names and Attributes that only Allah ﷻ can possess, are impermissible names for anything of the creation. One of the Companions (Sahabah) named Hani, who is remembered as Abu Shurayh ؓ received that Kunya⁽²⁾ from the Prophet ﷺ. **Hani reported that his Kunya was Abul-Hakam, so the Prophet ﷺ said to him, ‘Allah is Al-Hakam [the Judge], and to Him is the judgement.’ Then the Prophet gave Hani a new Kunya after his eldest son Shurayh.**”(3)



(1) *Sharh al-Kitab at-Tawheed*, Shaykh Abdul-Rahman as-Sa'di, Khaliyl trans. (p. 218).

(2) A Kunya is a component of an Arabic name, a type of epithet, in theory referring to the bearer's first-born son or daughter.

(3) Abu Dawud (4955), Sahih by Al-Albani; Nasa'i (5389); Hakim (23/1) and Ibn Hibban (1957).

Chapter Five

Developing Knowledge of Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

A student of knowledge in the West who engages in calling others to Islam (Dawah) needs very little information to convey invitation if they restrain themselves only to what they know based on evidence. The principal rules are:

- ◆ Invite to the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).
- ◆ Identify the audience.
- ◆ Truthfulness and sincerity.
- ◆ Following the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).
- ◆ Avoid argument and debate.
- ◆ Invite with wisdom, knowledge, and beautiful means.

All these points are known and elaborated in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Calling effectively to the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) is more complex because they are people of rhetoric and speculative theology. The entirety of the contemporary Christian world everywhere has built its creed, rituals, and orthodoxy on hidden meanings, metaphoric thought, and changing or distorting evidence. What they have of benefit is a love for our Lord. Therefore, inviting the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) by use of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ is effective. Calling others to Islam (Dawah) by use of the Names and Attributes is complicated and requires more knowledge to avoid speculative theology. The nature of the topic is unreachable by the means that deviant sects and religions use to build their own theology. Therefore, this chapter is a summary of **twelve foundational principles** used to understand and explain the Names and Attributes without deviancy. The following chapter is a structured query system that can be used while calling others to Islam (Dawah) to negotiate controversial or difficult topics concerning the Names and Attributes.

1. The Names and Attributes are Tawqifiyah

Tawqifiyah means to provide evidence from the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) only. There is no place for intellectual free-thinking regarding the Names and Attributes of our Lord as

they are contingent upon evidence from the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). The worst crime is to speak about Allah ﷻ without knowledge—and valid knowledge of our Lord is only what has been transmitted from Revelation. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿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﴾ [الأعراف: 33]

“Say, ‘My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—what is apparent of them and what is concealed—and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.’”⁽¹⁾

Amongst the matters of the unseen (Ghayb) are the things we do not know, and from them are the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and He alone has knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) and unknowable things that are hidden from the creation. We must not employ our intellectual faculties to derive or invent a name or an attribute without revealed evidence. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ﴾ [البقرة: 255]

“And they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself pleases to reveal.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾ [الإسراء: 36]

“And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.”⁽³⁾

Hence, we must refer to Allah ﷻ for knowledge about Himself without innovating names or attributes outside of what has been revealed.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:33), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ [part of] Quran (2:255), Maududi trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (17:36), Shakir trans.

Furthermore, we cannot employ analogy to infer Attributes of Allah ﷻ. For example, to say that He has the attribute of strength (Jalad) since it is similar to the Attribute of Might (Quwwah), or Allah ﷻ has the attribute of compassion (Riqqah) since it is like the Attribute of Mercy (Rahmah).

2. The Names and Attributes are superlative

Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes (Al-Asma was-Sifat) are indeed perfect to the highest degree. Some humans may have beautiful names such as Karim, Raheem, or others that suggest virtue. Still, their character cannot comprehensively and completely reflect these attributes. All the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ are the completion of Majesty and Perfection without flaws or deficiencies. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ﴾ [الأعراف:180]

“And to Allah belong the best Names, so invoke Him by them.”⁽¹⁾

Al-Hayy, for example, implies a complete life, one that was not preceded by nothingness, one that never climaxes, one that never needs sustenance or rest and will never come to an end, and **Al-Aleem** means the One who has a complete and perfect knowledge that was not preceded by ignorance and that will never result in forgetfulness.

Allah ﷻ gave us a valuable example of how to introduce the perfect nature of our Lord when calling disbelievers (kafirun) to Him. Prophet Musa (Moses) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام engaged with the Pharaoh regarding Allah ﷻ:

﴿قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَىٰ﴾ [٤٩] ﴿قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْقَهُ ۖ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ﴾ [٥٠] ﴿قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَىٰ﴾ [٥١] ﴿قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ ۖ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى﴾ [طه:49-52]

“[Pharaoh] said, ‘So who is the Lord of you two, O Musa (Moses)?’ He said, ‘Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it].’ [Pharaoh] said, ‘Then what is the case of the former generations?’ [Musa (Moses)] said, ‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets.’”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:180), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (20:49-52), Sahih International trans.

3. The number of Names is immeasurable

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah has ninety-nine Names, one-hundred less one; and he who memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise (Jannah).”⁽¹⁾

The above Narration (Hadith) made some people assume that the Divine Names are just ninety-nine, which is not correct. The Names of Allah ﷻ are not limited to a fixed and definite number. The use of the Names to enter Paradise (Jannah) is not through memorizing a specific ninety-nine. Use is through performing **Ahsaha**, a verb that infers struggling to recognize, understand, implement, and call others by use of the knowledge of the Names and Attributes.

The meaning of **Ahsaha** is illustrated in the famous Narration (Hadith), which is narrated by the Prophet ﷺ who said, “I ask You, O Allah, by every one of Your Names by which You have named Yourself or revealed in Your Book, or (those which You have) taught to one of Your creatures or appropriated for Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen (Ghayb) that is with You.”⁽²⁾

The Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ (Al-Asma was-Sifat) can be actualized in a practical sense. It is not through esoteric means such as a dream or inheritance from the heart of a senior scholar. Neither is actualization from inspiration after the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has passed away. Rather, the practicality of knowing Allah ﷻ through His Names and benefiting from this is made easy by Allah ﷻ by giving us information in Revelation (Quran and Sunnah), and after this through the explanations (Tafsir) of scholars.

Absorbing and assimilating the great meanings of His Names are far more extensive than memorizing. Shaykh Muhammad bin Salih Al-Uthaymeen رحمه الله said, “What is meant by **Ahsaha** is not merely writing them on a piece of paper, then repeating them until you have memorized them.” Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله stated that performing **Ahsaha** of Allah’s ﷻ ninety-nine Names means three things:

1. Knowing the Names and the number of Names.
2. Understanding the diverse meanings.
3. Calling Allah ﷻ by using them.

Calling on Allah ﷻ can simply be praise, worship, and asking for one’s needs.

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (7392); Muslim (6809, 6810).

⁽²⁾ Ibn Hibban (972), Sahih by Al-Albani; also in Ahmad.

From the above statements by several scholars (Ulama), **Ahsaha** is to know the Names by heart, to realize their meanings, to believe in them out of firm conviction, to deduce them from the Quran, to abide by them in one's actions, to make them part of the daily portion of remembering Allah ﷻ, to reflect on them, and to keep studying their meanings. Thus, the person who learns these Names, implements their understanding, and connects to Allah ﷻ through them, has truly fulfilled the minimum meanings of **Ahsaha**.

4. The apparent meaning must be maintained

We must refer to Allah ﷻ according to how He and His Prophet ﷺ have described Him without explaining His Names and Attributes by giving them meanings other than their intended purpose. For example, Allah ﷻ said He has anger concerning the disbelievers (kafirun) and the hypocrites (mushrikun):

﴿وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظُنَّ السُّوءَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السُّوءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾ [الفتح:6]

“And [that] He may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women—those who assume about Allah an assumption of evil nature. Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature; and Allah has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them Hell (Jahannam), and evil it is as a destination.”⁽¹⁾

Thus, anger is one of the noble Attributes of our Lord. It is incorrect to change the meaning of anger in this Verse (Ayah) to represent His punishment. Many misinterpret this Verse (Ayah) based on the understanding that anger is a sign of weakness in humanity and is not befitting of Allah ﷻ. What Allah ﷻ has stated should be accepted with the qualification that His anger is not like human anger, based on the evidence:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى:11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (48:6), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

The similarity between Divine Attributes and those of humankind is only in name and not in degree. When qualities are associated with Allah ﷻ, they are to be taken in the absolute sense, and free from human deficiencies.

5. Each Name is inclusive of an Attribute

Each confirmed Name of Allah ﷻ is inclusive of an Attribute, but the opposite is not the case. This rule is highly crucial to refute those who produce names for Allah ﷻ by deriving them from Attributes. It is incorrect, for example, to call Allah ﷻ ‘The Deceiver’ from the Attribute of deception, and ‘The Plotter’ from the Attribute of plotting.

Non-Muslims sometimes allege that they do not want to believe in a God named The Deceiver or The Plotter. We respond first by explaining that these names are not Names Allah ﷻ gave Himself; these names are innovated by deriving them from the Attributes of plotting and deceiving. If a caller to Islam (Da’i) is challenged in rebuttal that “such attributes are not befitting to Allah,” then we can refute their rebuttal.

In the context in which Allah ﷻ mentioned these Attributes in the Quran, the hypocrites (mushrikun) or the disbelievers (kafirun) are trying to deceive or plot against the believers (Mumineen), not realizing that Allah ﷻ is guardian over the believers (Mumineen). Allah ﷻ is fully aware of their secret scheming, and He will confront their limited human plans of deception with His Divine plans to defend the believers (Mumineen). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: 54]

“And they [the unbelievers] plotted [against Isa (Jesus)] but Allah caused their schemes to fail, for Allah is the best of all plotters.”⁽¹⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ ﴾ [النساء: 142]

“Surely the hypocrites try to deceive Allah, and He is deceiving them; and when they rise up for prayer, they rise up lazily, showing off to (other) men, and they do not remember Allah except a little.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (3:54), Kaskas trans.

It is permissible to derive one or more Attributes from Allah’s ﷻ confirmed Names. For example, The Most Merciful (Ar-Rahman) incorporates the Attribute of mercy; The Munificent (Al-Kareem) incorporates the Attribute of munificence and generosity; The Subtle One (Al-Lateef) includes the Attribute of being gentle and all-perceiving.

Names must not be innovated from His Attributes such as His Will (Iradah), His Coming (Majee), His Ascending (Istawa); we cannot derive the name The Willer, The Comer, The Ascender, respectively.

6. The Divine Attributes of Zhatiyah or Fi’liyah

We may categorize Attributes of Allah ﷻ into **Zhatiyah**, which refers to His Divine Essence or the Selfhood of Allah ﷻ, and **Fi’liyah** which refers to Divine Actions, and a third category which combines both:

I. Attributes ascribed to His Self (As-Sifat Az-Zhatiyah)

Attributes that describe Allah ﷻ in His Selfhood are **As-Sifat Az-Zhatiyah**. They are Attributes ascribed to His Self, which are part of His true nature. His Selfhood never ceases and will always be consistent with these qualities.

Allah ﷻ is described with: Life (Al-Hayat), Knowledge (Al-Ilm), Ability (Al-Qudrah), Wisdom (Al-Hikmah), Highness (Al-’Uluw), Might and Power (Al-’Izzah), and numerous more. Also included in this category are informational Attributes called As-Sifat Al-Khabariyah, which describe the Self of Allah ﷻ, such as two hands, two eyes, fingers, etc. These must not be interpreted with anthropomorphism.

II. Attributes ascribed to His Actions (As-Sifat Al-Fi’liyah)

Attributes that describe the Actions of Allah ﷻ are **As-Sifat Al-Fi’liyah**, and are connected to His Will (Al-Mashi’ah) They are dynamic and not restrained to His Self (Az-Zhāt), neither are they limited in any sense of occurrence, intensity, or frequency.

Examples that are all supported by evidence from Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) are: the Ascending (Al-Istiwa), Descending (An-Nuzul), and the Coming (Al-Majee’). All of these are attributes describing His Actions and connected to His Will, which have the occurrence of varying frequency. They have a beginning and an ending because they are not

⁽¹⁾ Quran (4:142), Ghali trans.

Allah ﷻ in selfhood but are from Allah ﷻ. The ability does not end when the occurrence ends, but the action is transient according to His Will, and Allah ﷻ is capable of all things.

Allah's ﷻ Descent (An-Nuzul) to the lower heaven happens every night based on the following evidence. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “**Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes down every night on the nearest heaven to us during the last third of the night and He says, ‘(Is there anyone) who invokes Me, (demands anything from Me) so that I may respond to his invocation? (Is there anyone) who asks Me so that I may grant him his request? (Is there anyone) who seeks My Forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?’**”⁽¹⁾

Allah's Coming (Majee' Ar-Rabb) will not occur unless the Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) is here. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا﴾ [الفجر: 21]

“No! When the earth has been leveled—pounded and crushed—And your Lord has come and the Angels, rank upon rank.”⁽²⁾

III. As-Sifat Az-Zhاتيyyah Al-Fi'liyah

The scholars (Ulama) explain this category of Attributes with the example of the speech of Allah ﷻ. Speech is from the Attributes of the Selfhood of our Lord because He will never lose the ability. Humans may become ill or aged, and our speech could cease due to pathology, but Allah ﷻ will always have speech without any deficiency. Furthermore, His speech is an action that comes from Him and it will come from Him according to His will when he chooses transiently.

7. His Attributes have unique referents

We established the impossibility of seeing the Essence of our Lord in this world (Dunya). Hence, we cannot describe what we cannot see. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾﴾ [الأنعام: 103]

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (1145, 2321, 7494); Muslim (1777)

⁽²⁾ Quran (89:21-22), Sahih International trans.

“Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.”⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, just as Allah’s ﷻ Divine Essence or Self is real and does not resemble that of other than Him, then likewise it is characterized by actual Attributes which also do not resemble the attributes of the creation. Divine Attributes affirm His existence, but not how He exists. His speech regarding the Names and Attributes is a branch of the Divine Essence. What is revealed resembles representative speech of humans, but there is no arbitrary nature in the speech of Allah ﷻ; He speaks what He wills, and the efficacy of His descriptors is unquestionable. We respond with varying degrees of understanding, so it is obligatory upon the servant to withhold and restrict himself to the speech of Allah ﷻ and to the speech of his Messenger ﷺ and to have a certain belief and Faith (Iman) in everything that is affirmed in the revealed texts regarding the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

Similarly, one must negate from Allah ﷻ whatever Allah ﷻ has negated from Himself or what the Messenger ﷺ negated from Him of deficiencies and inadequacies.

8. Speech on some of the Attributes is like the rest

This means we must not change the formula we use to classify and understand Attributes. When Allah ﷻ intends metaphor, He describes it as such. Whoever affirms the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, such as hearing, seeing, and will, must also affirm Allah’s ﷻ loving, being pleased, His anger, and His hating. Approval and affirming of some of the Attributes and rejection of others is a following of individual desires which results in a loss in this life and the Hereafter (Akhirah). For example, Allah ﷻ asked the children of Isra’il:

﴿أَفْتَوْمُنُونَ بَعْضَ الْكِنَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 85]

“So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in the worldly life, and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be sent back to the severest of punishment.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (6:103), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (2:85), Sahih International trans.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته said, “Whosoever differentiates between one Attribute and another, despite their being the same with reasons for their being literal or metaphorical, then he contradicts himself, erroneous in his position, and resembling those who believed in a part of the Book while disbelieving in other parts.”⁽¹⁾

9. It is unlawful to give Allah ﷻ human attributes

We must refer to Allah ﷻ without giving Him the qualities of His creation. Western Judeo-Christian culture believes that Allah ﷻ created everything in six days then rested on the seventh. Such a claim assigns to Allah ﷻ the Attributes of His creation. This describes a man who tires after heavy work and needs sleep to recuperate, and Allah ﷻ is above that.

The following text was quoted from the Old Testament:

“Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ is not in need of rest. Allah ﷻ revealed in response to this:

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ
وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿ق: 38-39﴾﴾

“And We did certainly create the heavens and earth and what is between them in six days, and there touched Us no weariness. So be patient, [O Muhammad], over what they say and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting.”⁽³⁾

Ibn Kathir رحمته mentioned that “Qatadah said, ‘The Jews said that Allah created the heavens and earth in six days and then rested on the seventh day, which was the Sabbath. Therefore, they call it a holiday. Allah the Exalted then sent down denial of their statement and false opinion.’ Allah said:

﴿وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ﴿ق: 38﴾﴾

(1) *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*. Ibn Taymiyyah.

(2) New International Version (Genesis 2:1-3).

(3) Quran (50:38-39), Sahih International trans.

‘(And nothing of fatigue touched Us) indicating that no sleep, exhaustion, or weariness affects Him.’”(1)

Elsewhere in the Bible and Torah, Allah ﷻ is depicted as repenting from His evil thoughts in the same way that humans do when they realize their errors. Similarly, the claim that Allah ﷻ is a spirit or has a spirit completely wrecks the concept of Monotheism (Tawheed). There is no evidence in the Quran or Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) of Allah ﷻ referring to Himself as a spirit. On the contrary, Allah ﷻ refers to the spirit as part of His creation. Knowing our Lord becomes impossible if we have ambiguous criteria of what constitutes an attribute of divinity.

What man knows about the Creator is what little He has revealed to him. Therefore, man is obliged to stay within these narrow limits. When a man gives free rein to his intellect in describing Allah ﷻ, he is liable to fall into errors by assigning to Allah ﷻ the attributes of His creation.

10. It is unlawful to attribute divinity to the created

We cannot provide the created things the qualities of Allah ﷻ which are His descriptors alone. An example of this which the caller to Islam (Da'i) contends with is the Christian attribution of divinity to Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام while he had attributes of a human being such as the need to eat food and the need to defecate. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَأَنَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ بَيَّنَّا لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ أَفْ يُؤْفَكُونَ﴾ [المائدة: 75]

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a Messenger; [other] Messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.”(2)

In the New Testament, Paul raises the example of Melchizedek, King of Salem, from the Torah(3) and gives both him and Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام the divine attribute of having no beginning or end:

“(1) This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him. (2) and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

(1) Tafsir Ibn Kathir (50:38).

(2) Quran (5:75)

(3) (Genesis 14:18-20)

First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” (3) Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.”⁽¹⁾

“(5) Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” (6) And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”⁽²⁾

Care must be taken to explain to the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) why they must not interpret knowledge of our Lord using invented metaphor. Christians will use the above verses and others to justify many symbolic constructs to support polytheistic Christian dogma. What is upon the caller to Islam (Da’i) is to explain the necessity of identifying traits of pure Monotheism (Tawheed). The rule here is that creation cannot have the Creator's qualities.

Similarly, most Shi’ite (Shia) sects have given their “Imams” divine attributes of absolute infallibility, knowledge of the past, the future, and the unseen (Ghayb), the ability to change destiny, and control the atoms of creation.

Likewise, extreme mystic Sufis attribute divinity to the head of their spiritual path. In so doing, they set up rivals who share with Allah ﷻ in the unique Attributes of Divinity and establish their Shuyukh (religious leaders) as gods besides Allah ﷻ.

These errors were based on love and good intention to honor the nobility of those who had highly developed Faith (Iman) and knowledge. Without knowledge, good intention can lead the most noble astray. These errors have served to pave the way for the attributes of divinity on Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ. Once they accepted the Creator’s conception as being like a human being, accepting Prophet Isa (Jesus) ﷺ as God presented no real problem for them. There have been numerous cults in the modern age which followed the same critical path of error, such as the Branch Davidians or the Nation of Gods and Earths.

11. Naming someone with one of Allah’s ﷻ Names

We desire a virtuous name for our children and seek honor within the beautiful words and names known in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Often, we choose an improper name with good intention but without knowledge or guidance. We are advised by the Prophet ﷺ to select one of the most virtuous names. Abu Wahb Al-Jushami رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Call yourselves by the names of the Prophets. The most beloved of names to Allah are Abdullah and Abdur-Rahman, and the truest of names are Harith (Earner) and Hammam (one who is**

⁽¹⁾ Hebrews (7:1-3), New International Version.

⁽²⁾ Hebrews (5:5-6), New International Version.

always thinking of an action), and the most reprehensible names are Harb (War) and Murrah (Bitter).”⁽¹⁾ This guideline aids in choosing a name with reward and avoiding that which is blameworthy. From the virtuous names are also those which derive from the Names of Allah ﷻ.

The general rules for calling someone with one of Allah’s ﷻ Names are as follows:

If the name has a meaning or quality that only Allah ﷻ is capable of, like creating, resurrecting, Lordship, Rahman, Mutakabbir, Jabbar, etc., then it is not permissible to call a human being by these names, except by prefixing “Abd” which means “the servant of” before the name.

If the name refers to a more general quality like hearing, listening, being generous, wisdom, etc., then it is permissible to call a person by that name. The permissibility requires the definitive “Al” to be removed from the name because the definitive implies uniqueness and exclusivity, which belong only to Allah ﷻ. Examples of this permissibility are Ra’uf and Raheem, proper names for men in their indefinite forms. Allah ﷻ used some of them to refer to the Prophet ﷺ:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ

رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾ [التوبة: 128]

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.”⁽²⁾

Names like Abdur-Rasool (servant of the Messenger), Abdun-Nabee (servant of the Prophet), Abdul-Hussain (servant of Hussain) are forbidden. Based on this principle, the Prophet ﷺ forbade Muslims from referring to those put under their charge as ‘Abd.’

12. Cutting off hope in knowing ‘how’

We are required to believe in the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ (Al-Asma was-Sifat) without inquiring after their nature and manner or investigating their Essence.

Attributes vary according to the self they characterize, but how they manifest themselves depends upon knowing the subject and its actions. We know the meanings of these attributes as they apply to humans because they are in the Arabic language, which we understand. We cannot inquire into the meaning of Allah’s ﷻ nature, His Essence, and how His Actions take place. We cannot ask about the nature of His Attributes in detail.

⁽¹⁾ Abu Dawud (4950), Hassan by Ibn Abdul Barr

⁽²⁾ Quran (9:128), Sahih International trans.

For this reason, when asked about how Allah ﷻ settled on the Throne (Al-Arsh), the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) said, **“The Rising (Istiwa) is known, the manner is unknown, believing in it is an obligation, and inquiring about it is a heresy.”⁽¹⁾**

We believe in Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes by the three processes of affirming, negating, and refraining from vague terms. We declare that Allah ﷻ is far above any similitude in His Attributes and does not resemble any of the attributes of His creation. We cut off any hope that we can understand the true nature of these Names and Attributes because a human mind cannot encompass the Lord of all that ever existed.



⁽¹⁾ *Al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, Bayhaqi (2:304-305 #866); *Fath al-Bari* Ibn Hajar (13:501), 1989 ed.

Part Five
Belief in Allah's ﷻ Attributes

Chapter One
Allah's ﷻ Attributes—Structured Query

The human mind is limited and deficient in contending with the attributes of Allah ﷻ. In general, we cannot even approach an understanding of Divine Attributes without textual evidence to establish their existence. This is the same principle for Attributes that may have shapes, such as the hands, the eyes, and abstract attributes that the human mind may infer as knowledge and wisdom.

A classification system differentiates several types of Attributes, such as the class of Attributes referring to the Divine Essence, another class which relates to His Actions, such as laughing and anger. The third class is a combination of the former two—it is an Attribute of the Essence of Allah ﷻ such as His speech which manifests into Action as He Wills and when He Wills.

Under the umbrella of the 12 principles is a guiding format, the Structured Seven Question Query (SSQQ), to apply when trying to understand and convey the Divine Attributes.

SSQQ Guidelines

The SSQQ is a format that can be applied to each of the Divine Attributes to understand them the way the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah) understood, to harvest the benefits of this understanding, and to avoid transgression. The structured method is a query made of seven consecutive questions which simplify our understanding within the parameters of the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Ibn Al-Qayyim ؒ described the need for such a systematic approach in his book *Al-Fawa'id*. He said, **“Being unaware of the way leading to Allah, its difficulty and purpose causes many problems and has little benefit.”**⁽¹⁾ This simple system will establish a clear path for calling to Monotheism (Tawheed) through the Divine Names and Attributes seeking the Face of Allah ﷻ and averting errors and hardships:

⁽¹⁾ *Al-Fawa'id*, Ibn Al-Qayyim. Umm Al-Qura, 2004, Bayan trans. (p. 287)

1. Why must we affirm the Attribute?

The first question considers why every Muslim must affirm the Attribute which Allah ﷻ affirmed for Himself in the Quran, or His Messenger ﷺ affirmed in the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). Likewise, every Muslim must negate the Attributes Allah ﷻ negated from Himself in the Quran, or His Messenger ﷺ negated in the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).

Hence, to complete the first query, one must identify reliable evidence which affirms or negates the Attribute. This involves considering the benefits of the evidence-based process as well as considering the consequences of refraining from the Attribute without justification.

2. Can we affirm the Attribute without negation (Ta'teel) and resemblance (Tamtheel)?

Shaytan (Satan) will begin his intense insinuating at this stage of the structured query, especially if the wording confirming the Attribute is the same as the human, such as Allah's ﷻ hands, face, finger, shin, or feet. These attributes are the ones of which a lack of knowledge can cause the greatest controversy among Muslims who are not well-grounded or those who delve into philosophy.

Shaytan (Satan) will invite and incite contemplation of the attribute in human dimension, which is called resemblance (Tamtheel *or* Tajseem). Shaytan (Satan) will intend by it to convince you to abandon the textualization of the Attribute by negation (Ta'teel), to disassociate from the insinuated human form.

To escape doubt and whispers (Waswas) produced by Shaytan (Satan), a structured query must recall the fundamentals of establishing Divine Names and Attributes and the Quranic references which support them.

Avoiding negation (Ta'teel)

Step one of our query addresses avoiding negation (Ta'teel). Evidence from the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) establish the Attribute. Hence, rejection or refusal to affirm it is belying the Quran and Sunnah, which can be blasphemous. Those with sincerity and an evidence-based method will be well prepared against doubt.

Shaytan (Satan) may then invite to a partial negation, as is done by many of the people of speculative theology, to accept the majority of the Attributes and negate the ones which linguistically infer human traits. This doubt is destroyed by recalling what Allah said when addressing the children of Isra'il. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 85]

“So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”⁽¹⁾

Avoiding the resemblance (Tamtheel and Tajseem)

To avoid falling into the sin of creating a similitude between Allah ﷻ and His creation, one may take refuge in His own words. Remembering, reflecting on, and reciting these two Verses (Ayat) arms a Muslim to defeat Shaytan (Satan). Consequently, they are important Verses (Ayat) for a caller to Islam (Da'i) to memorize and use as responses during outreach discourse. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”⁽²⁾

In the above Verse (Ayah), Allah ﷻ uses two Names from which we can derive Attributes of hearing and seeing, which are also human faculties. However, at the beginning of the Verse (Ayah), Allah ﷻ warns us to understand them under the rule that nothing in creation is like Him.

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾ [الشورى: 11]

“There is nothing like unto Him.”⁽³⁾

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾﴾ [الإخلاص: 4]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:85), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

“Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent.’”⁽¹⁾

One should recite loudly with a beautiful tone and take pleasure in the fact that these words are distressing to Shaytan (Satan). One should reflect on the meaning that Allah ﷻ is One and only. Nothing in creation is co-equal or comparable with Him and His Divine Essence, Names, Attributes, and Actions.

There is another tool to destroy doubt, which is logical reasoning. Logic can help you defeat the Satan-inspired desire to liken Allah ﷻ to His creation. In this world, human beings have physical attributes shared with animals, such as the feet; tables and buildings are also described with the word. Through a fast mapping of semantic classes, we know that the feet of a donkey, a bird, a lion, a camel, a table, and a human do not look alike—their essences are different. The Divine Essence of our Lord is unique and different from the human. If a fast logical process can identify, and differentiate between Allah ﷻ and His creation in essence, then it follows that any similitude of the attributes is in the linguistic referent only.

3. Can the Attribute be personally interpreted?

Shaytan (Satan) will never abandon His task to mislead Muslims. Suppose he fails to incite a Muslim to commit the sins of negation (Ta'teel), resemblance (Tamtheel *or* Tajseem). In that case, he will appeal to the ego to delve into corrupted and misleading interpretation (Ta'weel Al-Fasid), and inspire the intellect to innovate distorted and misleading interpretations of the Divine Attributes.

For example, through his whisperings (Waswas), Shaytan (Satan) will incite the belief that the Hand of Allah ﷻ must refer to His power and strength, the coming of Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) refers to the arrival of Allah's ﷻ command, and the descending of Allah ﷻ in the last third of the night relates to the descending of His mercy. Shaytan (Satan) will inspire these distortions (Tahreef) and cause a Muslim who follows them to believe they are doing so to protect Monotheism (Tawheed).

Avoiding corrupt interpretation (Ta'weel)

The danger of misinterpreting the Attributes is like any other innovation (Bid'ah) because the foundational concepts appear pleasing and beautiful. Despite the great merit in associating beauty with our Lord, innovation (Bid'ah) of any sort, even the most beautiful and appealing

⁽¹⁾ Quran (112:1-4), Sahih International trans.

interpretations of Attributes, are contrary to Revelation. In principle, we must apply a foundational rule to our comprehension of any subject of theology which states that we cannot take a word from its apparent linguistic meaning to a hidden meaning without evidence. Allah ﷻ rebuked the children of Isra'il for changing interpretation of meanings. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لِيَّأُ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي
الَّذِينَ ءَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِن لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾
[النساء:46]

“There are such among the Jews, who pervert the original meanings of the WORDS (they do not preserve the authenticity of the Revelations)... They play with their tongues to form false concepts in regards to Religion and to mean: ‘We hear and we disobey,’ ‘Hear, but do not be heard,’ and ‘Raina—limited in understanding.’ If they had said, ‘We hear and we obey,’ ‘Hear’ and ‘Unthurna—watch over us’ it would have been better and more correct for them.”⁽¹⁾

4. How does the Attribute look?

After Shaytan (Satan) fails in his misleading *Fasid* attempts in the areas of negation (Ta'teel), resemblance (Tamtheel *or* Tajseem), distortion (Tahreef), and corrupted interpretation (Ta'weel), he will incite the Muslim to consider the modality of Attributes. He will tempt the intellect with the question, ‘How?’

Eluding the question ‘How?’

Adherence to the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) will remove a Muslim from the intellectual trial of questioning the modality of Divine Attributes.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, “Shaytan (Satan) comes to one of you and says, ‘Who created so-and-so? Who created so-and-so?’ till he says, ‘Who has created your Lord?’ So, when he reaches up to such a question, one should seek refuge with Allah and give up such thoughts.”⁽²⁾

The wording in Sahih Muslim includes the Prophet ﷺ saying, “Whoever experiences any of that, let him say: ‘I believe in Allah.’”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (4:46), Hulusi trans.

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (3276).

⁽³⁾ Muslim (343).

We must realize that Allah ﷻ did not command us to discriminate the nature and the reality of His Attributes. We are unable to discriminate ‘why’ since we are incapable of comprehending such a reality.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Reflect deeply upon the creation, but do not reflect upon the essence of the Creator. Verily, His essence cannot be known other than to believe in it.”**⁽¹⁾ Hence, the Prophet ﷺ advised us to reflect upon the creation of Allah ﷻ. Aspects of creation such as the Throne (Al-Arsh), the Bearers of the Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh, a group of Angels), and the Footstool (Al-Kursi) are evidence of His great Attributes.

The caller to Islam (Da’i) needs to remember the following rule:

لا يعلم كيف الله إلا الله

“Only Allah Knows How Allah is.”

We believe these Attributes have essence and function based on what we understand from the Arabic language, but we do not dictate how they work, and we cut off all hopes to reach that conclusion. We also need to remember this rule:

أن تقطع الأمل في الكيفية تقديراً بالجنان، أو قولاً باللسان، أو تحريراً بالبنان

What the above translates as is that it would be best if we cut off every hope and desire to discover the formation, nature, reality, and functionality of Allah’s ﷻ Attributes by producing an image through the mind, the spoken narrative, or the drawing and painting skills.

5. What if Shaytan (Satan) succeeds?

Considering the consequences of following interpretation or negation of Divine Attributes should strengthen the resolve to be steadfast upon the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). If Shaytan (Satan) succeeds in making us visualize Allah’s ﷻ Divine Essence or one of His Names and Attributes in a certain shape, we must refrain and interrupt the insinuation and say *Subhan Allah* (Allah is above that!). The presence of whispering (Waswas) from Shaytan (Satan) is a sign that one is on the correct path because he despairs to beguile you.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that some Companions (Sahabah) came to the Prophet ﷺ complaining about Satanic insinuations. They said to him, **“We find in ourselves something that is too awful**

⁽¹⁾ Musnad Ar-Rabi’ (742), Hassan by Al-Albani.

for any of us to speak of it.’ He said, ‘Do you really find that?’ They said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘That is clear Faith (Iman).’”(1)

An-Nawawi رحمه الله said in his commentary on the above Narration (Hadith) that the Companions (Sahabah) were so afraid of speaking of the insinuations and believing them that it was a sign that they were free of doubt.(2) Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله wrote that it means that: **“The Shaytan (Satan) only whispers to those whom he despairs of tempting because he is unable to tempt them. As for the disbeliever (kafir), he can approach him in any manner he wants and is not restricted to whisperings (Waswas). Based on this, what the Narration (Hadith) means is that the cause of whisperings (Waswas) is pure Faith (Iman), or that whisperings (Waswas) are a sign of pure Faith (Iman).”**(3)

Ceasing, and desisting from Shaytan (Satan)

If Shaytan (Satan) comes to insinuate to you to picture Allah ﷻ in a certain way, remember the rule **‘Only Allah knows How He is.’** Hence, you stop the Satanic inspiration immediately with the verbalizing of **‘Subhan Allah.’** Consequently, one may use this invocation to purify our minds and hearts of every dictation of shape, nature, and reality regarding the Divine Names and Attributes.

One may also say, “I believe in Allah and His Messenger,” as exemplified in the following Narration (Hadith). Aishah رضي الله عنها narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“The Shaytan (Satan) comes to one of you and says, ‘Who created you?’ And he says ‘Allah.’ Then the Shaytan (Satan) says, ‘Who created Allah?’ Let him say ‘Amantu Billahi Wa Rusulihi’ (I believe in Allah and His Messengers) if that happens to any one of you. Then that will go away from him.”**(4)

A Muslim may aid oneself in avoiding wrongful contemplation of the Attributes by being occupied with acts of worship and pursuit of knowledge that are known, and explained by the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) who had an authentic understanding of our Lord and His Attributes. This is to be certain of following the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) and eschewing Shaytan (Satan).

Imam Ibn Rajab رحمه الله wrote, **“People who are under the influence of Shaytan’s (Satan) whisperings are likely to obey his commands, and reject the Sunnah of the Prophet and his Companions (Sahabah).... Shaytan’s (Satan) control over such people has led them to obey him blindly. It is similar to the school of the [speculative theologians] who deny the facts of the creation and things which are perceptible through senses.... It is all an exaggeration in their**

(1) Muslim (340).

(2) *Explanation of Sahih Muslim*, An-Nawawi, trans. unknown.

(3) *Majmu’ Al-Fatawa*, Ibn Taymiyyah (22/608), trans. unknown.

(4) Ahmad (25671), Hassan by Al-Albani.

obedience to Shaytan (Satan), and acceptance of his whisperings (Waswas); so whoever reaches this level of obedience to Shaytan (Satan) has achieved complete obedience to him.”⁽¹⁾

What are the benefits of affirmation?

There are many benefits we gain from affirming the Divine Attributes without the five violations [(negation (Ta’teel), distortion (Tahreef), corrupt interpretation (Ta’weel), resemblance (Tamtheel), and dictating the modality)]. They are a part of the noble reward for the seeker of knowledge. A Muslim should be bound to knowledge with a passion for pursuing and implementing it upon an evidence-based method. This keenness is a shield against innovation (Bid’ah), and the benefit of it is only with the help of Allah ﷻ. Zeal for knowledge, purity of intention, and integrity of method will prepare a Muslim to engage in calling others to Islam (Dawah) using the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of Allah, and do not feel helpless.”**⁽²⁾ Non-exclusive gains include:

- ◆ We save ourselves from deviation (Ilhad) regarding Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes, against which Allah ﷻ warned us.
- ◆ Affirming the Divine Names and Attributes means we believe in all the Divine texts associated with the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
- ◆ Affirming the Divine Names and Attributes the way the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (Sahabah) understood them will lead us to actualize the knowledge of them in our lives.
- ◆ Awareness of the Attributes is associated with specific acts of worship, which increases the servant’s fear and love for Allah ﷻ (Khushu).

6. What are the consequences of negation (Ta’teel)?

Likewise, believing in the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ while entertaining one of the five violations will have a series of consequences. Some of the non-exclusive consequences include:

- ◆ Compound ignorance of belonging to the sect which deviated from the correct understanding of the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.

⁽¹⁾ *Waswasah: the whispering of the Shaitan*, Ibn Al-Qayyim. Interpretation of *Dham al-Muwaswiseen wat-Tahdheere minal Waswasah*, by Ibn Qudama. Elaceri trans. Al-Firdous Ltd, London. (p. 30-31).

⁽²⁾ Ibn Majah (79).



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- ◆ Belying the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), which speak of these Names and Attributes.
- ◆ Loss of benefit of the Names and Attributes, and actualizing them in life and in worship.



Chapter Two

Allah's ﷻ Divine Essence

Under the shade of the 12 rules, we developed a Structured Seven Question Query (SSQQ) that can guide our understanding of Allah's ﷻ Attributes. This is a necessity because of the diversity and complex nature of speculative theology practiced by many Muslim sects. In addition, calling non-Muslims to Islam (Dawah) often involves discussing the nature of our Lord because many People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) base their understanding on speculative theology. Our position cannot be rhetorical, philosophical, or avoidance. Rather, the caller to Islam (Da'i) must have a structured response. The issue of Divine Essence and Selfhood of our Lord is significant in calling non-Muslims to Islam (Dawah) in the West, due to the polytheistic nature and anthropomorphic qualities of Judeo-Christian theology. Therefore, it is important to apply the SSQQ to this issue:

1. Why must we affirm the Attribute?
2. Can we affirm the Attribute without negation (Ta'teel) and resemblance (Tamtheel)?
3. Can the Attribute be personally interpreted?
4. How does the Attribute look?
5. What if Shaytan (Satan) succeeds?
6. What are the benefits of affirmation?
7. What are the consequences of negation (Ta'teel)?

Allah's ﷻ Divine Essence

We believe that Allah ﷻ has a Divine Essence, free from imperfection in the highest degree of magnificence. The most significant Verse (Ayah) in the Quran concerning this topic is Ayat ul-Kursi.⁽¹⁾ This Verse (Ayah) describes the greatness of our Lord's Divine Essence. The most significant Chapter (Surah) which discusses the unique monotheistic qualities of our Lord is Chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās.⁽²⁾ While there is sufficient evidence in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), the caller to Islam (Da'i) may rely heavily on these two references.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:255)

⁽²⁾ Quran (112:1-4)

Why must we affirm the Attribute?

We must affirm the Attributes of the Essence because we have textual evidence to confirm, the first of which was mentioned above. Refusing to acknowledge the Divine Essence is tantamount to belying the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).

The last words of Khubaib bin Adi رضي الله عنه is an example of the firmness of the praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) upon belief in the Divine Essence. At the time when the disbelievers were putting Khubaib رضي الله عنه to death, he said, “As I am martyred as a Muslim, I do not care in what way I receive my death for Allah's sake, for this is for the Cause [lit. the Essence في ذات] of Allah. If He wishes, He will bless the cut limbs of my body.”⁽¹⁾

Another evidence which was mentioned in several forms from multiple sources is from Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه who narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Contemplate on the signs of Allah but do not think about Allah (Himself).”⁽²⁾

1. Can we affirm without negation (Ta'teel) and resemblance (Tamtheel)?

We affirm the Attribute of Selfhood for our Lord, The Most High, according to the rule:

[الشورى: 11] ﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

“There is nothing like unto Him.”⁽³⁾

Affirmation is mandatory because if we refrain from affirming the Attribute of the Divine Essence, we will then approve of the deviant belief that Allah ﷻ is a spirit that dwells in His creation. The concept of divine selfhood existing as a pantheistic spirit is known and believed by the majority of Christians, Animists, and extreme Sufis. We cannot engage in calling them to Islam (Dawah) and discourse with any of these groups unless we affirm our Lord has a Divine Essence and Selfhood.

2. Can the Attribute be personally interpreted?

The Attribute of our Lord's Essence and Selfhood must not be interpreted by an individual. One of the foundations of freedom of religion in the West is respect for personal interpretation of the Divine Essence. We believe there is no compulsion in religion, and we respect personal freedoms, but we say theology must be based on Revelation. The evidence for this is in the sending of all the Prophets as a means to guide towards Monotheism in worship (Tawheed Uluhiyyah).

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (3989).

⁽²⁾ Musnad Ar-Rabi' (742), Hassan by Al-Albani; At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat.

⁽³⁾ Quran (42:11), Sahih International trans.

One of the 12 rules concerning the Divine Attributes states that a believer cannot prefer a hidden meaning over a word or concept that has an apparent meaning without evidence. Following a personal opinion in theology is analogous to following a hidden meaning because it is a meaning which is innovated and unknown from revealed evidence or explanations of the Companions (Sahabah) who witnessed the Revelation. Following a personal interpretation is an act of distorting and twisting the meaning of the Attributes of our Lord.

3. How does the Attribute look?

We are not allowed to question how regarding the modality of the Attributes of our Lord, The Most High. A believer must be aware that Shaytan (Satan) triggers the question of ‘how’ concerning the modality of the Divine Attributes of Allah ﷻ. The callers to Islam (Du’aat) should be aware that ‘how’ is one of the most common challenges the people in the West will bring to obfuscate our invitation to Islam (Dawah). The caller to Islam (Da’i) should respond to the challenge of ‘how is our Lord?’ with consideration of the following:

- ◆ Imam Malik's ﷺ criteria of understanding the Attribute of Rising over the Throne (Istawa).
- ◆ Only Allah ﷻ Knows How Allah ﷻ is.
- ◆ We must cut off every hope and desire to discover the formation, nature, reality, and functionality of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
- ◆ We should avoid innovating imagery of His Selfhood in the mind, the spoken narrative, drawing or painting.
- ◆ We reflect upon creation, such as the Footstool (Al-Kursi), the Throne (Al-Arsh), and the Angels who bear the Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh); all of which are unseen and impossible to comprehend. The complexity and incomprehensibility of the unseen is evidence that the Essence of Allah ﷻ is beyond our grasp.

4. What if Shaytan (Satan) succeeds?

Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), the Muslim who considers this question in sincerity, is taking responsibility for his actions. Allah ﷻ allows some doubt to inform the Muslim who is stepping into an area which Allah ﷻ did not permit. Awareness that Shaytan’s (Satan) schemes can cause doubt is the first step to turn him on his heels in failure. If Shaytan (Satan) incites contemplation of the Selfhood of Allah ﷻ, one should follow short steps of mitigation:

- ◆ Immediately refrain from contemplating Allah’s ﷻ Essence or Selfhood.
- ◆ Say ‘Subhan Allah,’ which means ‘Allah is above’ the contemplated image or attribute.
- ◆ Say, ‘I seek refuge with Allah.’
- ◆ Say, ‘I believe in Allah and His Messenger.’

5. What are the benefits of Affirmation?

We understand Allah's ﷻ Divine Essence in a way that suits His majestic greatness, and according to the rule, **'There is nothing like unto Him.'** Therefore, we are banned from employing our intellect to picture Allah's ﷻ Divine Essence in an explicit way. However, if one wishes to have an idea, we can ponder upon other creations of Allah ﷻ, such as the Throne (Al-Arsh), the Angels that hold the Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh), the Footstool (Al-Kursi), and the whole universe with its trillions of stars.

If Shaytan (Satan) returns to make us contemplate the Essence, we say 'Subhan Allah' and refrain from entertaining the insinuation. No one knows how Allah ﷻ is except Allah ﷻ. No one knows the reality and nature of His Divine Essence except Him. Whatever the human mind may deduce, Allah ﷻ is above that.

We believe that Allah ﷻ has a Divine Essence in reality and a nature that suits His Majesty. We do not dictate the modality, and we cut off all hopes to reach that. Nevertheless, we do not refrain from the Attribute rather, when we affirm what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ affirmed, there are gains and benefits. Amongst them:

Consistency regarding the Attributes

Affirming the Attribute of the Divine Essence of Allah ﷻ is essential. It reflects our firm belief and complete conviction and is a necessary part of a whole comprehensive submission to our Lord. Since there is textual evidence to establish His Divine Essence, then we must affirm it. Rejection of the essence is the rejection of all the Attributes.

Refutation of unity of existence (Wahdat Al-Wujud) and the trinity

When we affirm the attribute of the Essence and its real nature above the Throne (Al-Arsh), it negates the transverse. This establishes the belief that Allah ﷻ is not part of His creation in any form or shape. Hence, affirmation of it refutes the ideology of unity of existence or being (Wahdat Al-Wujud), the incarnation approach, and the excuse idol worshipers present to justify their act of polytheism (shirk). The pantheistic claim that Allah ﷻ is a spirit intrinsic in everything is a violation of Monotheism (Tawheed). There is no evidence in the Quran or Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) where Allah ﷻ referred to Himself as a spirit. On the contrary, Allah ﷻ refers to the spirit as part of His creation. Affirmation of a Selfhood for Allah ﷻ above the Throne (Al-Arsh) is a compulsory negation of polytheism (shirk); only the Creator can be outside of creation, and there can be only One Creator.

Proving the validity of the question ‘Where is Allah?’

The question ‘Where is Allah?’ is a challenge, and a burden to polytheists and Muslims who are upon innovation (Bid’ah). The affirmation of the locus of our Lord closes the door on polytheism (shirk) and pantheism. It also gives insight into the evidence-based method that Islamic theology must be based upon. In turn, the evidence-based method supports the correct understanding of our Lord Most High and His Attributes of Self. This is established through the following Narration (Hadith). Mua’wiyah bin Al-Hakam رضي الله عنه reported, **“I had a servant woman who used to look after some sheep of mine. I am a man from among the sons of Adam, and I get upset as they get upset, (and in my anger) I slapped her. I came to the Messenger of Allah, and he regarded that as a grievous action on my part. I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, should I set her free?’ He said: ‘Bring her to me.’ So I brought her to him and he said to her: ‘Where is Allah?’ She said: ‘Above the heavens.’ He said: ‘Who am I?’ She said: ‘You are the Messenger of Allah.’ He said: ‘Set her free, for she is a believer.”**⁽¹⁾

We also have other evidence in Chapter (Surah) Al-Mulk. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورٌ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْمُونَ كَيْفَ

نَذِيرٍ ﴿المَلِك: 16-17﴾

“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you and suddenly it would sway? Or do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not send against you a storm of stones? Then you would know how [severe] was My warning.”⁽²⁾

The Prophet ﷺ said in an authentic Narration (Hadith), **“The merciful are shown mercy by Ar-Rahman. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens.”**⁽³⁾

Allah’s ﷻ Highness does not negate His nearness

The Attribute of our Lord established in the above evidence can be described as highness in the sense of the meaning of the word while we do not fully understand the reality of highness from other than our position on the earth. The evidence-based method established that Allah ﷻ is above the heavens. Those who reject the crystal-clear evidence that Allah ﷻ is above His creation do so

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (1199, 1200).

⁽²⁾ Quran (67:16-17), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Muslim (1924); Abu Dawud (4941); Al-Hakim (109/4); Ibn Abi Shaybah (338/8).

because it contradicts their position that our Lord is everywhere. They cannot reconcile Allah’s ﷻ Highness with His nearness because it is incongruous to human spatial relations. Rather than reconciling and harmonizing evidence, the people of innovation (Bid’ah) reject evidence that does not harmonize with their ideology.

This position weakens the concept of calling others to Islam (Dawah) because it portrays our corpus of evidence as being rife with contradiction. The correct position is what has been mentioned in the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), and promised that both would be protected. Contradiction is not in the evidence-based method but is in our understanding. Below is an authentic situation that confirms that the Highness of our Lord does not negate His closeness.

Khawlah bint Thalabah ﷺ visited the Prophet ﷺ to complain about her husband Awais bin As-Sammit ﷺ. Aishah ﷺ said, **“Praise be to Allah Whose hearing encompasses all voices. Khawlah came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ complaining about her husband, but I could not hear what she said. Then Allah The Mighty and Sublime, revealed:**

﴿قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ﴾ [المجادلة:1]

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, [O Muhammad], concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing.” (1) (2)

6. What are the consequences of negation (Tat’teel)?

There are devastating consequences if we do not affirm the Attribute of Allah’s ﷻ Divine Essence. Reflect upon the following elements of creation, which Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ mentioned in one Narration (Hadith), connecting them and our Lord in a spatial arrangement.

Remember, if a Muslim chooses not to affirm Allah’s ﷻ Divine Essence, he is, in turn, striking out all the elements in this evidence. Likewise, a caller to Islam (Da’i) may refer non-Muslims to the creation as evidence of a Creator who transcends earthly terms and perspectives. Abdullah bin Mas’ud ﷺ said, **“Between the lowest heaven and the one above it is (a distance of) five hundred years, and between each heaven and the next is (a distance of) five hundred years marching.”** (3) **Between the seventh heaven and the Footstool (Al-Kursi) is (a distance of) five hundred years. Between the Footstool (Al-Kursi) and the water is (a distance of) five hundred**

(1) Nasa’i (3490); Ibn Majah (188); Bukhari (Vol. 9, Ch. 9 introduction).

(2) Quran(58:1).

(3) According to another report: “The thickness of each heaven is a distance of five hundred years marching.”

years. The Throne (Al-Arsh) is above the water and Allah is above the Throne (Al-Arsh), and none of your deeds are concealed from Him.”⁽¹⁾

Denying, rejecting, or negating the Attribute of the Divine Essence will strike out all these elements of the universe, and in turn, negate the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), which addressed them:

I. The seven heavens and the seven earths

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾ [الطلاق: 12]

“It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.”⁽²⁾

II. The Angels who bear the Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧﴾ [غافر: 7]

“Those [Angels] who carry the Throne (Al-Arsh) and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed, [saying], ‘Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire (Jahannam).’”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah (9105), trans. Unknown; Sahih by Adh-Dhahabi and Ibn Al-Qayyim in *Ijtma Al Juwaish Al-Islamiyah* (p. 100).

⁽²⁾ Quran (65:12), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (40:7), Sahih International trans.

Moreover, Allah ﷻ talks about the great Angels that carry the Throne (Hamlat Al-Arsh). They are magnificent creatures from the best of Allah’s ﷻ Angels. On the Day of Judgement (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), Allah ﷻ tells us there will be eight Angels that will bear His Throne (Al-Arsh). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَىٰ أَزْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ﴾ [الحاقة: 17]

“And the Angels are at its edges. And there will bear the Throne (Al-Arsh) of your Lord above them, that Day, eight [of them].”⁽¹⁾

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I have been given permission to speak of one of the Angels of Allah, one of the bearers of the Throne (Al-Arsh). The distance between his earlobe and his shoulder is like the distance of seven hundred years’ travel.”⁽²⁾ It was also narrated with the wording, “The distance is (like) that of a bird flying for seven hundred years.”

III. The ocean (Al-Bahr) above the heavens

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾ [هود: 7]

“And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne (Al-Arsh) had been upon water—that He might test you as to which of you is best in deed.”⁽³⁾

Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah decided the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.” He said, “And His Throne is above the water.”⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (69:17), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Abu Dawud (4727).

⁽³⁾ Quran (11:7), Sahih International trans.

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (6748); Adh-Dhahabi in *Al-‘Alw*, Sahih by Al-Albani.

IV. The Footstool (Al-Kursi) is above the ocean

The Footstool (Al-Kursi) is a component of the Throne (Al-Arsh), and Allah ﷻ is above the Throne (Al-Arsh), yet He knows everything, and nothing is hidden. The Footstool (Al-Kursi) has all the heavens and the earth under it. Allah ﷻ said:

[البقرة: 255] ﴿وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ﴾

“His Footstool (Al-Kursi) extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not.”⁽¹⁾

In an authentic Narration (Hadith), the Prophet ﷺ said, “The seven heavens in relation to the Footstool (Al-Kursi) are like a ring thrown into a desert, and likewise the Footstool (Al-Kursi) compared to the Throne (Al-Arsh) is like a ring thrown into a desert.”⁽²⁾

V. The Throne (Al-Arsh) above the Footstool (Al-Kursi)

Abdullah bin Mas’ud رضي الله عنه, a Companion (Sahabi) of the Prophet ﷺ, said, “Between the lowest heaven and the one after it is the distance of five hundred years. And between every two heavens is the distance of five hundred years, and between the seventh heaven and the Footstool (Al-Kursi) is the distance of five hundred years, and between the Footstool (Al-Kursi) and the water is the distance of five hundred years. The Throne (Al-Arsh) is above the water. Allah, the Almighty is above the Throne (Al-Arsh). And nothing is hidden from Allah of your deeds.”⁽³⁾

Additional Evidence to Support the SSQQ

1. Allah’s ﷻ Divine Essence is above the Throne (Al-Arsh)

When we say that Allah ﷻ is above the sky, it does not mean that Allah ﷻ is within the boundaries of the sky. Rather, Allah ﷻ is above His creation. The first piece of evidence would be His Names. Allah’s ﷻ Names: The High, The Highest, The Most High. Allah ﷻ named Himself with three Names relevant to the Attributes of highness and aboveness:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:255)

⁽²⁾ *Kitab Al-Arsh*, Ibn Abi Shaybah (1/114). Bayhaqi in *As-Asma was-Sifaat* (p.290); A t-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*; Hassan by Al-Albani (109).

⁽³⁾ *An-Naqd*, Ad-Darimi (1/422); *Al'Adhamah*, Abu Ash-Shaykh Al-Asbahani (2/688-689); *Al-Mujalasa wa Jawahir Al-Ilm*, Ahmad ad-Daynuri (6/406); *Sharh I'tiqad Ahl As-Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, Al-Lalikai (3/395-396).

I. The High (Al-A'lee)

Allah ﷻ has mentioned one of the last two Names in the most significant Verse (Ayah) of the Quran. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ [البقرة: 255]

“...and He is the Most High, the Most Great.”⁽¹⁾

II. The Highest (Al-Ala')

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى﴾ [الأعلى: 1]

“Exalt the Name of your Lord, the Most High.”⁽²⁾

III. The Most High (Al-Muta'l)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالَى﴾ [الرعد: 9]

“[He is] Knower of the unseen (Ghayb) and the witnessed, the Grand, the Exalted.”⁽³⁾

Allah's ﷻ Highness is engrained in our Fitrah

The innate instinct of man is the **Fitrah**. Fitrah is the state of purity and innocence in which all humans were born with a predisposition to worship Allah ﷻ alone. There should be no dispute that man instinctively knows that Allah ﷻ is above the heavens. Whenever something overwhelming befalls a person, and he turns to Allah ﷻ for help, he looks towards heaven, not in any other

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:255), Sahih Muslim trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (87:1), Ali trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (13:9), Sahih International trans.

direction. But it is strange that those who deny that Allah ﷻ is above His creation still raise their hands in supplication to no other direction than heaven.

The Pharaoh admitted Allah's ﷻ Highness

Even Pharaoh, the enemy of Allah ﷻ instructed his minister Haman to expose Allah ﷻ in His heights. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانَ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى ﴿غافر: 36﴾ ﴾

“And Pharaoh said, ‘O Haman, construct for me a tower that I might reach the ways. The ways into the heavens—so that I may look at the deity of Musa (Moses).’”⁽¹⁾

Deeds are raised above to Him

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ ﴿١٠﴾ ﴾ [فاطر: 10]

“The Angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.”⁽²⁾

Allah ﷻ also said that the Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and other Angels ascend to Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾ [المعارج: 4]

“The Angels and the Spirit [Jibreel (Gabriel)] ascend to Him in a Day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years.”⁽³⁾

(1) Quran (40:36-37), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (35:10), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (70:4), Sahih International trans.

During supplicating, we raise our hands and sights

When we supplicate, we normally raise our hands up. The Prophet ﷺ also used to raise his hands towards heaven when he supplicated. For example, during the exchange the Prophet ﷺ had with his Companions (Sahabah) on the day of Arafat, after concluding his farewell speech, the Prophet ﷺ held a gesture of pointing up with his finger when addressing them. He asked the people, **“Have I not conveyed the message?”** And they said, **“Yes!”** He said. **“O Allah, bear witness!”** While pointing up to the sky and then at the people. ⁽¹⁾

Allah raised Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to Himself

Allah ﷻ said about Prophet Isa (Jesus) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

﴿بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 158]

“Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.”⁽²⁾

Common sense

Highness is a quality that is associated in people’s minds with perfection. If this is the case, then it should be attributed to Allah ﷻ because every absolute perfection should be attributed to Him.



⁽¹⁾ Ibn Majah (3055)

⁽²⁾ Quran (4:158).

Part Six
Actualizing Allah's ﷻ Names
Chapter One
Allah Ar-Rahman (The Beneficent)

A second example of exploring and absorbing the Names of our Lord is in the Name of Ar-Rahman. **Ahsaha** of this name renders the virtues and benefits much more than a memorizing of the Name.

The mechanism relevant to the Names of Allah ﷻ is the true meaning of **Ahsaha**—enumerating—which comprises the following four steps:

1. Validating the Name of Allah Ar-Rahman.
2. Perceiving the Name correctly.
3. Identifying the effect of the Name.
4. Praising and supplicating Allah ﷻ using the Name.

The incentive in the Narration (Hadith) narrated by Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه is that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Allah has ninety-nine Names, one-hundred less one; and he who memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise (Jannah).”**⁽¹⁾ The Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) tells us that whoever counts the Names of Allah ﷻ is promised admittance into Paradise (Jannah). Let us hope in Allah ﷻ that His Name Ar-Rahman is amongst the ninety-nine Names mentioned in the above Narration (Hadith), and we should validate, and enrich our hope by facts, like these mentioned below:

- ◆ The Name of Allah Ar-Rahman appears in the Quran in fifty-seven places, six of them paired with Ar-Raheem.
- ◆ The Name of Allah Ar-Rahman is among the three Names in the *'Basmalah,'* which we recite at the beginning of each Chapter (Surah) except At-Tawbah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ [الْفَاتِحَةُ: 1]

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (7392); Muslim (6809, 6810).

“In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.”⁽¹⁾

- ◆ The Name of Allah Ar-Rahman is the only Name of Allah ﷻ that a Chapter (Surah) of the Quran is named after.
- ◆ The Name of Allah Ar-Rahman is the only Name that Allah ﷻ used equally to His proper Name in Chapter (Surah) Al-Isra.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا بِصَلَاتِكُمْ وَلَا تَخَافَتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ

سَبِيلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ [الإسراء: 110]

“Say, ‘Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [Name] you call—to Him belong the best Names.’ And do not recite [too] loudly in your prayer or [too] quietly but seek between that an [intermediate] way.”⁽²⁾

1. Validating the Name ‘Ar-Rahman’

The first meaning of **Ahsaha** is to recall the Name Ar-Rahman and memorize it. Therefore, we must provide evidence from the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) to call Him by the Name Allah Ar-Rahman, even if the amount of evidence in the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) is more remarkable. Below are authentic Narrations (Sahih Ahadith) from the Prophet ﷺ, which establish the Name of Allah Ar-Rahman in his Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition).

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The word ‘Ar-Rahm’ (womb) derives its root from the Name Ar-Rahman. Allah said, ‘I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, (womb i.e., kith and kin) and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you, (womb, i.e., kith and kin).”⁽³⁾

Another Narration (Hadith) of Abdullah bin Mas’ud رضي الله عنه recounts that the Prophet ﷺ said, “There are three reasons why horses are kept: A horse that is kept for Ar-Rahman (the Most Beneficent), a horse kept for Shaytan (Satan) and a horse kept for the man. As for the horse kept for Ar-Rahman, it is the horse that is being kept for the cause of Allah (for Jihad), and as such, its food, dung, and urine, etc., (he made mention of many things). As for the horse that is for Shaytan (Satan), it is one that is being used for gambling. As for the horse that is

⁽¹⁾ Quran, Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (17:110), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (5988).

for man, it is the horse that one tethers, seeking its benefit. For him, this horse will be a shield against poverty.”⁽¹⁾

2. Perceiving Ar-Rahman correctly

Evidence mentions Ar-Rahman, and it is incumbent to understand the meanings as the first three praised generations (Al-Salaf Al-Salih) understood them. The derived Attribute must be explored and expounded with the majesty the Name implies, and understanding should be consistent around it.

The Name of Allah Ar-Rahman means the Beneficent, The Kindest, and Giving; The One who continually showers all creation with blessings and prosperity without any disparity; The One who is most kind, loving, and merciful, whose endless loving mercy is perfect and inclusive.

Allah’s ﷻ Mercy

Allah ﷻ is described with the Attribute ‘Merciful.’ Some theologians and skeptics have failed to understand many of Allah’s ﷻ Attributes and therefore misinterpreted them. Their failure to construe the reality of Allah’s ﷻ Attributes stems from their conception of these Attributes as they relate to human beings. As a human quality, mercy was created to trigger feelings and physical responses, such as softness in the heart, crying, and perhaps the sense of vulnerability.

Allah’s ﷻ Mercy is befitting His Majesty, and like all His Names and Attributes, it cannot be grasped by our limited minds. We can only observe and perceive their effects on us. Therefore, the way of our righteous predecessors was that they believed in all the Divine Attributes as described in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) without seeking to know the nature of these Attributes, such as likening Divine Mercy to human mercy.

The Mercy of Allah ﷻ is of two types

General Mercy

Allah’s ﷻ general Mercy is bestowed upon all of His creation throughout the universe. This Mercy emanates from Allah’s ﷻ Attribute of Ar-Rahman. This Mercy is all-encompassing and even touches the non-believers. All of His creations are living peacefully and nurtured, with all their sicknesses cured and needs fulfilled because of the existence of this Mercy. The universal existence of the virtue of nurturing proves that this Mercy does not differentiate between a believer and a non-believer.

⁽¹⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir (8:60); Ahmad (3756).

Special Mercy

Allah ﷻ directs His special Mercy towards the believers in this world (Dunya) and the Hereafter (Akhirah). This is the manifestation of His Mercy towards the believers, and His guidance and peace, which He bestows upon them. Allah ﷻ guides them to lead an honorable, pure, and wholesome life in this world (Dunya) and a great reward in the Hereafter (Akhirah). Allah ﷻ says:

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةًۭ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [النحل: 97]

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer—We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter (Akhirah)] according to the best of what they used to do.”⁽¹⁾

When one contemplates the high value of being a believer and the life that those who have Faith (Iman) in Allah ﷻ live, one will never fail to recognize that the life of a believer is more worthy and honorable than that lived by one who does not believe nor has Faith (Iman) in Allah ﷻ.

Examples of Allah’s ﷻ Mercy

We can never truly comprehend the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, but here are some examples.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“I heard Allah’s Messenger saying, ‘Allah has divided Mercy into one hundred parts, and He kept ninety-nine parts with Him and sent down one part on the earth; and because of that one single part, His creations are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts up its hoof away from its baby animal, lest it should trample on it.’”⁽²⁾**

Imagine how much a mother has mercy for a child, from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Imagine if that mercy could somehow be captured and placed in a bottle. Overall, to capture all the mercy that ever existed from the beginning of time until the end will only represent one percent of the one-hundred parts of the Mercy that Allah ﷻ created. The ninety-nine other parts of

⁽¹⁾ Quran (16:97), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (6000).

this created Mercy Allah ﷻ has reserved for the believers on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah).

Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه said, “Some Saby (i.e., war prisoners, children, and women only) were brought before the Prophet and behold, a woman amongst them was milking her breasts to feed, and whenever she found a child amongst the captives, she took it over her chest and nursed it (she had lost her child but later she found him). The Prophet said to us, ‘Do you think that this lady can throw her son in the fire?’ We replied, ‘No, if she has the power not to throw it (in the fire).’ The Prophet then said, ‘Allah is more Merciful to His servants than this lady to her child.’”⁽¹⁾

Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim

Allah ﷻ paired Ar-Rahman with another Name in the Quran, namely Ar-Raheem. Both Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem imply the Attributes of mercy, compassion, kindness, and gentleness. The two Names are about Allah’s ﷻ Attribute of ‘Mercy.’ Ar-Rahman is ‘The Most Compassionate,’ or ‘The Most Gracious.’ Ar-Raheem is ‘The Most Merciful.’ Both Names imply the Attribute of Mercy, but the two Names do not mean the same thing even when mentioned together. In fact, they appear together six times in the Quran. As we previously indicated, both appear in the *Basmalah* (Bism Allah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem) as well as in Chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah.

Ar-Rahman indicates Allah’s ﷻ Mercy as an Attribute of the Divine Essence of Allah ﷻ. Meanwhile, Ar-Raheem is an Attribute connected to Allah’s ﷻ Divine Will and those who are subject to His Mercy, such as humans and animals. In other words, Ar-Rahman is related to Allah’s ﷻ most comprehensive and encompassing and eternal expressions of Mercy, while Ar-Raheem indicates Allah’s ﷻ practical Mercy.

Scholars (Ulama) supported this approach with multiple pieces of evidence in the Quran and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition), and the most profound one is the mentioning of Ar-Rahman in association with His Magnificent Throne (Al-Arsh). Allah ﷻ described His Footstool (Al-Kursi), which is below the Throne (Al-Arsh), as encompassing the heavens and the earth. Likewise, the Name Ar-Rahman includes all levels and meanings of Mercy in this life and the Hereafter (Akhirah). His Mercy encompasses and touches everything in the universe, including humans, jinn, animals, and all forms of life in the sea and on land. The Prophet ﷺ spoke of Allah’s ﷻ Mercy in a Qudsi Narration (Hadith). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “**When Allah had finished creation,**

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (5999); Muslim (6978).

He ordained for Himself in His Book which is with Him above the Throne (Al-Arsh): ‘My Mercy prevails over My Wrath.’”(1)

The Name ‘Ar-Rahman,’ like the Name ‘Allah,’ is an exclusive Name for Allah ﷻ alone. No human being can claim this Name, and it is forbidden for Muslims to name themselves by it, except with the prefix ‘Abd,’ which means a slave or servant. On the other hand, human beings may take the name of Raheem. Allah ﷻ said about the Prophet ﷺ:

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ [التوبة: 128]

“Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad) is anxious over you [to be rightly guided, to repent to Allah, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins, in order that you may enter Paradise (Jannah) and be saved from the punishment of the Hellfire(Jahannam)], for the believers (he is) full of pity, kind, and merciful.”(2)

There is another difference that some scholars (Ulama) mentioned but refuted. They said Ar-Raheem is exclusive to the believers on Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah). There is a reference in Chapter (Surah) Al-Baqarah to Allah ﷻ being Merciful (Raheem) to the people in this world.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ عِبَادَهُ إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَشَدِيدٌ﴾ [البقرة: 143]

(1) Muslim (6969, 6970, 6971); Bukhari (3194, 7553).

(2) Quran (9:128), Hilali trans.

“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the Qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your Faith (Iman). Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.”⁽¹⁾

3. Identifying the effects of Ar-Rahman on you

The individual who knows that Allah ﷻ is the Merciful (Ar-Rahman), will identify the impact of mercy on their life. It causes a reevaluation of the relationship with Allah ﷻ, between the servant and the Master.

It necessitates our love for Allah ﷻ

When someone shows excessive and abundant mercy, there is no response except to love that being—and to Allah ﷻ belongs the Highest similitude of Mercy—then how much more should we love Allah ﷻ knowing every good we receive from creation; the actual cause of that blessing is because of Him.

It instills in a believer shyness from disobeying Allah’s ﷻ Commandments

When someone has showered you with gifts, it becomes relatively hard to be ungrateful and go against his commands. Look at Prophet Nuh (Noah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ rebuking his people who worshiped others beside Him despite all the bounties Allah ﷻ bestowed upon them. Prophet Nuh (Noah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ started with reminding them to shy away, and display fear and respect:

﴿ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴾ [نوح: 13]

“What is the matter with you, [that you fear not Allah (His punishment), and] you hope not for reward (from Allah or you believe not in His Oneness).”⁽²⁾

Then he started listing Allah’s ﷻ bounties upon them:

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:143), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (71:13)

﴿وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا﴾ ١٤ ﴿أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا﴾ ١٥ ﴿وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا﴾ ١٦
 ﴿وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا﴾ ١٧ ﴿ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا﴾ ١٨ ﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا﴾ ١٩ ﴿لِتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا
 فِجَاجًا﴾ ٢٠ ﴿[نوح: 14-20]

“While He has created you in (different) stages.⁽¹⁾ See you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another. And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp? And Allah has brought you forth from the (dust of) earth.⁽²⁾ Afterwards He will return you into it (the earth), and bring you forth (again on the Day of Resurrection)? And Allah has made for you the earth wide spread (an expanse). That you may go about therein in broad roads.”⁽³⁾

The servant will never despair from Allah’s ﷻ Mercy

Allah’s ﷻ faithful servant recognizes that he has done so much sin to the point that the heavens and earth cannot contain them—regardless of how heavy your sins are. There is hope even if they are more substantial than all the mountains put together. The servant may feel as though he is deserving of no mercy or that Allah ﷻ will not forgive him. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ ٥٣ ﴿[الرُّم: 53]

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the Mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’”⁽⁴⁾

Remember, it is one of Shaytan’s (Satan’s) tricks to make us give up on Allah’s ﷻ Mercy because he himself gave up on His Majesty’s Mercy. Linguistically, **Iblis** is the proper name of Shaytan (Satan), which is derived from the Arabic noun Al-Balas that is translated as ‘despair.’ Shaytan (Satan) himself despaired of Allah’s ﷻ Mercy. Therefore, he planned not to stop sinning or misguiding others to sin as well. One of Shaytan’s (Satan’s) tricks is to make individuals despair of Allah’s ﷻ Mercy. Anas رضي الله عنه reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, “Allah, Blessed

(1) i.e., first *Nutfah*, then *'Alaqah* and then *Mudghah*, (see Quran 23:13-14).

(2) See *Tafsir At-Tabari*, Vol.29, Page 97.

(3) Quran (71:14-20).

(4) Quran (39:53), *Sahih International* trans.

is He and Most High, said: ‘O son of Adam! Verily, as long as you called upon Me and hoped in Me, I forgave you, despite whatever may have occurred from you, and I did not mind. O son of Adam! Were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky, then you sought forgiveness from Me, I would forgive you, and I would not mind. O son of Adam! If you came to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth, and then you met Me not associating anything with Me, I would come to you with forgiveness nearly as great as it.’”(1)

Never make others give up on Allah’s ﷻ Mercy

There was once a serial killer who belittled life and slaughtered without conscience. Despite the gravity of the sin, Allah ﷻ still showed him Mercy. Abu Saeed Al-Khudri رضي الله عنه narrated, **“There was a man from Bani Israel who murdered ninety-nine persons. Then he set out asking (whether his Repentance (Tawbah) could be accepted or not). He came upon a monk and asked him if his Repentance (Tawbah) could be accepted. The monk replied in the negative and so the man killed him. He kept on asking till a man advised him to go to such and such village. (So he left for it) but death overtook him on the way. While dying, he turned his chest towards that village (where he had hoped his Repentance (Tawbah) would be accepted), and so the Angels of mercy and the Angels of punishment quarreled amongst themselves regarding him. Allah ordered the village (towards which he was going) to come closer to him, and ordered the village (whence he had come), to go far away, and then He ordered the Angels to measure the distances between his body and the two villages. So, he was found one span closer to the village (he was going to). So he was forgiven.”**(2)

Repentance (Tawbah) is the noblest and best form of obedience in the eyes of Allah ﷻ. He loves those who repent. Repentance (Tawbah) has a status that no other act of worship has. Just ponder upon the Divine joy Allah ﷻ has due to the Repentance (Tawbah) of a sinner. Anas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Allah rejoices more over the Repentance (Tawbah) of His servant when he repents to Him than one of you who was on his mount in the wilderness, then he lost it, and his food and drink are on it, and he despairs of finding it. He goes to a tree and lies down in its shade, having lost hope of finding his mount, and while he is like that, there it is standing in front of him, so he takes hold of its reins and says—because of his intense joy: ‘O Allah, You are my servant and I am your lord,’ making this mistake because of his intense joy.”**(3)

After these Narrations (Ahadith), no one has the right to cause any Muslim to despair from Allah’s ﷻ Mercy.

(1) Tirmizi (3540).

(2) Bukhari (3470).

(3) Muslim (6960).

4. Seek the means to attain Allah's ﷻ Mercy

Obviously, the more we strive to actualize certain Attributes, the closer we come to Allah's ﷻ unique Mercy in this life and the next. The most deserving people of Allah's ﷻ unique form of Mercy are the following categories of Muslims:

- **Muslims who strive to attain excellence (Ihsan)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ [الأعراف:56]

“Indeed, the Mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”⁽¹⁾

- **Muslims who are God-conscious (Taqwa)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ﴾ [الأعراف:156]

“My Mercy encompasses/embraces all things. So, I will decree it [especially] for the Muttaqun (people who practice Taqwa).”⁽²⁾

- **Muslims who constantly beg Allah's ﷻ forgiveness**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قَالَ يَنْقَوْمُوا لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ [النمل:46]

“He said, ‘O my people, why are you impatient for evil instead of good? Why do you not seek forgiveness of Allah that you may receive Mercy?’”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:56), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (7:156), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (27:26), Sahih International trans.

• **Muslims who listen to the Quran tentatively**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ [الأعراف: 204]

“So when the Quran is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive Mercy.”⁽¹⁾

• **Muslims who obey Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ [آل عمران: 132]

“And obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain Mercy.”⁽²⁾

• **Muslims who strive to follow the Quran and Sunnah**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: 155]

“And this [Quran] is a Book We have revealed [which is] blessed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive Mercy.”⁽³⁾

• **Muslims who establish Prayers (Salah) and Charity (Zakah)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ [النور: 56]

⁽¹⁾ Quran (7:204), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (3:132), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Quran (6:155), Sahih International trans.

“And establish Prayer (Salah) and give Charity (Zakah) and obey the Messenger—that you may receive Mercy.”⁽¹⁾

- **Muslims who have Faith (Iman) and they strive to sustain it**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَؤْتِيكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾
[البقرة: 218]

“Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah—those expect the Mercy of Allah. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”⁽²⁾

- **Muslims who show mercy to others**

Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Those who are merciful will be shown Mercy by the Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One above the heavens will have Mercy upon you.”⁽³⁾**

5. Praising and supplicating Allah ﷻ using the name ‘Ar-Rahman’

Another meaning of performing **Ahsaha**, or extolling the virtues of the Name Ar-Rahman, is to supplicate and to call upon Allah ﷻ using it, and also to praise Allah ﷻ through it.

Notice that the Name of Allah Ar-Rahman is unique to Allah ﷻ and is not permissible to name any other with it, except with the addition Abdur-Rahman. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ قُلْ اَدْعُوا اللَّهَ اَوْ اَدْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ اَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوْا فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنٰى وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴾
[الإسراء: 110]

“Say, ‘Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [Name] you call—to Him belong the best Names.’ And do not recite [too] loudly in your prayer or [too] quietly but seek between that an [intermediate] way.”⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (24:56), Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Quran (2:218), Sahih International trans.

⁽³⁾ Muslim (1924). Abu Dawud (4941); Al-Hakim (109/4); Ibn Abi Shaybah (338/8).

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (17:110), Sahih International trans.

Chapter Two

The Merciful will be shown Mercy

The teachings of Islam demand Muslims to implement mercy as much as they can, to the best of their abilities. Therefore, Muslims must strive to be merciful to the entire creation, Muslims and non-Muslims, friends or foe, and even animals.

The Attribute of Mercy of Allah ﷻ is associated with His other supporting characters, including kindness, compassion, love, tolerance, forgiveness, patience, and treating others the way we would love to be treated.

Muslims must aim to be advocates of mercy towards the entire creation representing, and actualizing Allah's ﷻ Attribute of Compassion and Mercy, and sharing the essence of the message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ [الأنبياء: 107]

“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said, “The adherents to the methodology of the people of the Sunnah and the Muslim community (Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah) obey Allah and his Messenger and follow the truth. Hence, they show mercy to the creations.”⁽²⁾

Thus, we must do our best to be merciful to the entire creation, to the Muslims and non-Muslims, to our families and relatives, to friends and strangers, to people and animals, and even to our most bitter enemies.

A means to obtain Allah's ﷻ Mercy

Naturally, it makes a believer want to be more merciful to others when he knows that Allah ﷻ will show him Mercy. Showing mercy towards others is also a means to attain Allah's ﷻ Mercy.

⁽¹⁾ Quran (21:107).

⁽²⁾ Majmu` Al-Fatawa (1/278).

Jarir bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Whoever is not merciful to people will not be shown Mercy from Allah.”**⁽¹⁾

Also, Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“The merciful are shown Mercy by Ar-Rahman. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown Mercy from Who is above the heavens.”**⁽²⁾

Mercy is a means to amend relations

Just by employing the attribute of mercy, we can repair any broken bonds in our lives. Below are just seven circles where Muslims may apply the attribute of mercy. You will see for yourself that if everyone does this, it will reform the entire Muslim community, and it will be a leading cause to their unity.

Mercy towards parents

The first domain where we must exercise mercy and compassion is towards our parents. Our parents are the reason why we exist in this world with the permission of Allah ﷻ. Hence, Allah ﷻ always paired actualizing Monotheism (Tawheed), which is the right of Allah ﷻ, with the rights of the parents. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said, **“Three Verses (Ayat) were revealed in connection with three others. One will not be accepted without its counterpart. Allah said:**

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَزْكُوا مَعَ الرِّكْبَانِ﴾ [البقرة: 43]

‘And perform Salah (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakah, and Irka’ (i.e. bow down or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along with Ar-Raki'un.’⁽³⁾

Whoever prays and does not give Charity (Zakah), his Prayer (Salah) is not accepted. Second, the saying of the Almighty:

﴿أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ﴾ [لقمان: 14]

‘Be grateful to me and your parents.’⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (7376).

⁽²⁾ Muslim (1924); Abu Dawud (4941); Al-Hakim (109/4); Ibn Abi Shaybah (338/8).

⁽³⁾ Quran (2:43), trans. unknown.

⁽⁴⁾ Quran (31:14).

Whoever is grateful to Allah and is not grateful to his parents, it will not be accepted from him. And Allah Almighty said:

﴿أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ﴾ [محمد:33]

‘Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.’⁽¹⁾

Whoever obeys Allah and does not obey the Messenger, it will not be accepted from him.’⁽²⁾

Furthermore, parents may be our path of ease to Paradise (Jannah). Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ, “‘Amin, amin, amin.’ It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said amin, amin, amin.’ The Prophet said, ‘Verily, Jibreel (Gabriel) came to me and he said: ‘Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and he is not forgiven, then he will enter Hellfire (Jahannam) and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin.’ I said amin. ‘Whoever sees his parents in their old age, one or both of them, and he does not honor them and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire (Jahannam) and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin.’ I said amin. ‘Whoever has your name mentioned in his presence and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire (Jahannam) and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin.’ I said amin.’”⁽³⁾

This is a warning for us against failing to show dutifulness and mercy towards our parents. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا﴾ [الإسراء:24]

“And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.’”⁽⁴⁾

Mercy towards children

Children are an inestimable given grant from Allah ﷻ. In Islam, parents have rights over their children. However, when their children grow up to be parents, their children will have rights upon them.

(1) Quran (3:32).

(2) *Ghidha' al-Albab*, Mardawi (1/392) *Kitab Al-Kabair*, Al-Hafiz Adh-Dhahabi.

(3) Ibn Hibban (915).

(4) Quran (17:24).

As Muslim parents, we must strive to show them mercy, love, and compassion for the sake of Allah ﷻ following the example of His Messenger ﷺ. Islamic teachings encourage parents to facilitate every means to nurture and educate.

The essential qualities every parent should strive to attain are outlined in the Quran, and detailed in the Prophet’s ﷺ performance of the Quran. The Prophet’s ﷺ excellent Quranic character was not exclusive to his time and place where he lived. Instead, it was meant to be inclusive for all times, generations, and communities. Thus, he is a lasting universal role model for all people, surpassing through time.

The Prophet’s ﷺ mercy towards children was exceptional. His treatment of all children, and not just his offspring, is an example to us all. The Prophet ﷺ would kiss and hug children often to express his compassionate mercy towards them. **Al-Aqra’ bin Habis** رضي الله عنه **saw the Messenger ﷺ kissing Al-Hassan** رضي الله عنه. **He said, “I have ten children and I have never kissed any of them.” The Messenger of Allah said: ‘The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.’”**⁽¹⁾

Despite the Prophet’s ﷺ many commitments, he would still find time to actively concern himself with the simple moments of community children. For example, when the pet bird of a young child died, the Prophet ﷺ went out of his way to try and console him. **Anas bin Malik** رضي الله عنه said, **“The Messenger of Allah used to enter upon us, and I had a young brother who was known by the Kunyah ‘Abu Umair.’ He had a Nughar (red beaked nightingale) with which he used to play, and it died. The Prophet entered upon him one day, and saw him looking sad. He said: ‘What is the matter with him?’ They said: ‘His Nughar has died.’ He said: ‘Abu Umair, what happened to the Nughair (diminutive of Nughar)?”**⁽²⁾

Mercy towards spouse

One of the missing ingredients in our Muslim houses is good character with our spouses. One might be smiling at everyone outside the house, and the moment he steps inside the house, his smile disappears. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ made it a sign of complete Faith (Iman) to exercise kindness and mercy towards one’s household.

The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Indeed among the believers with the most complete Faith (Iman) is the one who is best in conduct, and the most kind to his family.”**⁽³⁾ One of the mounting dilemmas in the Muslim world is the rising occurrence of divorce. Many Muslims have forgotten the foundation upon which their marriage bond was founded; it is love and mercy. When love is not felt in a spousal relationship, then mercy should be the replacement. Allah ﷻ said:

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (6028).

⁽²⁾ Abu Dawud (4969).

⁽³⁾ Tirmizi (2612), Hassan Sahih by Abu ‘Eisa.

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ

يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ [الروم: 21]

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity [sic] in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”⁽¹⁾

Mercy towards the kinship

In many Narrations (Ahadith), Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ equated the kinship ties with the mother’s womb where the baby grows and develops. This implies the close connection all of humanity has because we can track our lineage to a common origin. Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ further equated the attribute of mercy with the mother’s womb. Allah ﷻ said in a Qudsi Narration (Hadith), **“I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, (womb i.e., kith and kin) and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you, (womb, i.e., kith and kin).”**⁽²⁾ There is Divine Wisdom behind this equation.

The mother’s womb perfectly illustrates the concept of Allah’s ﷻ Mercy; a mother’s womb is the child’s only source of protection and nourishment. The child is taken care of entirely by the mother—and it is entirely dependent on mercy. The mother loves the child and shows her mercy in every aspect, while the child is unaware that this protection and nourishment are extended.

Another illustration of the Mercy of Allah ﷻ is exhibited in the mercy mothers have towards their infant children. **Umar bin Al-Khattab** رضي الله عنه narrated that some prisoners of war were brought to the Prophet ﷺ and a nursing woman was among them. Whenever she found a child among the prisoners, she would take it to her chest and nurse it. The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Do you think this woman would throw her child into the fire?”** The Companions said, **“No, not if she was able to stop it.”** The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Allah is more merciful to His servants than this mother is to her child.”**⁽³⁾

The disappearance of mercy, compassion, and kindness is a leading cause of the widespread severing of kinship in our Muslim communities. Meanwhile, Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ commanded us to uphold our kinship ties and warned us against severing the kinship in many Narrations (Ahadith).

⁽¹⁾ Quran (30:21). Sahih International trans.

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (5988).

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (5999); Muslim (6978).

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:⁽¹⁾ **“Allah created the creations, and when He finished from His creations, Ar-Rahm i.e., womb said, ‘(O Allah) at this place I seek refuge with You from all those who sever me (i.e., sever the ties of kith and kin).’ Allah said, ‘Yes, won’t you be pleased that I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, and I will sever the relation with the one who will sever the relation with you.’ It said, ‘Yes, O my Lord.’ Allah said, ‘Then that is for you.’ Allah’s Messenger added, ‘Read (in the Quran) if you wish, the Statement of Allah: Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship?’”**⁽²⁾

Muslims hear the exhortation to keep the ties of kinship every Friday Sermon (Khutbah). Isn’t it time to respond?

Mercy towards another Muslim

Showing mercy towards other Muslims is another means of actualizing the Mercy of Allah ﷻ and a means to receive His special Mercy. Jarir bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“He who is not merciful to others, will not be treated mercifully.”**⁽³⁾

Abu Hisham رضي الله عنه said, **“It has reached me that it is written in the Torah: ‘As you show mercy you will receive mercy.’”**⁽⁴⁾

An-Nu’man bin Bashir رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves, showing love among themselves, and being kind among themselves, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”**⁽⁵⁾

Hence, by being merciful to others we not only benefit them in this world, but we also benefit ourselves in the Hereafter (Aakhirah).

Allah ﷻ revealed the following Verse (Ayah) offering forgiveness for Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه if he resumed charity to an individual:

⁽¹⁾ Bukhari (5987).

⁽²⁾ Quran (47:22), Darussalam trans.

⁽³⁾ Bukhari (6013).

⁽⁴⁾ Musanaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (24780).

⁽⁵⁾ Bukhari (6011).

﴿ وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْفُوا وَلِيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [النور: 22]

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”⁽¹⁾

When this Verse (Ayah) was revealed, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “By Allah, certainly I love that Allah should forgive me,” so he resumed spending on Mistah as he had spent on him before, and he said, “By Allah, I shall never stop spending on him.”⁽²⁾ Mistah bin Uthatha رضي الله عنه was someone who slandered his daughter Aishah رضي الله عنها, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, and the mother of the believers (Ummahat ul-Mumineen).

The quality of mercy is not restricted to the Muslims. Mercy shown by non-Muslims towards Muslims can be the cause to receive guidance to Islam as well. The following is a story from our time.

There was an old American man who was not yet a Muslim. Whenever he heard of trouble or instability in one of the developing countries, he would go there and bring an orphan to a sponsor. When the United States invaded Afghanistan, he went there to bring an orphan. Unusually, this orphan’s late parents taught the child to neglect sleep and pray the Night Prayer (Tahajjud). One night, the orphan’s beautiful recitation of the Quran woke the old man up. He came to check on the young boy, and he asked him, “What are you doing?” He said, “I’m praying.” The old man started inquiring more about his religion, which eventually became the reason for this old man at 84 years of age to accept Islam.

Mercy towards non-Muslims

The Prophet ﷺ applied the teachings of Divine Mercy throughout his entire life, even to his enemies and oppressors. On more than one occasion, the Companions (Sahabah) asked the Prophet ﷺ to curse or pray against their enemies who had been persecuting them for years. Even so, the Prophet ﷺ refused to curse or pray against their enemies as it would have contradicted the message of mercy.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported, “The Prophet ﷺ was told ‘O Messenger of Allah, pray against the idolaters.’ He said: ‘I was not sent as an invoker of curses, rather I was sent as a mercy.’”⁽³⁾

(1) Quran (24:22), Sahih International trans.

(2) Ibn Kathir (24:22).

(3) Muslim (6613).

The most famous example of the Prophet’s ﷺ mercy was the forgiveness he showed his opponents after the Conquest of Makkah after nearly twenty-three years of suffering oppression for his message of Monotheism (Tawheed). Despite all of this oppression, the Prophet ﷺ was able to spread the message of mercy back to the Mother of all Cities. Rather than taking revenge, the Prophet ﷺ responded to the former enemies with what they expected—mercy.

Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ was forgiving and merciful because Allah ﷻ had revealed to him, as well as to the Prophets before him, that among the best and most honored people to Allah ﷻ are those who forgive others and treat others the way they would love to be treated.

When Aishah رضي الله عنها asked the Prophet ﷺ if he had experienced a day more difficult than the Day of Uhud, his reply was, ‘Yes.’ Then he mentioned to her the story of his journey to Taif. When the Prophet ﷺ invited the people of Quraysh to Islam, they did not respond to him, and he headed towards Taif to convey Allah’s ﷻ message to them. When he invited Taif to Islam, their attitude was worse than that of the people of Makkah. So, he ﷺ left Taif dejected. He was unaware of his surroundings until he met Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) عليه السلام. The Prophet ﷺ told Aishah رضي الله عنها, Jibreel (Gabriel) said, ‘Allah has heard what your people said to you, and how they have rejected you. He has sent to you the Angel of the Mountains, so that you can tell him to do whatever you want to them.’ Then he called the Angel of the Mountains to me and he greeted me with Salam, then said: ‘O Muhammad, Allah has heard what your people have said to you, and I am the Angel of the Mountains. Your Lord has sent me so that you can tell me what to do. What do you want? If you wish, I will bring together Al-Akshabain (the two mountains of Makkah) to crush them.’ The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Rather I hope that Allah will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allah alone, not associating anything with Him.’⁽¹⁾

Then Allah ﷻ did bring a progeny from the hypocrites (mushrikun) of Taif who became righteous servants and people free from associating partners with Him. Mercy is an essential value of what Muslims build together as a community. The lack of mercy is a vacuum of loss, and the presence of mercy is an inspiration for perseverance; therefore, it is incumbent on us to spread mercy.

Mercy towards animals

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “A prostitute passed by a panting dog near a well and saw that the dog was about to die of thirst, so she took off her *Khuff* (leather sock or shoe) and tied it with her head-cover and drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave her because of that.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Muslim (4653).

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (3321).

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته الله commented on the above Narration (Hadith), **“If Allah Almighty had forgiven one who gave water to a dog suffering from extreme thirst, then how about one who relieves the thirst, satisfies the hunger, and clothes the naked among the Muslims?”**⁽¹⁾

One of our predecessors used to wake up every morning to pray the Morning Prayer (Salat ul-Fajr), and he would pass by a Christian lady who would wake up to feed the birds every day. Our predecessor used to tell her, ‘What you’re doing is great, but it will not help you on the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) because you are not on Monotheism (Tawheed).’ One day, our predecessor was performing the Annual Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj), and was making Circumambulation (Tawaf) around the Kaabah. He was surprised to see the Christian lady there. He immediately asked her what brought her to Islam. Rather than the invitation (Dawah) from the brother, her guidance to Islam was the engagement with mercy she felt when feeding the birds.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“While a man was walking on a road, he became very thirsty. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank (of its water) and then came out. Meanwhile, he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself, ‘This dog is suffering from the same state of thirst as I did.’ So, he went down the well (again) and filled his shoe (with water) and held it in his mouth and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him. The Prophet further explained, ‘There is a reward for serving any animate (living being).’”**⁽²⁾

Qurra ibn Iyas رضي الله عنه reported, **“A man said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I would have slaughtered a sheep, but I had mercy on it.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘If you had mercy on the sheep, then Allah will have mercy on you twice.’”**⁽³⁾

It is by virtue of our spreading of mercy among us that Allah ﷻ bestows upon us some of the Mercy we rely upon in this life. Mercy is raised between us, and the virtues are its sharing without accounting, yet we anticipate a fuller return in the Hereafter (Akhirah), while we feel no deficit in the present; surely our Lord is abundantly Merciful to those who know Him.



⁽¹⁾ Uddat As-Şabirin (1/253).

⁽²⁾ Bukhari (6009).

⁽³⁾ *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (368), Sahih by Al-Albani.

Chapter Three

The Greatest Name of Allah ﷻ

All the Names of Allah ﷻ are great, without exception. They are void of any imperfections or flaws, and are most excellent. However, several Narrations (Ahadith) were reported concerning the greatest Name of Allah ﷻ. The most famous these Narrations (Ahadith) are the following:

Abu Umamah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The Greatest Name of Allah, if He is called by which He will respond, is in three Chapters (Surah): Al-Baqarah, Al-Imran and Ta-Ha.”⁽¹⁾

Anas رضي الله عنه narrated, “I was sitting with the Prophet ﷺ while a man was praying. The man said in supplication, ‘O Allah, I ask You because all praise is due to You. There is no god but You alone. You have no partner or associate, the Bestower, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Possessor of majesty and honor, O Ever-Living, O Sustainer.’ The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘He has asked Allah by His Greatest Name which if He is called upon thereby, He answers, and if asked thereby He gives.’”⁽²⁾

Buraydah bin Al-Husayb رضي الله عنه narrated, “The Prophet heard a man supplicating, and he was saying: ‘O Allah, indeed, I ask you by my testifying that You are Allah, there is none worthy of worship except You, the One, As-Samad, the one who does not beget, nor was begotten, and there is none who is like Him.’ [The Messenger of Allah] said: ‘By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, he has asked Allah by His Greatest Name, the one which if He is called upon by it, He responds, and when He is asked by it, He gives.’”⁽³⁾

Asma bint Yazeed رضي الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said that the Greatest Name of Allah ﷻ is in these two Verses (Ayat):

﴿وَاللَّهُ كَرِيمٌ ۝ وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝﴾ [البقرة: 163]

“And your deity is One Deity, there is none who has the right to be worshiped but He, Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim.”⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibn Majah (3856) Hassan by Al-Albani.

(2) Tirmizi (3544), Abu Dawud (1495), Sahih by Al-Albani; an-Nasa’i (1300) and Ibn Majah (3858).

(3) Tirmizi (3475); Abu Dawud (1493), Sahih by Al-Albani; Ibn Majah (3857).

(4) Quran (2:163), Darussalam trans.

﴿الَمْ ١﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ [آل عمران: 2-1]

“Alif. Lam. Mim. Allah, None has the right to be worshiped but He, the Ever living, the Sustainer.”⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

Difference of Opinion

Scholars (Ulama) have a difference of opinion regarding the potential Greatest Name of Allah ﷻ. The opinions vary as follows:

The First View

The first view is that it is incorrect to differ between Names and to favor one over another. All the Names must be viewed equally, approached, and used equally.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ said that Imam Malik ﷺ believed it was impermissible to regard some Divine Names as superior to others. Imam Malik ﷺ was famous for making no distinction between parts of the Quran and held all of them in the highest esteem—so too with the Names of Allah ﷻ. It was said he believed making a distinction “**May lead to believing that the less favored parts are inferior to those that are more favored.**”⁽³⁾

Advocates of this position still must sort out the different Narrations (Ahadith) that refer to Allah’s ﷻ most excellent Name. Their view of the Narrations (Ahadith) is to interpret reports of a ‘Greatest Name’ to mean ‘among the great.’ This is like saying that each of Allah’s ﷻ Names is among the greatest, and the use of any of the Names known from evidence will bring the same result.

What was meant by the Companions (Sahabah) in the Narrations (Ahadith) quoted above was a reward for their sincerity by calling Allah ﷻ based on knowledge of His Names, and this reward was referred to by Ibn Hibban ﷺ as what is sought by calling upon Allah ﷻ by a specific Name.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar ﷺ said what was meant by way of identifying greatness was the extra reward earned by the reciter, just as an individual may have a shorter chain in a Narration (Hadith) or a longer one and both reach the Prophet ﷺ.⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (3:1-2), Darussalam trans.

⁽²⁾ Tirmizi (3478), Hassan by Abu ‘Eisa; Abu Dawud (1496); Ibn Majah (3855).

⁽³⁾ *Fath Al-Bari*. Ibn Hajar.

⁽⁴⁾ *Fath Al-Bari*. Ibn Hajar.

What is required of a Muslim is to call upon Allah ﷻ using any of the Names of Allah ﷻ. One must call Him in complete submission and with a singular focus of mind, and a mix between fear and hope (Khushu). Whoever calls like this will receive a response as though they called using the Greatest Name. Hence, what is meant by the Greatest Name is the frame of mind and focus of the One who is calling upon Allah ﷻ by that Name.

An example of this might be that of a scholar named Bal'am bin Ba'ura in the time of Prophet Musa (Moses) ﷺ. Some Quranic commentators feel that Verses (Ayat) 175 and 176 of Chapter (Surah) Al-A'raf refer to Bal'am. Ibn Kathir ﷺ recorded that Qatadah رضى الله عنه reported that Ka'b رضى الله عنه said that Bal'am was gifted with the knowledge of Allah's ﷻ Greatest Name. Bal'am was also known for his beautiful and acceptable forms of supplicating the Lord, and so Prophet Musa (Moses) ﷺ sent him as an emissary to the people of Madyan (Midian). When Bal'am directed his benedictions against Prophet Musa (Moses) ﷺ, Allah ﷻ took away his knowledge.

The Second View

The advocates of the second position believe that Allah ﷻ has kept knowledge of His Greatest Name with Himself only. Ibn Hajar رضى الله عنه expressed that this opinion was held by others and respected, and Allah ﷻ knows best.⁽¹⁾

The Third View

This is the view of those who affirmed that the Greatest Name of Allah ﷻ exists and that it is a specific Name, but they differed as to which is the Greatest Name. There are fourteen views expressed by Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar رضى الله عنه in his book *Fath al-Bari'*:⁽²⁾

1. *Hu* (He), followed by an authentic name such as *The Ar-Rahman* (The Merciful).
2. Allah.
3. *Ar-Rahman* (The Merciful)
4. *Ar-Raheem* (The Beneficent)
5. *Al-Hayy Al-Qayyoom* (The Ever-Living, All-Sustaining).
6. *Al-Mannan* (Allah is the One Who is Tremendous in giving)
7. *Badee' as-Samawati wa 'l-Ard* (The Originator of the Heavens and the Earth)
8. *Zhu 'l-Jalali wa 'l-Ikram* (Lord of Majesty and Generosity, Lord of Glory and Honor)

⁽¹⁾ *Fath al-Bari'*, Ibn Hajar (11/224).

⁽²⁾ *Fath al-Bari'*, Ibn Hajar (11/224-225).

9. *Allahu laa ilaaha illa Huwa al-Ahad as-Samad allazi lam yalid wa lam yoolad wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan ahad* (It is Allah, there is no one worthy of worship except He, (the) One, and Only, *As-Samad* (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks)."He begets not, nor was He begotten; "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."
10. *Rabb Rabb* (Lord, Lord)—Lord of all that exists.
11. The prayer of Prophet Yunis (Jonah) عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in the belly of the fish: "*Laa ilaaha illa anta subhaanaka inni kuntu min az-zaalimeen*" (There is no deity worthy of worship except You. exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers).
12. *Huwa Allah Allah Allah allazi laa ilaaha illa Huwa Rabb al-'arsh al-'azeem* (He is Allah, Allah, Allah, besides Whom there is no other god worthy of worship except He, Lord of the mighty Throne).
13. It is concealed within the Divine Names.
14. The word of Monotheism (Tawheed): *Laa ilaaha ill-Allah* (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah).

The Fourth View

There are scholars (Ulama) who approve of the reality of Allah's ﷻ existing Names by evidence and explored a distinction between the Names. These scholars (Ulama) have two popular opinions. The **first opinion** is that the Greatest Name is 'Allah' because it encompasses all the other Names and indicates all the subtle and sublime Attributes. This Name was never bestowed on anyone in creation; furthermore, it refers to His Essence and relates to all His praiseworthy Attributes and to many semantic meanings. It is mentioned in the Quran in at least 2,697 places depending on criteria, and it is mentioned in all the Narrations (Ahadith) concerning the content of the Greatest Name of Allah ﷻ.

The fourth view has a **second opinion**. The Greatest Name is Al-Hayy Al-Qayyoom (The Ever-Living, The Sustainer). This is the view of several scholars (Ulama), such as Nawawi ﷺ and Ibn Uthaymeen ﷺ.

﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ

يُرْشَدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ [البقرة: 186]

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me—indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Quran (2:186)

Ninety-Nine Names of Allah ﷻ

Al-Asma ul-Husna

الْوٰثِر	Witr	The One Who Has No Partner Nor Anyone Like Him
الْمَنَّان	Al-Mannaan	The Beneficent Bestower of Bounties
الْمُعْطِي	Al-Mu'tee	The Giver
الْمُحْسِن	Al-Muhsin	The One Who Acts in a Fine and Good Manner
الْمُؤَجِّر	Al-Mu'akhkhir	The One Who Puts Back
الْمُقَدِّم	Al-Muqaddim	The One Who Gives Precedence
الْبَاسِط	Al-Baasit	The Granter of Ample Provision
الْقَابِض	Al-Qaabid	The Withholder
الطَّيِّب	At-Tayyib	The Pure One
الشَّافِي	Ash-Shaafee	The One Who Cures
السَّيِّد	As-Sayyid	The Lord and Master
السُّبُّوح	As-Subbooh	The Venerated and Perfect
الرَّفِيق	Ar-Rafeeq	The Gentle
الرَّبِّ	Ar-Rabb	The Lord and Nurterer
الْحَيِّ	Al-Hayyiyu	The One Who Honourably

		Disdains Anything Unbecoming His Mercy and Generosity
الحَكَم	Al-Hakam	The Judge
الجَوَاد	Al-Jawaad	The Munificent
الجَمِيل	Al-Jameel	The Beautiful One
الْوَهَّاب	Al-Wahhāab	The Bestower
الْوَالِي	Al-Waliyy	The Guardian Lord
الْوَكِيل	Al-Wakeel	The Trustworthy Disposer of Affairs
الْوَدُود	Al-Wadood	The Loving One and the Beloved One
الْوَاسِع	Al-Waasi'	The Vast One
الْوَارِث	Al-Waarith	The Inheritor
الْوَاحِد	Al-Waahid	The One and Only
النَّصِير	An-Naseer	The Helper
المُهَيِّمِينَ	Al-Muhaymin	The Trustworthy and Ever Watchful Witness
المَوْلَى	Al-Mawlaa	The Patron Lord or the Master and Supporter
المَلِك	Al-Maleek	The Omnipotent Sovereign
المَلِك	Al-Malik	The King
المُقَيِّت	Al-Muqteet	The All-Powerful Maintainer
المُقْتَدِر	Al-Muqtadir	The Omnipotent
المُصَوِّر	Al-Musawwir	The Bestower of Forms

المُحِيط	Al-Muḥeet	The All-Encompassing
المَجِيد	Al-Majeed	The One Perfect in Glory and Honour
المُجِيب	Al-Mujeeb	The Responsive
المَتِين	Al-Mateen	The Strong
المُتَكَبِّر	Al-Mutakabbir	The One Supreme in Glory, The Justly and Rightfully Proud
المُتَعَالِي	Al-Muta'aalee	The Supreme and Exalted One
المُؤْمِن	Al-Mu'min	The True and Trustworthy, The Granter of Security
اللطيف	Al-Laṭeef	The Subtle and Kind
الكَرِيم	Al-Kareem	The Bountiful, The Generous One Abundant in Good
الكَبِير	Al-Kabeer	The Incomparably Great
القَهَّار	Al-Qahhaar	The Overwhelming Subduer Who is Never Overcome
القَوِيّ	Al-Qawiyy	The One Perfect in Strength
القَرِيب	Al-Qareeb	The One Who is Near to the Servants
القَدِير	Al-Qadeer	The All-Powerful
القُدُّوس	Al-Quddoos	The Pure and Perfect
القَاهِر	Al-Qaahir	The Invincible Subduer
القَادِر	Al-Qaadir	The Fully Able One

الْفَتَّاحُ	Al-Fattaah	The Judge and Opener Who Distinguishes the Truth from Falsehood
الْغَنِيِّ	Al-Ghaniyy	The Independent One Who is Free of All Needs
الْغَفُورِ	Al-Ghafoor	The One Who Forgives Extensively
الْغَفَّارِ	Al-Ghaffaar	The Oft-Forgiving
الْعَلِيِّ	Al-'Aliyy	The Exalted
الْعَلِيمِ	Al-'Aleem	The All-Knowing
الْعَفُوفِ	Al-'Afuww	The One Who Pardons Again and Again
الْعَظِيمِ	Al-'Azeem	The Tremendous One or the Magnificent
الْعَزِيزِ	Al-'Azeez	The Almighty or the Invincible
الْعَالِمِ	Al-'Aalim	The All-Knower of the Seen and Unseen
الصَّمَدِ	As-Şamad	The Perfect Lord and Master Upon Whom the Whole of Creation Depends
الشَّهِيدِ	Ash-Shaheed	The Witness
الشَّكُورِ	Ash-Shakoor	The One Most Ready To Appreciate and Reward Abundantly
الشَّاكِرِ	Ash-Shaakir	The Appreciative
السَّمِيعِ	As-Samee'	The All-Hearing
السَّلَامِ	As-Salaam	The Impeccable One or

		Flawless One
الرَّقِيب	Ar-Raqeeb	The Ever Watchful Guardian
الرَّزَّاق	Ar-Razzaq	The Great Provider
الرَّحِيم	Ar-Raheem	The Bestower of Mercy
الرَّحْمَان	Ar-Rahmaan	The Extremely Merciful
الرَّؤُوف	Ar-Ra'oof	The Compassionate and Kind
الْخَالِق	Al-Khallaq	The Creator Who Creates Again and Again
الْخَالِق	Al-Khaaliq	The Creator and Maker of Everything
الْخَبِير	Al-Khabeer	The Fully Aware
الْقَيُّوم	Al-Qayyoom	The Self-Subsisting One Upon Whom Everything Depends
الْحَي	Al-Hayy	The Everliving
الْحَمِيد	Al-Hameed	The One Who is Deservedly Praised
الْحَلِيم	Al-Haleem	The Forebearing
الْحَكِيم	Al-Hakeem	The One Fully Wise or Al-Haakim (The All-Wise)
الْمُبِين	Al-Mubeen	The Clear and Manifest One
الْحَقّ	Al-Haqq	The True One
الْحَفِيّ	Al-Hafiyy	The Benovolent
الْحَفِيظ	Al-Hafeez	The Guardian
الْحَسِيب	Al-Haseeb	The Reckoner Who Suffices

الحافظ	Al-Haafiz	The Protector
الجَبَّار	Al-Jabbaar	The Exalted and Almighty Compeller
التَّوَّاب	At-Tawwaab	The One Who Guides His Servants to Repent and Accepts Their Repentance
البَصِير	Al-Baṣeer	The All-Seeing
الْبَرّ	Al-Barr	The Most Benign and Kind
البارئ	Al-Baari`	The Originator
الباطن	Al-Baatin	The Innermost One
الظاهر	Ath-Thaahir	The Uppermost One
الأخر	Al-Aakhir	The Last
الأول	Al Awwal	The First
الإله	Al-Ilaah	The One Who Alone Deserves to be Worshipped
الأكرم	Al-Akram	The Most Generous
الأعلى	Al-A'laa	The Most High
الأحد	Al-Aḥad	The Unique
الله	Allah	

References:

The Ninety-Nine names of Allah سبحانه وتعالى

Based on Shaykh Uthaymeen's book Al-Qawaa'id al-Muthla, Translated by Dawud Burbank

Source: <https://abdurrahmanorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/list-of-the-99-names-of-allaah-shaykh-uthaymeen-dawud-burbank.pdf>

