



*The 'Ash'arīs:
In the Scales of Ahl us-Sunnah*

Shaykh Abū 'Uthmān Faisal bin Qazār al-Jāsim

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Studies in Contemporary 'Ash'arī Polemics

Vol.1

The 'Ash'arīs In the Scales of Ahl us-Sunnah¹

**By Shaykh Abū 'Uthmān Faisal bin Qazār al-Jāsim
(hafidhahullāh)**

Translated by 'AbdulHaq ibn Kofi ibn Kwesi Addae ibn Kwaku al-Ashanti

¹ Summarised and abridged from Faisal bin Qazār al-Jāsim, *al-Asha'irah fi Mīzān Ahl us-Sunnah: Naqd li-Kitāb Ahl us-Sunnati al-'Ashā'iratu: Shahādatu 'Ulama il-Ummati wa Adilatuhum* [The Ash'arīs in the Scales of the People of Sunnah: A Critique of the Book 'The 'Ash'arīs are Ahl us-Sunnah: The Testimony of the Scholars of the Ummah and their Evidences']. Kuwait: al-Mabarah al-Khayriyyah li Uloom il-Qur'an wa's-Sunnah, 1428 AH/2007 CE. The copy of the book that was used for this translation was personally given to the translator ('AbdulHaq al-Ashantī) by Shaykh Faisal Jāsim (hafidhahullāh) while he was in the UK in May 2008 CE and permitted the translator to undertake translating sections of it.

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Translator's Preface

Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allāh.

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“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (in submission to Him).”

{*Āli-Imrān* (3): 102}

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“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh through whom you ask things from each other, and (respect) the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.”

{*an-Nisā* (4): 1}

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“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will amend for you your deeds and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.”

{*al-Abzāb* (33): 70-71 }

To proceed:

This is a partial translation of the recent outstanding work *al-'Ashā'irah: Fī Meezān Ahl is-Sunnah* by the respected Shaykh Faisal bin Qazār al-Jāsīm (*bafidhabullāh*). The original book is some 824 pages and this translation is a meagre effort to transmit just some of it for the benefit of the English reader. I had the opportunity to ask Shaykh Faisal during his most recent trip to the UK in May 2008 CE on what chapters he suggests I translate for a summarised translation project, so with that in mind I undertook what the Shaykh and myself concurred would be of most use in light of the most common 'Ash'arī creedal discrepancies. Some other brothers and myself hope finish a more complete translation of this vital work which will be available for publication, may Allāh help us in this. Many of the recent works by Shaykh Faisal have been introduced by a variety of well-known and respected scholars. For his book *Tajreed ut-Tamheed* (Kuwait: al-Mabarah al-Khayriyyah li Uloom il-Qur'ān wa's-Sunnah, 1428 AH/2007 CE) was introduced and commended by Imām 'Abdullāh bin 'Abdul'Azeez al-'Aqeel, who is regarded by many as being the Imām of the Hanābilah at present. While Shaykh Faisal's book *Usool Shaykh Bin Bāz fi'r-Radd 'ala'l-Mukhbālif* [The Principles of Shaykh Bin Bāz in Refuting the Opposer] (Beirut: Dār ul-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, 1429 AH/2008 CE) was introduced by al-'Allāmah, Dr Sālih al-Fawzān and Shaykh 'Abdul'Azeez as-Sadhān.

This book on the 'Ash'arī creed was also introduced by ten scholars however I have not translated their introductions in order to keep this translation brief. In any case the following scholars introduced the book:

- ❖ Shaykh and Professor, Dr Muhammad bin 'AbdurRazzāq at-Tabatabā'ī (Kuwait) – from the *Sharee'ah College* in Kuwait
- ❖ Shaykh Muhammad bin Hamd al-Hamood an-Najdī (Kuwait) – head of the Academic Panel, *Jam'iyah Ihyā Turāth al-Islāmī*.

- ❖ Shaykh and Professor, Dr Muhammad bin 'AbdurRahmān al-Maghrāwī (Morocco) – Professor of Higher Islamic Studies at *al-Qarawiyyeen University* in Morocco and head of the *Jam'iyyat ud-Da'wah ila il-Qur'an wa's-Sunnah*.
- ❖ Shaykh and Professor, Dr Sa'ood bin 'Abdul'Azeez al-Khalaf (Saudi Arabia) – head of the *'Aqeedah Department, College of Da'wah and Usool ud-Deen, Islamic University of Madeenah* and head of the *Jam'iyyat ul-'Aqeedah* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ Shaykh Mashhoor Hasan Āl Salmān from Jordan
- ❖ Shaykh and Professor, Dr Muhammad Ahmad Lawh (Senegal) – from the *African College of Islamic Studies* in Senegal.
- ❖ Shaykh, Dr Ahmad Shākir al-Junaydī (Egypt) – Professor of Islamic 'Aqeedah and deputy director general of *Ansār us-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah*.
- ❖ Shaykh and Professor, Dr Abū 'Abdul'Azeez an-Nūrustānī (Pakistan) – director of the *Jāmi'at al-Athariyyah* [Atharī University] in Peshawar, Pakistan.
- ❖ Shaykh 'AbdulHādī Wahbī (Lebanon) – head of *Jam'iyyat us-Sirāj ul-Muneer* in Beirut.
- ❖ Shaykh, Dr Sa'duddeen bin Muhammad al-Kubbī (Lebanon) – director of the *Bukhārī Islamic Institute* and head of the *Centre of Islamic Research* in Lebanon.

In the mid 1990s evidence-laden works by the Salafis stifled the spread of the 'Asharite-Mu'tazilite dialectic in the West. Efforts at that time by the likes of the brother Aboo Rumaysah, *Salafī Publications* (Abū Iyyād Amjad Rafeeq in particular) and their works *Mountains of Knowledge* and *Foundations of the Sunnah*, and by others demonstrated to English-speaking audiences the abundant evidences invalidating the 'Ash'arī creed. More recently, the Salafī brothers of *Sunni Press* have also conducted outstanding research in presenting detailed evidences and studies discounting 'Ash'arī polemic and dialectic.¹ It is hoped that some of the work by *Sunni Press* can be published and printed for a wider reading audience.

It will be evident within this translation that the 'Ashā'irah are particularly unconvincing in terms of 'aqeedah and thus their arguments have been found wanting. This is due to a number of reasons which can be summed up with the following:

- ❖ The neutrality deficit within much contemporary 'Ash'arī writing, to the extent that their writing assumes a polemical standing as opposed to a critical academic survey of

¹ Refer to: <http://z3.invisionfree.com/sunnipress/index.php?showforum=11>

Recently, Abū Zubayr Saleem "al-'Azzāmī" also conducted some useful refutations of the 'Asha'rīs, yet his 'aqeedah in regards to *īmān*, *kufr*, *takfeer* could be improved as could his etiquette with the Salafis and their scholars.

ascertaining the correct *'aqeedah*. So Shaykh Faisal al-Jāsīm demonstrates in this work for example that in many cases the two 'Ash'arī authors who he critiques throughout the book¹ totally neglect any referral to certain extant creedal works and continue as if nothing has even been written. This kind of approach seems to maintain partisan loyalties and is far from academic impartiality.

- ❖ The adamant 'Ash'arī assertion, which serves as more of an *argumentum ad nauseam*, that Salafīs are anthropomorphists. It is plain from the works which Salafīs utilise in *'aqeedah* that nothing of the sought is found therein and there are abundant rejections of *tamtheel*, *tajseem* and *tasbbeeh*, as there are refutations of *ta'teel*, *ta'weel* and *tafveedh*.
- ❖ The 'Ash'arī agreement with the Mu'tazilah in many of their interpretations of the texts and their agreement with them regarding Allāh's Speech not being comprised of letters and sounds.
- ❖ The 'Ash'arī agreement with the Jahmiyyah in regards to Allāh's Attributes, this agreement with them is exemplified in the writings of Zāhid al-Kawtharī, who even defended Jahm bin Safwān! His excessive statements and even *takefeer* of scholars will be studied in a future paper.
- ❖ The contemporary 'Ash'arī claim of a “Salafī conspiracy to tamper with classical texts” in order to further *Salafīyyah*. This preposterous assertion is probably the epitome of such contemporary 'Ash'arī intellectual bankruptcy and polemic. So after it is demonstrated that the 'Ash'arīs have a contrary approach to *'aqeedah* in light of the Qur'ān, Sunnah, Ijmā of the Salaf and creeds of the Imāms of the early generations – the final evasion becomes: “Actually, we don't trust your sources, they have been tampered with!” Nūh Keller, who has written a variety of rather obscurantist and polemical articles, even attempted to demonstrate this in a rather haphazard attempt to prove this contention.²

¹ The reader of this translation will thus notice that Shaykh Faisal al-Jāsīm throughout the book refers to quotes by “**the two authors**” and he intends by this the two 'Ash'arī authors who authored the book claiming that the 'Ash'arīs are Ahl us-Sunnah. This book was entitled *Ahl us-Sunnati al-'Ashā'iratu: Shahādātu'Ulama il-Ummati wa Adilatuhum*, yet Shaykh Faisal does not mention the names of the two authors and suffices with referring to them as just “**the two authors**”. I have not yet found the names of the two 'Ash'arī authors yet in any case this is unimportant as their arguments are the usual 'Ash'arī arguments and logical fallacies that are replete within 'Ash'arī polemical writings.

² As can be seen in an article written in the mid 1990s entitled *Reforming Classical Texts* by Mas'ūd Khān from Aylesbury, which was a question put to his teacher, Nūh Keller. Such a question would be of little benefit to Khān who cannot access the classical texts in the original Arabic language in any case, so it would be perhaps better to actually study Arabic first before accusing Salafīs of the very serious crime of tampering with and purposefully covering up what is found within books which may oppose them.

Yet it is apparent that to claim that there has been an intentional “Salafī conspiracy to tamper with texts” would mean that somehow the Salafīs (from the 19th century or 1980s – according to their non-concurring dates of when *Salafīyyah* became popularised) would had to have had access to a vast range of manuscripts, collections and folios to tamper with, and this is obviously implausible.

One latest example of this inadequate comprehension of *'aqeedah* is the fact that only recently have some Western 'Ash'arī teachers admitted that there is such a thing as the “Salafī” or “Atharī” *'aqeedah*, even though this has been emphasised in the West for the last fifteen years. Indeed, it seems that this recognition of the Salafī *'aqeedah* has more to do with the current ecumenical zeitgeist among some Muslims as a front for “unity”, in light of recent events affecting Muslim communities in the West, more than it has to do with a serious critical evidence-based investigation of the correct *'aqeedah* as documented from the *Salaf*. The dearth of evidences is just one issue which causes many to disregard the 'Asharite creed and its speculative-rhetorical approach.

Of late however, for a variety of reasons, there has been an increase in 'Ash'arī polemic and its dialectic is resurfacing. Leading the way in this regard have been the following 'Ash'arī apologists who have authored and translated a variety of polemical tracts:

- ❖ G.F Haddād – the “Mureed” of Hishām al-Kabbānī (the deputy of Nazim Qubrusī head of a peculiar brand of the Naqshbandī Sūfī cult).¹ Kabbānī can be witnessed here performing a “dance”² See: <http://video.google.co.uk/videoplay?docid=618545744089582463&q=Kabbani+sufi+dhikr> and

Just one example which indicates that this is incorrect is that fact that writings and manuscripts of books of those who wrote against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb are still extant to this day within Saudi libraries. The works of Ahmad bin 'Alī ash-Shāfi'ī al-Qabbānī for example are to be found in the library of *Imām Muhammad ibn Saud University* in Riyadh. This demonstrates that the opposing arguments have been preserved in order to rebut them and shows that the followers of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb did not totally destroy, desecrate and ransack the works, writings and books of their opposers. Qabbānī had two writings against Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb, the first was a copy in his handwriting of a book entitled *Kitāb Rad ad-Dalālah wa Qama' al-Jahālah* by another scholar called Ahmad Barakat ash-Shāfi'ī al-Azharī at-Tandatāwī. While the second is entitled *Kitāb Naqd Qawā'id ad-Dalāl wa Rafd 'Aqā'id ud-Dullāl* which is a response to a letter sent by Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb to the 'Ulama in Basra.

¹ Interestingly, other strands of *Naqshbandīyyah* make *takfeer* of Nazim Qubrusī! Not even *tabdī'* or *tadleel* but *takfeer*! As occurred from Sameer al-Kādī ar-Rifā'ī, another *Naqshbandī* leader who is vying with Nazim for control of the cult.

² Is it any wonder why there is an emphasis on following the *manhaj* of the Salaf?!

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=r_YYpDRknjU&feature=related and:
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=ncQi1FGYL9U&feature=related>

- ❖ 'Abdullāh bin Hamīd 'Ali – a proponent of a polemical variety of Mālikī fiqh parochialism. Originally hailing from Philadelphia, he has recently assumed a teaching position with the *Zaytuna Institute* in Santa Clara, California.
- ❖ TJ Winter (Abdul-Hakīm Murād) – a Cambridge University Professor of Divinity Theology.
- ❖ Abū Layth ash-Shāfi'ī¹
- ❖ Abū Ja'far al-Misrī al-Hanbalī²
- ❖ The Marifah.net website³ - their work attempts to present the 'Ash'arī creed in a more academic manner yet the arguments presented are still inconclusive in aiding the 'Ash'arī credal position. I will refer to the website's key papers which support the 'Ash'arī position within the footnotes of this work.
- ❖ And others.

Much of their writing however has demonstrated a distinct lack of academic impartiality not to mention falling short in terms of intellectual consistency. The lack of academic neutrality which has led to such intellectual bankruptcy and ahistoricity on the part of some contemporary 'Ash'arīs is not adequate, especially considering the fact that they are deemed by some quarters as being “intellectual” and “scholarly”. Manifestly however, when it comes to writing about the Salafīs and issues related to creed, impartiality and objectivity, which are the hallmarks of professional academic writing, totally go out of the window. This rather haphazard and unsophisticated approach is a form of cognitive bias, resulting from bigoted and biased partisanship.⁴ It is also a form of intellectual denial on the part of the contemporary 'Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs.

¹ <http://seekingilm.com/>

² <http://www.htspub.com/>

³ www.marifah.net

⁴ One example of this can be seen in a question posed to Nūh Keller in the mid 1990s by Mas'ud Khan of Aylesbury; the question was entitled '*Was Imām Ahmad an anthropomorphist as claimed by the Salafīs?*' Yet it is evident that this is an excellent example of a *Straw man argument*. Khan exaggerates and distorts (and that's putting it mildly!) the Salafī position and puts words into the Salafīs' mouths claiming that they've forwarded an argument which they haven't actually made. Furthermore, within the answer Keller claims that *Kitāb us-Sunnah* is falsely ascribed to 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad bin Hanbal yet provides no evidence whatsoever, this is not adequate for serious scholarship and research.

Let's take a recent remark made by TJ Winter (Abdul-Hakīm Murād) in the introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.10¹:

Certainly, it is intriguing that the Hanbalī alternative in most places represented no more than a small fringe, just as the Hanbalī definition of Shari'a remained the smallest of the rites of law. The iconic hard-line champion of this school, Ibn Taymiyya...is not conspicuous in the catalogues of Islamic manuscript libraries;² his current renown is a recent phenomenon. Ibn Taymiyya was, indeed, imprisoned for heresy, a relatively unusual occurrence, and it would be hard to imagine Muslim society, or its rulers or scholars, punishing more philosophical thinkers like Ghazālī, or Razī, or Taftāzānī, in the same way. 'Hard' Hanbalism offered a simple literalism to troubled urban masses, and occasionally won their violent, riotous support, but the consensus of Muslims passed it by.

An exquisite illustration of such contemporary 'Ash'arī academic obscurantism littered with selective perception and then topped off with a dash of polemical exuberance to boot! Let's deconstruct this intellectual irregularity and ahistorical reading of events:

First of all, what Winter has done here is to regurgitate what Dr Yahya Michot calls the "Ibn Taymiyyah myth" which seeks to portray Ibn Taymiyyah as some sort of "big baddie" who is responsible for all things negative within the Muslim world today. There is no doubt that such an assessment is simplistic and, as Dr Yahya Michot has stated, is also too general to claim that Ibn Taymiyyah is not "conspicuous in the catalogues of Islamic manuscript libraries" as there has not been a detailed corpus of Ibn Taymiyyah's works compiled based on the manuscripts around the world, let alone a thorough survey of where Ibn Taymiyyah has been highlighted within the manuscripts.³

¹ It can be referred to here: http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/85495/excerpt/9780521785495_excerpt.pdf

²This ahistorical claim has been assessed thoroughly here: http://salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_PledgeContradiction pp.4-15

³ I had the opportunity to ask Dr Yahya Michot this question on Friday 18th July 2008 at a lecture on Ibn Taymiyyah held at London's City Circle. Dr Yahya is currently regarded as the main Western specialist in the works of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and has written a wealth of material on him largely in French. He does have four works in English one which has been published and the other three are due for publication later in 2008. His book *Muslims under non-Muslim Rule: Ibn Taymiyya on fleeing from sin, kinds of emigration and the status of Mardin* (Oxford and London: Interface Publications, 2006) is a translation and study of Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa* on Mardin and Dr Yahya corroborates exactly as Shaykh, Dr Khālīd al-Anbarī did in his book *The Impact of Man-Made Laws* and in the audio lectures *Politics in Light of Islām* (which can be downloaded from salafimanhaj.com). Dr Yahya has also conducted research detailing how many of the modern-day takfeerīs have totally mis-read and misused Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatāwā* in that they have taken Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatāwā* regarding the Mongols and applied them to the rulers of the Muslim lands, again corroborating what the Salafi

Secondly, historically it was the other way round! Murād (Winter) in his writings neatly skips over any referral whatsoever of how the 'Ash'arī speculative theological system came to the fore. In fact, the 'Ash'arīs were rebuked for their views before they attained dominance and were regarded as a heretical fringe fraternity. MacDonald also notes, in following Ibn Taymiyyah, adh-Dhahabī and Ibn ul-Mabrad, that the 'Ash'arīs were rebuked “**from the pulpits of mosques**”¹ and that many 'Ash'arīs fled Baghdād and Persia as a result. For the 'Ash'arī creed only gained dominance after the Abbasid minister Nidhām al-Mulk came into power and established institutions (Nidhāmiyyah) wherein the Asharite speculative-rhetorical creed could be instructed, al-Ghazālī at one point was the head of the institution.² Hye states:

Nizam al-Mulk founded the Nizamite Academy in Baghdad in 459 AH/1066 CE for the defence of Asharite doctrines. It is under his patronage that Abu al-Ma'ali 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini got the chance of preaching the Ash'arite doctrine freely.³

So in the year when William the Conqueror and his Norman armies took control of England suppressing the Anglo-Saxon English, Nidhām ul-Mulk and the 'Ash'arīs were taking control of Islamic educational institutions in the Muslim state and suppressing the Hanbalīs. Surely Winter should be aware of this? Such a denial and lack of referral to this historical event by the contemporary 'Ash'arīs is but one example of their intellectual denial. The Abbasid support of Ibn al-Qushayrī, an 'Asharite rhetorician, led to disturbances within Baghdād with the majority of the Hanbalī orientated public rejecting the newly fangled 'Ash'arī creedal system. This event has been referred to in Islamic history as the *Fitnah Qushayriyyah* and at this point the Hanbalīs were suppressed by the state which had succumbed to 'Ash'arite creedal dialectic. Ibn Kātheer mentions this event in *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah* and states that Ibn al-Qushayrī, along with some others, wrote to Nidhām ul-Mulk accusing the Hanābilah of *tajseem* (anthropomorphism) and other things. This caused a commotion which led to a mob of 'Asharites physically attacking one of the Hanbalī Shaykhs, Shareef Abū Ja'far bin Abī Mūsā, at his masjid wherein one was killed and others injured. Not to mention the fact that al-Juwaynī and Nidhām ul-Mulk were close friends and reciprocates in religio-political outlook⁴, so does this sound familiar? Indeed, Ibn

scholars have highlighted for years. Dr Yahya currently teaches classical Arabic and Islamic theology at Oxford University and is due to hold a position at the Hartford Seminary in America.

¹ D.B. MacDonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1903), p.212. There will be more mentioned about this in detail within the last chapter of this translation.

² M.H. Zuberi, *Aristotle and Al-Ghazali* (Delhi, India: Noor Publishing House, 1992), pp.29-30

³ M.A. Hye (2004), “Asharism” in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963-6), vol.1, p.242

⁴ M.R. Hassan (2004), “Nizam al-Mulk Tusi” in MM Sharif (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.747-774

'Asākir in his *Tabyeen Kadhib al-Muftarī*, who was writing at the height of the 'Ash'arī inquisition (in the sixth Islamic century) never at all in his writings claimed that the 'Ash'arīs were the majority as the contemporary 'Ash'arīs try to use as a proof. Rather, he merely argued that the arguments were correct yet accepted that they were a minority. Note that Ibn 'Asākir was writing in refutation of al-Ahwāzī who argued that the 'Ash'arīs were a newly fangled fringe group which had heretical beliefs. The famous Muslim historian al-Maqrīzī stated in his monumental work *Khutat*:

The madhhab of Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī spread in 'Irāq from around 380 AH and from there spread to Shām. When the victorious king Salāhuddeen Yūsuf bin Ayyūb took control over Egypt, his main judge Sadruddeen 'AbdulMalik bin 'Īsā bin Darbās al-Mārānī and himself were adherents to this school of thought. The madhhab was also spread by the just ruler Nūruddeen Mahmood bin Zinkī in Damascus. Salāhuddeen memorised a text authored by Qutbuddeen Abu'l-Ma'ālī Mas'ood bin Muhammad bin Mas'ood an-Naysabūrī and this ('Ash'arī) text was then studied and memorised by Salāhuddeen's offspring. This gave prominence and status to the madhhab (attributed) to al-'Ash'arī and was taken on board by the people during their rule.¹ This was continued by all of the successive rulers from Banī Ayyūb (the Ayyubids) and then during the rule of the Turkish kings (Mamluks).

Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Tumart, one of the rulers of al-Maghrib (Morocco), agreed with this ('Ash'arī) trend when he travelled to al-'Irāq. He took the 'Ash'arī madhhab on board via Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī and when Ibn Tumart returned to al-Maghrib he caused a clash² and began to teach the people of the land the 'Ash'arī madhhab and instituted it for the people. When he died 'AbdulMumin bin 'Alī al-Mīsī succeeded him and was referred to as the 'leader of the believers', him and his sons seized control of Morocco and were named the "Muwahhiddūn" ('the montheists'). This is how the Muwahhiddūn state came to fruition in Morocco and they shed the blood of all who opposed the '*aqeedab* laid down by Ibn Tumart, who they viewed as being the infallible Mahdī.³ Look how many were killed during that the numbers of which can only be enumerated by Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, this is well known within the history books.

This was the reason for the spread of the madhhab (attributed to) al-'Ash'arī and how it spread within the Islamic lands. This is to the extent that all other madhāhib (of Sunnī

¹ Furthermore, the 'Ash'arī in Egypt during that time were active against the Fatimiyyah Rawāfid who were ruling over Egypt, as a result the institution of a formal creed was a move to quell the development of the Rawāfid within Egypt and Shām. The Fatimid-Shi'a built *al-Azhar University* and when Salāhuddeen defeated the Fatimids their teachings were replaced with what the 'Ash'arīs there had codified.

² Ibn Tumart, after debating with the scholars of Fez, was deemed to be a radical and was thus imprisoned for his beliefs and views at the bequest of the Murābit (Almoravid) ruler at the time 'Ali bin Yūsuf.

³ Ibn Tumart actually declared himself to be a descendent of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and the Mahdī while he was promoting the 'Asharite creed in Morocco and North Africa and rebelling against the Murabitoon Muslim leaders!

'aqeedah) have been forgotten and people are ignorant of it to the extent that today there exists no other madhhab (of Sunnī 'aqeedah) contrary to it! Except for the madhhab of the Hanbalīs who follow Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal (radi Allāhu 'anhu), for they were upon the way of the Salaf and did not view that any form of figurative interpretation be made about Allāh's Attributes. So after seven hundred years after the Hijrah the actions of the Hanbalīs became famed in Damascus due to Taqīuddeen Abū'l-'Abbās Ahmad bin 'AbdulHakam bin 'AbdusSalām bin Taymiyyah al-Harrānī. He supported the madhhab of the Salaf and exerted great efforts in refuting the madhhab of the 'Ashā'irah and he strongly criticised them as well as the Rāfidah and Sūfiyyah.¹

Thirdly, the “rites of law” (i.e. *madhābib*) and their spread, was due to power and politics as is evident from even a brief historical survey. The idea that the *madhābib* were spread around the Islamic world by a mere “unbroken chain of transmission” that was “handed down traditionally” is a romantic ahistorical reading of events. For example, al-Maqrīzī in *Khutat Misr* notes:

The people of Ifreeqiyyah (Africa) mostly used to follow the Sunnah and the Āthār. Then the Hanafī madhhab took over and then after that, the Mālikī madhhab; the latter ones following earlier ones in the playing of the companions of desires and self-interest.

All the people of the nations which the companions conquered used to be described with the name ‘*Ahl ul-Hadeeth*’, as Abū Mansoor 'AbdulQādir ibn Tāhir at-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī said in his book *Usool ud-Deen* (vol.1, p.317):

It is clear that the people of the lands of ar-Rūm, al-Jazeera, ash-Shām, Adharbayjān (Azerbaijan), Bāb ul-Abwāb (Darband/Derbent)² and others which were conquered were

¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khutat: al-Mawā'idh wa'l-'tibār bi Dhikr il-Khutat wa'l-Athār* (Cairo: Maktabah ath-Thaqāfiyyah ad-Deeniyyah, n.d.), vol.4, p.192

² Or 'Derbend', written and pronounced as 'Derbent' in Russian, it is a town in Daghestan on the Western shore of the Caspian Sea that was known to the Arabs. See Houtsma, Van Donzel (eds.) *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam: 1913-1936* (Leiden, Netherlands: EJ Brill: 1993), p.940.

Derbent is the southern most city in Russia which is thought to be the oldest city in the whole of Russia. Derbent was known as the 'Caspian Gates' in the West and Bāb ul-Abwāb ('The Gate of Gates') in the Arabic-speaking Islamic world, but its name has always been linked to 'gates' of a fortress. The name "The Gate of Gates" originates in the fact that Derbent consisted of thirty north-facing towers which stretched for 40 kilometres between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. The immense wall had a height of up to twenty meters and a thickness of about 10 feet (3 m) when it was in use. It was built by Yazdegird the Second of the Sassanid-Persian Empire (in circa 440 CE) and was attacked by the Armenians and Albanians in their rebellion in 450 CE. Kisra the First strengthened it during his reign (531-579) in order to keep out the Gokturks. Some historians have confused the fortress walls with the Gates of Alexander which he built as a barrier in the Caucasus to prevent the non-Greeks of the north attacking the south. Some historians still maintain that the fortress built by Kisra may have had earlier foundations built by the Achaemenid Persian Empire (550–330 BCE), these were later conquered by the Greeks so the fortress may have been reinforced by agents of Alexander's empire.

all upon the madhhab of the Ahl ul-Hadeeth. Also the inhabitants of the lands of Ifreeqiyyah, Andalus and all the countries behind the Western Sea, were from the Ahl ul-Hadeeth. Also the people of the lands of al-Yaman upon the Zanj coastline (Zanzibar) were all from the Ahl ul-Hadeeth.¹

Al-Maqrīzī also notes in *al-Khutāt* (vol.3, p.333):

Most of Ifreeqiyyah (Africa) was upon the Sunnah and Āthār, until 'Abdullāh ibn Farrookh Abū Muhammad al-Fārisi came with the Hanafī madhhab, then Asad ibn al-Furāt ibn Senān became the judge of Ifreeqiyyah, upon the Hanafī madhhab. When Sahnoon ibn Sa'eed at-Tanūkhī took judgeship of Ifreeqiyyah, the Mālikī madhhab spread amongst them. Then al-Mu'izz ibn Bādees made all of the people of Ifreeqiyyah adhere to the Mālikī madhhab and leave everything else. So the people of Ifreeqiyyah (Africa) and the people of al-Andalus were turned to the Mālikī madhhab right up until today, due to the desire of the rulers and their desire for the world. So the judgements and rulings in all those towns and villages were not given except by one who had ascribed themselves to the fiqh of the Mālikī madhhab...

This is also mentioned by the historians Ibn ul-Atheer in *al-Kāmil fi't-Tāreekh* and Ibn Khallikān in *Mawāsim ul-Ādāb*. Ibn Hajar mentions in *Raf' ul-Isr*, as does as-Sakhāwī in *ath-Thighar al-Bassām* that:

Ibn 'Uthmān ad-Dimishqī al-Qādī was the first one to bring the Shāfi'i madhhab into ash-Shām and he took over the judgeship of Dimishq, ruling by it. He was followed by those who succeeded him and he used to give a reward of 100 deenārs to the ones who memorised Mukhtasar ul-Muzanī.

In *Tabaqāt as-Subkī, al-I'lān wa't-Tawbeek* and *Shadharāt adb-Dhabab* (vol.3, p.51) it is mentioned:

The Shāfi'i madhhab was spread beyond the river (to Transoxania) by Qaffāl ash-Shāshī. He died in the year 365 AH (1005 AH).

In the *Tāreekh* of Ibn Khallikān, in the second volume, under the biography of an-Nāsir Salāhuddeen Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, it says:

When the state of Ayyūbiyyah was set up in the 5th century AH (from circa 1010 CE) in Misr, the madhhabs were revived by building schools for its jurists and other means. The Shāfi'i madhhab was given big favours to make it known and the judges were chosen from it because it was the madhhab of the country. Banu Ayyūb were all Shāfi'iyyah, except 'Īsā ibn al-'Ādil.

Darband (Derbent) is not to be confused with the four other towns today that have the name 'Darband'. One town/district in Tajikistan; a village next to Tehrān in Irān; a town in Western Baluchistan and the other a village in the Mansehra District in North-Western Pakistan.

¹ See Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ad-Dehlawee al-Madane, *A History of the People of Hadeeth* (Birmingham: Salafi Publications, Ramadān 1425AH/December 2005), p.38

Al-Maqrīzī thus states in *al-Kbutat* (vol.3, p.344):

When the naval empire of the Turks succeeded it, its authorities were also Shāfi'ī. It continued acting by judging according to the Shāfi'iyyah law until the Sultanate of Mālik adh-Dhāhir Baybaras brought in judges from all four: they were Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī and Hanbalī. This continued until the year 665 AH (1267 CE), until there remained no madhhab in all of the Muslim lands except the four madhhabs and the creed of al-Ash'arī which was all taught to its people in the schools, the Khawānik (Sūfī hospice), prayer rooms and retreats (for the Sūfīs) in all the Islamic states. Enmity was shown to the ones who were partisan to anything else and they were criticised. None would be appointed as judges, nor would anyone's witness be accepted, nor would their proposals be accepted, nor would they be accepted as Imāms or teachers – if they did not blindly follow any one of the four madhhabs! The jurists of these countries gave the ruling, throughout this period, that it is an obligation to adhere to these madhhabs and that anything else was forbidden.

This is the state of affairs up to today.¹

Fourthly, the 'Ash'arīs foundation of Kalām was attacked and condemned by Shāfi'ī scholars such as adh-Dhahabī, Ibn Kātheer, Ibn Hajar and as-Suyūṭī all condemning the very *kalām* which Murād (Winter) refers to as enlightened “philosophical thought”. How on earth Murād manages to construe that al-Ghazālī, ar-Rāzī and Taftāzānī in some way represent the beliefs of the Salaf is beyond us, hence the fragility of contemporary 'Ash'arite logic.

As for Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimabullāh*) being “imprisoned for heresy” then exactly the same accusation was levelled against Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal (*rahimabullāh*) who was also accused of heresy by the prevailing heretical Mu'tazilah rulers and their intelligentsia. Imām Mālik (*rahimabullāh*) was also imprisoned, beaten and had his beard shaven off by the rulers for holding onto his positions. So the mere fact that Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah was imprisoned and accused of heresy is understandable considering the fact that the 'Ash'arī creed by the time of Ibn Taymiyyah was becoming more established. It must also be emphasised that even though the 'Ash'arī inclined intelligentsia had incited the arrest and imprisonment of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah the Damascene populace loved him.

As for Hanbalism in some way nurturing “troubled urban masses” and winning their “violent, riotous support” then this can equally be applied to the spread of the Mālikī-'Ash'arī² school within north-west Africa with the self-proclaimed “Mahdī” Ibn Tumart (d. 1128 CE) and 'AbdulMūmin (d. 1163 CE), who both rebelled and overthrew the al-Murābitūn. Also with the

¹ See Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ad-Dehlawee al-Madane, *op.cit.*, p.80-86.

² I say “Mālikī-'Ash'arī” because Ibn Tumart was an ardent 'Ash'arī who endeavoured to institute its creed within Africa and al-Andalus. Many Mālikī *fuqahā* were not 'Ash'arī, refer to an interesting piece by Shaykh Mashhoor Hasan on this topic here: http://salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_RefuteAsharees.pdf

hardcore Hanafism exemplified in the Muridism of Imām Shāmīl of Daghestan (d. 1871 CE) or with the Afghān Tālībān Tasawwuf teachers. Not to mention the stringent Shāfi'ism found within Shām and *al-Azhar*, which extols the virtue of the Khalaf over the virtue of the Salaf. So Hanbalism in Islamic history has not had a monopoly on “simple literalism” and “violent, riotous support” from “troubled urban masses”, as TJ Winter (Abdal-Hakīm Murād) may have us believe. Such ahistoricity therefore is but an example of Orientalism within Western 'Asharite garb and Winter has unfortunately become renowned for his essentialism¹ when writing about Salafīs generally and Saudi Arabia in particular. This method allows polemics to take priority over discussion and argumentation and thus Winter has been rather reluctant to present his contentions when faced with the prospect of directly engaging the Salafīs in a reasoned and neutral fashion.²

It is also obvious that despite their attempts they are evidently unable to draw upon referral to the Salaf for their creed, instead referring to those who were only influenced by aspects of the 'Ash'arī dialectic or obscure scholars about whom little is known, like Qādī Ibn Jahbal. This is to emphasise that while Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah is critiqued those contemporaries of him were evidently not to the same meticulous academic level attained by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullāh*).

The contemporary 'Ash'arīs also like to refer to Ibn al-Jawzī as if he was in complete harmony and agreement with them. Further investigation however reveals that Ibn ul-Jawzī strongly criticised Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī for delving into *kalām* (speculative-rhetorical discussion). Not only did Ibn ul-Jawzī in his book *Sayd ul-Khātir* criticise al-'Ash'arī but also Ibn ul-Jawzī again condemned al-'Ash'arī in his book *al-Muntadham* saying:

He was born in 260 AH. He delved into kalām, and was upon the madhhab of the Mu'tazilah for a long time. He then decided to oppose them and proclaimed a doctrine which muddled up people's beliefs and caused endless strife. The people never differed that this audible Qur'an is Allah's Speech, and that Gabriel descended with it upon the Prophet – Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. The reliable imams declared that the Quran is eternal, while the Mu'tazilah claimed that it is created. Al-Ash'ari then agreed with the Mu'tazila that the Quran is created and said: 'This is not Allah's Speech. Rather,

¹ Generalised statements which are asserted that make no reference to possible variations.

² He has also played a role in asserting a sort of “vetted British Islam” and just one example of the move towards such “vetted Islam” can be witnessed in Murād's (Winter's) *'Muslim Songs of the British Isles'?* This is an odd attempt to formulate and develop a type of expression which is not seen as subversive for the native population of the UK. The site can be seen here: <http://www.britishmuslimsong.co.uk/harmonia.htm> along with Abdal Hakīm Murād's own vocal song contribution to this rather peculiar ballad of 'Islamic expression'. To also see his “Muslim choir” see: http://www.britainusa.com/WebGalleries/MPE/pages/A_Muslim_Choir.htm

Allah's Speech is an Attribute subsisting in Allah's Essence. It did not descend on the Prophet, nor is it audible.' Ever since he proclaimed this belief, he lived in fear for his life for opposing the orthodox community (Ahl us-Sunnah), until he sought refuge in the house of Abu al-Hasan al-Tamimi fearing his assassination. Then some of the rulers began to fanatically follow his madhab, and his following increased, until the Shafi'is abandoned the beliefs of al-Shafi'i and instead followed al-Ash'ari's doctrine.¹

Ibn Katheer also highlights Ibn ul-Jawzī's strong censure of the 'Ash'arīs in *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Maktabah al-Ma'ārif), vol.11, p.206. Al-'Ash'arī however did finally retract and his later writings on creed: *Maqalāt ul-Islāmiyyeen*, *Risālah ila Ahl itb-Thaghr* and *al-Ibānah 'an il-Usool id-Diyānah* are testimony to his rejection of speculative-rhetorical discussion and his conformity with the creed of the Salaf.² The contemporary 'Ash'arīs however have been hesitant to refer to these sources due to the clear agreement with *Salafīyyah* contained within these works by Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī. In some instances it has been asserted by some Orientalists and 'Ash'arīs that these works were merely authored to please the Hanābilah or to deceive them, yet this is unlikely as he was an honest scholar who did not present two-faces in regards to an essential subject such as Islamic theology.

The 'Ash'arīs therefore have been found wanting in terms of recognising the correct '*aqeedah* as inherited from the Salaf, so for instance some contemporary 'Ash'arīs have either admitted to the existence of the Salafī/Atharī '*aqeedah* (from whence in the mid 1990s they criticised it!), or some of them are utilising obscure works to discredit the Salafī '*aqeedah*. As for some of the more sinister facets of the 'Ash'arī dialectic then this includes the belief that the Qur'ān is created yet that this only be taught within private instruction or within a teaching environment. This in itself is the most clear example of the 'Ash'arī agreement with Mu'tazilī beliefs and methods in approaching the Islamic texts.

For this series into contemporary 'Ash'arī polemic we plan to embark on a look at the claim that the majority of the Shāfi'ī scholars were 'Ash'arī and it will be evident that while some of the later Shāfi'ī fuqahā were 'Ash'arī the early Shāfi'ī scholars on the otherhand and those Shāfi'ī scholars who witnessed the development of the 'Ash'arī-Mu'tazilī dialectic – were totally opposed to the Asharite creed and did not hold the same beliefs and ideas about Allāh's Attributes, the Qur'ān and many other important aspects of belief. Also for the series we also plan to present a paper regarding Imām al-Muzanī (*rahimabullāh*) and what he mentioned in his *Sharh us-Sunnah* which runs contrary, or at least very differently, to what has been constructed by

¹ Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntadham* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995 CE), vol. 8, p.219

Refer to: http://hanbalis.com/index.php/Ibn_al-Jawzi#Ash.E2.80.99ari_theologians

² Shaykh Faisal al-Jāsim quotes much from these works as will be seen within this translation.

latter Shāfi'ī-'Ash'arīs and contemporary “Shāfi'ī” polemicists. Any suggestions, recommendations or advice can be forwarded to the salafimanhaj.com team. In terms of the citations and references in this translation then I have provided the full details of the works used by Shaykh Faisal for the benefit of any wishing to conduct further research based on anything mentioned in this translation.

AFFIRMING THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLĀH DOES NOT NECESSITATE TASHBEEH WITH HIS CREATION: WHATEVER IS THE RIGHT OF THE CREATOR DOES NOT NECESSARILY APPLY TO THE CREATION

Introduction

What caused the two authors to distort Allāh's Attributes in the name of *ta'weel*, and avert them from what is apparent of them, is the claim that what is apparent of the Attributes is not what is intended. As a result, they understood that affirming Allāh's Attributes necessitates the attributes of the weak, poor, unable and incapable creation, so they say for example: "If we were to affirm such and such it would necessitate such and such" – this is ignorance from them both of the Divine Legislation, the intellect and the Arabic language. Allāh says,

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"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

So Allāh affirms for Himself hearing and seeing, what the creation are also described as having, yet Allāh negated from Himself having anything from the creation which is like unto Him. Allāh says,

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"Do you know of any similarity to Him?"

{*Maryam* (19): 65}

And Allāh says,

"Nor is there to Him any equivalent."

{*al-Ikhlās* (112): 4}

Allāh says,

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“So do not assert similarities to Allāh.”

{*an-Nabl* (16): 74}

Allāh says,

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“So do not attribute to Allāh equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].”

{*Baqarah* (2): 22}

It is well-known that the Essence (*Dhāt*) of Allāh does not resemble that of the creation and that affirmation of Allāh's Essence does not necessitate that of the creation. So whoever extracts *tashbeeh* from affirmation of Allāh's Essence is the same who would make *tashbeeh* from affirming all of His Attributes. So when it is known conclusively that there is a distinction between the Creator and the creation in terms of essence and existence, it is also known that there is a distinction between His creation in terms of attributes. So speech concerning the Attributes is a branch of speech concerning the essence and there is nothing like Allāh whether in His Essence, His Attributes and His Actions. So if Allāh has a real Essence it does not resemble that of other essences, so the Essence is a description of a real Attribute and is not to be compared with the attributes of other essences. So what necessitates Allāh's Attributes does not necessitate creation's attributes, because there are matters that apply to the creation such as deficiency, poverty, humility and weakness, this does not apply to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Beginner and Creator of everything whose Existence, Essence and Attributes are not encompassed by minds and are not comprehended by delusions and thoughts.

I will transmit here some Imāms' statements in regards to affirmation of Allāh's Attributes and that what necessitates the creation does not apply to Him, and that those who necessitate affirming Allāh's Attributes necessitate the description of the creation are the various types of Mu'atilah (deniers of Allāh's Attributes).

Narrations from the Salaf Concerning What Necessitates Allāh's Attributes does not necessitate the creation's attributes

'Abdul'Azeez bin 'Abdullāh bin Abī Salamah al-Mājishūn (d. 164 AH/781 CE):

He said:

As for the one who rejects what the Rabb (Lord) described about Himself then he has been deluded by the devils who are on the earth. As a result, he (the rejector) began to use as evidence

for his claim to reject what the Lord described and named for Himself that: “It is a must that if He has such and such then He would have to be such and such”. So he disregarded what was clear with that which was unknown, and rejected what the Lord named for Himself as descriptions for the Lord for what He did not name for Himself.

Imām Abū Yūsuf al-Qādī Ya'qūb bin Ibrāheem al-Kūfī (d. 182 AH/798 CE):

He said:

For that reason it is not permissible to make an analogy in *tawbeed*, Allāh is not known except by His Names and He is not to be described except by His Attributes...He commanded us to single Him out and *tawbeed* is not by analogy. This is because analogy is in regards to things which have a resemblance or likeness yet Allāh has neither resemblance nor likeness unto Him, Blessed is He the Best of the Creators.

How can *tawbeed* be understood by analogy when He is the Creator of creation contrary to the creation, there is nothing like unto Him, Blessed and High is He?

'AbdurRahmān bin al-Qāsim al-'Utqī Abū 'Abdullāh al-Misrī al-Mālikī (d. 191 AH/807 CE):

Ibn 'AbdulBarr said:

It reached me from Ibn il-Qāsim that he did not view there being a problem in relaying the hadeeth: “Indeed, Allāh laughs...” because laughing from Allāh, like descending and amazement are also from Him yet are not like what is found from His servants.

He also said:

It is not suitable for anyone to describe Allāh except with what He described Himself with in the Qur'ān. His Hands and Face do not resemble anything yet it is still said that: “He has Two Hands just as He described Himself in the Qur'ān; He has a Face just as He described Himself in the Qur'ān”, one is to stop at what He described Himself with in the Book for there is no likeness or similarity unto Him, Blessed is He. Rather, He is Allāh and there is no god worthy of worship except He and He is how He described Himself and His Hands are Outstretched just as He described,

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“...while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand.”

{az-Zumar (39): 67}

As He described Himself.

Al-Hāfidh Nu'aym bin Hammād bin Mu'awiyah al-Khazā'i (d. 228 AH/843 CE):

He said:

Whoever resembles Allāh with anything from His creation has disbelieved and whoever rejects what Allāh described Himself with has disbelieved. Whatever Allāh and His Messenger describe Allāh with is not *tashbeeh*.¹

'Abdul'Azeez bin Yahyā bin 'Abdul'Azeez al-Kanānī (d. 230 AH/845 CE):

He said in his discussion with a Jahmī:

The Jahmī says: “Inform us just how he made *istiwā* over the Throne? Is it like how the Arabs say that such and such made *istiwā* over the bed so that the bed encompasses the person when he's on it? So you have to say that the Throne encompasses Allāh if He is over it because we cannot imagine anything over something except in this way.”

In order to explain this is should be said to him: “As for your saying “how does he make *istiwā*?” Then “how?” cannot be applied to Allāh, for He has informed us that He made *istiwā* over the Throne and He did not inform us of *how* he made *istiwā*'. So it is obligatory for the believers to believe in their Lord and His *istiwā*' over the Throne and it is forbidden for them to describe how he made *istiwā*'. This is because He did not inform them how He did that and the eyes in this worldly life did not see it to describe what they saw. He also forbade the believers from saying about Him that which they do not know, so they are to believe in His *istiwā*' and then refer knowledge of how he made *istiwā*' unto Allāh.²

Imām al-Hāfidh Ibn Rāhawayh Ishāq bin Ibrāheem al-Handhalī (d. 238 AH/852 CE):

He said:

It is not permissible to enter into the affair of Allāh as it is permissible to enter into the action of the creation based on what Allāh says,



“He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned.”

¹ Reported by al-Lālikā'i, *Usool I'tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār Tayyibah, 1411 AH, 2nd Edn.), vol.3, p.523 and Abū Ismā'eel al-Harawī in *Dhamm ul-Kalām wa Ahluhu* (Madenah, KSA: Maktabat al-Athariyyah, 1419 AH, ed. 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad al-Ansārī), vol.4, p.263.

² Transmitted from him by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in: *Bayān Talbees al-Jahmiyyah* (KSA Government Print: 1391 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Qāsim), vol.2, p.343 and *Naqd ut-Ta'sees*, (Madenah, KSA: Maktabat ul-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam, 1424 AH, ed. Mūsā ad-Duwaysh), p.16.

{*al-Anbiyā* (21): 23}

And it is not permissible for anyone to imagine Allāh and His Attributes and Actions as it is permissible to reflect and view the affair of creation. Allāh can be described as descending in this last third of every night to the heaven of the dunya but it is not to be asked “how is His descending” because the Creator does what He wills as He wills.¹

Imām Ahl us-Sunnah Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE):

He stated in his book *Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah wa'z-Zanādiqah*:

And he (i.e. Jahm) interpreted the Qur'ān in a way other than which it is to be interpreted and he denied ahādeeth of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam). He also claimed that whoever describes Allāh with something which Allāh Himself described Himself with in His Book, or with what the Messenger of Allāh narrated from Him, is a disbeliever and from the Mushabbihah (those who resemble Allāh to the creation)...²

He also said:

So we say to them: Allāh is the One who arranged the affairs and He is the One who spoke to Mūsā, they say: “He did not speak to him and does not speak, because speech is only done with limbs and limbs are to be negated from Allāh.” So if an ignorant person was to hear their (Jahmī) statements he would think that they are the most fervent in glorifying Allāh and the ignorant person will not realise that their words lead to misguidance and kufr and will not sense that they do not say what they do except as a false claim about Allāh.³

Imām Ahmad also said in '*Bāb mā Ankarat al-Jahmiyyah min an yakūn Allāh kallama Mūsā*' [Chapter: The Jahmiyyah Rejected that Allāh Spoke to Mūsā]:

We say: why do you reject that? They say “Allāh did not speak and does not speak, rather He formed something which was an expression from Allāh and He created a voice which was heard” and they also claimed that speech is only with a mouth, tongue and lips. We say: is it permissible for that which was formed, or other than Allāh, to say:

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“O Mūsā, indeed I am your Lord”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 11-12}?

Then Imām Ahmad said,

¹ Relayed by Abū Ismā'eel al-Harawī in *Dhamm ul-Kalām wa Ahluhu*, vol.4, p.325.

² *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah wa'z-Zanādiqah*, p.104

³ *Ibid.*, p.104

As for their saying: “Speech is not done except with a mouth, tongue and lips” then did not Allāh say to the heavens and the earth

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“Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion.” They said, “We have come willingly.”

{*Fussilat (41): 11*}?

Do you think that they said that with a mouth, tongue, lips and limbs?

Imām Ahmad also said:

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“And We subjected the mountains to exalt [Us], along with David...”

{*al-Anbiyā (21): 79*}

Do you think that they exalted Allāh with a mouth, tongue and lips? And as for limbs then they will testify against the disbeliever,

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“And they will say to their skins, “Why have you testified against us?” They will say, “We were made to speak by Allāh, who has made everything speak...”

{*Fussilat (41): 21*}

Do you think that they will speak with a mouth, tongue and lips?

However, Allāh made them speak how He wills and He speaks how He wills without saying that this is done with a mouth, tongue and lips.¹

Imām Ahmad also said in *Risālat us-Sunnah* which was transmitted by 'Abdūs bin Mālik al-'Attār:

There is no analogy in the Sunnah and no similitude to be put forth, it is neither understood by intellects nor desires, rather it is to be followed and desires are to be abandoned.

This from him, may Allāh have mercy on him, invalidates making an analogy between the Creator and creation in regards to what Allāh described Himself with, and that it is obligatory to submit to that without analogy of His Attributes to that of the creation.

Abū Zur'ah ar-Rāzī 'Ubaydullāh bin 'AbdulKareem al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī (d. 264 AH/878 CE):

He said:

¹ Ibid., pp.130-131

The Mu'atilah who negate are those who deny the Allāh's Attributes that He described Himself with in His Book and based on the tongue of His Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*). They also deny the authentic narrations which have arrived from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) in regards to Allāh's Attributes. They falsely interpret Allāh's Attributes according to their void opinions which conform to the misguidance that they believe in. They ascribe the narrators of the narrations (which affirm Allāh's Attributes) as having made tashbeeh. So whoever ascribes those who describe their Lord, Blessed and Exalted, with what Allāh Himself describes Himself with in His Book and based on what His Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said, without *tamtbeel* and *tashbeeh*, to *tashbeeh* is a negating Mu'atīl. This is what the people of knowledge stated about them, such as 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubārak and Wakī' bin al-Jarāh.¹

We mentioned beforehand that of the signs of the Jahmiyyah Mu'atilah is that they call those who affirm Allāh's Attributes as being Mushabbihah; we have transmitted the statement of Imām Ahmad, Ishāq, Abū Hātim and others.

Imām Abū Muhammad 'Abdullāh bin Muslim bin Qutaybah ad-Dīnawarī (d. 276 AH/889 CE):

He said in his refutation of the false interpretations of the Jamhiyyah and Mu'tazilah:

And they say about laughter: **“It is like when the Arabs say ‘the earth laughed with plants’” when the earth blossoms with flowers and vegetation; and “the clouds laughed when the lightning flashed” – there is nothing in these meanings except that ‘laughter’ here means ‘to bring about’ (or ‘to cause to happen’).”**

(We say): If the laughter which they fled from is *tashbeeh* with people, then within these meanings is also *tashbeeh*.²

Imām al-'Allāmah al-Hāfidh an-Nāqid 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed ad-Dārimī (d. 280 AH/893 CE):³

¹ Mentioned by Abu'l-Qāsim at-Taymī in *al-Hujjah fi Bayān il-Mahajjah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār ur-Rāyah, 1411 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad bin Rabī' al-Madkhalī), vol.1, p.178.

² Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ikhtilāf fi'l-Lafdh wa'r-Radd'ala'l-Jahmiyyati wa'l-Mushabbihah* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1405 AH, 1st Edn.) p.39.

³ **Translator's note:** Ibn 'Asākir (who was influenced by 'Ash'arī-Mu'tazilī dialectic himself) mentions in his *Tāreekh ud-Dimishq* in regards to the biography of Imām ad-Dārimī:

'Uthmān bin Sa'eed bin ad-Dārimī al-Sijzī, who lives in Herat. He heard in Damascus from Ibrahim bin al-'Alā bin Abdallāh bin Zayd, Hishām bin 'Ammār, Sulaymān bin Abdur-Rahmān, Hishām bin Khālid, Hammād bin Mālik al-Harastanī, Sa'eed bin Abī Maryam, Nu'aym bin Hammād, 'Abdul-Ghaffār bin Da'ud al-Harranī, Yahyā al-Himmanī, Abū Bakr

bin Abī Shaybah, Mūsa bin Isma'eel al-Tabudhkī, Ali bin al-Madinī, Abū Rabi' al-Zahranī, Ishāq bin Rahawayh and others.

Ibn 'Asākir mention by *isnad* that Abū Abdallāh Muhammad bin Ishāq al-Qurashī said: **“Imām Abū Sa'eed 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed bin Khālid ad-Dārimī as-Sijzī reported to us...”** Then Ibn 'Asākir mentions through another *isnad* Ibn Abī Hātim's opinion about ad-Dārimī:

'Uthmān b. Sa'id al-Dārimī as-Sijistānī, who lived in Herat, transmitted from Abū Sālih (the secretary of al-Layth), Sa'eed bin Abī Maryam, Abdallāh bin Raja, Muslim bin Ibrāheem, Abu'l-Waleed and Abī Salamah, and he sat with Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yahyā ibn Ma'een and 'Alī ibn al-Madinī.

Ibn 'Asākir quotes also from the partly found *Tāreekh Jurjān* authored by Abu'l-Qāsim as-Sahmī (d.427 AH): **'Uthmān bin Sa'eed as-Sijzī was in Jurjān in the year 273 AH and al-Hasan bin 'Alī bin Nasr at-Tūsī and a group reported from him.**

Ibn 'Asākir quotes also one of the *Shuyookh* and 'Ulama of Herat, namely Abu'l-Fadl Ya'qoob bin Ishāq bin Mahmood al-Qarrab, who said:

We've never seen the like of 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed and 'Uthmān never saw the like of himself! He took *adab* from Ibn al-A'rabī; *fiqh* from Abū Ya'qoob al-Buwaytī; *hadeeth* from Yahyā bin Ma'een, 'Alī bin al-Madinī, and he stood at the forefront in these sciences, Allāh's Mercy upon him!

So this is the opinion of some of the Ahl ul-'Ilm on Imām ad-Dārimī, author of the *Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah* and *Naqd al-Marīsī*.

Let us quote again Ibn 'Asākir, the same author of the *Tabyeen Kadhib ul-Muftarī*, quoting through al-Bayhaqī (who was also affected by 'Ash'arī dialectic):

(I heard Abu Hāmid al-A'sha say): “I have not seen Muhaddithin like Muhammad bin Yahyā [ad-Dhuhli], 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed and Ya'qoob bin Sufyān.”

Ibn 'Asākir also relays through none other than Abū Nasr al-Qushayrī (who propagated 'Ash'arī-Mu'tazilī dialectic) and al-Bayhaqī themselves (!):

Abū Nasr bin al-Qushayrī reported to us: Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī reported to us: Abū 'Abdallāh al-Hāfidh reported to us saying: I heard Abdallāh bin Abī Dhal say: I said to Abū Fadl bin Ishāq bin Mahmood: “Have you ever seen someone better than 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed ad-Dārimī?” Then after a while he said: “Yes, Ibrāheem al-Harbī.

From all of the above therefore it is evident that the criticism of Imām ad-Dārimī by modern-day 'Ash'arīs (with al-Kawtharī leading the way!) has to be rejected as it is clearly not based on anything from the contemporaries of ad-Dārimī. Rather the criticism of Imām ad-Dārimī is based on the excessively polemical and partisan rants of al-Kawtharī the *takfeerī* who even went to the extent of defending the heretical Jahmī creed. Unfortunately those in the West who have merely followed al-Kawtharī uncritically in his modern critique of this Imām have included: GF Haddād, Abdullāh bin Hamīd 'Ali, Hishām al-Kabbānī, Nūh Keller, Zayd Shākir and their partisan students. One example of this is in the book *Islamic Belief and Doctrine According to Ahl al-Sunna, Vol.1: A Repudiation of “Salafī” Innovations* (Mountain View, CA: ASFA, 1996), p.212 – **the book has Hisham Kabbānī's name on the cover yet was more than likely penned by GF Haddād whose name appears inside as ‘editor’!** Herein is a list of “rejected books of unsound doctrine” and the list includes: *as-Sunnah* by 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad bin Hanbal; *as-Sunnah* by al-Lālikāī; *as-Sunnah* by al-Khallāl; the books of al-Barbahārī; *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī* (which is Imām ad-Dārimī's refutation of the chief Jahmite Bishr al-Mareesī); *Kitāb ut-Tawheed* by Ibn Khuzaymah; *Dhamm ul-Kalām* by

He said:

As for your saying “the how (*kayfiyyah*) of these Attributes and making *tashbeeh* of them with what exists in creation is an error.” Yet we do not say: “It’s an error” as you say, rather according to us it is *kufri*! In regards to the how (*kayfiyyah*) of the Attributes and making *tashbeeh* of them with what exists in creation then we are much stricter than you! Except that we do not make *tashbeeh* of the Attributes, *takyeef* (ask “how?”) about the Attributes, disbelieve in the Attributes, deny the Attributes and we do not deem the Attributes to be *bātil* with misguided false interpretations.

Then Imām ad-Dārimī said:

It is not permissible to make *ijtihād* with opinions in regards to many of the obligatory actions and rulings that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears, then how can it be allowed in regards to the Attributes of Allāh which eyes neither see nor can comprehend by thoughts.¹

Imām ad-Dārimī also said:

If we are *Mushabbihah* according to you, even though we single out Allāh as the one true God worthy of worship with Attributes which we have taken from His Book and we have described Allāh with what He has described Himself with in His Book – then in your claim Allāh Himself would be the first of the those who are *Mushabbihah*! And then His Messenger who informed us of His Attributes would also be from the *Mushabbihah*! Therefore, do not oppress your own selves and do not feign knowledge when you are ignorant of it, for the title (that you have ascribed to us) about *tashbeeh* is distant (from us).²

He also said:

As for your harsh condemnation of those believers who affirm Allāh’s Attributes as being “those who are deluded and believe that the Attributes are composed of limbs and body parts” then your claim about them is falsehood. In fact, you are the people who are the most well-known for intending that!³ The people who affirm the Attributes affirm that which you deny and they do not

al-Harawī; *al-Uluww* of adh-Dhahabī and many other works! Yet there are neither footnotes giving details of the sources of who has deemed these classical books as being “unsound” nor any elaboration on exactly what makes the content “unsound”. All that is present is one page which is not really adequate in assessing if these books are “unsound” in terms of *'aqedah*. Therefore, it is evident that all GF Haddād did in this case was to merely regurgitate what had been mentioned within the extremist polemics of al-Kawtharī.

¹ Imām 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed ad-Dārimī, *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat ur-Rushd, 1418 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Rasheed al-Almaī), vol.1, pp.219-220

² *Ibid.*, vol.1, pp.302-303

³ **Translator’s note:** This is a superb observation by Imām ad-Dārimī (*rahimahullāh*), for it is common to hear the contemporaries who have been influenced by *Jahmī* rhetoric saying “**yes, but a Hand means a limb**”, so hereby they themselves have already compared Allāh to His creation! Abdullāh bin Hamīd Ali, a petty partisan polemist, even authored an article which he boldly entitled *Allah’s Hand: Is It Real or Not?* And then had the audacity to state within the article that Muslims should not get confused into matters related to Allāh’s Attributes, yet gave his article with this ridiculous title!!? Another example of 'Ash'arī delving into Allāh’s Attributes can be seen here with this text negating Allāh’s *fawqiyyah*. It is an answer to a question posed concerning “the one who

presume about the Attributes except whatever Allāh and His Messenger meant, and they do not claim that He has limbs or bodily parts as you claim about them. Yet you have no shame in condemning them with lies in order to promote your misguidance among the ignorant people.¹

He also said:

As for your claim that “going from place to place is an attribute of creation” then we do not ask “how?” about Allāh’s Coming more than what He Himself mentioned in His Book and then what was described by His Messenger (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*).²

He also said:

Then you (O Jahmī) did not suffice with this false interpretation until you claimed that a people from Ahl us-Sunnah interpreted Allāh’s Laughter according to what their minds from their own selves thought. This is a lie against them, for we have not heard of any of them comparing the Actions of Allāh with the actions of the creation. However, we say that He Laughs as He wills in accordance to what befits Him, while your tafseer is to be discarded...³

Imām Abū Ja’far Muhammad bin Jareer at-Tabarī (d. 310 AH/922 CE)⁴:

believes that Allāh is settled in created things or that He has a direction” by an ‘Ash’ari Shaykh, Abū Muhammad Mahmūd Khattāb as-Subkī al-Azharī, translated by Abū Ādam an-Narūjī. On page 7 it states:

“Was He sitting, according to them, on the non-existing ‘Arsh before it existed????!! Was He (according to them) in the sky before it existed????!!”

Refer to the document here: <http://www.marifah.net/articles/fatwaazhar-mahmudkhattab.pdf>

The likes of such speech are not to be found among the *Salaf* neither did the *Salaf* pose such ridiculous questions which confuse the common people. In fact to even ask such question even in the rhetorical sense is clear heresy, Imām al-Barbahārī stated in *Sharh us-Sunnah*:

No one says about the attributes of the Lord, the Most High, “Why?” except one who doubts about Allāh, the Blessed and Most High. The Qur’ān is the Speech of Allāh, His Revelation and Light. It is not created, since the Qur’ān is from Allāh and that which is from Allāh is not created. This was what Mālik ibn Anas, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Scholars before and after them said and debating about it is disbelief.

Most of the doubts contained within it will be refuted by Shaykh Faisal al-Jāsīm within this book.

¹ *ar-Radd ‘ala’l-Mareesī*, vol.1, pp.374-375

² *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.280

³ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.780

⁴ **Translator’s note:** He is Imām Muhammad bin Jareer bin Yazeed bin Katheer bin Ghālib Abū Ja’far at-Tabarī from Amul in Tabaristān, born in 224 AH (858 CE). He heard from Muhammad bin ‘AbdulMālik bin Abī ash-Shūwārib, Ishāq bin Abī Isrā’eel, Ahmad bin Munī, Abū Karb Muhammad bin al-‘Alā’ and many others. Those who narrated from him were Ahmad bin Kāmil al-Qādī, Muhammad bin ‘Abdullāh ash-Shāfi’ī and Mukhallid bin Ja’far. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī stated in *Tāreekh Baghdād*:

At-Tabarī lived in Baghdād and stayed there until his death, he was one of the Imāms of the ‘Ulama his sayings are taken as rulings and his view is referred to because of his knowledge and virtue. He combined various sciences in a way that no one else from his time equalled,

He said:

We affirm all of these meanings which we have mentioned that have arrived in the narrations, the Book and the Revelation from which the reality of affirmation (of the Attributes) is understood. We negate *tashbeeh* (resembling Allāh to creation) and we say: Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, Hears voices, neither due to having an earlobe nor via limbs as Bani Ādam has limbs. Likewise, Allāh

for he had memorised Allāh's Book, had knowledge of the different recitations, had insight into its meanings, was a faqeeh in the regulations of the Qur'ān, he was a scholar of the Sunnah and that of it which is authentic and weak, abrogated and unabrogated, he had knowledge of the statements of the Sahābah, Tābi'een and those after them from the latter people (Khālifeen) in regards to the ahkām and issues of the halāl and the harām, he also had knowledge of the time of those people and their narrations.

In another instance al-Khateeb relays from Abū Bakr bin Bālawayh that he said:

Ibn Khuzaymah said to me: "I've heard that you wrote down the tafseer of Ibn Jareer?" I replied, "Yes, by dictation." Ibn Khuzaymah then asked: "All of it?" I replied, "Yes." Ibn Khuzaymah said: "In which year was this?" I replied, "183-190 (AH)." Then he borrowed what I had dictated from Ibn Jareer and gave it back to me after two years and said to me "I have gone through it from beginning to end and I do not know of anyone on the face of the earth more knowledgeable than Muhammad bin Jareer! The Hanbalīs oppressed him."

Refer to al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.2, p.163.

As-Subkī said in *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'yyah al-Kubrā*:

Al-Farghānī said: Muhammad bin Jareer did not fear the blame of those who always blame even with all the harms that he went through from the jāhil (ignorant), the hāsīd (envious) and the mulhid (deviant). As for the people of knowledge and deen then they are not like those who deny his knowledge and zuhd in the dunya and his rejection of the dunya.

See as-Subkī, *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'yyah*, vol.3, p.120

His works are:

1. *Jāmi' ul-Bayān 'an Ta'weel Āyi'l-Qur'ān* (printed).
2. *Tahdheeb ul-Āthār wa Tafseel Ma'ānī ath-Thābit 'an Rasoolullāh min al-Akhbār* (printed in parts from the original, as for the rest of the original work then that is no longer extant).
3. *Ikhtilāf 'Ulama il-Amsār fī Ahkām Sharā'īl-Islām* (printed with the title *Ikhtilāf ul-Fuqahā*).
4. *Lateef ul-Qawl fī Ahkām Sharā'īl-Islām*.
5. *Al-Khateef fī Ahkām Sharā'īl-Islām* (a summarised version of the previous book).
6. *At-Tabseer fī Ma'ālim id-Deen*: extant in manuscript form, but has been recently published with the edit of Shaykh 'Alī bin 'Abdul'Azeez bin 'Alī ash-Shibl (*hafidhahullāh*), published by Maktabah ar-Rushd in Riyadh, 1425 AH/2004 CE. This work was also introduced and additional commented upon by Imām 'Abdul'Azeez bin Bāz (*rahimahullāh*). As-Subkī mentioned this book in *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'yyah*, vol.3, p.121, but with the title *at-Tabseer fī Usool id-Deen*.
7. *Tāreekh ul-Umam wa'l-Mulūk* (printed).
8. And other works.

He died on a Saturday evening and was buried on the Sunday afternoon in Shawwāl 310 AH (January 923 CE). Refer to Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Jareer at-Tabarī, *Sareeh us-Sunnah* (Kuwait: Maktabah Ahlu'l-Athar, Muharram 1426 AH/February 2005 CE), Badr bin Yūsuf al-Ma'tooq (ed.), 2nd Edn. pp.8-10.

Sees people with sight which does not resemble the sight of Banī Ādam who have limbs. Allāh has Two Hands and Fingers and they are not limbs, however His Two Hands are Outstretched with blessings upon His creation, His Two Hands do not withhold from good. His Face is not like the limbs that Banī Ādam have which are comprised of flesh and blood. And we say: Allāh Laughs to whom He wills from His creation and we do not say “this is done by putting the teeth together”. And every night He descends to the heavens of the dunya.¹

Imām of the Imāms Muhammad bin Ishāq bin Khuzaymah (d. 311 AH/923 CE):

He said in lengthy and precious speech:

Abū 'Abdullāh 'Ubaydullāh bin Muhammad al-'Ukbarī al-Hanbalī Ibn Battah (d. 384 AH/994 CE)²:

¹ *At-Tabseer*, pp.141-145

² **Translator's note:** He is the Imām, the hadeeth master (Hāfidh), the Hanbalī legal jurist, the devout worshipper and ascetic. He was born in the year 304 AH (917 CE) in Ukbarā, a land close to Baghdād, and died in the year 387 AH (997 CE). His father was a faqeeh and it was under his auspices that he began his studies and he often reports from him in his books. He was sent to Baghdād to study hadeeth while still young, then he travelled to various lands such as Shām, Basra, Makkah and Thagur studying under a host of the leading scholars of his time and excelled in 'aqeedah, hadeeth and fiqh. He heard from the likes of Abu'l-Qāsim al-Baghawī, Abu Dharr al-Bāghandī, Abu Bakr bin Ziyād an-Naysabūrī, Ismā'eel al-Warrāq, al-Qādī al-Mahāmālī, Muhammad bin Mukhallid, Abu Tālib Ahmad bin Nasr al-Hāfidh, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Thābit al-'Ukbarī, Alī bin Abī al-Aqab, Ahmad bin 'Ubayd as-Saffār, Ibn Sā'id and others. A group of the scholars narrated from him such as Abu al-Fath bin Abī al-Fawāris, Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahānī, 'Ubaydullāh al-Azhari, 'Abdul'Azeez al-Azjī, and Abu Ishāq al-Barmakī, Abu Muhammad al-Jawharī, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Īsā as-Sa'sī and others.

He has been praised by more than one Imām and was famous for enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. See Ibn Katheer, *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol.11, pp.368-369; Ibn Hajr, *Lisān ul-Meezān*, vol.4, p.133+) and adh-Dhahabī, *as-Siyar*, vol.16, pp.529-533. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī said: Abū Hāmid ad-Dawli narrated to me that when Ibn Battah returned from his travels he confined himself to his house for forty years [only rarely going out]. He was not seen in the market place and neither was he seen breaking fast except on the day of 'Eid. He used to enjoin the good and not a single bad narration [concerning people] would reach him except that he put it in a better light.” See Ibid and al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.10, p.372. Abdul-Wāhid bin Alī al-'Ukbarī said, **“I have not seen any of the scholars from the As-hābul-Hadeeth or other than them having a better disposition and mannerism than Ibn Battah.”** See al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.10, p.372. Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Ateeqī said, **“Ibn Battah was a righteous Shaykh, one whose supplications were answered.”** See Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntadhim*, vol.7, p.194. Abu al-Fath al-Qawwās said: I mentioned the knowledge and asceticism of Ibn Battah to Abu Sa'eed al-Ismā'eelī and so he went to him. When he returned he commented, **“His [knowledge and asceticism] is beyond description.”** See Ibn Hajr, *Lisān ul-Meezān*, vol.4, p.134. Abu Mas'ood Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Bajlī, the Hāfidh said, **“I have loved the Hanbalīs since the day I saw Abu Abdullāh bin Battah.”** See Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.2, p.145. Ibn al-'Imād said: **“the great Imām, the Hāfidh, Ibn Battah, the Hanbalī Faqeeh and righteous servant.”** See Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt udh-Dhahab*, vol.3, p.122. However, in the field of

He said in his refutation of those who falsely interpret the descent of Allāh:

The Mu'atīl says “If we say He descends then we are saying that He comes down and Allāh does not come down, and if He was to descend then He would go down because everything that descends is that which goes down.”

We say: Are you not those who claim that you negate tashbeeh (comparing Allāh to creation) from the Lord of the Worlds? Yet here, with this speech, you have made the vilest form of tashbeeh. The much worse difference is that you have rejected the narrations and denied the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam) and what he said. If you say that He does not descend except by “coming down” then you have

hadeeth he has been criticised for his lack of precision although in and of himself he is regarded to be truthful (sadūq). It is important to note that the scholars of hadeeth have cleared him of the possibility of fabricating. See

- ✓ Adh-Dhahabī, *al-Mughnī fi'd-Du'afā'*, vol.2, p.417), *al-Uluww*, vol.2, p.417, *as-Siyar*, vol.16, pp.529-533;
- ✓ As-Suyūtī, *al-Lā'ī*, vol.1, p.85 and other works.

A defence of him against a number of criticisms levelled against him can be found in:

- ✓ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntadham*, vol.7, p.194 and
- ✓ Al-Mu'allimī in *at-Tankeel*, pp.561-571.

At this point it is necessary to mention that the People of Innovation have capitalised on a statement concerning this great Imām made by al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, may Allāh have mercy upon him. Using this statement they have attempted to declare this Imām a fabricator and liar, may Allāh forgive them and us. Ibn Hajar in his notice of Ibn Battah begins by declaring him an Imām and then proceeds to criticise him for his lack of precision in narration. He quotes the words of al-Ateeqī about him that:

Despite his lack of precision (in narrating) he was an Imām in the Sunnah and an Imām in *fiqh*, possessor of miraculous events and one whose supplications were answered, may Allāh be pleased with him.

He then proceeds to mention a *munkar* narration concerning the Attributes of Allāh and after identifying Ibn Battah as being the source of this narration (although his being the culprit is differed over by the scholars of *hadeeth*), Ibn Hajar comments, “**and I do not know what I should say about Ibn Battah after this.**” It should be noted here that if Ibn Hajar thought Ibn Battah to be a liar or fabricator it would be necessary for him to mention this clearly, for the likes of this Hāfidh could not possibly remain silent on such an issue. Furthermore as-Suyūtī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, further clarifies Ibn Hajar's position on him. He says, after quoting the above mentioned words of Ibn Hajar,

I saw in the handwriting of Ibn Hajar in his notes to Mukhtasar al-Mawdū'āt of Ibn Darbās (concerning this hadeeth), “...this *bātil* addition that occurs at the end of it is not present here and so it is clear that it occurs due to the poor memory of Ibn Battah.

So in this narration Ibn Hajar explicitly clears Ibn Battah of intentional fabrication and hence his stance on him falls in line with the majority of Hadeeth masters and Allāh knows best. See Ibn Hajar, *Lisān ul-Meezān*, vol.4, p.134 and as-Suyūtī, *al-Lā'ī al-Masnū'ah*, vol.1, p.75. His books concerning *'aqeedah* that have been published are *al-Ibānah al-Kubrā* in seven volumes edited and studied by Yusuf bin Abdullah al-Wābil and *ash-Sharh wal-Ibānah* edited and studied by Dr. Ridā Nu'sān. May Allāh have mercy upon him.

Biography adapted from: <http://www.troid.org/seerah/those-who-followed-them-/abu-abdullaah-ubaidullaah-bin-muhammad-bin-battah-al-ukbaree-al-hanbalee.html>

compared Allāh to His creation. And you have claimed that He is unable to descend without coming down in the description of the creation which if in a place is in need of that place. Rather, we believe our Prophet (sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam) when he said: “Our Lord descends” and we do not say: “He goes down” rather He descends how He wills and we do not describe this as His coming down (as creation does) and we do not ascribe a limit to Him and we do not say “His descent is His going down.”¹

He also said:

And they (the Mu'attilah) say: “We do not say that Allāh has Two Hands because hands are not but they have fingers, a palm, a wrist, forearms etc.” So according to their claim they fled from tashbeeh yet they fell into it and went towards it. All that they claim is that “these are attributes of the creation from which Allāh is Exalted” because the Hand of Allāh has no how-ness and Allāh deemed them as liars as did the Messenger.²

Imām al-Hāfidh Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ishāq bin Mandah (d. 395 AH/1005 CE):

He said:

Allāh says,

آء

“He has decreed upon Himself mercy.”

{*al-An'ām* (6): 12}

The Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “*Allāh says: “I have made harām dbulm upon Myself.”*” The Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) explain what Allāh said: “*Verily Allāh has decreed upon himself that “Indeed My Mercy precedes My Anger.”*”

So he explained the intent of Allāh in regards to what Allāh informed about Himself, Allāh explained that He was Eternal while the creation is finite. His Essence is not to be described except with what He described and with what the prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) described Him with.³

¹ Ibn Battah, *al-Ibānah 'an Sharee'at il-Firqat in-Nājiyah wa Majānibat il-Firaq al-Madhmūmah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār ur-Rāyah, 1418 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Al-Waleed Sayf un-Nasr), vol.3, pp.239-240.

² Ibid., vol.3, p.314

³ Ibn Mandah, *at-Tawheed* (Madeenah, KSA: Maktabat ul-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam, 1423 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Dr 'Alī bin Nāsir al-Faqīhī), vol.3, pp.7-9.

Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh bin Abī Zamanayn al-Andalūsī (d. 399 AH/1009 CE):

He mentioned the Attributes of Allāh such as Face, Two Hands, Light, Speech and the likes and then said:

These Attributes of our Lord which He described Himself with in His Book, and what His prophet described Him with, then within none of them are there to be any limitations, likening (to creation) or estimation. Glory is to He Who there is nothing like and He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.¹

Imām al-Muqrī, al-Muhaddith Abū 'Umar Ahmad bin Muhammad at-Talamankī (d. 429 AH/1038 CE):

Ahl us-Sunnah say about Allāh's saying,

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

Allāh's establishment over His Throne is real (*'ala'l-haqeeqah*) and not metaphorical/allegorical (*la 'ala'l-majāz*). **A people from the Mu'tazilah and the Jahmiyyah that it is not permissible to name Allāh with these names in a real sense ('ala'l-haqeeqah) because the creation also has these names.**² So they negated from Allāh the realities of His names and affirmed them for His creation. If they are asked what caused them to deviate in this way? They will say: **“agreement in name obligates tashbeeh.”**

We say: this is diverting from the language which we were addressed with, as what makes sense in the language is that similarity in language is not attained in naming. Making *tashbeeh* of things is only in regards to things which are the same or in forms such as white with white, black with black, tall with tall, small with small. So if the Names (of Allāh) obligate similarity (with the creation) then everything would be compared with each other due to the comprehensiveness of the name of a thing with something else and due to the generality of naming things.

So we ask them: “Do you say that Allāh exists? If they say “yes”, then say to them: “Your claim necessitates therefore that you have compared (Allāh) to things which also ‘exist!’” If they say “He

¹ Ibn Abi Zamanayn, *Usool us-Sunnah* (Madenah, KSA: Maktabat al-Ghurabā' al-Athariyyah, 1415 AH, 1st Edn., ed. 'Abdullāh al-Bukhārī), p.74.

² **Translator's note:** This is where the 'Ashā'irah inherited it from, none other than their predecessors in creed the Jahmiyyah and the Mu'tazilah. An example of this is in the 'Ash'arī *ta'weel* of *istiwā'* as being “istawla”, for the first to make this false interpretation was Qādī 'Abdul-Jabbār (d. 415 AH/1020 CE), the founder of the heretical Mu'tazilī belief system. More on this will be explained later.

Exists yet His Existence does not obligate a comparison between Him and other extant things”, then we say: “This, He (Allāh) is Living, Knowing, Willful, Able, Hearing, Seeing and He Speaks, which means that this does not necessitate comparing Him with those who have also been described as having these attributes.”¹

Shaykh al-Imām al-Hāfidh Abū Nasr 'Ubaydullāh bin Sa'eed as-Sijzī (d. 444 AH/1052 CE):

He said in the book *al-Ibānah*:

The principle which has to be known is that: agreement in naming does not obligate agreement of the things being named, so if we say: “Allāh Exists, is Kind, One, Living, Knowing, Hearing, Seeing and Speaks” then that is not *tashbeeh* and none of the *Salaf* or Imāms oppose us. Rather Allāh, Exists and is still One, Living, Eternal, Knowing, Hearing, Seeing and Speaking, so it is not permissible for Him to be described with the opposite of these Attributes...so whatever that is applied to the creation is not *tashbeeh* with the Creator because the agreement is only in the names of these attributes.²

Al-Imām al-'Allāmah Hāfidh ul-Maghrib Abū 'Umar Yūsuf bin 'Abdullāh bin 'AbdulBarr al-Andalusī al-Qurtubī al-Mālikī (d. 463 AH/1071 CE):

He said after narrating the hadeeth of the slave-girl who the Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked: “*Where is Allāh?*” She replied: “Above the heavens.” The Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said, “*Free her, for she is a believer*”:

As for those who use as a proof: “**If He is in a place that would be tashbeeh with the creation because whatever is encompassed by places is encompassed by the creation**” – this is something which is not binding and has no meaning to it. For there is nothing from the creation which is like Allāh and there should be no analogy between Allāh and His creation. He is neither comprehended by analogy and nor is He to be made analogous with people. There is no god worthy of worship except He, He was before everything and then He created places, the heavens, the earth and whatever is between them. He remains after everything and He created everything and has no partner.

¹ This was transmitted from the Imām by: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in: *Dara' at-Ta'arud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql* (1st Edn., 1399 AH, ed. Muhammad Rashād Sālim), vol.5, p.251; *Bayān Talbees il-Jahmiyyah*, vol.2, p.38; *Naqd ut-Ta'sees*, p.115 and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (Compiled by 'AbdurRahmān bin Muhammad bin Qāsim an-Najdī and supervised by the General Office of Affairs of the Two Noble Sanctuaries), vol.5, p.519. Also transmitted by: Ibn ul-Qayyim, *as-Sawā'iq ul-Mursalāh* (Riyadh, Dār ul-'Āsimah, 1418 AH, 3rd Edn., ed. Dr 'Ali ad-Dakheelullāh), vol.4, p.1284; adh-Dhahabī, *al-'Uluww*, p.246.

² This was transmitted from the Imām by: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Dara' at-Ta'arud*, vol.5, pp.90-92.

It is authenticated by common sense and verified with succinctness based on evidence that He is in eternity neither in a place nor non-existent, so how can He be made analogous with His creation? And how can *tamtbeel* and *tashbeeh* be made between Him and creation? Exalted is Allāh Who is Elevated and Mighty from what the oppressors say. Nothing from His description is known about except what He described about Himself or based on what His Prophet and Messenger (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) described Him with, or what the upright Ummah has agreed on about Him.¹

Imām al-Hāfidh Abu'l-Qāsim Ismā'eel bin Muhammad at-Taymī at-Talhī al-Asbahānī (d. 535 AH/1141 CE):

He said:

Chapter: Refuting the Jahmiyyah who Reject the Attributes of Allāh and Call Ahl us-Sunnah Mushabbihah –

The saying of Ahl us-Sunnah that Allāh has a Face, Two Hands and all else that Allāh informed of about Himself does not necessitate *tashbeeh* with His creation. Their narration of the hadeeth of the Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*): “Allāh created Ādam upon His image” – does not necessitate *tashbeeh* to be applied to them. Rather, all of what Allāh informed about Himself and what His Messenger (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) informed of is the truth. The saying of Allāh is the truth and the saying of His messenger is the truth, Allāh is more knowing about what He has said and His Messenger knows more about what He said. It is only upon us to have *īmān* and submit, sufficient is Allāh for us and He is the Best disposer of affairs.²

Then he said in transmitting from some of Ahl us-Sunnah:

It is only necessary for the servants to submit because neither an Angel nor a Prophet knows the Attributes except by the Names that the Lord taught them. Neither intellects nor analogies can comprehend Allāh's Attributes, so the path is to affirm the understanding of His Attributes by following and submitting. As for the slander by the people of desires against Ahl us-Sunnah and accusing Ahl us-Sunnah of making *tashbeeh* if names agree then it is to be said about this: the matter is not as how they think! **Because two things are not said to resemble each other only on account of the names in the language being similar, rather two things are said to resemble each other if they are intrinsically similar or resemble each other in understood meanings. So if the matter was as how they think then everything would resemble each other just because of a similarity in the names of things.**³

¹ Ibn 'AbdulBarr, *at-Tamheed* (Morocco: Wizārat 'Umoom ul-Awqāf, 1387 AH, eds. Mustafā bin Ahmad al-'Alawī and Muhammad 'AbdulKabeer al-Bakrī), vol.7, p.135.

² *Al-Hujjah fī Bayān il-Mahajjah*, vol.1, pp.285-287

³ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.452

Imām Muwaffaquddeen Abū Muhammad 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad bin Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620 AH/1223 CE):

He said in refuting those who deny the letter (*harf*) from Allāh's Speech due to it allegedly necessitating limbs and body parts:

This would only be necessitated in regards to whoever speaks with limbs and body parts and Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, is not to be described as having such things and this is making tashbeeh of Allāh with His servants, wherein He is only perceived based on how His creation are and this is bātil in and of itself.¹

Imām al-Hāfidh Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Uthmān adh-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH/1347 CE):

He transmitted:

'Abdullāh ibn al-Imām Ahmad said in *as-Sunnab*: 'Abbās al-'Anbarī reported to us: Shādh bin Yahyā reported to us: I heard Yazeed bin Hāroon and it was said to him: "Who are the Jahmiyyah?" He replied, "Whoever claims that Allāh is Established over the Throne in a manner that opposes what has been affirmed by the hearts of the generality is a Jahmī!"

Then adh-Dhahabī said commenting on the above:

By "affirmed": absorbed and the intent of "the generality" is the majority of the Ummah and the people of knowledge who have affirmed in their hearts what the verses indicate along with the certainty that He is Established over the Throne and there is nothing like unto Him. This is what is an established fact in their sound natures and minds and if there was a meaning behind that then would have explained it and not neglected it. If any of them interpreted *istinā'* then these transmissions would be available from them and if these were transmitted they would be well-known. So even if there are some foolish ignoramus who understand that by *istinā'* it necessitates a deficiency and an analogy between the creation and the Creator - then this is rarely the case. Whoever would say this is to be reprimanded and taught and I do not think that anyone from the generality (of the 'Ulama) accepts this in himself (i.e. *tashbeeh* between the Creator and creation) and Allāh knows best.²

Adh-Dhahabī also said:

For descending, speech, hearing seeing, knowledge and *istinā'* are clear and lucid expressions for the one who hears them. So if the One Who has nothing like Him (i.e. Allāh) is described with these then how these Attributes are unknown to humans.³

¹ Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Munādharah fi'l-Qur'ān* (Kuwait: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1410 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad al-Hamood an-Najdī), p.48

² Adh-Dhahabī, *al-Uhuww* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat Adwā' us-Salaf, 1416 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Ashraf 'AbdulMaqsood), p.157

³ Ibid., p.214

Al-Hāfidh 'AbdurRahmān bin Ahmad bin Rajab al-Hanbalī (d. 795 AH/1393 CE):

He stated after permitting using some of Allāh's Names such as as-Samī and al-Baseer:

As for those from the creation who are named with the Names of Allāh such as as-Samī, al-Baseer, al-Qadeer, al-'Aleem and ar-Raheem then their ascription (to Allāh) sever any partnership and likewise description.

So when we say: "Zayd hears and sees" this does not apply except as a description of the creation and when we see "Allāh hears and sees" then this applies as His description which befits Him and so any resemblance in any aspect is ended, for this reason Allāh says,

ä

"Do you know of any similarity to Him?"

{*Maryam (19): 65*}¹

Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin al-Murtadā al-Yamānī, aka Ibn ul-Wazeer (d. 840 AH/1437 CE):

He said:

It is established that "ar-Rahmān" is specific to Allāh alone and it is prohibited to absolutely apply it to other than Him. So if ar-Rahma (Mercy) is metaphorical in regards to Allāh, yet to other than him understood in a real sense, then rather the contrary would take precedence and be more obligatory. So there is nothing to prevent a Muslim from affirming these Attributes of praise of Allāh just as our Lord has taught us, along with negating from Allāh attributes of deficiency which are connected to the mercy of creation. In the same way, we affirm that He has the Names of the Ever-Living, the Knowing, the Well-Informed and the Willful along with negating the deficiencies of the creation in their lives.

Likewise, every attribute that Allāh is described with, yet is also used to describe a servant, is used for Allāh in the utmost manner without any deficiency. Yet when it is used for the servant it

¹ Transmitted from the book *Manhaj ul-Hāfidh Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī fi'l-'Aqeedah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār us-Samī'i), p.356.

Translator's note: the above book was originally a Master thesis submitted to the *Islamic University of Madeenah*, KSA. It was written by Dr 'Alī bin 'Abdul'Azeez ash-Shibl and also printed by Dār ul-'Āsimah in Madeenah in 2001 CE.

contains deficiencies. This is the way *tashbeeh* has been explained by Ahl us-Sunnah and they did not explain *tashbeeh* by negating Allāh's Attributes and making *ta'teel* (denial) of the Attributes.¹

Imām Yūsuf bin 'AbdulHādī, aka Ibn ul-Mabrad (d. 909 AH/1503 CE)²:

¹ Ibn ul-Wazeer al-Yamānī, *Īthār ul-Haq 'ala'l-Khalq* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1403 AH, 1st Edn., edited by a group of scholars under the supervision of the publishers), pp.127-128

² **Translator's note:** Sometimes spelt "Ibn ul-Mibrad" or "Ibn ul-Mabrid", yet this most accurate is "Ibn ul-Mabrad". He is Yūsuf bin al-Hasan ibn 'AbdulHādī ad-Dimishqī as-Sālihī al-Hanbalī, aka. "Ibn ul-Mabrad", born in Damascus and a descendent of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*). He authored a work refuting Ibn 'Asākir (who authored *Tabyeen Kadhib al-Muftari*) who had been heavily influenced by Ash'arī polemic and *kalām*, entitled *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir* [The Assembly of Soldiers against Ibn 'Asākir]. This is evidently unbeknown to some of the contemporary 'Ash'arīs who have rashly included him as being from the Sufiyyah! *Jam' ul-Juyūsh* was edited as a Masters thesis by a student from Thailand at the *Islamic University of Madeenah* (Muhammad Fawzī Hasan Sa'd), the thesis was supervised by Dr 'Ali bin Nāsir al-Faqeehī in 1418 AH. It obtained the equivalent of a 2:1 Higher and is 742 pgs. It can be downloaded here: <http://www.kabah.info/uploaders/Books/Jam3Dsaker.rar>

Ibn ul-Mabrad also authored:

- ✓ *al-Jawhar al-Munaddad fi't-Tabaqāt Muta'akhhiri As-hāb Ahmad*, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 2000 CE), 'AbdurRahman ibn Sulaymān al-'Uthaymeen (ed.);
- ✓ *Mahd as-Sawāb fi Fadā'il Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb*, (Riyadh: Adwa' us-Salaf, 2000 CE), 3 vols., 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin al-Furayh (ed.);
- ✓ *Kitāb as-Shajarah an-Nabawiyah fi Nasab Khayr al-Bariyah*, (Damascus: Dār Ibn Katheer and Dār al-Kalim at-Tayyib, 1994 CE), Muhiydeen Deeb Mastū (ed.);
- ✓ *Nujūm al-Masa' takshifu Ma'ānī ar-Rasā'il-Sālihāt min an-Nisā* (Beirut: 1990 CE), Muhammad Khalid al-Kharsah (ed.).
- ✓ *Kitāb Bahr ad-Dam fi-man takallama fi-hi al-Imam Ahmad bi-Madhin aw Dhamm* (Riyadh: Dar al-Rayah lil-Nashr wa't-Tawzi', 1989 CE), Abū Usamah Wasiullāh ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abbās (ed.)
- ✓ *Rasā'il Dimashqiyah* (Damascus and Bayrut: Dār Ibn Katheer, 1988), Salah Muhammad al-Khiyami (ed.)
- ✓ *Kitāb Mughnī Dawā al-Afhām an al-Kutub al-Katheerah fi'l-Ahkām* (Saudi Arabia, 1900, n.p.), 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn Duhaysh (ed.) and printed by Maktabah Tabariyyah in 1995.
- ✓ *Dhayl 'Abdīl-Hadī alā Tabaqāt Ibn Rajab* (Riyadh: Dār al-'Āsimah, 1988 CE), Abi Abdullāh Mahmood ibn Muhammad al-Haddād (Ed.).
- ✓ *Nuzhat ul-Masāmir fi Akhbār Majnoon Banī 'Ameer* (Beirut: 'Alam ul-Kutub, 1994)
- ✓ *Ithāf an-Nubalā' bi-Akhbār wa-Ash āir al-Kuramā' wa'l-Bukhalā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990), Yusri 'AbdulGhanī Abdullā h (ed.)
- ✓ *Kitāb Wuqū' ul-Balā bil-Bukhl wa'l-Bukhalā'* – extant in manuscript form and studied by Fedwa Malti-Douglas in the *Bulletin of Oriental Studies*, no. 31 (1979), pp.17-50. Also see Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Structures of Avarice: The Bukhalā' in Medieval Arabic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), p.2.
- ✓ *Kitāb Maqbool ul-Manqool min 'Ilm il-Jadal wa'l-Usool 'ala'l-Qā'idat il-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal* (Beirut: Dār al-Basha'ir al-Islāmiyah, 2007 CE), Abdullāh bin Sālim al-Battāti
- ✓ *Sayr al-Hathth ilā 'Ilm at-Talāq ath-Thalāth* (Beirut: Dār al-Basha'ir al-Islāmiyah, 1997 CE)
- ✓ *Al-Ightirāb fi Ahkām il-Kilāb* – printed in 2006

He said:

As for affirming what Allāh has described Himself with, or what His Messenger (described Allāh with), without *ta'weel*, then this is not *tasbbeeh*. The Imāms of Islām such as Mālik, Ahmad, ash-Shāfi'ī and others have indicated this.

Then he transmitted some words from Ibn 'Asākir wherein he made *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attributes and said:

This speech leads to *ta'teel* in that he flees from what Allāh has already affirmed for Himself via *ta'weel* based on the claim that “such and such necessitates such and such” and this is something which leaves no room for sense. As whatever Allāh has affirmed for Himself, we affirm and this is not *tasbbeeh*. We do not make any false figurative interpretation which thereby negate what is affirmed based on alleged *tasbbeeh*, for this is stubbornness and contrary (to the truth).¹

✓ *At-Tamheed fī'l-Kalām 'ala't-Tawheed* (Dār ul-Bulansiyyah, 1997), 1st Edn.

✓ A compilation of his works was entitled *Muj'am Mu'allafāt Yūsuf bin Hasan bin 'AbdulHādī al-Hanbalī* (Riyadh: Dār Ishbeeliyah, 1999 CE), Nāsir bin Sa'ud bin 'Abdullāh as-Salamah (ed.).

¹ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, pp.299-301

**ESTABLISHING THE PRINCIPLE OF
'WHAT APPLIES TO ALLĀH'S ATTRIBUTES DOES NOT
NECESSARILY APPLY TO THE CREATION'**

**FROM THE WORDS OF ABU'L-HASAN AL-'ASH'ARĪ AND HIS
COMPANIONS**

Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī (*rahimahullāb*) stated:

If we affirm these attributes for Allāh, which the intellects, language, Qur'ān and consensus indicate, it does not obligate that they are created. For that reason, it is not permissible for His Attributes what is permitted for the creation's attributes.¹

He also said:

Issue: it is to be said to them: “why do you reject what Allāh says,

“...with My hands?”

{*Sād* (38): 75}

Two Hands and not ‘two bounties?’”

If they say: “Because a hand if it is not a bounty it can be nothing but a limb.”

Say to them: “Why have you judged that a hand if not a bounty can be nothing but a limb, and that we return to what we see or to what we find among us in creation?”

They say “The hand if it is not a bounty in what we see around us then it can nothing else but a limb.”

Say to them: “If you have used what you see (as a proof) to judge by for Allāh, then we also do not find things which are ‘living’ among the creation except that they have bodies, flesh and blood so do you judge Allāh has having this? Exalted is He from such things. If not then you have to abandon what you say and you have nullified your own weak basis! If you affirm that unto Allāh is a ‘life’ not like the lives of others from the creation, then why do you reject Two Hands (of Allāh)

¹ Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, *Risālah ila Ahl ith-Thaghar* (Madeenah, KSA: Maktabat ul-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam, 1422 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. 'Abdullāh al-Junaydī), p.218.

Translator's note: The contemporary 'Ash'arīs are very weak in 'aqeedah, evidenced by some of them only now realising that there is such a thing as a “Salafi” and *Athari* 'aqeedah!? And even this they admitted mainly due to the socio-political and ecumenical zeitgeist vis-a-vis the Muslims in the West as a front for “unity”. Also, they are wanting in terms of their source referencing and explaining 'aqeedah. A case in point can be seen with this document here by Shaykh Abū Adam an-Narūjī: <http://marifah.net/articles/TheIndivisibleElement-AbuAdam.pdf>

Which, for a paper supposedly on 'aqeedah, is wanting in terms of evidences from the *Salaf*. Furthermore, it also claims that to say “we don't know how” is insufficient!? Even though this was the way of the *Salaf* which he could not be bothered to refer to within the petite paper!

which Allāh Himself informed of as being Two Hands and neither as being two bounties nor two limbs like my hands.”

Also it is to be said to them: “You do not find (among you) a wise controller except that it is a person and then you affirm that the world has a Wise Controller (Allāh) who is not like people, so here then you have again contradicted what is seen (among you) and you have nullified your own weak basis!” So do not prohibit affirming Two Hands, neither ‘two bounties’ nor ‘two limbs’, due to that being contrary to what can be seen.¹

Al-Qādī Abū Bakr Muhammad bin at-Tayyib al-Bāqilānī stated in his book *Tamheed ul-Awā'ik*:

So if someone says: “what is the proof that Allāh has a Face and Hand?”

It is to be said to him:

Allāh says,

ä ä äÔ

“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rahmān* (55): 27}

And Allāh says,

ä ä ää

“O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands?”

{*Sād* (38): 75}

So Allāh affirms for Himself a Face and a Hand.

If the person says: **“Why do you reject that His Face and Hand are limbs if you do not think of a face and hand except that it is a limb?”**

Then we say to him: **“This is not a must, just as if we do not think of something living, knowing and able except that it has a body, both us and you affirm that Allāh, the Exalted, has these attributes. In the same way, it is not a must that everything which is established with its essence is an atom as we do not find anything established by itself from what we see around us except that it is in this way.”**

This is also the answer to them if they say: “His Knowledge, Life, Speech, Hearing, Seeing and all of the Attributes of His Essence have to be subject to change and occurrence (‘aradhan) and weakened by existence.”²

¹ Al-'Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah*, p.110

² Al-Bāqilānī, *Tamheed ul-Awā'il wa Talkhees ud-Dalaa'il* (Beirut: Mu'asisat ul-Kutub ath-Thaqaafiyah, 1407 AH, ed. 'Imaaduddeen Haydar), pp.295-298 this was transmitted by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmū'*

AN EXPLANATION OF THE 'ASH'ARĪ OPPOSITION TO THE SALAF IN REGARDS TO THIS MATTER AND A REFUTATION OF THEIR DOUBTS

We will end what has proceeded with establishing the following matters:

Firstly: From the *usool* of the beliefs of the *Salaf* are that Allāh's Attributes which are mentioned in the Book and Sunnah do not necessitate affirming *tashbeeh* between Allāh and His creation even if the creation are described with such attributes. This is whether the Attributes are *Khabariyyah* (i.e. reported within the Book and Sunnah) such as the Face, Hand and Eye; or the Attributes are related to His Actions (*Fi'liyyah*) such as Nuzool, Coming, Laughter; or the Attributes are related to Allāh's Essence (*Dhātīyyah*) such as Hearing, Seeing and Knowledge. For Allāh says,

أَ أَ أَ أَ

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

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

So there is nothing like unto Him neither in His Essence, His Attributes and His Actions. So an adjective follows what it is describing, so Allāh's Essence does not resemble other essences and likewise the Attributes of His Essence do not resemble other attributes.

Secondly: Those who necessitate for Allāh's Attributes that which is necessitated for the creation's attributes, and use this as a means to avert Allāh's Attributes from the apparent meaning and reality – are the Mu'attilah from the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah. Included in them are all who traverse their path in this matter even if regards to some of Allāh's Attributes.

Thirdly: The two authors opposition to the *madhab* of the *Salaf* in this regard and their traversing the way of the Mu'attilah whom the *Salaf* severely rebuked. The two authors state (p.192) about those who affirm Allāh's Attributes upon their apparent meanings without necessitating that which is necessitated for the creation's attributes:

The fact that they do not affirm what is necessitated is something which is not surprising.

Because affirming what is necessitated, which is the apparent meaning here (with them),

and then negating what is actually necessitated, which is Jismiyyah (bodily characteristics)

al-Fatāwā, vol.5, p.98, and in *Bayān Talbees ul-Jahmiyyah*, vol.2, p.64. It was also transmitted by adh-Dhahabī in *al-Uluww*, p.237.

and the likes, does not make sense because Jismiyyah is binding and what has to be maintained.

This speech is apparently false and corrupt, in terms of the *Sbar'*, the intellect and the language, for many reasons:

Firstly: The statements from the *Salaf* have been established prior in regards to the falsehood of this (which has been mentioned by the two authors). Because whatever is necessitated from Allāh's Attribute is not necessitated from the creation's attribute, so the ascription (to Allāh) severs *tashbeeh* and association (between Allāh and His creation). This is sufficient in showing the futility of the authors' claim.

Secondly: What the two authors claim disregards language, for an adjective follows what is being described so if we say "Zayd's face" and "Amru's face" the two are not the same according to language. Resemblance and closeness is only known by meaning and what can be witnessed, for an attribute follows what is being described and does not mean that there is association in that attribute. Association only takes place in the basis of the attribute and this is something which is evident to the ears and not the eyes. For that reason it is not understood that there is any similarity or resemblance from the one who says "Zayd's face and the water's face", because the very ascription severs any association between the two. So if this is between Zayd's face and the water's face then the difference between the Creator's Face and the creation's face is even far greater!

Al-'Allāmah al-Alūsī stated:

It is said: the intent of Mālik and others was, when they said, "Al-Istiwā is known (ma'loom), and the how (al-kayf) is unknown (majhool)" is that it means: istiwā is known in terms of the meaning and when ascribed to Allāh, and exaltation of Allāh is by saying it is majhool (unknown). This is because attributes are ascribed to all essences according to what befits that essence and the True Essence (of Allāh) has nothing like unto it. So when the attributes are ascribed to Allāh this is not like when they are ascribed to others, because the Essence of Allāh cannot be comprehended by the mind...¹

Thirdly: The Attributes which the two authors claim necessitate Jismiyyah (bodily characteristics) and a limit, such as Nuzool, Coming, the Face, Hand and others – are words used to describe things which do not have human bodies. So it is said "the face of the matter" and "the water's face" and water does not have a face within the language and we will discuss the terms "jism" and "Jismiyyah" shortly. It is also said within the (Arabic) language "the buyer descended the price", "winter is coming" and "the hand of the night" and the likes, and these

¹Al-Ālūsī, *Gharā'ib ul-Ightirāb wa Nuzhat il-Albāb fi'dh-Dhīhāb il-Iqāmah wa'l-Iyāb* (Baghdād, al-'Irāq: Matba'ah ash-Shābandar, 1327 AH), p.387

things do not have bodies whether in the language or within the terminology of the people of *kalām* (speculative-rhetorical discussion)¹ and the 'Ash'īrah. Yet it is still correct to describe these things with *nuzūl*, coming, a face, a hand and the likes and all of this renders futile the

¹Translator's Note: *Kalām* (speculative rhetorical discussion) began during the Abbasid Empire and Hunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873 CE) was the one who recruited scholars to *kalām* in order to justify that the Speech of Allāh was created. They also opposed the *Ahl ul-Hadeeth* and delved into certain matters of 'aqeedah with no precedence whatsoever and via merely discussing the issues philosophically. The *Ahl ul-Kalām* also placed a huge emphasis on the rational intellect and revolved much of their argumentation around the notion of 'the intellect' and rationality, they also emphasised that Muslims should "rationally prove" their 'aqeedah. They also use the excuse that due to the advances of Aristotelian logic, Greek logic and other so-called 'intellectual' theories (such as materialism and evolution theory) it is a must to utilise such philosophical and rational speculative rhetorical discussion in order to refute these developments, but this is nonsense as rational arguments can still be used to a certain extent without having to totally absorb arguments of rational theology and rhetoric.

Contemporary 'Ash'arīs such as Nūh Keller have praised the use of *kalām*, refer to his article entitled *Kalam and Islam* which was based on a lecture he gave at the 'Ahl ul-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought' in 'Ammān, Jordan. Furthermore, the 'marifah.net' website, in its partisan polemic, even went to the extent of translating an article by Taqiuddeen as-Subkī (trans.'S. Abdul-Aziz') which justifies the use of *kalām*! The article, in a rather discreet and indirect fashion, is basically justifying leaving the way of the *Salaf* and using the way of the *Mutakallim*. It also demonstrates how 'ilm ul-Kalām is praised by the 'Ash'arīs due to a false notion that it somehow represents "intellectual scholasticism"! When the reality is that it is but a mere continuation of the *manhaj* of the Mu'tazilah. Hamza Yusuf Hanson for example, who is not strong in 'aqeedah in any case, has at times referred to *kalām* as being "**something that the 'Ulama did not like**" to stating at other times that "**kalām was the hallmark of our intellectual tradition**"! So which one was it? This is itself is a manifestation of the famous 'Ash'arī principle of "**the way of the Salaf is better, yet the way of the Khalaf is wiser and more knowledgeable.**" Hamza Yusuf Hanson in the mid 1990s demonstrated a confused understanding of 'aqeedah in the mid 1990s and only recently has begun to admit and refer to there being something known as a "Salafī or Atharī 'aqeedah". After 12 minutes into the interview Hamza Yusuf states (it can be seen here after 2 mins 50 seconds: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SE4_f7FyIU&mode=related&search=):

One of the beauties of our tradition is that if you go from Indonesia to Morocco in the pre-modern classical formulation you going to find that there was basically three creedal formulation that were being taught: the Māturīdī from Abū Mansoor al-Māturīdī he's a late 3rd-earler 4th century scholar; Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī and then you have what can be considered an Atharī tradition, I mean what people today would probably call the Salafī tradition. These three, although they differed, they're actually very close, there are differences, but they're so close that these differences are actually negligible.

The statement that they are close and that their differences are negligible is incorrect, the *Salafī/Atharī 'aqeedah* is the only correct view from the *Salaf*. This statement therefore has to be understood in light of an *ikhwānī* type notion which has emerged due to the ecumenical zeitgeist vis-a-vis the situation of Muslims in the West as a front for "unity" as opposed to a serious understanding of 'aqeedah itself.

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah is credited as providing the most systematic critique of Greek 'logical' thought yet used their own ideas against them as opposed to fully inculcating their ideas. See: Wael B. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

claim that whatever is described with these attributes must necessitate Jismiyyah (bodily forms and characteristics).

Fourthly: The claim that Jismiyyah is necessitated, and Allāh is Exalted over this, is something which needs a study of the meaning of “jism” (body) and if this term is to be authentically affirmed or negated from Allāh. So we say: the term “jism” (body) has a much more general meaning within the terminologies of the *Mutafalsifab* (philosophers) and people of *kalām* than it does within the Arabic language, for the linguists say that a “jism” is a “jasad” and a “badan”.¹ Ibn ul-Mandhoor stated in *al-Lisān*:

Al-Jism (the body): refers to the whole body or the limbs of people, camels, animals and other things from the various types of amazing creations. Abū Zayd said: Jism is a “jasad” likewise it is said “the body of a person” (jismān) or “the flesh of a person” (juthmān). “Jasuma ash-shay” (the thing became large) means: it became large, it is jaseem and jussām.²

So the linguists do not use the term “al-Jism” (body) except in regards to that which is thick and large. So they did not name the wind has being “a body” yet they named people’s bodies as being “forms”, as Allāh said,

Ô ä ä

“And when you see them, their bodies please you...”

{*al-Munāfiqūn* (63): 4}

And Allāh says,

ä ä ää ä

“...and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.”

{*Baqarab* (2): 247}

As for the *Mutafalsifab* (philosophers) and the people of *kalām* (speculative and rhetorical theological discussion) then they are differed over the name “jism” (body). For some of them say that a “jism” is “existence”, some of them say that “jism” means “that which is established by itself”, some of them say that “jism” is “a composite of singular atoms”, some of them say that

¹ **Translator’s note:** in fact all of these words mean “body” yet the English language does not allow for such variations as only the word “body” can be used for all of these terms.

² Ibn Mandhoor, *Lisān ul-Arab* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1414 AH, 3rd Edn.), under ‘jism’

“jism” is “a composite of materials and images”, some of them say that “jism” is “that which is alluded to by the senses”, some of them say “jism” is “neither a composite, nor this and that, rather it is what is indicated to”.¹ Al-'Ash'arī within his *Maqalāt* mentions these different views from the people of *kalām* in regards to the name “jism” and mentions 12 different meanings of it.² So what the speculative-rhetorical theologians and *Mutafalsifab* deem is not the same as what the Arabic linguists hold whether in their poetry or in their books. So the wind, which is indicated to and ascends and descends, and is established by itself – is still not referred to as being a “jism” by the Arabic linguists. For this reason they differentiate between the two and say “body and wind” and this means that the “jism” (body) within the language is more specific than what is being referred to. The air and clouds are over the earth, ascending, descending and coming yet they have not been referred to as being “bodies” by the linguists. Based upon this, their claim that describing Allāh with Descent, Coming and other Attributes which are *Fi'liyyah* or *Khabariyyah* – necessitates bodily characteristics (Jismiyyah) is false, because there are things which are described with the same words some of which have bodies and some of which do not.

The 'Ashā'irah affirm that Allāh has a Real Essence with Attributes established by themselves yet according to them this does not necessitate a “jism” (body). As for affirming the Hand, Face, Foot, Nuzool, Laughter and other Attributes of Allāh's Essence then this necessitates *tajseem* (anthropomorphism) according to them!? This is a contradiction! Ibn Abī Ya'lā stated, when discussing the creed of his father:

What indicates that the Hanbalī submission to the reports regarding Allāh's Attributes without *ta'weel*, and not basing them on what can be seen, and that this does not necessitate *tashbeeh* – is the *ijma'* of the different groups who agree with the Sunnah and oppose it, is that Allāh the Creator exists. This neither necessitated for us, nor for them, that a “jism” (body), “jawhar” (substance) or “aradh” (occurrence) is affirmed. This is even if a “dhāt” (an essence) which can be witnessed has these characteristics. Thus, whatever is necessitated by what can be observed according to the Hanbalīs does not apply to the reports about the Attributes. What clarifies the accuracy of this is that: The Creator, Mighty and Majestic, is described as being Living, Knowing, Able and one who Wills (things to happen), and the creation are also described with these attributes – **yet the agreement in the naming does not lead to an agreement in their realities and meanings.**

¹ Refer to: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' ul-Fatāwā*, vol.3, pp.32-33

Translator's note: this is also explained by Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen in his *tafseer* of Ayāt ul-Kursī, Dr Sālih as-Sālih (*rahimahullāh*) translated it well, see pp.105-107 of it here: <http://understand-islam.net/Books/TafseerAyatal-KurseewithotherBenefits-Revised.pdf>

² Al-'Ash'arī, *Maqalāt ul-Islamiyyeen* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al'Asriyyah, 1419 AH, ed. Muhammad Muhuydeen 'AbdulHameed), vol.2, p.4.

This is the (correct) saying in regards to the Attributes and accepting them without ta'weel does not necessitate affirming limitations and meanings based on what is observable.¹

We have mentioned prior Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī's own refutation of these claims. As for Ahl us-Sunnah and the *Salaf* then they do not speak about either negating a jism from Allāh or affirming it. They also do not use other terms which have not been relayed within the Book and Sunnah such as *Jihab* (direction), *Tabayyuz* (spatial confinement) and the likes. They just describe Allāh with what He described Himself with in His Book and with what His messenger (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) described Him with, they do not surpass the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Imām Ahmad said:

And those who describe him do not reach the full extent of His Attribute and we do not surpass the Qur'ān and hadeeth, we say as He said and we describe Him with what He described Himself with and we do not go beyond that.²

Abū Yūsuf transmitted from Abū Haneefah that he said:

It is not befitting for one to speak about Allāh's Essence, rather He is to be described as He described Himself and no opinions are to be said regarding Him at all, blessed be Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds.³

Al-Barbahārī said:

There is to be no speech in regards to the Lord, except with what He described Himself with in the Qur'ān and what the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) explained to his companions.⁴

He also explained that these newly developed terms are the basis for the emergence of innovation, he said:

You should know, may Allāh have mercy on you, that the people stopped at newly developed matters and did not surpass them at all. They also did not give rise to speech which had not arrived within the narrations from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) or from his companions.⁵

Al-Hāfidh 'AbdulGhanī al-Maqdisī (*rahimahullāh*) said in his recognition of this principle:

¹ Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, (Beirut: Dār ul-Ma'rifah), vol.2, p.211.

Translator's note: the above work was also printed in 1952 CE by Matba'ah as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, edited by Muhammad Haamid al-Fiqī. There was also a print by Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah in Beirut in 1997 CE.

² 'Abdullāh al-Ahmadī, *al-Masā'il war-Rasā'il al-Marwiyyatu 'an al-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal fil-'Aqeedah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār Tayyibah, 1412 AH, 1st Edn.), vol.1, p.277; Ibn ul-Qayyim, *Ijtimā' ul-Juyūsh il-Islāmiyyah* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat ur-Rushd, 1426 AH, 4th Edn., ed. Dr 'Abdullāh 'Awād al-Mu'taq), p. 83; Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.26

³ Abu'l-'Alā' Sā'id bin Muhammad, *Kitāb ul-'Itiqād: 'Aqeedah Marwiyyat 'an al-Imām Abī Haneefah* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1426 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Dr Sayyid Bāghjawān), pp.123-124

⁴ Al-Barbahārī, *Sharh us-Sunnah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār us-Salaf, 1418 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Khālid ar-Radādī), p.69

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.105

From the necessary aspects of the Sunan are: keeping quiet about what has been relayed without a text from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and what the Muslims have not absolutely agreed upon. Also leaving off the conflicting matter by neither negating it nor affirming it, just as a matter is only affirmed with a *Shari'* text likewise a matter is only negated with a clear evidence.¹

Indeed, the *Salaf* made *tabdī'* of the people of *kalām* (speculative theological rhetoric) due to these terms and censured them to the utmost due to the distortion of truth contained within it. As Imām Ahmad said: “They speak with ambiguous speech and deceive ignorant people by confusing them.”² Nūh bin al-Jāmi' said:

I said to Abū Haneefah “what do you say about the rhetoric that people introduced regarding occurrences and bodies?” He replied: “Sayings of philosophers! Stick to the narrations and the way of the Salaf and beware of newly invented matters for it is an innovation.”³

Muhammad bin Hāmid as-Sijzī said:

I said to Abu'l-'Abbās bin Surayj: “What is tawheed?” He replied: “Tawheed according to Ahl ul-'Ilm and the Jama'ah of the Muslims is: I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh. Tawheed of the people of *bātil* is to enter into (matters related to) occurrences and bodies, the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) was sent to reject that.”⁴

None of the *Salaf* censured any of the *Salaf* as being a “Mujassim” and no censure of the “Mujassimah” is to be found rather they censured the Jahmiyyah-Mu'attilah who negated the realities of Allāh's Attributes and they also censured the Mushabbihah who say “Allāh's Attributes are like the creation's attributes.”

¹ Fawāz Zumarlī (ed.), *'Aqā'id A'immat us-Salaf* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1415 AH, 1st Edn.), p.132

² *Ar-Radd 'ala'z-Zanādiqah wa'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.85

³ Narrated by Abū Ismā'eel al-Harawī in *Dhamm il-Kalām wa Ahlihi*, vol.4, p.213

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol.4, p.386

EXPLANATION OF THE REALITY OF THE 'AQEEDAH ASCRIBED TO IMĀM AHMAD BY ABU'L-FADL AT-TAMĪMĪ

The two authors transmitted (p.194) from Imām Ahmad that he allegedly said:

Unto Allāh are Two Hands which are His Attributes in His Essence, they are neither two limbs nor two composites, with no body nor any type of bodies.

There are some important matters in regards to this:

Firstly:

This is not from the speech of Imām Ahmad rather it was mentioned by Abu'l-Fadl 'AbdulWāhid bin Abi'l-Hasan at-Tamīmī in his *Musannaf* regarding the creed of Imām Ahmad according to what he understood to be from his creed in his (Abu'l-Fadl's) own words. So Abu'l-Fadl says: "Abū 'Abdullāh used to..." or "Abū 'Abdullāh was...." and then he mentions the creed of Imām Ahmad according to how he (Abu'l-Fadl) understands and views it to be, not according to what Imām Ahmad mentioned and is documented. This work therefore is of the standard of those who author *fiqh* books according to the view of some Imāms and then mention the *madhdbab* according to how the author understands and views it to be. This is even though another author from the *madhdbab* of the Imām is more knowledgeable regarding the Imām's terms and has more understanding of the Imām's intents. So it is well known that one of them will say "Allāh has ruled this..." or "the Sharee'ah has ruled this..." according to what he believes it to be according to the scholar of Sharee'ah, according to what he has reached him and his understanding; this is even though there maybe someone else more knowledgeable than him of the views of that particular scholar of Sharee'ah and his actions, and understands his intents more.

The Tamīmīs: Abu'l-Hasan at-Tamīmī, his son and grandson and others were inclined towards the 'Ashā'irah and there was a fair degree of goodwill and companionship between Abu'l-Hasan at-Tamīmī and al-Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn al-Bāqilānī which is well-known. For this reason, al-Hāfidh Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī in his book on the *Manāqib* of Imām Ahmad, when he came to mentioning the creed of the Imām based what he mentioned herein on the words of Abu'l-Fadl 'AbdulWāhid bin Abi'l-Hasan at-Tamīmī in regards to the creed of Imām Ahmad. This was mentioned by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah.

Most of what Abu'l-Fadl at-Tamīmī mentions is contrary to what is affirmed in the creed of Imām Ahmad like with the issue regarding negating terms like "jism", "limbs", "composition" and the likes of these terms (which are not mentioned by Imām Ahmad). The way of Imām

Ahmad, and those Imāms like him, is that they would not pronounce these terms with either a negation or an affirmation. Rather, they said that to either affirm or negate these terms is an innovation and they adhered firmly to the description of Allāh mentioned in the Book and Sunnah. Imām Ahmad said:

And those who describe him do not reach the full extent of His Attribute and we do not surpass the Qur'ān and hadeeth, we say as He said and we describe Him with what He described Himself with and we do not go beyond that.¹

It is well known that the *'aqeedah* of Imām Ahmad is only extracted from those works that he himself mentioned, not from “what is understood from his words”. These sources (which contain the *'aqeedah* of Imām Ahmad as he himself mentions) are various, such as:

First source: What Imām Ahmad wrote and outlined himself in the book *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah wa'z-Zanādiqah*; his letters to his companions such as his letter to Musaddad;² his letter to 'Abdūs bin Mālik al-'Attār; his letter to al-Hasan bin Ismā'eel ar-Rab'ī; his letter to Muhammad bin Yūnus as-Sarkhasī and other letters which have been transmitted with verified chains of transmission.³

Second source: his words and terms which have been transmitted from him and have been authenticated, as is found with al-Khallāl in *as-Sunnah* and in *al-Amr bi'l-Ma'roof wa'n-Nahy 'an il-Munkar*, and within other books; also what his son transmitted from him in the book *as-Sunnah* and in regards to matters that he transmitted from his father; what is transmitted in the narrations of *Masā'il ul-Imām Ahmad*, such as the narration of Abū Dāwūd; the narration of Ibn Hānī; the narration of Sālih ibn ul-Imām Ahmad; likewise within *Masā'il ul-Imām Ahmad wa Ishāq bin Rāhawayh*, according to the narration of Kawsaj; also in the book *al-Wara'* by al-Marwadhī; what was transmitted from Imām Ahmad in books of the Sunnah such as *Kbalq Af'al ul-'Ibād* by al-Bukhārī; *Sbarh Usool I'tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah* by al-Lālikā'ī; the books of Ibn Mandah; the books of Ibn Battah; *ash-Sharee'ah* by al-Ājūrī; *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt* by al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā and his other books.

Secondly:

Within these books that have just been mentioned there is not to be found either an affirmation or negation of these terms (i.e. jism, limbs and composites). Rather, what is affirmed from Imām

¹ Al-Imām Ahmad, *al-Masā'il war-Rasā'il fil-'Aqeedah*, vol.1, p.277; *Ijtimā' ul-Juyūsh il-Islāmiyyah*, p. 83; *al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.26

² **Translator's note:** It has been translated here by the respected brother Abū Khaleel: <http://www.dkh-islam.com/Content/Article.aspx?ATID=22&PG=1>

³ **Translator's note:** This is a superb observation which the contemporary 'Ash'arīs should seriously take into consideration. For they boldly claim that the Salafīs do not adhere to the *'aqeedah* of Imām Ahmad yet they themselves do not transmit from the verified works of Imām Ahmad let alone know what such works are.

Ahmad is that there is a rejection of the Jahmiyyah and a negation of the term “Jism” and withholding from agreeing with recognising the term with either negation or affirmation. This is what occurred with his debate with Abū 'Īsā Barghūth and others who negate Allāh's Attributes in regards to the issue of the Qur'ān during his famous inquisition. Abū 'Īsā tried to get him to necessitate him to say that by saying the Qur'ān is Uncreated this necessitates that Allāh has a body. Imām Ahmad responded by saying that he did not know what was the intent of saying this (i.e. “a body”), so he did not affirm its use and said “rather Allāh is Eternal, He was not born, nor does He give birth and there is nothing like unto Him.” Hanbal bin Ishāq stated in the book *Dhikr Mibnat il-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal*:

Abū 'Abdullāh said: they made necessary something which my heart was not at ease with and which my tongue could not utter. They rejected the narrations and I did not think that they were upon this until I heard their statements. Barghūth began to say to me: “a Jism is like this and that...” and “Speech is serious disbelief in Allāh”. I began saying: “I don't know about this, all I know is that Allāh is Eternal and He has no resemblance or similarity. He is as how He described Himself” then he (Barghūth) went quiet.¹

Thirdly:

Within this creed which is ascribed to Imām Ahmad, and which the two authors rely upon to explain the creed of Imām Ahmad, are many issues which are contrary to the creed of the 'Ashā'irah which is the creed that the two authors claim is the creed of Ahl us-Sunnah!! I will mention some examples:

Sample 1: Abu'l-Fadl at-Tamīmī says that the creed of Imām Ahmad is to believe that Allāh has a Face:

Unto Him is a Face which is not allegorical, the Face of Allāh is Eternal and does not deteriorate, His Attributes do not deteriorate. Whoever claims that His face is His Self has deviated and whoever changes its meaning has disbelieved.

Yet according to the 'Ashā'irah Allāh does not have a Face in the real sense, some of them say that His Face is His Essence and some of them make *tafveedh* of the meaning. 'AbdulQahhār al-Baghdādī stated in *Usool ud-Deen* in describing the Face of Allāh:

What is authentic with us (i.e. 'Ashā'irah) is that His Face is: His Essence (Dhātahu) and “His Eye” is: His Vision of things.²

¹ *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.2, p.294

² 'AbdulQahhār al-Baghdādī, *Usool ud-Deen* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah – copied from the first print by a governmental printing house in Istanbul in 1364 AH), p.110

Abu'l-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī stated in *al-Irshād* in the chapter on 'The Two Hands, Two Eyes and Face':

What is correct with us (i.e. 'Ash'irah) is that: the Two Hands are regarded as being Power; the Two Eyes are regarded as being vision and the Face is regarded as being existence.¹

Indeed, the two authors actually mention in their book that affirmation of Allāh's Face necessitates *tajseem* (anthropomorphism), they state (p.193):

The difference between the terms which indicate bodies and the terms which indicate meanings are great and vast. The first thing which occurs to the one who hears the terms are limbs and body so the speech is in the context of metaphor and allegory, like with the terms "Hand", "Finger" and "Face".

So do you see here that the two authors agree with what they themselves claim is the creed of Imām Ahmad?!!

Sample 2: at-Tamīmī states in regards to the creed of Imām Ahmad:

Unto Allāh are Two Hands which are an Attribute in His Essence, it is corrupt to say that "Hand" is "Power", "Blessing (Ni'mah)" or "Grace" because the plural of "Hand (yad)" is "Aydi", while the plural of the other is "Ayād".²

Yet according to the two authors Allāh's Hand necessitates *tajseem* (anthropomorphism) and is not His Attribute in His Essence. So either *tafweedh* has to made along with rejecting that it is His Attribute in reality, or *ta'weel* of it as being "Ni'mah" (Blessing) or "Qudrah" (Power). The two authors also state (p.153) that:

An example of this, *tafweedh*, is in regards to when Allāh says,

"Rather, both His Hands are Outstretched..."

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 64}

This is generally understood as being generosity, as for the term "Two Hands" ascribed to Allāh in the verse then the furthest meaning of it is that it be absolutely taken upon its apparent meaning. The term can possibly carry a number of allegorical meanings and due to these possible meanings most of the *Salaf* withheld from specifying and this is what is meant by their lack of knowledge of the intended meanings.

So do you see here that the two authors agree with what they themselves claim is the creed of Imām Ahmad?!!

Sample 3: at-Tamīmī stated in regards to the creed of Imām Ahmad:

¹ Abu'l-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī, *al-Irshād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānājī, 1422 AH, 3rd Edn., eds. Muhammad Yūsuf), p.155

² *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.2, p.294

He used to say that the Qur'ān in how it is, is Uncreated and Allāh speaks with a Voice and Letters.¹

Yet according to the two authors themselves Allāh does not speak according to His Will and that His Speech is not with letters and a voice,² so whoever says that Allāh speaks with letters and a voice has resembled Allāh to His creation and innovated. The two authors state (p.76):

Whoever studies the Nidhāmiyyah³ knows that it agrees with the creed of the people of Sunnah, the 'Ashā'irah. An example of this is Imām al-Juwaynī exaltation of Allāh from a direction, place, spatial confinement, letters, voice and other apparently ambiguous aspects.⁴ Likewise, Imām al-Ghazālī (rahimahullāh) within his book *Ijām ul-'A'wām* – which in reality is the foundational way of most of the 'Ashā'irah in regards to exalting Allāh from created features such as Jihah, Makān, Huroof, Aswāt and the apparent ambiguous aspects.

Soon will follow further explanation of these Attributes.

So do you see here that the two authors agree with what they themselves claim is the creed of Imām Ahmad?!!

Sample 4: at-Tamīmī states in regards to the creed of Imām Ahmad:

He (Imām Ahmad) used to render as false “al-Hikāyah” (narrative), meaning the saying that the Qur'ān is a “narrative” from Allāh’s Speech and not Allāh’s Speech – whoever used to say this (that the Qur'ān is a “narrative”) Imām Ahmad would consider such a person as being misguided. Also according to Imām Ahmad’s *madhhab* whoever says “the Qur'ān is an expression (‘ibārah) from the Speech of Allāh” is ignorant and has erred. For it has not been transmitted from any of the Imāms of the Muslims from the first companions of the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi*

¹ Ibid., vol.2, p.296

² **Translator’s note:** Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, who was an 'Ash'arī, also fell into this error by claiming that Mūsā (*alayhis-salām*) heard the Speech of Allāh without hearing a voice or letter?! He also highlights the belief in *kalām nafsi*. This from al-Haytamī was translated by ‘marifah.net’ and was again wanting in terms of references from the *Salaf* regarding this very important matter: <http://www.marifah.net/articles/speech-haytami.pdf>

³ **Translator’s note:** *al-'Aqeedah an-Nidhāmiyyah* authored by Imām al-Juwaynī and published by Zāhid al-Kawtharī.

⁴ **Translator’s note:** Actually, within this book Imām al-Juwaynī supports the way of the *Salaf* and that to accept the verses related to Allāh’s Attributes have to be accepted upon the apparent meaning without *ta'weel*, for he states within *al-'Aqeedah an-Nidhāmiyyah*:

“The Imams of the *Salaf* believed in abstaining from interpretation (*ta'weel*) and passing the literal meanings of the texts as they have come (*ijra' al-dhawāhir 'ala mawaridiha*), while relegating (*tafwīdh*) the meanings to the Lord Most High...”

His father Abū Muhammad al-Juwaynī, was also a Shāfi'ī faqeeh and renounced the 'Ash'arī creed as testified with his *Risālat Ithbāt Istiwā' wa'l-Fawqiyah*. For details of what is mentioned therein refer to *Foundations of the Sunnah* (Birmingham: Salafi Publications, 1417 AH/1997 CE), pp.118-124.

See an Online version, pp.101-106: <http://www.al-sunnah.com/pdf/found.pdf>

wassallam) and the *tābi'een*, peace upon them, that they used the word “Hikāyah” (narrative) and “Ibārah” (expression). So the use of these terms indicates innovation and newly invented matters.”¹

It is well known that those who say that the Qur'ān is “a narrative” or “an expression” from Allāh's Speech are 'Abdullāh bin Kullāb and Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī. Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī states within his *Maqālāt*:

Abdullāh bin Kullāb stated: Allāh, glory unto Him, does not cease being a Speaker and Speech is neither with letter nor voice. It is not separable, divisible, dividable or changeable, it has one meaning with Allāh.² 'Abdullāh bin Kullāb claimed that what we hear of those reciting is an expression of the Speech of Allāh, and that Mūsā (*'alayhis-salām*) heard a speaker of His Speech and that the meaning of His saying,

“...then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh.”

{*at-Tawbah* (9): 6}

Means: “...so that he may understand the words of Allāh.”³

Yet Imām Ahmad used to deem those who said (the Qur'ān was) “a narrative” or “an expression” as misguided and as being innovators, as the two authors themselves transmit! The two authors state (pp. 47-58):

After Imām al-'Ash'arī left P'tizāl he was upon the way of 'Abdullāh bin Sa'eed bin Kullāb...the way of Ibn Kullāb and the way of the Salaf in reality were the same because Ibn Kullāb was an Imām from the Imāms of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah who traversed the way of the Salaf us-Sālih...Imām Ibn Kullāb...did not innovate or oppose the manhaj of the Salaf and the Sunnah.

So do you see here that the two authors agree with what they themselves claim is the creed of Imām Ahmad?!!

Sample 5: at-Tamīmī stated in regards to the creed of Imām Ahmad:

He used to say that the meaning of *istiwā'* is: to rise and ascend, He is over and above everything.⁴

¹ *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.2, p.296

² **Translator's note:** This led them to claim that the Torah, Injeel and Qur'ān are all in fact 'expressions' of the same *kalām*, but the actual *kalām* of Allāh is without any language, and is of the same meaning. Therefore, according to them, the essence of the Torah, the Injeel and the Qur'ān is the same. Since they claimed that Allāh's *kalām* is an internal *kalām*, they then followed up this principle by stating that the actual text of the Qur'ān is created, but the *kalām* of Allāh is not. The Arabic Qur'ān, according to the 'Ash'arīs, is not the actual *kalām* of Allāh, but rather an 'expression' of the *kalām* of Allāh. Refer to Yasir Qadhi, *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān* (Birmingham: al-Hidaayah, 1420 AH/199 CE), pp.40-53.

³ *Maqālāt ul-Islāmiyyeen*, vol.2, pp.257-258

⁴ *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, vol.2, p.296

Yet according to the 'Ashā'irah: "istiwā' is affirmed but we do not know its meaning rather we defer its meaning or we interpret it to mean *isteelā'* (conquering)¹ as it is impossible to believe in

¹ **Translator's note:** It was noted prior that the false interpretation of "isteela" (i.e. "He *conquered* the Throne") was initially asserted by Qādī 'Abdul-Jabbār the founder of Mu'tazilī thought and then taken on board by the 'Ash'arīs. Yet this interpretation is invalid from a number of aspects:

The Arabic language does not allow that the meaning of "Istawā" is "isteelā", and this meaning is not quoted from any of the trusted Imāms of Arabic linguistics, rather it has been authentically transmitted from them that they totally rejected this meaning. Take for example, Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ziyād Ibn al-A'rābī (d. 231 AH/845 CE), who was the son of a Sindi slave and the foster-child of the famous Kufan philologist, al-Mufaddal bin Muhammad ad-Dabbī. His prodigious memory was a storehouse of Arabic philology, folklore and poetry. He was an Imām in Arabic linguistics and philology who questioned al-Asma'ī and Abū 'Ubaydah Ma'mar bin al-Muthanna. Some fragments of his works are present in the collection of manuscripts collected by the *Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam*, refer to its inventory here: <http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/inventories/amsterdam/inventory-academy-collection.pdf>

He is not to be confused with Abū Sa'eed Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ziyād ibn Bishr ibn al-A'rābī (d. 341 AH/952 CE) from Basra and then Makkah, who was the student of Abū Dāwūd as-Sijistānī and author of *Kitāb ul-Mu'jam*, Ibn Abī Zayd narrated from.

Ibn al-A'rābī said (as reported in Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.5, p.283 and al-Lālikā'ī, *Sharh Usul I'tiqād*, vol.3, p.399 with a saheeh *sanad*): "Ibn Abī Dāwood wished that I seek out some of the phrases of the Arabs and their meanings. (So he said): **“the Most Merciful Istawā upon the Throne” {Tā Hā (20): 5} “Istawā” meaning “Istawlā”?** I said to him, **“by Allāh this does not mean this and I have never seen this.”** Al-Khaleel ibn Ahmad was asked: **“Have you seen in the language “Istawā” taken to mean “Istawlā”?** To which he replied, **“This is neither known to the Arab nor possible in the language.”**

This is why Ibn al-Jawzī says in *Zād al-Maseer*, vol.3, p.213: **“This meaning is rejected according to the linguists.”** Ibn Abdul Barr said in *at-Tamheed*, vol.7, p.131: **“Their saying in explanation of Istiwā that it means Isteelā is not correct in the language.”**

This false meaning was mentioned by the later grammarians who inherited this understanding from the Mu'tazilah and the Jahmiyyah. They did not rely upon narrations for this view; rather they relied on the alleged saying of the poet, **“istawā Bishrun 'ala'l-'Irāq”**. This was utilised by GF Haddād in *Islamic Belief and Doctrine According to Ahl al-Sunna, Vol.1: A Repudiation of “Salafi” Innovations* (Mountain View, CA: ASFA, 1996), p.106 – **the book has Hisham Kabbāni's name on the cover yet was more than likely penned by GF Haddād whose name appears inside as 'editor'!** The following have to be taken into account:

- ✓ This line of poetry is not classed as being an authentic Arabic poem because it has not been transmitted via a credible route. It is neither referred to nor found in any collections of Arabic poetry, and cannot be traced.
- ✓ There is no known origin in history for this line, and neither is there any indication in this line that would show that the poet meant *istawā* with the meaning of *istawlā* such that it could be depended upon.
- ✓ (It is possible that) this poem is distorted and its correct phraseology is, **“Bishrun qad istawlā 'ala'l-'Irāq”**.
- ✓ Even if this poem is authentic and it is not distorted then it still is not a proof for them, rather it is against them because Bishr was the brother of the Khaleefah al-Umawī (the Umayyad Caliph) 'AbdulMalik bin Marwān, and he (Bishr) was the Ameer of 'Irāq and he made *Istawā* upon it as was the habit of the leaders that they sit above the throne of the kingdom, and this conforms to the meaning of

Allāh's 'Uluww (Transcendence) and *Fawqīyyab* (being above) His creation as this necessitates *tabayyun* (spatial confinement), *jibab* (direction) and *makān* (a place). So Allāh's *fawqīyyab* is in that He is Above in Power and Authority not *fawqīyyab* in being high above and raised.” According to the 'Ashā'irah as well “Allāh is neither within the world, nor outside of it, neither above it nor beneath it, neither distinct nor indistinct.”

Al-Bayjūrī said within his *Sharh of Jawharat ut-Tawheed*:

When it is transmitted within the Qur'ān and Sunnah that which seems to affirm a *jibab* (direction), *jismīyyab* (bodily characteristics), *surab* (image) or *jawāriḥ* (limbs) – the people of truth and others, apart from the Mujassimah and Mushabbihah, have concurred that such (verses) are to be figuratively interpreted (*ta'weel*).

Then he mentioned:

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

The Salaf say (about this verse): “we do not know what *istiwā'* is” and the Khalaf say: “the intent of this verse is *isteelā'* (conquering) and dominion.”¹

The two authors state (p.139):

It is not understood from the statement of the people of truth that “Allāh is not be described as being within the world, or outside of it” that they describe Him with nothingness. Rather, their intent is that to apply these terms is not permissible as He is exalted from this, meaning He is exalted from 'Uluww (Transcendence) over His Creation in the sense that He is over and above. As for what has arrived within the Book and the Sunnah with regards to these terms which apparently affirm a direction and a place for Allāh – then these verses according to the agreement of the Salaf and the Khalaf have to be categorically averted from their apparent and real meanings.

this word as mentioned in His, the Exalted, saying, “...that you may mount upon their backs (li **tastawū alā dhuhoorihi**)” {*Zukhruf* (43):14}

- ✓ Ibn al-A'rābī said: “He is on His Throne as He has told us. He said, O Abu 'Abdullāh, does it not mean *istawlā* (possess, take control)? Ibn al-A'rābī said: How can you know that? The Arabs do not say *istawlā* unless there are two people competing for a throne, then whichever of them prevails, they describe as *istawlā*.” Refer to *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol.2, p.249.

Refer to Online paper by Aboo Rumaysah entitled *A Comparison of the Ta'weels of the Mu'tazilah to the Ta'weels of the Later Ash'arees*.

¹ Al-Bayjūrī, *Sharh Jawharat it-Tawheed* (Cairo: Dār us-Salām, 1427 AH, 3rd Edn., ed. 'Alī Jum'ah), p.157.

So do you see here that the two authors agree with what they themselves claim is the creed of Imām Ahmad?!!

These are just some examples which demonstrate the opposition of the 'Ash'arīs to what at-Tamīmī mentioned as being the creed of Imām Ahmad. As for the 'Ash'arī's differences with what is affirmed as being the creed of Imām Ahmad then they are many indeed.

THE IJMĀ' THAT ALLĀH IS ABOVE HIS CREATION AND OVER HIS THRONE WITH HIS ESSENCE

Introduction

From the most apparent of Allāh's Attributes in the Book, Sunnah and statements of the *Salaf* which have many evidences for it and which Allāh has ingrained into the natural disposition, and is recognised by correct intellect, is that Allāh is above and over His creation encompassing it all with His Essence. Nothing of the affairs of creation is hidden from Him and He is alluded to by indicating to the heavens and hands are raised up when making *du'ā* to Him.

Various Evidences from the Book and Sunnah Affirming Allāh's 'Uluww Over His Creation with His Essence¹

There are many evidences in the Book of Allāh and Sunnah of His Messenger (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) which affirm Allāh's 'Uluww and these vary into over twenty evidences, I will mention some of them:

1 - Clear reference to *fawqiyah* (Allāh being above His creation) recognised by the use of the particle 'min' (from), specifically related to the transcendence of the Essence,

أَءِ
وَ

“They fear their Lord above them...”

{*an-Nabl (16): 50*}

2 – Clear reference to being above without the particle 'min' (from):

أَءِ أِ

“And He is the subjugator over His servants.”

{*al-An'ām (6): 18*}

¹ **Translator's note:** An excellent paper on this subject was also rendered into English by the respected brother, Dr Sālih as-Sālih (*rahimahullāh*), it can be referred to Online here: <http://abdurrahman.org/tawheed/asmawasifat/TheTranscendenceOfAllaah.pdf>

3 – Clear reference to ascension to Him:

ää ð

“The angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him...”

{*al-Ma'ārij* (70): 4}

4 – Clear reference to ascension to Him:

ä ää

“To Him ascends good speech...”

{*Fātir* (35): 10}'

5 – Clear reference to raising some of creation up to Him:

ää

“Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”

{*an-Nisā* (4): 158}'²

6 – Clear reference to absolute transcendence in all meanings of transcendence including ability and nobility:

¹ **Translator's note:** Ibn Kathēer mentioned in his *tafseer*: means, words of remembrance, recitation of Qur'ān, and supplications. This was the view of more than one of the *Salaf*. Ibn Jareer recorded that Al-Mukhāriq bin Sulaym said that “‘Abdullāh bin Mas'ood, may Allāh be pleased with him, said to them, “If we tell you a hadeeth, we will bring you proof of it from the Book of Allāh. When the Muslim servants says, ‘Glory and praise be to Allāh, there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, Allāh is Most Great and blessed be Allāh,’ an angel takes these words and puts them under his wing, then he ascends with them to the heaven. He does not take them past any group of angels but they seek forgiveness for the one who said them, until he brings them before Allāh, may He be glorified.” Refer to Online version of *tafseer*:

http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1912&Itemid=91

² **Translator's note:** related to this are the many *ahādeeth* which states that Īsā (*alayhis-salām*) will “descend” and be “sent down” from whence Allāh raised him to. So this also indicates the *fawqiyyah* of Allāh.

ä ä

“And He is the Most High, the Most Great.”

{*Baqarah (2): 255*}

ä ä

“And He is the Most High, the Grand.”

{*Saba (34): 23*}

ä ä ä

“Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.”

{*ash-Shūrā (42): 51*}

7 – Clear reference to revealing down the Book from Him:

ää ää ä ää Ôä ä

“The revelation of the Qur’ān is from Allāh, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

{*az-Zumar (39): 1*}

Allāh does not restrict anything as being revealed down from Himself except the Qur’ān and nuzool (sending down) can only be from being transcendent.

8 – Clear reference to specifying some of creation as being near to him and that some are closer than others:

ä ä ä

“Indeed, those who are near your Lord...”

{*al-A'rāf* (7): 206}

9 – Clear reference to Him being in (i.e. over) the heavens:

ä ä ä

“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

According to Ahl us-Sunnah this can be one of two meanings: either in the sense of being '*alā*' (over and above) or the intent can be the higher heaven, they do not differ in that.¹

10 – Clear reference to *istiwā'* recognised with the particle “*alā*” (above) specifically related to the 'Arsh (Throne) which is the highest of creations. This is only understood by those to whom this is addressing as being transcendence and elevation nothing can possibly be understood at all, like when Allāh says:

ä

“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

{*al-A'rāf* (7): 54}²

¹ **Translator's note:** To say “in (i.e. above) the heavens” (*fi's-Samā'*) is a statement that is made by people based on their *fitrah*, the one saying it in no way intends that Allāh is enclosed within the heavens, which the 'Ash'arīs insinuate is the only possible meaning. Rather, “in the heavens” (*fi's-Samā'*) denotes being over and above the heavens. There are instances in the Qur'ān wherein Allāh utilises the preposition “*fi*” to denote “on” as occurs in the following,

ä ä ä ä

“...and I will crucify you on the trunks of palm trees...”

{*TaHa* (20): 71}

² **Translator's note:** the *tafseer* of Ibn Katheer states:

As for Allāh's statement,

ä

“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

11 – Clear reference to people’s hands to be raised up to Allāh, like when the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “Allāh is ashamed to turn down his servant empty when he has raised his hands to Him (*in du‘ā*).”¹

12 – Clear reference to His *Nuzool* every night to the heavens of the *dunya*, *nuzool* is well known to all nations as being from transcendence.

...the people had several conflicting opinions over its meaning. However, we follow the way that our righteous predecessors took in this regard, such as Mālik, al-Awzā‘ī, ath-Thawrī, al-Layth bin Sa’d, ash-Shafī‘ī, Ahmad, Ishāq bin Rāhawayh and the rest of the scholars of Islam, in past and present times. Surely, we accept the apparent meaning of, al-Istiwā’, without discussing its true essence, equating it (with the attributes of the creation), or altering or denying it (in any way or form). We also believe that the meaning that comes to those who equate Allāh with the creation is to be rejected, for nothing is similar to Allāh,

ä ä à ää

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

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

Indeed, we assert and affirm what the Imams said, such as Nu’aym bin Hammād Al-Khuzā‘ī, the teacher of Imām al-Bukhārī, who said, “Whoever likens Allāh with His creation, will have committed Kufr. Whoever denies what Allāh has described Himself with, will have committed Kufr. Certainly, there is no resemblance (of Allāh with the creation) in what Allāh and His Messenger have described Him with. Whoever attests to Allāh’s attributes that the plain Ayat and authentic Hadeeths have mentioned, in the manner that suits Allāh’s majesty, all the while rejecting all shortcomings from Him, will have taken the path of guidance.”

Refer to Online version of *tafseer*:
http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1242&Itemid=62

¹ Narrated in the hadeeth of Salmān (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*) reported by Ahmad (Egypt: Mu’asisat Qurtuba), vol.5, p.437; Abū Dāwūd (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1416 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad al-Khālīdī), vol.2, p.78; at-Tirmidhī (Beirut: Dār Ihyā ut-Turāth, 1415 AH, ed. Ahmad Shākir), vol.5, p.556 - who deemed the hadeeth as *hasan*; Ibn Mājah (Beirut: Dār Ihyā ut-Turāth, 1395 AH, ed. Muhammad Fu’ad ‘AbdulBāqī), vol.2, p.1271; Hanād bin as-Sirī in *az-Zuhd* (Kuwait: Dār ul-Khulafā’ li-Kitāb il-Islāmī, 1406 AH, 1st Edn., ed. ‘AbdurRahmān al-Faraywā‘ī), vol.2, p.629; al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1411 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Mustafā ‘AbdulQādir ‘Atā), vol.1, p.675, and he authenticated the hadeeth; at-Tabarānī, *al-Kabeer*, vol.6, p.256; at-Tabarānī, *ad-Du‘ā’* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1413 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Mustafā ‘AbdulQādir ‘Atā), p.84; al-Bazzār, vol.6, p.478; Shihāb, *Musnad* (Beirut: Mu’asisat ur-Risālah, 1407 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Hamdī as-Salafī), vol.2, p.165; Abū Shaykh, *al-Karam wa’l-Jawd* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 1412 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Dr ‘Āmir Hasan), p.44; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1414 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad ‘AbdulQādir ‘Atā), vol.2, p.211; AbdulGhanī al-Maqdisī, *at-Targheeb fi’d-Du‘ā’* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 1416 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Fawwāz Zumarī), p.50 and authenticated by al-Albānī as is found in *Saheeh at-Targheeb wa’t-Tarheeb* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat al-Ma’ārif, 1412 AH, 1st Edn.), no.1635 in the chapter from Jābir and Anas (*radi Allāhu ‘anhumā*).

13 – Clear reference to the Prophet (*sallallābu 'alayhi wassallam*) indicating above and pointing with his finger as an indication of transcendence, this is what all the Mu'attilah withhold from doing. Yet the Prophet would point up and testify to all that Allāh was the one who has sent him and to testify that Allāh was above His heavens over His 'Arsh.

14 – Clear reference to the word “where?” like when the Prophet (*sallallābu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked the slave-girl: “*Where is Allāh?*” She replied: “Above the heavens (fi's-Samā’).”¹ The Prophet (*sallallābu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “*Free her for indeed she is a believer.*”²

There are other types of clear evidences which indicate Allāh's Transcendence over His creation with His Essence, His Dominance, His Authority and His Ability - all of which are not to be falsely interpreted in any way at all. The Attribute of Allāh's Transcendence is the most apparent to the extent that some of the 'Ulama stated: “There are more than three hundred verses in the Qur'ān that indicate Allāh's Transcendence with Himself over His creation” and some of the scholars said that rather indeed there are a thousand proofs!

I also discovered some works which affirm this Attribute unto Allāh and I found that there are treatises and chapters which emphasis it, such as by: adh-Dhahabī *al-'Uluww li'Alī'l-Ghafār*, Ibn Qudāmah, *Ithbāt Sifāt ul-'Uluww*; Ibn ul-Qayyim, *Ijtimā' Juyooosh il-Islāmiyyeen*; 'AbdulHādī Wahbī, *al-Kalimāt ul-Hassān fī 'Uluww ir-Rahmān*, and many other works.

TEXTS OF THE SALAF WHICH NARRATE A CERTAIN CONSENSUS AFFIRMING ALLĀH'S 'ULUWW WITH HIS ESSENCE OVER HIS CREATION

Due to the texts of the *Salaf* from the Sahābah, Tābi'een and those after them being very abundant, some of which have been mentioned prior in regards to this, I wanted to transmit some texts which relay the assured consensus affirming Allāh's 'Uluww in a real sense. Meaning that Allāh is above His creation with His Essence and with His 'Uluww, nothing from the affairs of Banī Ādam are hidden from Him and this is the natural disposition (fitra) that Allāh made natural to the creation.

¹ **Translator's note:** The Arabic words of the hadeeth are “*Fi's-Samā'*” which does not literally translated as “In the heavens” in the sense of being contained within it but rather means “**above the heavens**”. Interestingly, the 'Ash'arīs reject this authentic hadeeth on this basis so they have taken the hadeeth literally and compared Allāh to created things in doing so, as there is no way whatsoever that the hadeeth can indicate containment within the heavens which Allāh Himself created.

² Reported by Muslim (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm and Maktabat ul-Ma'ārif, 1416 AH, 1st Edn.), 537.

Imām of Ahl ush-Shām, 'AbdurRahmān bin 'Amr Abū 'Amru al-Awzā'ī (d. 157 AH/774 CE):

He said:

The Tābi'een and ourselves used to always say: Allāh is above His 'Arsh and we believe in what has been relayed in the Sunnah about His Attributes.¹

Sa'eed bin 'Āmir ad-Dab'ī Abū Muhammad al-Basrī (d. 208 AH/823 CE):

The Jahmiyyah were mentioned to him and he said: “They have sayings worse than that of the Jews and Christians! For the Jews, Christians and people of other religions agree with the Muslims that Allāh is above His 'Arsh, while the Jahmiyyah say “He is not above anything”.”²

Imām al-Hāfidh Ibn Rāhawayh Ishāq bin Ibrāheem al-Handhalī (d. 238 AH/852 CE):

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Abū Bakr al-Khallāl said: al-Marwadhī informed us: Muhammad bin as-Sabāh an-Naysabūrī narrated to us: Abū Dāwūd al-Khaffāf Sulaymān bin Dāwūd narrated to us saying: Ishāq bin Rāhawayh said: Allāh says,

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā (20): 5*}

The people of knowledge have reached agreement (ijmā') that Allāh is established above His 'Arsh and knows everything in the lowest of the seven earths.

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Listen to this Imām and how he transmits that there is an ijmā' on this issue as Qutaybah did during his time.³

Qutaybah bin Sa'eed bin Jameel bin Tareef ath-Thaqafī (d. 240 AH/854 CE)⁴:

¹ Reported by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah), p.515.

² Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted it in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.52; also in *Dar' at-Ta'arud*, vol.2, p.261; ascribed to Ibn Abī Hātim in *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah* and also relayed by adh-Dhahabī in *al-'Uluww*, p.158.

³ Relayed by adh-Dhahabī in *al-'Uluww*, p.179 and ascribed to al-Khallāl.

⁴ **Translator's note:** He was one of the narrators and Shaykhs depended upon by Imāms Bukhārī and Muslim. For example Muslim relates in his Saheeh: Qutaybah Bin Sa'eed narrated to us (that): Layth narrated to us from Sa'd Bin Abī Sa'eed from his father from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam*)

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Abū Ahmad al-Hākīm and Abū Bakr an-Naqāsh al-Mufassir said, in his wording: Abu'l-'Abbās as-Sarrāj narrated to us saying: I heard Qutaybah bin Sa'eed say: The saying of the Imāms of Islām, the Sunnah and Jama'ah is that: we know our Lord is in above the seven heavens over His 'Arsh as He said,

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā (20): 5*}

Adh-Dhahabī said:

And likewise Mūsā bin Hāroon transmitted from Qutaybah that he said: “we know our Lord is above the seven heavens over His 'Arsh.” So Qutaybah, with his leadership and truthfulness, transmitted there is an *ijmā'* on this issue and he had met Mālik, al-Layth, Hammād bin Zayd and others from the seniors, he had also lived a long life and the Huffādh used to congregate at his door. He said to a man once: “Stay with us this winter until I send to you five people with one hundred thousand hadeeth.”¹

Abū Zur'ah ar-Rāzī, 'Ubaydullāh bin 'AbdulKareem al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī (d. 264 AH) and al-Hāfidh Abū Hātīm ar-Rāzī Muhammad bin Idrees bin al-Mundhir al-Handhalī (d. 277 AH/890 CE):

Abū Muhammad 'AbdurRahmān bin Abī Hātīm said:

I asked my father and Abū Zur'ah about the madhhab of Ahl us-Sunnah in Usool ud-Deen and who of the 'Ulama from all places that they had encountered and what they believed. They both

said: *“There was not from amongst the Prophets a Prophet except that he was given from the signs by the likes of which the people believed in him. And indeed, that which I was but given is revelation which Allah revealed to me, so I hope that I will have the most followers from them (the Prophets) on the Day of Resurrection.”*

Qutaybah also said: **“The best of the people in our time is 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak, and then this young man (meaning Ahmad bin Hanbal) - and if you see a man who loves Ahmad, then know that he is a person of the Sunnah. If he had reached the time of ath-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī and al-Layth, he would have been the one having precedence amongst them.”** So it was said to Qutaybah, “You would mention Ahmad along with the Tābi'een?” So he said, **“With the greater Tābi'een.”** He also said **“If it were not for ath-Thawrī, piety would die out, and if it were not for Ahmad they would innovate in the Religion. Ahmad is the Imām of the world.”**

Refer to: adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām un-Nubala'* (Beirut: Mu'asisat ur-Risālah, 1413 AH, 9th Edn., eds. Shu'ayb al-Arna'oot and Muhammad al-'Arqsoos), vol.12, pp.394-396; Ibn Hajar, *Hādī al-Sārī*, p.479.

¹ *Al-'Uluww*, p.174

said to me: 'We knew 'Ulama from all places, Hijāz, 'Irāq, Shām, Yemen – and from their madhhab were...' then they mentioned some matters up until they both said: 'That Allāh is Over His 'Arsh distinct from His creation as He described Himself in His Book and upon the tongue of His messenger (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*), without asking 'how this is?'. His knowledge encompasses everything,

ä ä à ää

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

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

'Abdullāh bin Muslim bin Qutaybah Abū Muhammad ad-Dīnawarī (d. 276 AH/889 CE):

He said:

All nations, be they Arab or non-Arab, say that: 'Allāh is above the heavens.....' In the hadeeth: a man went to the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) with a non-Arab slave girl in order for her to be freed. The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked her: "Where is Allāb?" She replied "Above the heavens." The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: "Who am I?" She replied: "You are the Messenger of Allāh." The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: "She is a believer." Then he instructed that she be freed – this is the hadeeth or like it.²

Imām al-'Allāmah al-Hāfidh an-Nāqid 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed ad-Dārimī (d. 280 AH/893 CE):

He said:

"The word of the Muslims is agreed that Allāh is above His 'Arsh and above His heavens."³ He also said: "The word of the Muslims, and disbelievers, is agreed that only Allāh is above the heavens, except for the misguided deviant al-Marīsī and his companions."⁴

Imām of the Imāms Muhammad bin Ishāq bin Khuzaymah (d. 311 AH/923 CE):

He said:

Chapter: Mention of the explanation that Allāh is above the heavens as He informed us in His Clear Revelation and on the tongue of His Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*), and as is understood in the fitrah of Muslims: whether they be their 'Ulama, their ignorant,

¹ Reported by al-Lālikāī, vol.1, pp.176-177

² Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'weel Mukhtalif il-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1405 AH, 1st Edn.), pp.252-253

³ *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī*, vol.1, p.340

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.228

their free, their slaves, their males, their females, their mature and their children. All who call upon Allāh raised their heads towards the heavens and spread out their hands unto Allāh.¹

Imām Abū Bakr Muhammad bin al-Husayn al-Ājurrī ash-Shāfi'ī (d. 360 AH/971 CE)²:

¹ Ibn Khuzaymah, *at-Tawheed* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1412 AH, ed. Muhammad Khaleel Harrās), p.110

² **Translator's note:** He is Imām Abū Bakr Muhammad bin Husayn bin 'Abdullāh al-Ājurrī al-Baghdādī, born in 280 AH (893 CE) while some accounts put his date of birth to be 264 AH (878 CE). The name "Ājurrī", which has a *fat-ha* on the first *alif* which is elongated, a *dhammah* on the *jeem* and a *kasra* on the *rā* which has a *shaddah* on it, is a relational adjective derived from the village of Ājurr in Baghdād however even by the time Yāqoot al-Hamawī was writing his history the village had been ruined. From an early age he studied and memorised hadeeth, learning from one of the great Imāms of hadeeth of his time Yāfi' Abū Muslim al-Kajjī, gaining high chains of transmissions via him. He later travelled to take from other major hadeeth scholars such as al-Hāfidh Abū Bakr Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Firyābī and also Abū Muhammad Yahyā bin Sā'id Hāmī. Within the books of al-Ājurrī it is evident that his teachers and Shaykhs were many indeed as historians have noted, also of his teachers and Shaykhs were:

- ❖ Abū Muslim al-Kajjī (or "al-Kashshī") Ibrāheem bin 'Abdullāh (d. 292 AH/905 CE);
- ❖ Ahmad bin 'Umar bin Mūsā bin Zanjūwayh Abu'l-'Abbās al-Qattān (d. 304 AH/916 CE);
- ❖ Abū Shu'ayb al-Hadānī;
- ❖ Khalf bin 'Amru al-'Ukbarī;
- ❖ Abū Khaleefah Fadl bin Habbāb;
- ❖ al-Mufaddal bin Habbāb al-Jundī Abū Sa'eed al-Hāfidh (d. 308 AH/920 CE);
- ❖ Hāroon bin Yoosuf bin Ziyād;
- ❖ Qāsim bin Zakariyyah al-Mutarriz al-Baghdādī (d. 305 AH/917 CE);
- ❖ Abū Bakr bin Abī Dāwood 'Abdullāh bin Sulaymān bin al-'Ash'ath as-Sijistānī (d. 316 AH/928 CE);
- ❖ Ahmad bin Yahyā al-Halwānī;
- ❖ Ja'far bin Muhammad bin al-Hasan Abū Bakr al-Firyābī, and then "at-Turkī" (d. 301 AH/913 CE);
- ❖ 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās at-Tayalisī;
- ❖ Hāmid bin Shu'ayb al-Balkhī;
- ❖ Ahmad bin Sahl al-Ashnānī al-Muqri'.

As for his student then they included (as mentioned within the historical works):

- ❖ Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdullāh al-Hāfidh al-Asbahānī (d. 404 AH/1014 CE), the author of *al-Hilyah*
- ❖ Muhammad bin al-Husayn bin al-Mufaddal al-Qattān
- ❖ Abu'l-Hasan al-Hammāmī
- ❖ 'AbdurRahmān bin 'Umar bin an-Nuhās
- ❖ 'Ali bin Ahmad al-Muqri'
- ❖ Mahmood bin 'Umar al-'Ukbarī
- ❖ Abu'l-Husayn 'Ali bin Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh bin Bishrān
- ❖ Abu'l-Qāsim 'AbdulMalik bin Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh bin Bishrān al-Baghdādī (d. 403 AH/1013 CE)

Adh-Dhababī in *Tadhkirat ul-Huffādh*, p.936 mentions that when al-Ājurrī was in Makkah many Hujjāj and Maghāribah (North-West Africans or "Moroccans") narrated from him. As for the academic and scholarly level of al-Ājurrī then this has been attested to by historians who have deemed him as a righteous and pious Imām of fiqh

He said:

What the Ahl ul-'Ilm go toward is that: Allāh, glory unto Him, is over His 'Arsh above His heavens and His Knowledge encompasses everything...

and hadeeth. Adh-Dhahabī said: **“The Imām, Muhaddith and Shaykh of the Haram ash-Shareef, he was sudoq and an Atharī. He also had good works and classification (tasāneef).”** Al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī said: **“He was thiqaḥ and sudoq, he also had tasāneef.”** As-Suyūṭī said: **“He was an 'Ālim, a person of the Sunnah and thiqaḥ in his deen.”** Ibn Muflih al-Hanbalī said: **“He was from the fuqahā (jurists) and the seniors (Kibār).”** Yāqoot al-Hamawī said: **“He was thiqaḥ, unto him are many works, he was raised in Baghdād and then moved to Makkah where he lived until he died.”** Ibn un-Nadeem said “The faqeḥ (jurist), one of the pious worshippers who used to reside in Makkah.”

Ibn al-Atheer in *al-Kāmil fi't-Tāreekh*, vol.7, p.44 described him as being a Hāfidh. Ibn al-Jawzī said about him in *Sifat us-Safwa'*, vol.2, p.479: “He was trustworthy and precise, possessing *deen*, a scholar and author.” In *Manāqib al-Imām Ahmad* p. 515, Ibn ul-Jawzī says: “He gathered together knowledge and ascetism.”

Al-Ājurri was Salafī and Atharī and opposed bigoted fanatical partisanship to madhhabs as is clearly evident from his books, there is dispute among the historians over whether he was Shāfi'ī in *fiqh* or not. For he is mentioned within *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'iyyah* and in *Wafayāt ul-A'yān* of Ibn Khallikān as being Shāfi'ī in *fiqh*, yet there are those who say he was upon the madhhab of Imām Ahmad as he is mentioned within *Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, *Shadharāt udh-Dhahab*, *Manāqib al-Imām Ahmad* and *Sifāt us-Safwa'*. His works include:

- ❖ *Al-Arba'een fi'l-Hadeeth* – there is an extant manuscript of this within the Dhāhiriyyah Library in Damascus, collection no.4, folios 40-80. There is also a copy of a manuscript of it within collection no.27, folios 34-45 (refer to the Index (Fihris) of the Dhāhiriyyah Library, p.2). This work was mentioned by adh-Dhahabī in *Tadhkirat ul-Huffādh*, p.936 and by Tāj as-Subkī in *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'iyyah*, vol.3, p.149.
- ❖ *Akhbār 'Umar bin 'Abdul'Azeez* - there is an extant manuscript of this within the Dhāhiriyyah Library in Damascus, collection no.30, folios 1-22. There is a copy of this in the Islamic university of Madeenah Library, slide no.106.
- ❖ *Akhlaq Hamalat ul-Qur'ān* – mentioned by Ibn ul-Khayr al-Ishbeelī in *Fihris ma Rāwāhu min Shuyookhihi* [Index of What He Narrated from His Shaykhs], p.185
- ❖ *Ahkām un-Nisā'* – mentioned by Ibn un-Nadeem in *al-Fihrist*, p.215
- ❖ *Akhlaq ul-'Ulama* – this has been edited and printed twice, firstly in Cairo in 1931 CE and secondly in Riyadh by the Administration for Academic Research and Rulings, Ismā'eel al-Ansārī (ed.).
- ❖ *Tasdeeq bi Nadhr ila Allāh, Azza wa Jall, wa ma Adahu min Awliyā'ihī* – there are two manuscript copies of this in the Dhāhiriyyah Library in Damascus: collection no.21, folios 185-200 and two folios in collection no.116, folios 114-118
- ❖ *Ash-Sharee'ah* – this was printed firstly in Cairo by Shaykh Muhammad Hāmid al-Fiqqī and then again by Dār Kutub al-'Alamiyyah in Beirut.
- ❖ *Al-Ghurabā min al-Mu'mineen* - there is an extant manuscript of this within the Dhāhiriyyah Library in Damascus, collection no.4572, folios 48-63.
- ❖ *Adab un-Nufoos* - there is an extant manuscript of this within the Dhāhiriyyah Library in Damascus, hadeeth collection no.248, folios 23-29.

The historians mention other works attributed to him and Ibn Muflih in *al-Furū'* mentions a number of other works authored by al-Ājurri. Al-Ājurri returned to reside in Baghdād in 330 AH and stayed there for a year after which he went to Makkah where he stayed for thirty years and eventually died there. See:

<http://www.ajurry.com/WhoIsAjurry.htm>

Until he said:

So if someone says: “What is the meaning of His saying,

ä äá ä äáÔ ä

“There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them...”

{*al-Mujādilah* (58): 7}

The verse that they use?”

It is to be said to Him: His Knowledge encompasses them and His Knowledge encompasses everything of His creation and He is above His 'Arsh. This is how the people of knowledge have explained this; the verse from the beginning of it to the end of it indicates knowledge.

Then the Imām said:

Chapter: Mention of the Sunan that indicated to the 'Uqalā' (intelligent) that Allāh is over His 'Arsh and above His seven heavens and that His Knowledge encompasses everything and nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him.¹

Abū 'Abdullāh 'Ubaydullāh bin Muhammad al-'Ukbarī al-Hanbalī Ibn Battah (d. 384 AH/994 CE):

He said:

The Muslims - from the Companions, Tābi'een and all of the Ahl ul-'Ilm from the believers – have agreed that Allāh, blessed is He, is over His 'Arsh above His heavens, distinct from His creation and His Knowledge encompasses all of His creation. This is neither denied nor rejected except by one who ascribes to the madhhab of the Hulooliyyah (incarnationists).²

Imām al-Muqrī, al-Muhaddith Abū 'Umar Ahmad bin Muhammad at-Talamankī (d. 429 AH/1038 CE):

He said:

The Muslims from Ahl us-Sunnah have agreed that the meaning of Allāh's saying,

¹ *Ash-Sharee'ah* (Jam'iyyat Ihyā ut-Turāth al-Islāmī and Mu'assisat ur-Rayān, 1421 AH, 1st Edn, ed. Mu'assisat ar-Rayān), p.300.

² *Al-Ibānah*, vol.3, p.136

Translator's note: Imām Ibn Battah's explanation here (*rahimahullāh*) makes much sense as most of those who deny that Allāh is above the heavens and accuse those who affirm this as being “Mujassimah” are also those who adhere to various brands of esoteric Sufism wherein Allāh is either defined in a pantheistic manner or in an obscurantist pseudo-spiritual way.

“And He is with you wherever you may be.”

{*Al-Hadeed (57): 4*}

And the likes of such verses in the Qur'ān, is that: His Knowledge (is with you) and that Allāh is above the heavens with His Essence established over His 'Arsh how He wills.

He also said:

Ahl us-Sunnah says in regards to when Allāh says,

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā (20): 5*}

That *istiwā'* from Allāh over His 'Arsh is real (*'ala'l-baqeeqah*) and not metaphorical/allegorical (*'ala'l-majāz*).¹

Al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdillāh al-Asbahānī (d. 430 AH/1039 CE):

Al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym stated in his book *Mahajjat ul-Wāthiqeen wa Madrajat ul-Wāmiqeen*:

The Muslims have agreed that Allāh is above His Throne, established over it and not “conquered over it” (mustawlin 'alayhi) as the Jahmiyyah say.²

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Al-Hāfidh al-Kabeer Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad al-Asbahānī, the classifier of *Hilyat ul-Awliyā*, said in his own book of creed that: Our way is the way of the Salaf who follow the Book, the Sunnah and the *ijmā'* of the Ummah, and from what they believed in is that Allāh has always been Perfect with all of His Eternal Attributes.

Up to where he said:

He (Abū Nu'aym) said: The ahādeeth which affirm the 'Arsh and Allāh's establishment over it are stated by them and affirmed by them with neither takyeef (asking how) nor tamtheel (likening Allāh to the creation), and that Allāh is distinct from His creation and the creation is distinct from Allāh. Allāh is neither incarnate within the creation nor mixed in the creation, He is established over His Throne above the heavens and not on the earth.

¹ Reference mentioned prior.

² Transmitted by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.60

Adh-Dhahabī said:

These Imāms transmitted an *ijmā'* on this view and all praise is due to Allāh and Abū Nu'aym was the Hāfidh of the non-Arabs during his time without argument and combined between lofty narration and knowledge.¹

Shaykh al-Imām al-Hāfidh Abū Nasr 'Ubaydullāh bin Sa'eed as-Sijzī (d. 444 AH/1052 CE):

He said in the book *al-Ibānah*:

Our Imāms such as Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Mālik bin Anas, Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, Hammād bin Salamah, 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubāarak, Fudayl bin 'Iyyād, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Ishāq bin Ibrāheem al-Handhalī – are agreed that Allāh is above His Throne with His Essence and that His Knowledge is in every place.²

Shaykh ul-Islām al-Imām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel bin 'AbdurRahmān as-Sābūnī (d.449 AH/CE)³:

¹ *Al-Uluww*, p.243

² *Ibid.*, p.266

³ **Translator's note:** He is the Imām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Ahmad bin Ismā'eel bin Ibrāhim bin 'Abid bin 'Amir an-Naysaburi as-Sābūnī. He was born in the year 373 AH. His father, also a scholar, was killed in 382 AH, when he was 9 years of age. His teachers in Hadīth were: Abū Sa'id 'Abdallāh bin Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Wahhāb, when he was 9, Abu Bakr bin Mihrān, Abū Muhammad al-Mukhallidī, Abū Tahir bin Khuzaymah, Abu'l-Husayn al-Khaffāf, 'AbdurRahmān bin Abi Shurayh, Zahir bin Ahmad as-Sarakhsī and their generation. Among his students were: 'Abdul'Azeez al-Kattānī, Ali bin al-Husayn bin Sasra. Najā bin Ahmad, Abu'l-Qāsim b. Abi'l-'Alā, Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqī, his son 'AbdurRahmān bin Ismā'eel and others, of which the last one is Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad bin al-Fadl al-Furawī. He lived in Nisabur and travelled to: Herat, Sarakhs, the Hijāz, Shām, al-Jabāl and other places. He transmitted hadeeth in Khurasān, Jurjān (Gorgan, Northern Irān), al-Hind (India), al-Quds (Jerusalem) and elsewhere. Hāfidh al-Dhahabī called him: **“as-Sābūnī, the Imām, the Scholar, the Exemplar, the Commentator, the Preacher, the Muhaddith Shaykh al-Islām...”** Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī described him as: **“Imām of the Muslims in reality and the Shaykh al-Islām truthfully, Abū 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī...”** Abū Abdallāh al-Mālikī said about him: **“Abū 'Uthmān belongs to those for whom the leading scholars testified for being perfect in al-Hifdh [of hadeeth] and al-Tafseer (of the Qur'ān).”** 'AbdulGhafir al-Fārisī, author of a History of Nisabur, and a Hāfidh said: **“al-Ustādh Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel as-Sābūnī is a Shaykh al-Islām, al-Mufasssir, al-Muhaddith, al-Wā'iz, one of his time and he was a Hāfidh, heard and wrote a lot..”** and he said, **“he was accepted by friend and foe, and they were agreed upon that he was a Sword of the Sunnah and Repeller of Bid'ah...”** Al-Kattānī said: **“I have not seen a Shaykh like Abū 'Uthmān in terms of Zuhd and Knowledge! He use to memorise from every science, leaving nothing of it... and he was from the Huffādh ul-Hadeeth!”** Adh-Dhahabī comments upon this with: **“I say: He use to be from the Imāms of al-Athar; he has a composition on creed and the beliefs of the Salaf (lahu musannaf fi's-sunnah**

wa-I'tiqād as-salaf)." The Imam and Shaykh al-Islām Abu 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī died in 449 AH, *rahimahullāh*. Imām Abu 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī said:

To proceed; While passing through the lands of Āmul in Tabaristān and Jeelān on my way to the House of Allāh, and to visit the grave of His Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, his family and noble Companions, some of my brothers in Islām asked me to compile for them chapters about the fundamentals of this Religion, which those who passed away from amongst the scholars and the Salaf as-Sāliheen adhered to, called the people to all times, which they forbade the believers, the truthful ones and the Muttaqeen from all that contradicted and nullified them and upon which (the scholars) showed allegiance to its followers and enmity to its rejecters. They labelled all those who opposed their creed as unbelievers and innovators. They earned for themselves and for those who they called (to their *'aqeedah*), its blessings, favours and goodness. They passed on to the ones who followed them the rewards of their *'aqeedah*. They encouraged them to cling to it, guided the worshippers to it and spurred them on towards it. So I made Istikhārah to Allāh, The Most High, and have recorded in this treatise what I have been able to concisely with the hope that those with the understanding and insight might benefit by it. It is Allāh who realizes (makes true) the hope and may He generously bestow upon us blessings in accordance to what is right, the truth, guidance and uprightness upon the correct and truthful path by His favour and Benevolence.

The Imām continues directly with the first chapter after his Introduction, saying:

With Allāh lies all success. Indeed the People of Hadeeth are those who adhere to the Qur'ān and Sunnah ~ may Allāh protect those of them who are alive and have mercy on those who have passed away. They bear witness to the unity of Allāh, The Most High, and to the message and prophethood of the Messenger, peace be upon him. They know their Lord, The Most Mighty and The Most Majestic, through those Attributes which He has mentioned in His revelation which He has sent down, or which His Messenger attested to in the authentic *ahādeeth* which have been related by the precise and trustworthy one from him. They affirm what Allāh, The Most Majestic, has affirmed for Himself in His Book or through the tongue of His Messenger, peace be upon him. They do not believe in comparing His Attributes with those of His creation. They say: He created Ādam with His Hands just as He, The One free of all deficiencies, mentions:

"He said: O Iblees what prevented you from prostrating before that which I have created with My Two Hands."

They do not change the meaning from its place, by saying His Two Hands mean His two bounties or His two powers like the *tahreef* of the Mu'tazilah and the Jahmiyyah, may Allāh destroy them. They do not ask nor think as to how they may be. They do not liken them to the hands of the creation like the Mushabbihah do, may Allāh humiliate them. Allāh, The Most High, has protected Ahl us-Sunnah from all *tahreef* (distortion), *tashbeeh* (comparison) and *takyeef* (asking how). He has blessed them with knowledge and understanding so that they may traverse the paths of Tawheed and *tanzeeh* (elevating Allāh and exalting Him above defects and deficiencies). They have abandoned all defective statements and comparison. They follow what Allāh, The Most Mighty and the Most Majestic, has said: *"There is nothing like Him and He is the All Hearing, The All Seeing."*

He said:

The people of hadeeth believe and testify that Allāh is above the seven heavens over His Throne as He stated in His Book.

Up to where he said:

The 'Ulama of the Ummah and the notable Imāms of the Salaf, may Allāh have mercy on them, do not differ on the fact that Allāh is over His Throne and His Throne is above the seven heavens.¹

Al-Imām al-'Allāmah Hāfidh ul-Maghrib Abū 'Umar Yūsuf bin 'Abdullāh bin 'AbdulBarr al-Andalūsī al-Qurtubī al-Mālikī (d. 463 AH/1071 CE):

He said:

Within this is evidence that Allāh is above the heavens over the Throne above the seven heavens as the Jama'ah have stated. This is of their proofs against the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah who say that Allāh is everywhere and not over His Throne...² – then he mentioned the evidences.

He said:

Also from the proofs that He is over the 'Arsh, above the seven heavens is that all of the Muwahhiddeen be they Arab or non-Arab when a calamity befalls them they raise their faces to the heavens and seek the help of their Lord.³

He said:

The meaning of this hadeeth (i.e. the hadeeth of the slave-girl) is clear and suffices any speech, as for his saying “Where is Allāh?” She replied: “Above the heavens (fi's-Samā').” This is what the people of truth are upon in regards to interpreting the saying of Allāh,

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And just as the Two Hands of Allāh are mentioned in the Qur'ān: “But His Two Hands are outspread. He spends as He pleases.” The Hand is mentioned in the authentic *ahādeeth* of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, like in the debate Mūsā had with Ādam: “Allāh created you with His Hand and the angels prostrated to you...”

Yet with this some of the contemporary 'Asharites either make little or no reference to as-Sābūnī or strangely claim that as-Sābūnī was 'Ash'arī without even referring to his creedal book whatsoever!?

His book *'Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth* based on the edit of Shaykh Badr al-Badr has been translated into English as: Imaam Aboo 'Uthmaan as-Saaboonee, *The Creed of the Pious Predecessors and the People of Hadeeth* (Brixton, London: Masjid Ibn Taymeeyah, 1420 AH/1999 CE), trans. Abū 'Ubaydah 'Amr Basheer.

¹ *'Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth* (Cairo: Dār ul-Manhāj, 1423 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Abi'l-Yameen al-Mansoorī), p.44

² *At-Tamheed*, vol.7, pp.129-131

³ *Ibid.*, vol.7, p.134

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

For when a calamity strikes the Muslims throughout every time have always been raising their hands and faces unto the heavens, hoping for Allāh to aid them.¹

Imām al-Hāfidh Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Abī 'Alī al-Hasan al-Hamadhānī (d. 531 AH/1137 CE):

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Muhammad bin Tāhir said: the Muhaddith Abū Ja'far al-Hamadhānī attended a gathering wherein Abū Ma'ālī gave an exhortation and had said “Allāh was there when there was no 'Arsh and now He is upon that which was not there?” Abū Jafar said: “Inform us O Ustaadh about this necessity that we have found (you mention). For one who knows does not at all say “O Allāh” except that he finds in his heart that this necessity demands al-'Uluww and one does not turn to the left or the right. So how can we avert this necessary (inclination) from ourselves” or he said: “Is there a cure to avert this necessary (inclination) that we find?” Abū Ma'ālī said: “O my beloved, there is nothing but perplexity.” Then he slapped him on his head and he went down and cried for some time and then said later: “al-Hamadhānī has perplexed me.”²

Imām al-Hāfidh Abu'l-Qāsim Ismā'eel bin Muhammad at-Taymī at-Talhī al-Asbahānī (d. 535 AH/1141 CE):

He said:

Those who deny al-'Uluww (Allāh's Transcendence above His creation) claim that it is not permissible to indicate to Allāh above by raising the head and finger, as according to them that necessitates a “limit” and “spatial confinement”. Yet the Muslims have concurred that Allāh is the Highest of the High and the Qur'ān says this,

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“Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High...”

{*al-'Alā* (87): 1}

They claim that it is referring to the 'Uluww of subduing and not of the 'Uluww of Allāh's Essence. Yet according to the Muslims unto Allāh is the 'Uluww of subduing along with all other manifestations of

¹ Ibid., vol.8, p.80

² Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted it with its chains of transmission in *Naqd ut-Ta'sees*, p.30; also relayed by adh-Dhahabī in *al-'Uluww* (p.259) and *as-Siyar*, vol.18, p.474.

'Uluww because 'Uluww is a description of praise. Allāh has affirmed the Transcendence of His Essence, Attributes, dominance and subduing.

Abu'l-Waleed Muhammad bin Abi'l-Qāsim Ahmad Ibn Rushd al-Qurtubī (the grandson), (d. 605 AH/1209 CE):

He said in the book *Manābij ul-Adillab fi'r-Radd 'ala'l-Usooliyeen*:

The statement of jihah (direction): as for this description then the people of Sharee'ah from the first generations affirm it for Allāh, Mighty and Majestic. The Mu'tazilah denied it and they were followed in that by the later 'Ash'arīs such as Abu'l-Ma'ālī and whoever followed what he said. What is apparent from the *Sbar'* is that affirming direction is required and necessitated...

Up to where he said:

All of the wise people are agreed that Allāh and the angels are in the heavens just as all of the legislations are agreed on that.¹

Imām Muwaffaquddeen Abū Muhammad 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad bin Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620 AH/1223 CE):

He said (in an exceptional poetic style):

Allāh described Himself with al-'Uluww fi's-Samā
And He was described with this by the seal of the Anbiyā,
And this was agreed upon by all of the 'Ulama - from the pious Sahābah and fuqahā,
Narrations have been reported about this with yaqeen
And these have been accepted in hearts of the Muslimeen,
And this is a naturally instinctive belief in all creation,
So when a calamity befalls them they look to the heavens and raise their hands making supplications,
And they wait for succour to arrive from the Creator of creations,
And they pronounce this upon their tongues,
And this is only rejected by an extremist innovator, who is steeped in his deviance,
Or one tested by uncritical following of him in his misguidance.²

Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubī (d. 671 AH):

He stated in *Sbarh Asmā' Illāhi'l-Husnā* [Explanation of Allāh's Beautiful Names]:

What is apparent from the statements that have been reported by the verses, narrations, luminaries and good people – is that Allāh is over His Throne as He informed of in His

¹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted it in *Dar' at-Ta'arud*, vol.6, p.213 and in *Naqd ut-Ta'sees*, p.97.

² Ibn Qudāmah, *Ithbāt Sifat ul-'Uluww* (Kuwait: Dār Ibn ul-Atheer, 1416 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Badr al-Badr), p.43

Book and on the tongue of His Prophet without asking how. Allāh is distinct from His creation. This is the madhhab of the Salaf us-Sālih as trustworthy narrators have reported from them.¹

He also said:

The original *Salaf*, may Allāh be pleased with them, did not say anything about “negating direction” they said nothing of the sort. Rather, they affirmed whatever Allāh mentioned in His Book and whatever His Messenger informed of, none of the Salaf us-Sālih rejected Allāh’s *istiwā’* over His Throne in a real sense, which Allāh specifically mentioned as it is the greatest of creations. Rather, they affirmed their ignorance of the *kayfiyyah* (the how-ness) of *al-Istiwā’* for its reality is not known. Mālik (*rabimabullāh*) said: **“Istiwā’ is ma’loom (known – in the language) and the kayf (how) is majhool (unknown), and asking about it is an innovation.”** This is what Umm Salamah (*radi Allāhu ‘anhā*) likewise stated. This is sufficient and wants to know more about this should refer to this topic within the books of the ‘Ulama.²

Imām al-Hāfidh Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad bin ‘Uthmān adh-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH/1347 CE):

He stated:

‘AbdurRahmān bin Abī Hātim ar-Rāzī al-Hāfidh stated in his book *ar-Radd ‘ala’l-Jahmiyyah*: my father informed us: Sulaymān bin Harb informed us: I heard Hammād bin Zayd say: they (i.e. the Jahmiyyah) always go on about Allāh not being above the heavens.

I say³: the saying of the Salaf and the Imāms of the Sunnah, rather indeed of Allāh, the Messenger, the Companions and the believers – is that Allāh is over the ‘Arsh, above His heavens and He descends to the heavens of the dunya and their proofs for that are texts and narrations. As for the saying of the Jahmiyyah that Allāh is everywhere then Allāh is exalted this rather Allāh is with us with His Knowledge. As for the saying of the latter-day speculative-theological rhetoricians (Mutakallimoon) that “Allāh is not in the heavens, not over the ‘Arsh, not above the heavens, not on the earth, not inside of the world, not outside of the world, not distinct from His creation, not connected to His creation” and say “all of these notions are used to described bodies and Allāh is Exalted from a body.”

Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Athar said to them: “We do not delve into that, we say what we have mentioned in following the texts. We do not say what you say, for that is the way of describing

¹ Al-Qurtubī, *al-Asnā fī Sharh Asmā’ Illāhi’l-Husnā* (Tantaa, Egypt: Dār us-Sahābah, 1416 AH, 1st Edn., edited by a panel of researchers), vol.2, p.132; also Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted it in *Dar’ at-Ta’arud*, vol.6, p.258, within *Bayān Talbees ul-Jahmiyyah*, vol.2, p.33, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.224, *Naqd ut-Ta’sees*, p.106; also transmitted by Ibn ul-Qayyim in *Ijtimā’ ul-Juyoosh al-Islāmiyyah*, p.263.

² Al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi’ li-Ahkām il-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1417 AH, 5th Edn.), vol.7, p.140

³ i.e. adh-Dhahabī [TN]

something which does not exist and Allāh is Exalted from non-existence. Rather, He exists distinct from His creation and is to be described as He described Himself, that He is above the Throne, without delving into “how” (*bi la kayf*).¹

Then adh-Dhahabī said, transmitting the words of al-Qurtubī:

Also al-Qurtubī said in *al-Asnā*: Most of the early and latter-day Mutakallimeen say that it is obligatory to exalt the Creator (al-Bārī) from *al-jibah* and *at-tabayyuz* and the necessary consequences of this (in the view of their past scholars and leading contemporaries) is to exalt the Creator from having a direction. So according to them *al-jibah* is not ‘above’ because that would necessitate specifying a direction for Him in which He is in a place and spatially confined. Therefore, a place and confinement would necessitate for Him movement, stillness, spatial confinement, transformation (*taghayyur*) and new occurrences (*budooth*). (Adh-Dhahabī then said after this): This is the saying of the Mutakallimoon (speculative-theological rhetoricians).

Adh-Dhahabī said:

Yes, this is what the deniers of the Lord’s ‘Uluww depend upon. For they avert from what the Book, Sunnah, statements of the *Salaf* and natural disposition (*fitra*) are based upon and claim that what they mentioned necessitates what befits human bodies. Yet Allāh has nothing similar unto Him. The lucidity of the texts necessitate the truth, however we do not apply an expression except with a narration.

Then adh-Dhahabī said:

We do not accept that the Creator being above His Throne above the heavens necessitates that He is spatially confined and has a direction, as whatever is below the Throne can be said to have spatial confines and directions yet what is above it is not like this. Allāh is above His Throne just as the first generation agreed upon and the Imāms transmitted from them. They stated in refutation of the Jahmiyyah who said that Allāh is everywhere and used the following verse as their proof,

“And He is with you wherever you may be.”

{*al-Hadeed* (57): 4}

So these two sayings were found during the time of the Tābi‘een and those who followed them and they are two sayings which make sense in this sentence.

As for the third saying which came about finally, then it said that “Allāh is not in a place, neither outside of it, nor above His Throne, neither connected to the creation nor disconnected from it, His Holy Essence is neither spatially confined nor distinct from His creation, neither is He in any directions nor outside of directions, neither this nor that, neither this nor that...”

¹ *Al-'Uluww*, p.143

This is something which neither makes sense nor can be understood! Not to mention the opposition to the verses and narrations that is found within this saying. So flee with your deen and beware of the views of the Mutakallimeen (speculative-theological rhetoricians), believe in Allāh and what has come from Allāh according to His intent, submit your affair to Allāh and la hawla wa la quwwata ila billāh!¹

ABU'L-HASAN AL-'ASH'ARĪS RECOGNITION OF ALLĀH BEING TRANSCENDENT ABOVE HIS THRONE WITH HIS ESSENCE

Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī said in his book *al-Ibānah* in the chapter '*A Mention of al-Istiwā' ala'l'Arsh*', after mentioning the verses which indicate Allāh's 'Uluww over all of His creation:

Allāh said when narrating about the Pharaoh,

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“And Pharaoh said, “O Hāmān, 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 Moses; but indeed, I think he is a liar.” And thus was made attractive to Pharaoh the evil of his deed, and he was averted from the [right] way. And the plan of Pharaoh was not except in ruin.”

{*Ghāfir* (40): 36-37}

So the Pharaoh denied the Prophet of Allāh Mūsā (*alayhis-salām*) when he stated that Allāh is above the heavens. Allāh also says,

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“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you...”

¹ Ibid., p.268

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

So the 'Arsh (Throne) is above the heavens and sue to this Allāh says,

ä ä ä ä ää

“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

Because He is established over the Throne which is above the heavens...

Up to when he said:

We see that all of the Muslims raise their hands towards the heavens when making du'ā because Allāh is established over His Throne which is above the heavens. If Allāh was not above the Throne they would not raise their hands toward the Throne they would lower their hands towards the ground.

Chapter: Some of the Mu'tazilah, Jahmiyyah and Harooriyyah say that the meaning of Allāh's saying,

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“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

...is *istawlā* (conquering), *mulk* (possession) and *qabar* ('domination') and that Allāh is in very place, they thus denied that Allāh is established over His Throne as the people of truth say and they took *itsimā'* to mean *Qudrah* (Power). Yet if it was how they said then there would be no difference between the Throne and the seven earths.

Then he highlighted the evidences and answered the doubts of the Mu'tazilah and others, then Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī said:

Another proof is that Allāh says,

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“They fear their Lord above them...”

{*an-Nabl* (16): 50}

And Allāh says,

ää Ô

“The angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him...”

{*al-Ma'ārij* (70): 4}

And Allāh says,

ä ä ä

“Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke...”

{*Fusillat (41): 11*}

And Allāh says,

ä ä Õ ä

“...and then established Himself above the Throne...”

{*al-Furqān (25): 59*}

Then Allāh says,

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“...then He established Himself above the Throne. You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor...”

{*as-Sajdah (32): 4*}

All of that proves that Allāh is above the heavens established over His Throne and the heavens according to the consensus of the people is not the earth, so this indicates that Allāh is single in His Oneness (*munfarid bi-wahdāniyyatibi*) Established over His Throne, Risen over it in a way which is exalted from *hulool* and *itihād*.

Other evidences:

Allāh says,

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“And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank...”

{*al-Fajr (89): 22*}

And Allāh says,

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“Do they await but that Allāh should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well]...”

{*al-Baqarab (2): 210*}

And Allāh says,

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“Then he approached and descended. And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer. And he revealed to His Servant what he revealed. The heart did not lie [about] what it saw. So will you dispute with him over what he saw? And he certainly saw him in another descent...”

Up to where Allāh says,

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“He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

{*an-Najm (53): 8-18*}

And Allāh said to 'Īsā bin Maryam (*'alaybis-salām*):

ä ä ä

“...indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself...”

{*Āli 'Imrān (3): 55*}

And Allāh says

ää - ä

“And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”

{*an-Nisā (4):157-158*}

The Ummah has concurred that Allāh raised 'Īsā (*'alaybis-salām*) to the heavens.¹

Then he said:

Ahl us-Sunnah and the people of hadeeth say that He has no body and nothing resembles Him, He is above His Throne as He said Himself,

¹ Al-'Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah*, pp.97-103

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

We do not place any other saying before the saying of Allāh, rather we say “*istiwā*’ without asking ‘how?’ (*bi la ‘kayf?*)”.

Then Abu’l-Hasan al-’Ash’arī said:

The Mu’tazilah say that Allāh being above the ’Arsh established (*istiwā*’) means: *istawlā* (conquered the ’Arsh).¹

Abu’l-Hasan al-’Ash’arī said in *Risālat ila Ahl itb-Thaghr* in the nineteenth agreement on affirming Allāh’s ’Uluww which does not negate His being with the creation with His Knowledge:

He, Exalted is He, is above His Throne and not on the earth, His following statements indicate this,

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“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

ä ää

“To Him ascends good speech...”

{*Fātir* (35): 10}²

ä Ô

¹Al-’Ash’arī, *Maqalāt ul-Islāmiyyeen*, vol.1, p.284

² **Translator’s note:** Ibn Katheer mentioned in his *tafseer*: means, words of remembrance, recitation of Qur’ān, and supplications. This was the view of more than one of the *Salaf*. Ibn Jareer recorded that Al-Mukhāriq bin Sulaym said that “Abdullāh bin Mas’ud, may Allāh be pleased with him, said to them, “If we tell you a hadeeth, we will bring you proof of it from the Book of Allāh. When the Muslim servants says, ‘Glory and praise be to Allāh, there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, Allāh is Most Great and blessed be Allāh,’ an angel takes these words and puts them under his wing, then he ascends with them to the heaven. He does not take them past any group of angels but they seek forgiveness for the one who said them, until he brings them before Allāh, may He be glorified.” Refer to Online version of *tafseer*:

http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1912&Itemid=91

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

Istiwā' over the 'Arsh is not isteelā' as the people of Qadr (Qadariyyah) say, for He was did not cease from being a Conqueror over everything. He Knows the secrets and what is more hidden than that, nothing is absent from Him in the heavens and earth to the extent that he is present with everything (with His Knowledge) and Allāh indicates this when He says,

“And He is with you wherever you may be.”

{*al-Hadeed* (57): 4}

The people of knowledge have interpreted the verse to mean that His Knowledge encompasses them wherever they may be. Unto Allāh is a Kursī lower than the 'Arsh and Allāh indicates this when He says,

ä Ô ä ä

“His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth...”

{*al-Baqarah* (2): 255}

Ahādeeth from the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) have arrived which state that Allāh will place down His Kursī in order to separate judgement between His servants on the Day of Judgement.¹

'ABDULLĀH BIN SA'EED IBN KULLĀB RECOGNISES ALLĀH'S 'ULUWW ABOVE HIS THRONE AND NULLIFIES THE CLAIM THAT ALLĀH IS NEITHER INSIDE THE WORLD NOR OUTSIDE OF IT²

Adh-Dhahabī said in his biography of him:

He wrote on tawheed, affirmed Allāh's Attributes and that Allāh is Transcendent above His creation is well-known according to the natural disposition of human beings (*fitrah*), to the 'aql (intellect) and is attested to by the text.³

¹ *Risālat ila Ahl ith-Thaghr*, pp.232-236

² For more on his actual words refer to original Arabic text pp.450-451, transmitted by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Dara' at-Ta'arud*, vol.6, p.120 and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.318.

³ adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām un-Nubala'*, vol.11, p.175

**AL-HĀRITH AL-MUHĀSIBĪ RECOGNISES ALLĀH'S
TRANSCENDENCE OVER HIS CREATION WITH HIS ESSENCE**

He stated in his book *Fahm ul-Qur'ān*:

As for the saying of Allāh,

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

And

ä ä ä

“And He is the subjugator over His servants.”

{*al-An'ām* (6): 18}

And

ä ä ä

“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

ä ä ä ä ä

“...then they [each] would have sought to the Owner of the Throne a way...”

{*al-Isrā'* (17): 42}

These verses, and other such as,

ä ä ä Ô

“The angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him...”

{*al-Ma'ārij* (70): 4}

And

ä ää

“To Him ascends good speech...”

{*Fātir* (35): 10}

This decisively indicates that He is above the 'Arsh, over all things, Exalted from being within His creation and nothing about them is hidden from Him. For He made clear Himself within these verses that His Essence is over His servants,

ä ä ä ä ää

“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

Meaning: He is above His Throne and the Throne is above the heavens...¹

EXPLANATION OF THE 'ASH'ARĪ OPPOSITION TO THE SALAF IN REGARDS TO THIS MATTER

We will summarise what has been mentioned prior with the following:

Firstly: Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is described with absolute transcendence in terms of His Essence, Dominance and Ability and the evidences are abundant in regards to confirming this. For the Book, Sunnah *Ijmā'*, *fitrah* and *'aql* all indicate that Allāh is Transcendent over His creation. The statements of the *Salaf* in regards to this matter are more than what has been restricted to and if all of their statements were gathered then it would number into its hundreds or even thousands rather! All of the *Salaf* affirmed Allāh's 'Uluww over His creation above His Throne, along with the *Salaf*'s censure of the Jahmiyyah who rejected Allāh's 'Uluww. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

No one is able to transmit even one letter from any of the *Salaf* of the Ummah and the Imāms from the first three generations which opposes that. None of the *Salaf* made any of the expressions of negation such as “Allāh is neither in the heavens, nor above the 'Arsh, neither is He inside the world, nor outside of it” and “Allāh is everywhere” and “Allāh is not in a place” and “it is not permissible to indicate to where He is” and the likes of such terms of expression which are applied by those who negate Allāh Being over the 'Arsh. There is neither a text nor anything apparent

¹ Al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī, *Fahm ul-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār ul-Fikr, ed. Husayn al-Qūṭalī), pp.349-352.

(from the Salaf agreeing with these expressions) rather they agreed that Allāh Himself is above the 'Arsh. The Salaf censured those who rejected this in an even stronger way than they censured other people of innovation such as the Qadariyyah, Khawārij, Rawāfid and others.¹

Secondly: Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, 'Abdullāh bin Sa'eed bin Kullāb and al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī all affirmed Allāh's 'Uluww, Blessed and Exalted is He, over His creation and that He is Transcendent in His Essence, Dominance, Victory and Ability. They also nullified the claims of those who said otherwise.

Thirdly: The invalidity of the view of the 'Ashā'irah in regards to their rejection of Allāh's 'Uluww above His Throne with His Essence and their false interpretation of 'Uluww being in regards to His Dominance, Victory and Ability. In this way they are contrary to the Book, Sunnah and Ijmā' and in fact agree with the Jahmiyyah and the Mu'tazilah. Al-Bayjūrī stated in *Sharh ul-Jawbarah* in explaining the statement of the poet "It is impossible for the Possessor of the Attributes, to have that which applies to directions":

Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is neither above the 'Arsh, nor below it, neither to the right of it nor to the left of it... He is neither above nor below and neither to the right nor to the left.²

Al-Ghazālī said in *al-Iqtisād fi'l-I'tiqād*:

We claim (i.e. the 'Ash'arīs) that He is not in any specific place from any of the six directions, so if it is said "negation of the directions leads to nothingness, and he would be neither inside nor outside, neither connected nor disconnected – and that indicates emptiness and nothingness".

Then he answered that by not rejecting describing Allāh in such a way.³ Ash-Shahrastānī said in *Nihāyat ul-Iqdām fi 'Ilm il-Kalām*: "We say: He is neither inside the world nor outside of it."⁴ At-Taftāzānī stated: "**So if Allāh is not in a place He is not in any direction, neither 'Uluwan (above), nor Suflan (below) or anything else.**"⁵

The two authors state (p.139):

It is not understood from the statement of the people of truth that "Allāh is not be described as being within the world, or outside of it" that they describe Him with nothingness. Rather, they intent is that to apply these terms is not permissible as He is exalted from this, meaning He is exalted from 'Uluww (Transcendence) over His Creation

¹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān Talbees ul-Jahmiyyah* (Madenah, KSA: Majma' al-Malik Fahd), vol.3, p.424.

² *Sharh Jawharat ut-Tawheed*, p.163

³ Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtisād fi'l-I'tiqād* (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabat il-Hilāl, 1993 CE, 1st Edn., Dr 'Alī Bū Milham), pp.74-81

⁴ Ash-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat ul-Iqdām 'ala' 'Ilm il-Kalām* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1425 AH. 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad Hasan Ismā'eel), p.67.

⁵ At-Taftāzānī, *Sharh ul-'Aqā'id an-Nasfiyyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azheerah, 1408 AH, ed. Ahmad Hijāzī as-Saqā), pp.32-33

in the sense that He is over and above. As for what has arrived within the Book and the Sunnah with regards to these terms which apparently affirm a direction and a place for Allāh – then these verses according to the agreement of the Salaf and the Khalaf have to be categorically averted from their apparent and real meanings.

This is the belief of these people about Allāh who is High and Mighty over what they claim about Him. Adh-Dhahabī spoke the truth when he said:

As for the third saying which came about finally, then it said that “Allāh is not in a place, neither outside of it, nor above His Throne, neither connected to the creation nor disconnected from it, His Holy Essence is neither spatially confined nor distinct from His creation, neither is He in any directions nor outside of directions, neither this nor that, neither this nor that...”

This is something which neither makes sense nor can be understood! Not to mention the opposition to the verses and narrations that is found within this saying. So flee with your deen and beware of the views of the Mutakallimeen (speculative-theological rhetoricians)...¹

And in this way the opposition of the 'Ash'airah and the two authors to the Book, Sunnah, *Ijmā'*, *fitrah* and *'aql* (not to mention their opposition to Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī himself who they claim to be ascribed to!) should be clear to anyone who has an innermost core. So it may be relevant to attach to the chapter that which affirms it and that is:

¹ Adh-Dhahabī, *al-'Uluww*, p.268

THE PERMISSIBILITY OF ASKING “WHERE?” IN REGARDS TO ALLĀH AND A REFUTATION OF THOSE WHO REJECT THAT IT IS ALLOWED

The Evidence from the Sunnah that it is allowed to Ask about Allāh “Where?”

From the evidences of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah in affirming Allāh's 'Uluww with His Essence above His creation is the clear question of asking about Allāh “where?” It was reported by Imām Muslim in his *Sabeeh* from Mu'āwiyah bin al-Hakam as-Sulamī (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) who said: I had a slave girl who watched over sheep that I had between Uhud and Juwāniyyah. One day, I went out to check on my sheep and discovered that a wolf had devoured one of them. Since I am just a human from Bani Ādam, (I became angry) and hit her. I then went to the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) (and told him what I had done) and he took me to account for it. So I then said “O Messenger of Allāh, will you now free her?” He said “Bring her to me.” So I brought the slave-girl before him and he (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked her: “Where is Allāh?” She said “Above the heavens (fi's-Samā’).” Then he (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked her: “And who am I?” She replied “You are the Messenger of Allāh.” The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said “Free her, for indeed she is a believer.”¹

This is clear in permitting asking “where?” about Allāh and to answer with saying that He is above the heavens and that to testify to this is a sign of *īmān* in Allāh due to it containing affirmation of Allāh's 'Uluww above His creation and that He is above the heavens. The Salaf agreed on the accuracy of asking this question about Allāh and that the answer is that has to be given is that He is above the heavens. The *Salaf* also rejected whoever prohibited asking this question and in fact the *Salaf* considered whoever prohibits asking this question to be rejecting what the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) did and rejecting Allāh's 'Uluww. The hadeeth of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) is sufficient and all praise is due to Allāh. Within it is a proof against those who try to nullify asking this question and prohibit it; however most of them do not understand.²

¹ Reported by Muslim, 537

² **Translator's note:** Unsurprisingly, Nūh “Hā Meem” Keller has objected to this hadeeth and, in following Zāhid al-Kawtharī, has deemed the hadeeth to be weak. Yet the hadeeth was reported by Imāms: Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī, Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, an-Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Abū Nu'aym, Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Mandah, al-Bayhaqī, at-Tahāwī, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Abī Shaybah, ad-Dārimī, al-Lālikā'ī, al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, at-Tabarānī, Ibn Abī

THE TEXTS OF THE SALAF WHICH INDICATE THAT IT IS PERMISSIBLE TO ASK ABOUT ALLĀH “WHERE?”

Sulaymān bin Tarkhān at-Taymī Abu'l-Mu'tamar al-Basrī (d. 143 AH/760 CE):

Sadaqah said:

I heard at-Taymī say: “If I am asked “where is Allāh?” I would say: in (i.e. above) the heavens. If the questioner asks “Where is His Throne before He created the heavens?” Then I would reply: Upon water. If the questioner asks “Where was His Throne before He created the water?” I would answer: “I don't know”.¹

Imām al-'Allāmah al-Hāfidh an-Nāqid 'Uthmān bin Sa'eed ad-Dārimī (d. 280 AH/893 CE):

He said in his refutation of those who prohibit asking the question “where is Allāh?”:

I have also showed the vile madhhab of the Jahmiyyah. I say: If it is said to us ‘where is Allāh?’ Then we do not say that He is incarnate in everything. If it is said to us: ‘Where is Allāh?’ It is to be said: ‘upon the 'Arsh and in (above) the heavens.’

...As for saying that “where” is not ascribed to Allāh, then this is basis of the statement of Jahm.²

So contemplate on what he said that to prohibit asking “where” (in regards to Allāh) is the basis of the Jahmiyyah!

Al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā Muhammad bin al-Husayn al-Farā' (d. 458 AH/1066 CE):

He stated after relaying the hadeeth of the slave-girl:

You should know that there are two aspects to this statement:

Firstly: that it is permissible to ask where He is and to inform about that by saying that He is in (above) the heavens.

Secondly: The Prophet's saying (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*): “Free her, for indeed she is a believer.”

'Āsim and others – none of whom disputed the authenticity of the hadeeth and rather deemed it as Saheeh. The only person who had issue with the hadeeth was Zāhid al-Kawtharī much later and in more recent times. Keller's rejection therefore of this hadeeth is odd considering the huge number of early scholars accepted the hadeeth and deemed it credible. For a study of Keller's contentions and an examination of the *ahādeeth* in question refer to this very good research paper by Abū Maryam Bilāl: <http://ahlulhadeeth.files.wordpress.com/2007/10/hadeeth-muawiyah-in-al-hakam-answering-nuh-haa-meem-keller.pdf>

¹ Reported by al-Lālikā'ī, vol.3, p.401 and reported by adh-Dhahabī in *al-'Uluww*, p.130

² *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī*, vol.1, p.489

As for the first aspect then it is apparent from the report that it is permissible to ask about Him (by asking “where?”), and that it is permissible to inform of this by saying that He is above the heavens. Because the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said to her “Where is Allāh?” So if it was not permitted he would not have asked her. She responded by saying that Allāh is above the heavens and the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) recognised this answer. So if it was not allowed to inform about Allāh in this way then the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) would not have recognised the answer.

Up to where he said: “Ahmad discussed this in what he relayed in *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*.”¹

Shaykh ul-Islām al-Hāfidh Abū Ismā'eel 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad al-Ansārī al-Harawī (d. 471 AH/1079 CE):

He said in *Bayān Muwāfaqat ul-'Ash'āirah li'l-Jahmiyyah*:

So listen O people of understanding! Look at the virtue of these 'Ash'arīs over those Jahmīs. Those Jahmiyyah say, may Allāh disgrace their statements, that “Allāh is everywhere”, while these 'Ash'arīs say that “Allāh is not everywhere and “where” is not to be asked of Him”. The Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said to the slave-girl of Mu'āwiyah bin al-Hakam (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*): “Where is Allāh?”²

Taqīudeen Abū Muhammad 'AbdulGhanī bin 'AbdulWāhid al-Maqdisī al-Hanbalī (d. 600 AH/1204 CE):

He stated after reporting the hadeeth of the slave-girl:

From utter ignorance, sheer stupidity and utmost misguidance is to say that “it is not permissible to say “where is Allāh?”” Even though the companion of the Sharee'ah (i.e the Prophet, *sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) clearly stated “Where is Allāh?”³

Imām al-Hāfidh Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Uthmān adh-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH/1347 CE):

He stated after mentioning the hadeeth of the slave-girl:

In this we way we see that all who are asked “where is Allāh?” Based on their natural disposition (*fitrah*) will answer “In (above) the heavens.” There are two issues in the report:

Firstly: In the Sharee'ah it is permissible for a Muslim to ask “Where is Allāh?”

¹ Al-Qādū Abū Ya'lā al-Firā', *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt* (Kuwait: Maktabat Dār adh-Dhahabī, 1410 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad al-Hamood an-Najdī), vol.1, p.232

² *Dhamm ul-Kalām wa Ahlihi*, vol.5, p.135

³ *'Aqā'id A'immat us-Salaf*, p.75

Secondly: The answer being “In (i.e. above) the heavens.”

So whoever rejects these two issues has rejected what al-Mustafā (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) did.¹

RECOGNITION OF THIS PRINCIPLE FROM ABU'L-HASAN AL-'ASH'ARĪ

He stated in *al-Ibānah* in the chapter on *Istiwā' 'ala'l-'Arsh*:

Another evidence is that: the 'Ulama (*rahimabumullāh*) have relayed from the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) that he said: “*The two feet of the servant (of Allaah) will not cease standing in front of Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, until he is asked about his actions.*”²

The 'Ulama report that a man came to the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) with a black slave-girl and said “O Messenger of Allāh I want to free her as expiation so is it permitted to free her?” The Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said to her “*Where is Allāh?*” She replied “Above the heavens (*fi's-Samā'*).” Then he (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) asked her “Who am I?” She replied “You are the Messenger of Allāh.” The Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “*Free her, for indeed she is a believer.*” This proves that Allāh is over His Throne above the heavens.³

RECOGNITION OF THIS PRINCIPLE FROM 'ABDULLĀH BIN SA'EEB BIN KULLĀB AL-QATTĀN

He said in the book *as-Sifāt* in the chapter on *istiwā'* in what he transmitted from Ibn Fawrak:

The Messenger of Allāh, as the purest and best of Allāh's creation, and the most knowledgeable of all creation, deemed it permissible to ask “where?” and the correct answer is that Allāh is “in (i.e. above) the heavens” and that this testifies to *īmān*. Jahm ibn Safwān and his companions do not allow asking “where?” If it was an error then the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) has to be the first to be rejected and it would have been necessary for him to have said to the slave-girl “do not say that because you're saying that Allāh is restricted and in a place. So rather say: ‘He is everywhere not in a place, this is correct not what you have said (that He is above the heavens).’”⁴ Rather, the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) allowed (that answer) due to his

¹ *Al-Uluww*, p.28

² **Translator's note:** this hadeeth is narrated by Abū Barzah Nadlah bin 'Ubayd al-Aslamī and reported in ad-Dārimī and at-Tirmidhī who said: “**the hadeeth is hasan saheeh.**” However, with the wording: “*The two feet of the servant will not cease (from standing before Allāh) on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about four things: On his life and how he spent it; On his knowledge and what he did for it; On his wealth and where he earned it and how he spent it; And on his body and in what way he utilized it.*”

³ Al-'Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah*, p.103

⁴ **Translator's note:** So even Ibn Kullāb finally realised the ridiculous claims of Jahm and his companions, which have unfortunately been revived by the Kawthari fraternity of modern-day Asharites!

knowledge of what it contained of being the most correct thing to say and that this obligated *īmān* for the one who says it (i.e. says “Allāh is above the heavens”). Due to this, the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) testified that she had *īmān* when she said that. So how can the truth be contrary to this when the Book pronounces it and testifies to it?

If what we have mentioned has not been sufficient in testifying to the accuracy of this madhhab of the Jama'ah in this regard then how about what has been ingrained into the natural disposition and the understanding of humans. For if you were to ask anyone, Arab or non-Arab, believer or disbeliever: “Where is your Lord?” They will not answer with anything except: “In (above) the heavens” if he is able to articulate and if not able to articulate will indicate not to the earth, coast or mountain but will rather point to the heavens. We do not find anyone except the Jahmiyyah, who are asked about their Lord and say that he is in every place as they say¹, claiming to be the best of all people. So the intellects became confused, the narrations were left and only Jahm and fifty other men with him were guided! We seek refuge in Allāh from tribulations.

Then Ibn Fawrak stated:

He, rahimahullāh, confirmed in this chapter something from his madhhab:

Firstly: that it is permissible to ask “where is Allāh?”

Secondly: The accuracy of answering this with “in (above) the heavens” and

Thirdly: This refers back to an Ijmā' specifically and generally.²

¹ The Jahmiyyah inherited their pantheistic notions from Ja'd who himself gained it from some of the beliefs that were in the East. [TN]

² This was transmitted from him by: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Dara' at-Ta'arud*, vol.6, p.193; *Naqd ut-Ta'sees*, p.51-53 and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.319; Ibn ul-Qayyim, *as-Sawā'iq ul-Mursalāh*, vol.4, p.1238; *Ijtīmā'a Juyūsh il-Islāmiyyah*, p.282.

THE CLAIM THAT THE SALAF MADE TA'WEEL AND ANSWERING SUCH CLAIMS

INTRODUCTION:

The two authors were unable to utilise the statements of the *Salaf* for the permissibility of *ta'weel* yet relied on the statements of the later ('Ash'arī) scholars which have no link to the *Salaf* of the past and this does not suffice. Similarly, the two authors try to gather as much as they can from the statements of the Sahābah and the *Salaf* from the Tābi'een and their followers in order to establish that *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attributes was practiced by the *Salaf*. As a result of this, they fell into the following hefty mistakes:

First error: They did not transmit the *Salaf's* narrations from the established and credible works, rather they transmitted from later books which have neither chains of transmission nor source references.

Second error: They did not ascertain the authenticity of what they ascribed to the *Salaf* and sufficed with mere claims.

Third error: They only transmitted those statements of the *Salaf* which agreed with their desires without compiling all of their statements in regards to the issue in order to clarify the intent and meaning of the words being used. Yet it is well known that all words from an Imām or his companion have to be referred to in regards to a matter so that his view can be established and ascertained. This is the method followed by the followers of Imāms in *fiqh*, all of their statements are gathered from the Imāms in regards to a matter.

Fourth error: They transmit the sayings from some of the *Salaf* yet out of context, as they did when they transmitted some statements from some of the *Salaf* regards to the verses of the Qur'ān regarding Allāh's Attributes, or in regards to a verse over which there was *ikhtilāf* about it being from those verses which mention Allāh's Attributes.

These errors make their book lose value and render it all useless; it also shows the lack of academic research and corroboration. As for the method of the scholars in regards to these matters then they traverse the following way:

1. Corroboration of the verse being utilised with the statements of the *Salaf* and if the verse is of those which discuss Allāh's Attributes. Likewise with the hadeeth.
2. Compilation of all of the quotes of the *Salaf* in regards to a particular verse or hadeeth from the credible books, in order to ascertain the veracity of the basis of them.

3. Compilation of all of the Imāms.
4. Sifting through the narrations in order to distinguish the authentic from the baseless.
5. An attempt to compile between what is ascertained from each Imām even if there is some contradiction.
6. Reaching what has been authentically reported from each Imām and compiling between them and the statements from other Imāms.

These are the steps that can possibly lead to an authentic academic result for each claim and if not then the argument is void. Yet when observing the quotes that the two authors utilise from the *Salaf*, for their claims that *ta'weel* is authentic, it is evident that there are two matters:

1. The lack of corroborating what they have transmitted and whether it is baseless, weak or contrary to what is widely reported and well known from their words.
2. It is out of place as if the statements are not in regards to Allāh's Attributes or there was a difference of opinion as to whether the text was speaking about Allāh's Attributes.

Previously we presented a chapter showing the *ijmā'* of the *Salaf* against *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attributes. It is absolutely well known that those from whom an *ijmā'* from the *Salaf* against *ta'weel* is relayed are the most knowledgeable of the people of differences in opinion, hadeeth and narrations. Some of them are major Imāms such as Muhammad bin al-Hasan ash-Shaybānī the companion of Abū Haneefah, Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām and others. So it is not possible that all of them relayed a consensus against *ta'weel* yet at the same time affirmed *ta'weel*. This is the complete answer. As for in terms of a detailed answer I will mention all that they utilise from the speech of the *Salaf* that they claim proves *ta'weel* in order to clarify the futility of what the two authors claim. It is also very important to bring to the reader's attention that all of what the two authors utilise as evidence are the same as what the Jahmiyyah use as proofs!

First: the claim that Ibn 'Abbās (radi Allāhu 'anhu) made ta'weel of al-Kursī

Based on what was reported by at-Tabarī via Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that he said about the verse,

ä ä

“His Kursī extends over...”

{*al-Baqarab* (2): 255}

“His Kursī: means His Knowledge.”

This is not authentically reported from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) for the following reasons:

Firstly: Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah is weak and al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajar summarised the ruling on him with saying **“Sudooq (truthful), but makes mistakes”** and the likes of this are unacceptable to take sole narrations from according to the Muhadditheen. This is especially the case in regards to those who report much from Sa'eed bin Jubayr. For if such a narrator adds something which opposes the *thiqāt* who reported much from the companions of Sa'eed bin Jubayr then there is no doubt that the specific ruling on such a narrator is that he has erred and reported something *shādh*, as is the case here. An explanation of this will follow:

Secondly: Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah differed from those who are more credible than him in regards to reporting from Sa'eed bin Jubayr. For Muslim al-Butayn reported from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that he said: *“His Kursī is the place of His Feet and the 'Arsh does not hold Him.”* Muslim bin al-Butayn is of the most trustworthy people to report from Sa'eed bin Jubayr and Bukhārī and Muslim reported from him. Ibn Mandah said about Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah: *“Ja'far did not follow him up and is not strong in transmitting from Sa'eed bin Jubayr.”*²

Thirdly: The Muhadditheen and Imāms have authenticated the narrations about Two Feet and have weakened the narration of Ja'far bin Abi'l-Mugheerah which mentions *“His Knowledge”*. Abū Zur'ah authenticated such reports and said in what Ibn Mandah relayed from him in *at-Tawheed* that he said: *“Abū Zur'ah was asked about the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbās that it (the Kursī) is the place of the Two Feet and said that it is Saheeh.”*³ Ad-Dāraqutnī relays in *as-Sifāt* with his chain of transmission from al-'Abbās bin Muhammad ad-Dūrī who said: I heard Yahyā bin Ma'een say: *“I witnessed Zakariyā bin 'Adiyy ask Wakī and he replied: ‘O Abā Sufyān these abādeeth mean that the Kursī is the place of the Two Feet...’”*. Wakī' said: *“We came across*

¹ Reported by 'AbdurRazzāq in his *Tafseer* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat ur-Rushd, 1410 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Mustafā Muslim), vol.3, p.251; ad-Dārimī, *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī*, vol.1, p.412; Ibn Abī Hātim, *at-Tafseer* (Maktabat Nizār Mustafā al-Bāz, 1419 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. As'ad at-Tayyib), vol.2, p.491; 'Abdullāh, *as-Sunnah*, vol.2, p.586; Ibn Khuzaymah, *at-Tawheed*, p.107; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-'Arsh*, p.79; Abu'sh-Shaykh, *al-'Udhmah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār ul-'Āsimah, 1408 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Ridāullāh al-Mubārakfūrī), vol.2, p.582; Ibn Mandah, *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.44; Ibn Battah, *al-Ibānah*, vol.3, p.337; ad-Dāraqutnī, *as-Sifāt*, p.111; al-Hākim, vol.2, p.310, who said: **“the hadeeth is Saheeh according to the conditions of Shaykhayn.”** Adh-Dhahabī agreed with him as did al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.474; Abū Dharr al-Harawī, *al-Arba'een fī't-Tawheed*, p.57; al-Khateeb, *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.9, p.251; and adh-Dhahabī relayed it in *al-Uluww*, p.86. Al-Albānī said in *Mukhtasar ul-'Uluww*, p.75: **“Saheeh.”**

² ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.45

³ Ibn Mandah, *at-Tawheed*, vol.3, p.309

Ismā'eel bin Abī Khālīd, Sufyān and Mas'ar and all of them narrated these *abādeeth* and did not interpret them.”¹ ad-Dārimī said in *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī*:

So it is to be said to this al-Mareesī²: ‘As for what has been relayed from Ibn 'Abbās then that has been reported from Ja'far al-Ahmar and he is not to be depended upon in his narration as he relayed contrary to the narrations of the certified *thiqāt*.’ Muslim al-Butayn reported from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās about the Kursī that which contrary to what (Ja'far) relayed from Ibn 'Abbās...³

Al-Bayhaqī reported two routes of transmission in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt* and said:

Allāh says,

ä Ô ä ä

“His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth...”

{*al-Baqarab* (2): 255}

We transmitted from Sa'eed bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhumā*) that he said: “His Knowledge”. The rest of the narrations from Ibn 'Abbās and others indicate that the intent is the famous Kursī which is mentioned with the 'Arsh.⁴

Adh-Dhahabī said in *al-'Uluww*:

Ibn 'Abbās said: “His Kursī, means His Knowledge” and this narration has arrived via the route of Ja'far al-Ahmar who is weak (leen) and Ibn al-Anbārī said “he only relays this chain of transmission which is criticised.”⁵

Abū Mansoor al-Azharī stated in *Tabdheeb ul-Lughah*:

What is authentic from Ibn 'Abbās in regards to the Kursī has been reported by ath-Thawrī and others from 'Ammār ad-Dahnī from Muslim al-Butayn...

Then he mentioned the hadeeth and said:

¹ Reported by ad-Dāraqtunī in *as-Sifāt* (p.163); al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt* (p.474); it is in *Tāreekh Ibn Ma'een*, vol.3, p.520 with the narration of ad-Dūrī (Makkah al-Mukarramah, KSA: Markaz al-Baht al-'Ilmī, 1399 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Ahmad Muhammad Noor Sayf).

² He is Bishr bin Ghayāth al-Mareesī was a famous Jahmī and laid the basis of much of the ideas of the *Mu'tazilah*. Bishr also claimed that 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb (*radi allāhu 'anhu*) was a liar for which Imām ad-Dārimī refuted him and branded some of his ideas as being *kufīr*. Bishr was also asked by Abū Yūsuf (*rahimahullāh*) to repent for denying that Allāh is over the Throne. The saying that the Qur'ān is created was innovated by Bishr al-Mareesī, and due to this innovation the Khaleefah ar-Rasheed swore that if he caught Bishr, he would kill him, the caliph al-Mu'tasim ordered for Bishr al-Mareesī to be beaten. Unfortunately, some of the *Ash'arī* theologians took on some of the ideas of al-Mareesī such as ar-Rāzī, al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Aqeel. [TN]

³ *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Mareesī*, vol.1, p.411

⁴ *Al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.497

⁵ *Al-'Uluww*, p.117

The people of knowledge have agreed on the authenticity of this narration and as for that which has also been transmitted from Ibn 'Abbās that he said the Kursī means “His Knowledge” then this has not been confirmed by the people with knowledge of the narrations and reports.¹

Fourthly: The *tafseer* of the Kursī as being the place of the Two Feet concurs with what has been reported from the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and the statements of the Companions (*radi Allāhu 'anhum*):

From Abū Dharr (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “The seven heavens are to the Kursi but like a ring thrown in a desert land. And the virtue of the Arsh compared to that of the Kursi is like the virtue of that desert compared to the ring.”²

'Abdullāh bin Mas'ood (*radi Allāh 'anhu*) said: “The distance between first and second heaven is that of 500 years, and then between each of the seven heavens is also 500 years, and the distance between seventh heaven to the Kursī is also 500 years, and the distance between the Kursī and the water is again 500 years. The Throne ('Arsh) is above the water and Allāh the Almighty is above the Throne. And none of your deeds are hidden from Allāh.”³

From Abū Mūsā (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that he said: “the Kursī is the place of the Two Feet...”⁴

The narrations in regards to this are many, so with this it is apparent that the narration from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*), from Ja'far ibn Abil'-Mugheerah is not authentic and is *shādh* so it is incorrect to make use of it as a proof.

Second: the claim that Ibn 'Abbās (radi Allāhu 'anhu) made ta'weel of the Coming of the Lord:

¹ Abū Mansoor Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Azharī, *Tahdheeb ul-Lughah*, vol.10, p.54

² Reported by Ibn Jareer (Beirut: Dār ul-Fikr, 1405 AH), vol.3, p.10; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-'Arsh* (Kuwait: Maktabat ul-Ma'lā, 1406 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad bin Hamd al-Hamood), p.77; Ibn Battah in *al-Ibānah*, vol.3, p.181; Abu'sh-Shaykh, *al-'Udhmah*, vol.2, pp.570-649; Ibn Hibbān, *Saheeh* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1407 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Kamāl al-Hoot), vol.1, p.287; Abū Nu'aym, *al-Hilyah* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah), vol.1, p.166; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.510. Al-Albānī authenticated the hadeeth in *Silsilah as-Saheehah* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Islāmī, 1405 AH, 4th Edn.), vol.1, p.174, hadeeth no.109.

³ Reported by ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.55; Ibn Khuzaymah, *at-Tawheed*, pp.105-106; at-Tabarānī, *al-Kabeer*, vol.9, p.202; Abu'sh-Shaykh, *al-'Udhmah*, vol.2, pp.565, 689; Ibn Battah, *al-Ibānah*, vol.3, p.171; Ibn Abī Zamanayn, *Usool us-Sunnah*, p.104; al-Lālikā'ī, vol.3, p.395; Ibn 'AbdulBarr, *at-Tamheed*, vol.7, p.139; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.507; adh-Dhahabī, *al-'Uluww*, p.79 and ascribed to 'Abdullāh bin al-Imām Ahmad in *as-Sunnah*, Abū Ahmad al-'Assāl and Abū 'Umar at-Talamankī, and he said “the isnād is saheeh.” Al-Albānī also authenticated the hadeeth in *Mukhtasar ul-'Uluww*.

⁴ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-'Arsh*, p.77; 'Abdullāh bin Imām Ahmad, *as-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.302; Ibn Jareer, vol.3, p.9; Abu'sh-Shaykh, *al-'Udhmah*, vol.2, p. 627; Ibn Mandah, *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*, p.46; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.509; adh-Dhahabī, *al-'Uluww*, p.107. Al-Albānī authenticated the hadeeth in *Mukhtasar ul-'Uluww*.

The two authors claim that Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) made *ta'weel* of the Coming of the Lord based on what an-Nasafī stated in his *tafseer* of the saying of Allāh,

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“And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank...”

{*al-Fajr (89): 22*}

“From Ibn 'Abbās that he said: His Command and Judgment” and they transmitted the same from al-Hasan. Yet this narration has neither a chain of transmission nor a basis either from Ibn 'Abbās or al-Hasan al-Basrī, none of the just scholars of narration have mentioned this report.

Third: the claim that Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) made *ta'weel* of the wording “Eyes”:

The two authors claim that Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) made *ta'weel* of Allāh's Eyes and said: Allāh said,

ä ä ä

“And construct the ship under Our Eyes...”

{*Hūd (11): 37*}

Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) said: (meaning): with Our observation.

To answer this then it can be said:

Firstly: This narration is not authentic from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) for al-Bayhaqī did not give a *sanad* for it. It is rather verified that Ibn 'Abbās stated about,

ä ä ä

“And construct the ship under Our Eyes...”

{*Hūd (11): 37*}

Meaning: under Allāh's Eye.¹

'Atā stated:

From Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that in regards to Allāh's saying,

ä ä ä

¹ Reported by Ibn Abī Hātim, vol.6, p.2026; Ibn Jareer, vol.12, p.34 and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.396. There is no problem in the chain of transmission.

“Sailing under Our Eyes...”

{*al-Qamar* (54): 14}

Ibn 'Abbās pointed to his eyes with his hand.¹

This is clear in affirming Allāh's Two Eyes. It is well-known from the *Salaf* that they affirmed this and the likes of these narrations have been verified from Abī 'Imrān al-Joonī, Qatādah, Mutarrif, Khālid bin Ma'dān, Abū Naheek and others.

Secondly: This narration, even if it was verified, is not *ta'weel* at all, rather it is a necessary explanation (*tafseer bi'l-lāzīm*) as it is well-known that Allāh Sees and Views what Nūh (*'alayhis-salām*) constructed and what his people were plotting against him. So Allāh consoled Nūh saying: “You are under Our Observation and Our Safeguarding, so do not fear.” This is neither *ta'weel* of Two Eyes nor is it averting terms from their apparent meaning. Rather, a correct *ta'weel* as the two authors claim would not affirm Allāh's Eye. It is well-known to all intelligent people that Nūh (*'alayhis-salām*) was not in Allāh's actual Eye as Allāh's Essence is not incarnate within the creation, rather the intent is preservation and protection. Establishment of what is necessary is derived from establishment of the necessitated, so if someone stated about Allāh's saying,

ä

“[Allāh] said, “Fear not. Indeed, I am with you both; I hear and I see.”

{*TāHā* (20): 46}

“It means: both of you are in My Preservation and Protection” then it would be correct and this is not *ta'weel* of Allāh's Vision or Hearing rather it is affirming for these Two Attributes what is necessary when affirming the Two Attributes.² Ad-Dārimī stated in his refutation of al-Maresī:

As for your *tafseer* from Ibn 'Abbās in regards to,

ä ä ä

“...for indeed, you are in Our eyes.”

{*at-Toor* (52): 48}

That he said (it means): “in Our Preservation and Protection”. If it is authentic from Ibn 'Abbās said this then this meaning is what we claim and not what you claim! For Ibn 'Abbās (allegedly)

¹ Reported by al-Lālikāī, vol.3, p.411 and the narration contains 'Alī bin Sadaqah who I have not come across any mention of yet the remainder of the *isnād* contains trustworthy narrators.

² So when the Attributes of Hearing and Seeing are affirmed for Allāh, then it is necessary from this that His Preservation and Protection are a part of that anyway. [TN]

said it means: “in Our Preservation and Protection with Our Eyes.” Because it is not permissible within the speech of the Arabs to describe someone with one as being a protector except that it has eyes, name something without eyes that can be described as protecting and guarding! So protection is based on viewing, there can be a man who protects without vision yet he will still have eyes, thus the meaning of your saying Allāh’s Eyes, so understand!¹

Abu’l-Hasan al-’Ash’arī transmitted within *Maqalāt ul-Islāmiyyeen* and *al-Ibānah* that Ahl us-Sunnah reached consensus on affirming Allāh’s Two Eyes as will be explained later.

Fourth: the claim that Ibn ’Abbās (radi Allāhu ’anhu) made ta’weel of the wording “Hand” (al-Yad):

The two authors claim that Ibn ’Abbās (*radi Allāhu ’anhu*) made *ta’weel* of Allāh’s Hand, they state:

Allāh said,

á ä Ô â

“And the heaven We constructed with strength...”

{*adb-Dhāriyyāt* (51): 47}

Ibn ’Abbās (*radi Allāhu ’anhu*) said: with power and strength (Tafseer of al-Qurtubī).

Answer: the word here “al-Ayd” is not the plural for “al-Yad” (hand), rather the basis of the word is “Ayd” (strength). Ibn Mandhoor stated in *al-Lisān* in the section on “Ayd”:

Ayd: al-Aydu and al-Ādu mean: strength. Al-’Ajjāj said that “I have expended my strength (bi-Ādī Ādā)” meaning: the strength of youth. In the khutbah of ’Alī, may Allāh make his face noble: ‘to hold it back from going ahead with his strength (bi Aydihi)’, meaning: his power.

Allāh says,

ä

“...and remember Our servant, David, the possessor of strength...”

{*Sād* (38): 17}

Meaning: a possessor of strength and that he was strengthened on the affair. Abū Zayd said: “Ād, ya’eedu, Aydan” when one becomes firm and strong. At-Tā’yeed: a verbal noun (masdar), “ayyadtuhu” meaning: “I strengthened him”. Allāh says,

ä ä ä ä

¹ *Ar-Radd ’ala’l-Mareesī*, vol.3, p.831,

“...when I supported you with the Pure Spirit...”

{*al-Mā'idab* (5): 110}

And read,

ä

“...when I supported you...”

Meaning: “I strengthened you.”¹

The author of *Mukhtār us-Sihāb* under the section of “yadī”:

Allāh says,

á ä Ô â

“And the heaven We constructed with strength...”

{*adb-Dhāriyāt* (51): 47}

I say:

á ä

Means: with strength, and it is the verbal noun of Āda, ya'eedu when something is strengthened. It is not the plural of yad (hand) that is being mentioned here; rather its place is under the letter 'dāl'. Al-Azharī mentioned this ayah and al-Yad with the meaning of it being a masdar. I do not know of anyone from the Imāms of the Arabic language and tafseer who said what al-Jawharī did that it is the plural of 'yad' (hand).²

Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, their Imām, answered the argument of the two authors within his book *al-Ibānah* when he refuted the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah who figuratively interpreted the Attribute of Allāh's Hand:

Issue: the Mu'attil denies the saying of Allāh,

á ä Ô â

“And the heaven We constructed with strength...”

{*adb-Dhāriyāt* (51): 47}

And said that it means: “strength and power” so when Allāh says,

¹ Ibn Manthoor, *Lisān ul-'Arab*, under “Ayd” (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1414 AH), 3rd Edn.

² *Mukhtār us-Sihāh* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshiroon, 1415 AH, ed. Mahmood Khātir), chapter of “yadī”.

ä

“...My Hands...”

{*Sād (38): 75*}

It has to mean: “my power.”

It should be said to them: “This ta’weel is corrupt from a number of aspects”:

Firstly: al-Ayd is not the plural of al-Yad, because the plural of “yad” is Aydi while the plural of al-Yad which means blessing is “Ayādi.” Allāh said

ä ä

“...to that which I created with My hands...”

{*Sād (38): 75*}

Cannot mean that

ä

“...My Hands...”

Means:

á ä Ô

“...We constructed with strength...”

{*adb-Dbāriyāt (51): 47*}¹

Ibn Khuzaymah said in *at-Tawheed*:

Some of the Jahmiyyah claim that the meaning of “Allāh creating Ādam with His Two Hand” is: with His Power and they claim that al-Yad (Hand) is ‘Power’. This is also substitution of the words and ignorance of the language of the Arabs, for power is only named ‘al-Aydu’ within the language of the Arabs and not ‘al-Yad’. So whoever does not differentiate between al-Yad and al-Ayd has to learn and submit to what is in the Book more than he has to seek leadership and debate.²

¹ Al-'Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah*, p.108

² Ibn Khuzaymah, *at-Tawheed*, p.87

Fifth: the claim that Ibn 'Abbās (radi Allāhu 'anhu) made ta'weel of the texts of “The Face” (al-Wajh):

The two authors claim that Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) made *ta'weel* of the Attribute of Allāh, the Face. They state on page 234:

Allāh says,

ä ä äÖ

“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rabmān* (55): 27}

Ibn 'Abbās said: the 'Face' is an expression for Allāh.

The answer: What al-Qurtubī mentioned has no foundation from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*). It is rather verified from Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that he affirmed Allāh's Face, for he stated (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) in regards to Allāh's saying,

ä ä

“For them who have done good is the best [reward] –and extra.”

{*Yūnus* (10): 26}

The 'extra' (*aḡ-Ziyādah*) is: looking at Allāh's Face.¹

Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) also said in regards to Allāh sayings,

ä ä

“...Looking at their Lord.”

{*al-Qiyāmah* (75): 23}

“...looking at its Creator.”²

¹ Reported by al-Lālikāī, vol.3, p.459 and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.133 and there is no problem with the chain of transmission.

² Reported by 'Abdullāh in *as-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.262; al-Ājurri, *ash-Sharee'ah*, p.270 and in al-Bayhaqī, *al-I'tiqād*, p.133. The chain of transmission contains Salamah bin Sāboor and 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi and both of them are weak.

Sixth: the claim that Ibn 'Abbās (radi Allāhu 'anhu) made ta'weel of the word “The Shin” (as-Sāq):¹

The two authors claim that Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) made *ta'weel* of the Attribute, the Shin of Allāh, they state (p.234):

Allāh says,

أ

“The Day the shin will be uncovered...”

{*al-Qalam* (68): 42}

Ibn 'Abbās (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) said: “severe torment.”

To answer this it can be stated:

Firstly: the Sahābah disputed over the verse, Ibn 'Abbās and a group interpreted it as being “shiddah” (intensity), while Abū Sa'eed, Ibn Mas'ood and others included the *ayah* as being from the Sifāt. The dispute is not whether the Attribute is to be affirmed or not, rather the difference is over whether the *ayah* is from the verses speaking about Allāh's Attributes. There is no doubt that they *ayah* apparently is not discussing the Attributes of Allāh because the word “Sāq” (Shin) appears in the indefinite form (*nakira*) and Allāh did not apply it to Himself, so the *ayah* does not say “His Shin” (Sāqahu) and was not relayed with the *idāfa* construct, hence they *ayah* is not referring to the Attribute of Allāh, as a result Ibn 'Abbās did not include the *ayah* as being a verse which relates to Allāh's Attributes. Those who did deem the *ayah* as relating to Allāh's Attributes, did so due to the hadeeth which is in the Two Saheehs, not based on the apparentness of the *ayah*. So *ta'weel* was not made, as *ta'weel* is to avert the *ayah* from what it

¹ **Translator's note:** Some of the narrations which claim that Ibn 'Abbās made these *ta'weelāt* are *da'eef*, some severely weak as highlighted by Shaykh Saleem al-Hilālī in his book *al-Manhal ar-Raqrāq*, p.30, the following have weakness:

1. The route of Usāmah bin Zayd from Ikrimah from Ibn 'Abbās
2. The route of 'Awfiyyeen
3. The route of Nāfi' bin al-Azraq

As for the following then they have breaks in the chains:

1. Alī bin Abi Talha from Ibn 'Abbās
2. Ibrāhim an-Nakha'i from Ibn 'Abbās
3. ad-Dahhāk bin Mazahim al-Hilālī from Ibn 'Abbās

The wordings are also quite different in these differing chains of transmission

indicates and from its understanding and well known meanings, so based on this it is not correct to say that Ibn 'Abbās made *ta'weel*.

Secondly: The Attribute of “Sāq” (Shin) is affirmed in the Sunnah in any case! From Abū Sa'eed (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) who said; I heard the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) say “Our Lord uncovers His Shin, and every believer, male and female, will prostrate to Him and there will remain those who used to prostrate before Him just for showing off and for gaining good reputation (in this world)...”¹

Seventh: the claim that Mujāhid, ad-Dahhāk, ash-Shāfi'i and al-Bukhārī made ta'weel of the word “The Face” (al-Wajh):

The two authors claimed (pp.236, 240) that Mujāhid, ad-Dahhāk and ash-Shāfi'i made *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attribute, the Face when they stated about Allāh's saying

ä

“So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allāh.”

{*al-Baqarah* (2): 115}

“The Qiblah of Allāh” as stated by Mujāhid and that ash-Shāfi'i said “the direction that Allāh makes you face”.

Answer: The *Salaf* differed over whether these verses were from the verses about Allāh's Attributes. Most of the *Salaf* considered that these verses are not of the verses which discuss Allāh's Attributes. Because the “al-Wajh” here could have the intended meaning of direction in the language of the Arabs as is very much well known. Furthermore, the apparentness of the ayah indicates that the intended meaning of “al-Wajh” is direction and not as an Attribute of Allāh. Therefore, the statements by Mujāhid, ad-Dahhāk and ash-Shāfi'i are not *ta'weel* because *ta'weel* is averting the ayah from its implication, understanding and well known meaning. All who have had explanations of this verse transmitted from them have not included it as being in regards to Allāh's Attributes, such as Mujāhid and others. They also did not give this explanation anywhere else except for this verse and in other instances wherein Allāh's Face is mentioned they did not negate that Allāh is described as possessing a Face. Such as the verse,

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¹ Reported by Bukhārī (Beirut and al-Yamāmah: Dār Ibn Katheer, 1407 AH, 3rd Edn., ed. Mustafā Deeb al-Baghā), vol.4, p.1871; Muslim, 183.

“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rabmān* (55): 27}

And other like verses. Ad-Dāraqutnī narrated in *ar-Ru'yah* from ad-Dahhāk that he said: “Extra (Ziyādah) looking at Allāh’s Face, Mighty and Majestic is He.”¹ Al-Lālikāī stated in *Sharh Usool Abl is-Sunnah*:

The context of interpreting these verses in the Book of Allāh is that the believers will see Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, on the Day of Judgement with their eyes: Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, says,

ä ä

“For them who have done good is the best [reward] –and extra.”

{*Yūnus* (10): 26}

It has been reported from the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*), in what has been authentically reported from him, that the verse means looking at Allāh, Mighty and Majestic. This has also been reported from the Sahābah: from Abū Bakr as-Siddeeq, Hudhayfah bin al-Yamān, Abū Mūsā al-'Ash'arī, Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Abbās. This has also been reported from the Tābi'een from: 'AbdurRahmān ibn Abī Laylā, Sa'eed bin al-Musayyib, al-Hasan, 'Ikrimah, 'Āmir bin Sa'd al-Bajlī, Abū Ishāq as-Subayī, Mujāhid, 'AbdurRahmān bin Sābit, Qatādah, ad-Dahhāk and Abū Sinān. From Mujāhid via Ibn Abī Hātim that he said in regards to:

ä ä

“For them who have done good is the best [reward] –and extra.”

{*Yūnus* (10): 26}

“...the best [reward]”

Is: Paradise and

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“...extra.”

¹ Ad-Dāraqutnī, *ar-Ru'yah*, p.162

Is: looking at the Lord.¹

From Mujāhid in regards to the saying of Allāh,

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

That it means “except for what His Face wants.”²

The narrations which affirm Allāh’s Face are well-reported from the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), the Companions and the Tābi’een. None of the books of Sunnah are devoid of a chapter about affirming Allāh’s Face, the Exalted. Ad-Dāraqutnī authored a book entitled *ar-Ru’yah* on this. As for what the two authors mention from ad-Dahhāk, Abū ‘Ubaydah and al-Bukhārī in regards to Allāh’s saying,

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

That ad-Dahhāk and Abū ‘Ubaydah said it means “except Him” and al-Bukhārī said it means “except for what His Face wants.” Then this is not *ta’weel* whatsoever because it can be expressing Him by mentioning some of His Attributes. So when Allāh says,

“His Face”

The intent is His Essence is described with Attributes and of them is the Face; this is evident and not hidden. So nothing from Him will end rather Allāh expressed this by mentioning one of His Attributes which is the Face. So the *tafseer* of ad-Dahhāk and Abū ‘Ubaydah is not negation of the Attribute of the Face rather it is an affirmation of it. Because if the “Face” mentioned in the verse was not in regards to His Attribute it would indicate His remaining (while everything else will be destroyed) then it would mean that Allāh is included in:

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¹ Al-Lālikāī, vol.3, pp.454-463

² Reported by Ibn Abī Hātim, vol.9, p.3028

“Everything will be destroyed...”

And Allāh is Exalted from this. Al-Bukhārī (*rahimabullāh*) confirmed this by including a chapter in his Saheeh in *Kitāb ut-Tawbeed* affirming Allāh's Face and using the *ayah* as a proof:

Chapter: The saying of Allāh

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

Qutaybah bin Sa'eed narrated to us: Hammād bin Zayd narrated to us: from 'Amru from Jābir bin 'Abdullāh who said: “When this ayah was revealed

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“Say, "He is the [one] Able to send upon you affliction from above you...”

{*al-An'am* (6): 65}

The Prophet said: “I seek refuge in Your Face”

ä ä ä

“...or from beneath your feet...”

The Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “I seek refuge in Your Face”,

ä ä

“...or to confuse you [so you become] sects...”

The Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “This is easier.”

So he applied the Prophet's statement “I seek refuge in Your Face” as a tafseer for Allāh's saying,

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“...except His Face...”

Both statements are a proof for affirming the Attribute of Allāh's Face. With this it is clear that what al-Bukhārī mentioned in its *tafseer* does not negate the Attribute of Allāh's Face, rather he affirmed it and this used what he did as proof. Ibn Katheer stated in his *tafseer*:

Allāh's saying,

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

Here Allah is telling us that He is Eternal, Ever Lasting, Ever Living, Self-Sustaining, Who, although His creation dies, He will never die, as He says,

ä ä äÔ - á

“Everyone upon the earth will perish, and there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rahmān* (55): 26-27}

Allah used the word “Face” to refer to Himself, as He says here,

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

Meaning: “everything except Him.”

It was reported in the Saheeh via Abu Salamah that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah said:

« ä â á ä ä áä »

“The truest word of a poet was the saying of Labeed - indeed everything except Allah is false.”

Mujāhid and ath-Thawrī stated about Allāh’s saying,

ä ä á

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

That it means: except for what His Face wants and al-Bukhārī reported this in his Saheeh as is well-established.¹

It is good here to mention a beneficial principle that was mentioned by Ibn ul-Qayyim when he said:

¹ *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, vol.3, p.404

Here there is a principle that has to be brought to attention and it is: if there is a dispute over a matter between Mālik and Ahmad or anyone else then it will not be more than the disputes over the meanings of a verse or hadeeth. Such as the dispute between Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ā'ishah in regards to Allāh's saying,

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“And he certainly saw him in another descent.”

{*an-Najm (53): 13*}

Ibn 'Abbās said: “he saw his Lord” and 'Ā'ishah said “Rather he saw Jibrā'il”, and like the difference between Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Abbās regarding Allāh's saying,

áä á äã ä ä

“Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke.”

{*ad-Dukhān (44): 10*}

Ibn Mas'ood said: it is the famine that afflicted the Quraysh to the extent that one of them would see between him and the sky a smoky haze. Ibn 'Abbās said: it is the smoke that will come on the Day of Judgement and this is correct. And those looking at it, is the decisive proof which will separate the people.¹

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The ta'weel of the Salaf that arrived from the Sahābah is accepted because they heard it from the Messenger of Allāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam). If the ta'weel is from others besides them such as the Tābi'een and Imāms then we also accept it. If one is alone in the ta'weel we discard it and turn away from the ta'weel of the Khalaf.²

Eighth: the claim that Sufyān ath-Thawrī made ta'weel of al-Istiwā':

The two authors claim (p.236):

Sufyān ath-Thawrī made ta'weel of “istiwā' 'ala'l'Arsh” as being “His Command” and also of the ayah “al-istiwā' ila's-Samā'”³ as being: “He proceeded to it” (qasd ilaha) – refer to *Mirqāt ul-Mafāteeh*, vol.2, p.137.

¹ *Mukhtasar us-Sawā'iq il-Mursalāh*, vol.2, p.262

² Ibn Taymiyyah, *Naqd ut-Ta'sees* (manuscript), vol.2, p.220 transmitted from Jamāl Basheer Bādī, *al-Āthār ul-Wāridah 'an A'immat us-Sunnah fi Abwāb il-I'tiqād 'an Kitāb Siyar A'lām un-Nubalā*, vol.1, p.296 (Riyadh: Dār ul-Watan, 1416 AH).

³ Allāh says,

This narration was mentioned by Mulā 'Alī al-Qārī in *al-Mirqāb* arbitrarily with neither a chain of transmission nor an ascription, so this *ta'weel* from ath-Thawrī is not known. Rather what is well-known and well-reported from him is that in he stated about all of Allāh's Attributes: "Leave them as they have come without asking how." This has been mentioned and verified earlier.¹ Therefore, it is not known that anyone at all from the *Salaf* made *ta'weel* of Allāh's *Istiwā'* as being anything other than *al-'Ulumw*, whether it is "istiwā' 'ala" or "istiwā' ilā".

Ninth: the claim that Imām Mālik made ta'weel of the Attribute of Nuzool:

The two authors claim that Imām Mālik made *ta'weel* of the Attribute of Allāh's Nuzool, they state:

Imām Mālik (rahimahullāh) was asked about the Nuzool of the Lord, Mighty and Majestic, and said: His command descends every morning, as for Him, Mighty and Majestic, then He does not descend or move at all, glory unto Him, there is no god worthy of worship except Him.

The answer: this narration is not authentically reported from Imām Mālik, rather it is a fabrication based on the following:

Firstly: it has been narrated via one of the scribes of Mālik, Habeeb, who is deemed as a liar. Abū Dāwūd said: "He is of those that used to lie the most" and "His ahādeeth are all fabricated." Ibn Hibbān said: "He narrates fabrications from trustworthy narrators."² Ibn 'Adiyy said: "The generality of his hadeeth are fabricated texts with upside down chains of transmission. Habeeb was not ashamed to fabricate hadeeth ascribed to trustworthy narrators and his affair is clear as being of those who lie."³ The narration also has another route which has been mentioned by Ibn 'AbdulBarr in *at-Tamheed* via Muhammad bin 'Alī al-Jabbulī from Jāmi' bin Suwādah from Mutarrif from Mālik that he was asked about the hadeeth of *tanazzul* (Allāh's Descent) and said about it: "His Command descends."⁴ This chain of

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ä ä ä

"Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion." They said, "We have come willingly."

{*Fussilat (41): 11*}

¹ Sunan at-Tirmidhī, vol.3, p.50

² *Meezān ul-'I'tidāl*, vol.1, p.452

³ *Al-Kāmil fī Du'afā' ir-Rijāl*, vol.2, p.414

Translator's note: this is also noted by al-Qādī 'Iyyād in *Tarteeb ul-Madārik*, vol.2, p.44, Imām an-Nasā'ī also stated this in *ad-Du'afā*.

⁴ *At-Tamheed*, vol.7, p.143

transmission is weak for it contains Muhammad bin 'Alī al-Jabbulī about whom al-Khateeb said: “It was said that he was a hardcore Rāfidī.”¹ As for Jāmi' bin Suwādah then he is *majhool*, ad-Dāraqutnī in *Gharā'ib ul-Hadeeth Mālik* mentioned a hadeeth reported by him and said: **“The hadeeth is bātil, Jāmi' is weak (da'eef).”**² Ibn ul-Jawzī said about Jāmi' in *al-Mawdū'āt*: **“The hadeeth is weak, Jāmi is majhool.”**³

Secondly: This narration is contrary to what is well-known and famous from Imām Mālik is to leave the Attributes upon their apparent meanings and not to avert from this via *ta'weel* or anything else. As is in the narration of al-Waleed bin Muslim wherein he said:

I asked al-Awzā'ī, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Mālik bin Anas and Layth ibn Sa'd about these ahādeeth which mention the Ru'yah (seeing Allāh on the Day of Judgement) and they said: leave them as they have come without asking how.⁴

And likewise in the well known and famous narration when he was asked about how *istiwā'* was and replied: **“al-Istiwā' is not unknown and the how is inconceivable.”**⁵ Thus is reported by Ibn Abī Zamanayn in *Usool us-Sunnah* wherein he stated in the *Bāb: al-Īmān bi'n-Nuzūl* [Chapter: Faith in the Descending]:

From the sayings of Ahl us-Sunnah is that Allāh descends to the heaven of the Dunya and to believe in it without limiting Him.

He then mentioned the hadeeth via Mālik and others and said:

Wahb informed me from Ibn Wadāh from az-Zuhrī from Ibn 'Ibād that he said: I came across the Shaykhs Mālik, Sufyān, Fudayl bin 'Iyyād, 'Īsā bin al-Mubārak and Wakī' and they all used to say: “the Nuzool is the haqq.”⁶

¹ *Tāreekh Baghdād*, vol.3, p.101; *Meezān ul-'Itidāl*, vol.3, p.675 and *Lisān ul-Meezān*, vol.5, p.303.

² *Meezān ul-'Itidāl*, vol.1, p.387 and *Lisān ul-Meezān* (Madenah, KSA: Maktabat al-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam, 1st Edn.), vol.2, p.93.

³ Ibn Sabt ibn al-'Ajāmī, *al-Kashf ul-Hatheeth*, p.83

⁴ Reported by al-Ājurrī in *ash-Sharee'ah*, p.327; Ibn Battah, *al-Ibānah*, vol.3, p.241; ad-Dāraqutnī, *as-Sifāt*, p.172; as-Sābūnī, *I'tiqād Ahl ul-Hadeeth*, p.68; al-Lālikā'ī, vol.3, p.527; Ibn 'AbdulBarr, *al-Istidhkār*, vol.2, p.513; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, vol.3, p.4 and *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt*, p.569 and *al-I'tiqād*, p.123. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.39 ascribed the narration to al-Khallāl.

⁵ Narrated by al-Bayhaqī with a sound chain in *al-Asmā' wa al-Sifāt*, p.515 and in *al-I'tiqād*, p.119; Ibn al-Muqrī, *Majma'*, p.311; as-Sābūnī, *I'tiqād Ahl ul-Hadeeth*, p.45. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.40 ascribed the narration to Abu'ush-Shaykh al-Asbahānī.

Translator's note: Also reported by al-Baghawī in *Sharh us-Sunnah* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Islāmī, 1403 AH, 2nd Edn., eds. Zuhayr ash-Shāwaysh and Shu'ayb al-Arna'oot), vol.1, p.171; al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharh Usūl al-I'tiqād*, vol.2, p.398; Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī in *al-Jāmi' fi's-Sunan*, p. 123; Abu Nu'aym in the *Hilya*, vol.6, pp.325-326; Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in *at-Tamheed* vol.7, p.151 and Ibn Hajar in *al-Fath* (Cairo: Dār ur-Rayān li't-Turāth, 1409 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Muhibbuddeen al-Khateeb), vol.13, p.407.

⁶ *Usool us-Sunnah*, pp.110-113

This is well-known and famous from Imām Mālik. As for the saying of the two authors say (p.130) in defence of the weakness of the previous narration:

Except that the companions of the madhhab know more about the statements of their Imām than others, especially if the statement is well-known with them and is famous.

I do not know if the two authors know what 'famous' means?! Because the statement which is famous and well-known from the Imām is that which has been reported from him via numerous routes of transmission and has been transmitted by his major companions and contemporaries. As for what has been reported from him by the later scholars with fabricated chains of transmission, with no authentic basis from the Imām, with no mention of these statements from his trustworthy companions who stayed with him and did not write this in their books which they transmitted from their Imām – then how can these be regarded as famous and well-known from him?!! This narration is not confirmed from Imām Mālik, not to mention it being well-known from him. It is only transmitted by those who believe in *ta'weel* of the Attributes and that they are not to be understood in the real sense. As a result, they were pleased with the like of this narration in order to turn away from the Book, Sunnah and what has been abundantly reported from the *Salaf* of the Ummah and to turn away from what is well-known from their Imām. Furthermore, it is enough for you that the rejected narration is neither mentioned whatsoever within any of the books of Sunnah that transmit the creed of the *Salaf* and their statements, nor within the any of the books of the companions of Imām Mālik wherein his statements and views are transmitted such as *al-Mudawwana* and the likes. It is also not mentioned within the books which mention the *'aqeedah* of Imām Mālik such as the *Risālah* of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī. So how is it possible after all of this that this narration can be a well-known and famous view of Imām Mālik?!

Tenth: the claim that Imām Ahmad made *ta'weel* of the Attribute of the Coming of Allāh:

The two authors claim that Imām Ahmad made *ta'weel* of the coming of Allāh, they state:

It is mentioned in *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nibāyah* of Imām al-Hāfidh Ibn Katheer that: al-Bayhaqī reported from al-Hākim from 'Amru bin as-Samāk from Hanbal that Ahmad bin Hanbal made *ta'weel* of

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“And your Lord has come...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

As being “when His reward comes.” Then al-Bayhaqī stated: “This isnād has no problem with it.”

Then the two authors state:

Ibn ul-Jawzī transmitted from al-Qādī Abī Ya’lā from Imām Ahmad in regards to the saying of Allāh,

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“Do they await but that Allāh should come to them in covers of clouds...”

{*al-Baqarab (2): 210*}

The intent is the Power of Allāh and His Command.

It can be said in answer to this:

Firstly: This narration from Hanbal was stated by Imām Ahmad, if it is authentic,¹ while debating the Jahmiyyah about the Qur’ān. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned what was stated by Ibn al-Jawzī and what he transmitted from al-Qādī Abū Ya’lā:

I say: this that has been mentioned by al-Qādī and others that Hanbal transmitted from Ahmad in *Kitāb ul-Mibnah* that he stated this in debating the Jahmiyyah during the *Mibnah* (inquisition) when they tried to use as a proof “al-Baqarah and Āl ’Imrān will come” and they said: “coming is only for the creation.” So Ahmad averted them from this by saying,

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“And your Lord has come...”

{*al-Fajr (89): 22*}

And

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“...or your Lord should come...”

{*al-An’ām (6): 158*}

“The intent with his saying that Baqarah and Āl ’Imrān will come is that their rewards will come like when Allāh says,

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¹ **Translator’s note:** There has been some discussion over the chain of transmission of this report which Shaykh Faisal will get to shortly. Also refer to a paper here by Aboo Rumaysah which also discusses the *isnad* of this report entitled *Did the Salaf Practice Ta’weel?* Here: http://www.load-islam.com/artical_det.php?artical_id=547§ion=indepth&subsection=Belief

“And your Lord has come...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

Means his Command and Power.¹

This indicates that Imām Ahmad only said this while arguing and nullifying the evidence of the one he was debating with via counter-arguing to his own sayings and creed. For the Jahmiyyah made *ta'weel* of the coming of Allāh as being the coming of His command not that He Himself will come. This would indicate, according to them, that whatever is described as ‘coming’ is created, so he countered them with this basis. Likewise, Allāh described His Speech, which is the Qur’ān, with ‘coming’ as is found in the hadeeth: “*al-Baqarah and Āl 'Imrān will come as if in the shape of two clouds.*” So this does not indicate that His Speech is created as you have claimed by taking His coming as being the coming of His Command and Power. Imām Ahmad mentioned this in the line of discussing and making the one he was discussing with to adhere to his own beliefs not that he (Imām Ahmad) believed in that. So *mu'aradab* (counter-arguing) does not necessitate belief in that or the accuracy of what one is counter-arguing with.

Secondly: this is contrary to what has been relayed abundantly and famously from Imām Ahmad in regards to this matter. For he held that the Attributes should be left as they are upon their apparent meaning without referring them to *ta'weel* or the likes, rather Hanbal himself transmitted from Imām Ahmad that *ta'weel* is not to be made whatsoever. Hanbal bin Ishāq said:

I said to Abū 'Abdullāh: “Allāh descends to the heaven of the dunya?” He (Imām Ahmad) said: “Yes.” I said: “Descends with His Knowledge or what?” He said to me: “Be quiet with this!” And he became very angered and said: “What is with you and this? Leave the hadeeth as they have arrived without asking how.”²

Hanbal said:

I asked Abū 'Abdullāh about the ahādeeth which have been relayed about Allāh descends the heaven of the dunya, about Allāh being seen, placing His Foot down and the likes of these ahādeeth. Abū 'Abdullāh said: “We believe in these ahādeeth, trust them and we do not reject them at all. We know that what has come from the Messenger of Allāh is the truth if the chains of transmission are authentic. We do not reject what Allāh has said and we do not describe him with more than what He has described Himself with with no limits. There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

Hanbal then said in another instance from Ahmad that:

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.16, p.405

² *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt*, vol.1, p.75

There is nothing like unto Him in His Essence as He described about Himself, Allāh's Attributes are neither limited nor are they known except by what He described Himself with. He (Imām Ahmad) said: He is Hearing and Seeing with no limit or estimation, His Attributes have not reached those who describe Him and we do not go further than the Qur'ān and hadeeth. So we say as He said and we describe Him with what He described Himself with and we do not go any further than that. We believe in all of the Qur'ān, the Muhkam and the Mutashābihah and we do not detract any of His Attributes from Him with anything repugnant. Whatever He described Himself with, from Speech, Nuzool and bringing His servant near to Him on the Day of Judgement and placing His Kanaf over him - then all of it indicates that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter.¹

Al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā stated in *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt*:

Yūsuf bin Mūsā said to Abū 'Abdullāh: "Allāh descends to the heaven of the dunya how He wills without describing it?" Imām Ahmad said: "Yes."²

Ishāq bin Mansoor said:

I said to Ahmad: "Our Lord, Mighty and Majestic, descends to the heavens of the dunya every night at the last third of the night. What do you say about these ahādeeth?" Imām Ahmad said: "Saheeh!"

Ahmad bin al-Husayn bin Hasān said:

I said to Abū 'Abdullāh: "Allāh, Blessed is He, descends to the heavens of the dunya every night?" Imām Ahmad said: "Yes." It was said to him: "In Sha'bān as is mentioned in the narration?" Imām Ahmad replied: "Yes."

Al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā said:

Ahmad said in his *Risālah* to Musaddad that Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, descends every night to the heavens of the dunya and the Throne does not encompass Him.

Al-Qādī said in appending to this:

Ahmad clearly highlighted that the Throne does not encompass Him, and this is the saying with us in regards to Allāh saying,

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"And your Lord has come and the angels..."

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

The intent of this is in regards to Allāh's Essence will come and not in the sense of moving.³

¹ I could not find the original source of this in the Shaykh's book [TN]

² *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt*, vol.1, p.260

³ *Ibtāl ut-Ta'weelāt*, vol.1, p.261

The statement of Imām Ahmad that Allāh descends and the Throne does not encompass Him shows that the *Nuẓool* is apparent and is in regards to Allāh and not His Command or Dominion descending. It is well known that whoever does not believe that Allāh is above His Throne does not believe in His *Nuẓool*. This certifies that this narration is *shādh* and that it was an error from Hanbal. Ibn ul-Qayyim stated:

It is common to find that Hanbal is alone in narrating that which is contrary to his madhhab and therefore if he contradicted what was well-known (the Hanbalī scholars like) al-Khallāl and his companion 'Abdul'Azeez would not verify such narrations.¹

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

This is what Hanbal transmitted and in regards to the discussion which occurred during the Mihna he did not transmit like 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad, Sālih bin Ahmad, al-Marwadhī and others.²

Indeed, the report (wherein the alleged *ta'weel* occurs) was not mentioned by Imām Ahmad in his book *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah wa'z-Zanādiqah* when he discussed what they use as proofs from the hadeeth for saying that the Qur'ān is created. The two authors comment upon the words of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and corroborate the report by saying:

As for the status of avoiding ta'weel being what is famous from Imām Ahmad then this narration does not contradict that, as something could be famous and oft-reported from an Imām yet something else could also be verified from him which is rare. This is all the more the case when there is no contradiction between the two views as in the matter we are discussing presently. So it has been transmitted from the Salaf that they stayed away from ta'weel and hated to delve into it, yet there are also statements from them where they made ta'weel of some terms. There is no problem with both approaches.

There is no doubt that this quote demonstrates a lack of academic and intellectual verification, for Imām Ahmad and the *Salaf* did not just merely forbid making *ta'weel* rather they forbade it in the sternest manner and ruled that the person who does it as having innovation and instructed that he be abandoned and cautioned against. There is also an *ijmā'* on the invalidity of *ta'weel* as has been mentioned from their statements prior. So how could have Imām Ahmad and the *Salaf* fallen into this?! And how can it be said that: “This is not a contradiction” or that “there is no problem”? If this is not a contradiction then we do not know what is!

¹ Ibn ul-Qayyim, *Mukhtasar us-Sawā'iḡ ul-Mursalāh 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah wa'l-Mu'attilah* (Maktabat ar-Riyadh al-Hadeethah), vol.2, p.260

² *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.399

Eleventh: the claim that al-Bukhārī made ta'weel of the Attribute of Laughter:

The two authors claim that al-Bukhārī made *ta'weel* of the Allāh's Attribute of Laughter and they transmit from al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wa's-Sifāt* that: "al-Bukhārī said: the meaning of Laughter (ad-Dahk) is Rahmah (Mercy)."

Answer: This is not verified from al-Bukhārī for a number of reasons:

Firstly: al-Bayhaqī attributed this to al-Bukhārī without a chain of transmission saying:

As for the Laughter mentioned in the narration then it has been reported from al-Farabī from Muhammad bin Ismā'eel al-Bukhārī (rahimahullāh) that he said: "the meaning of ad-Dahk is Rahmah."

It may be the case that he took this from al-Khattābī who in *A'lām us-Sunan* stated after mentioning the hadeeth of al-Ansārī and his wife:

"Allāh marvels at, or laughs at, so and so": Abū 'Abdullāh said: the meaning of laughter is mercy and this narration is from al-Farabī and not from Ibn Ma'qal.¹

Ibn Hajar commented upon this in *al-Fath* saying: **"I say: I did not see this within the copy of al-Bukhārī which we have in our possession."²**

Secondly: This is contrary to what is well known from the creed of Imām al-Bukhārī and from his Shuyūkh such as Imām Ahmad, Ishāq, Abū 'Ubayd and other Imāms of the Salaf to affirm Allāh's Attributes as they have arrived upon their apparent meaning without resorting to *ta'weel* or anything else. A corroboration of the beliefs of al-Bukhārī will be mentioned later.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION:

The following matters are clear to us:

Firstly: Not one letter from the *Salaf* (*rahimahumullāh*) is verified which justifies *ta'weel* and this also justifies what has been mentioned prior that the *Salaf* all agreed on the invalidity and prohibition of *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attributes and that it is obligatory to leave them upon their apparent meaning without *tashbeeh* and *takyeef*.

Secondly: The invalidity of the claim of the two authors that *ta'weel* is established from the *Salaf*, this therefore demolishes the basis and second pillar which their book was based upon wherein they claimed that the *Salaf* rotated between *ta'weel* and *tajweedh* of Allāh's Attributes. So if their

¹ Al-Khattābī, *A'lām us-Sunan* (Makkah al-Mukarramah, KSA: Umm ul-Qura' University, 1409 AH, 1st Edn., ed. Muhammad bin Sa'd bin 'AbdurRahmān Āl Sa'ood), vol.2, p.1367

Translator's note: Ibn Ma'qal died in 295 AH/907 CE

² *Fath ul-Bārī*, vol.8, p.501

claim of *tafweeḍ* is nullified, as has been mentioned prior, and then their claim of *ta'weel* has here just been nullified – this renders their entire book to have been established upon *bāṭil*!

Thirdly: It is also evident that what the two authors refer to as proofs are weak, for they refer to rejected reports and narrations from the Sahābah and *Salaf* which have no basis whatsoever. So they did not find anything authentic from the *Salaf* which supported their claims. So after such a lengthy study it has to be asked: what kind of *'aqeedah* is this that it cannot be established except upon rejected and void narrations?!

THE INNOCENCE OF THE IMĀMS FROM THE 'ASHARITE CREED

The two authors try to validate the Salafiyah of the 'Ash'arīs by the abundance of its followers from trusted scholars of the Ummah. As a result, the two authors include many scholars known and famed for the *Salafī manhaj* as being 'Ash'arī. Indeed, the two authors even go to the extent of including the Sahābah as being Mutakallimeen! The two authors thus fell into areas wherein it is feared that falsehood and allegation against the Imāms has been made. They thus include many as being among the 'Ash'arīs without verification and they utilised opinions, delusions and stories to prove their claim. This is contrary to meticulous academic corroboration and Divinely Legislated verification which our Lord has commanded us to have. It is well-known that the most important sources from which it is possible to understand the *manhaj* or belief of a specific scholar is to refer to what he mentioned in his books and what has been documented from him. So if a scholar has extant works wherein issues of creed are established, along with an exposition of his *manhaj* and way, then such works are the primary source for knowing his creed. So from the outset, we find that the two authors turn away from what the scholar himself has authored, clarified and manifested in his books and instead refer to stories and tales to know his creed!? Yet such tales cannot be given priority over what the scholar himself has authored and clarified within his own books. Within our study we will observe samples of this method, which is far from even the most basic level of topical academic research. I will mention some of those who have been ascribed to be from the 'Ashā'irah and I will clarify their creed which totally opposed the way of the 'Ash'arīs. In order to be brief I will not mention all who have been falsely attributed to be from the 'Ashā'irah.

Imām al-Hāfidh al-Hujjah Muhammad bin Ismā'eel al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH/CE):

The two authors claim that al-Bukhārī agreed with the creed of Ibn Kullāb!? This is a mere claim which is devoid of any academic corroboration and historical substantiation. For al-Bukhārī (*rahimabullāh*) is a leader of hadeeth, rather he was the Imām of the *dunyā* of his era and the flag-bearer of the people of hadeeth. This in itself is not strange because he was the student of the Imāms of the Sunnah at the head of which was the undisputed Imām of Ahl us-Sunnah, Ahmad bin Hanbal. He also studied with Ishāq bin Rāhawayh, Abū Nu'aym al-Fadl bin Dukayn, Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām and other senior Imāms of the Sunnah and others from the *Salaf*. Whoever contemplates on what he wrote in his *Sabeeh* and within other works knows for sure

that he was upon the *'aqeedah* of the people of *Athar* and not on the way of the people of *kalām*. He would affirm Allāh's Attributes absolutely without *tashbeeh*, *takyeef* and without negating the reality of the Attribute. He entitled a chapter within his book as *'Kitāb ut-Tawbeed'* wherein he affirms Allāh's Attributes based on the way of the *Salaf* and the Imāms, not the way of the people of *kalām*. He had 58 chapters affirming Allāh's Attributes such as:

Chapter: the Saying of Allāh,

“And Allāh warns you of Himself...”

{*Āl 'Imrān* (3): 28}

Affirming Allāh's Self.

Chapter: the Saying of Allāh,

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“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

Affirming Allāh's Face

Chapter: the Saying of Allāh

ä ä

“...that you would be brought up under My eye.”

{*TāHā* (20): 39}

Affirming Allāh's Eye

Chapter: the Saying of Allāh,

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“...that which I created with My hands?”

{*Sād* (38): 75}

Affirming Allāh's Hands

Chapter:

“...and His Throne had been upon water...”

{*Hood (11): 7*}

“...and He is the Lord of the Great Throne.”

{*at-Tawbah (9): 129*}

Affirming Allāh's 'Uluww over His creation and His *istiwā'* and elevation over His Throne. Al-Bukhārī relayed the statement of Abu'l-'Āliyah and Mujāhid that: “Istiwā’: raised and elevated” and then he mentioned the *abādeeth* which indicate Allāh's Transcendence and that He is above the heavens above everything.

Chapter: the saying of Allāh,

“...every day He is bringing about a matter.”

{*ar-Rahmān (55): 29*}

And Allāh says,

“...perhaps Allāh will bring about after that a [different] matter.”

{*at-Talāq (65): 1*}

And that this does not resemble what the creation does in bringing things about.” Within this is an affirmation that Allāh is described with bringing about that which He wills.

Chapters affirming Allāh's Speech such as: ‘Chapter: Affirming the Letter and Sound of Allāh's Speech’ and ‘Chapter: The Lord's Speech with Jibreel and Allāh's calling the Angels.’

Chapter: what has arrived regarding the creation of the heavens, earth and other creations and that this is an action of the Lord and His Command. The Lord, with His Attributes, Action and Command, is the Creator of creation and not created. Whatever is the result of His Action, Command and Creation is made and created.¹

In regards to *īmān* he stated:

Chapter: ‘the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) named prayer as being an action’, affirming that actions are from *īmān*.

¹ See Ibn al-Bannā, *al-Mukhtār fī Usool is-Sunnah* (Madeenah, KSA: Maktabat al-'Uloom wa'l-Hikam, 1425 AH 2nd Edn., ed. 'AbdurRazzāq bin 'AbdulMuhsin al-'Abbād al-Badr), pp.110-149, wherein he includes a chapter which clarifies the creed of Imām al-Bukhārī regarding his chaptering of *Kitāb ut-Tawheed* from his *Saheeh*.

Chapter: the saying of Allāh,

“While Allāh created you and that which you do?”

{*as-Sāffāt* (37): 96}

And the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) named prayer as being *īmān*. Al-Bukhārī was also the one who said: **I dictated from 1080 men and they were all people of hadeeth who said “īmān is speech and action, it increases and decreases.”**¹

It is well-known that this opposes the *'aqeedah* of the 'Ash'arīs who view that *īmān* is just *tasdeeq* and that actions are not included in *īmān*. He also noted often this within his *Kitāb ut-Tawbeed* in his *Sabeeh* within many chapters, wherein he acknowledged Allāh's Attributes as they have arrived in the Book and Sunnah without resorting to *ta'weel* and *tabreef*. Adh-Dhahabī stated in *al-'Ulumm*:

Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ismā'eel said towards the end of *al-Jāmi' us-Sabeeh* in *Kitāb ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah*: Chapter: the saying of Allāh,

“...and His Throne had been upon water...”

{*Hūd* (11): 7}

Abu'l-'Āliyah said: *istiwa'* ilā Samā, rising. Mujāhid said: *istiwa'* is: over the Throne. Zaynab Umm ul-Mumineen (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) said: “Allāh gave me in marriage from above the seven heavens.” Then he included chapters regarding Attributes that the Jahmiyyah deny such as *al-'Ulumm*, Speech, Two Hands and Two Eyes utilising verses and *abādeeth*. Such as: Chapter: the saying of Allāh,

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“To Him ascends good speech...”

{*Fātir* (35): 10}

And chapter: the saying of Allāh,

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“...that which I created with My hands?”

{*Sād* (38): 75}

And chapter: the saying of Allāh,

¹ *Siyar A'lām un-Nubalā'*, vol.12, p.395

“...that you would be brought up under My Eye.”

{*TāHā (20): 39*}

And chapter: ‘the saying of the Lord, Mighty and Majestic, with the Prophets’. There are similar other chapters which if the intelligent person reflects upon will know that the Jahmiyyah reject such beliefs and distort words from their correct context. Imām al-Bukhārī has a separate book entitled *Kitāb Af’āl ul-Tbād* in regards to the issue of the Qur’ān.¹

Imām al-Bukhārī also authored the book *Khalq Af’āl ul-Tbād wa’r-Radd ‘ala’l-Jahmiyyah wa As-hāb ut-Ta’teel* wherein he corroborated some matters of creed according to Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jama’ah and transmitted many texts from the *Salaf* and Imāms in regards to Allāh’s Attributes. We have mentioned some of these texts within this book of ours such as the statements of the Imāms and the *Salaf* about Allāh’s ’Uluww above His creation, the Speech of Allāh and affirming that the Speech of Allāh is with a voice. He said:

Allāh called out with a voice which was heard from far and near and this is not for any other besides Allāh. Abū ’Abdullāh said: within this is a proof that Allāh’s Voice does not resemble the voices of the creation because Allāh’s Voice, Mighty is His Mention, is heard from afar as it is heard from near. The angels are in awe of His Voice, Allāh says,

“So do not attribute to Allāh equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].”

{*al-Baqarah (2): 22*}

Allāh has no partner or likeness with His Attribute and there is nothing in creation that has His Attributes.²

This is an Attribute that the ’Ash’arīs unanimously agree is rejected and that Allāh is exalted from being described with it, based on the claim that it is *tashbeeh* and based on their principle of “internal *kalām*”. Al-Bukhārī affirmed the Speech of Allāh and that it is with letter and sound. This invalidates the claim that Imām al-Bukhārī was affiliated to, or influenced by, Ibn Kullāb, because the issue of “internal *kalām*” is of the most famous issues in which Ibn Kullāb opposed the *Salaf*. For that reason, Imām Mālik was severe against him and instructed that al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī be boycotted as a result. The way of al-Bukhārī in his *Sabeeh* in *Kitāb ut-Tawbeed*, and likewise in his book *Khalq Af’āl ul-Tbād*, in corroborating creed is apparent in it being upon the *manhaj* and way of the *Salaf* who placed the Book and Sunnah as a foundation to follow and then followed it up with the words of the *Salaf* from the Sahābah, Tābi’een and the Ummah. Likewise, al-Bukhārī’s chaptering of credal issues clearly indicate that he was not of the Mutakallimeen

¹ *Al-Uluww*, p.186

² *Khalq Af’āl ul-Tbād* (Cairo: Maktabat ut-Turāth al-Islāmī, ed. Abū Hājir Muhammad as-Sa’eed bin Bisyūnī), p.137.

(speculative rhetorical theologians); rather he was clearly distinct from them. What certifies that al-Bukhārī did not agree with Ibn Kullāb is that al-Bukhārī did not mention Ibn Kullāb within any of his books at all and did not refer to his words! Neither did al-Bukhārī refer to any of Ibn Kullāb's companions such as al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī, al-Qalānisī,¹ al-Karābīsī and others. Neither in his *Sabeeh*, nor his *Tāreekh*, such as *Tāreekh ul-Kabeer*, *al-Awsat*, *as-Sagbeer* and neither in his other books such as the book *Khalq Af'āl ul-'Ibād*.

Imām Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Jareer at-Tabarī (d. 310 AH/922 CE):

He was an Imām of knowledge, a Mujtahid, the scholar of his era Abū Ja'far at-Tabarī the author of beneficial works, from Amul in Tabaristān. He has two works in creed *at-Tabseer fī Ma'ālim id-Deen* and *Sareeh us-Sunnah* and within these books he acknowledges the creed and clarifies his *manhaj* and way, not to mention what he authored within his great *tafseer*. Yet with the fact that these two books are extant, the two authors did not transmit even one letter from them and did not refer to them at all, yet still claimed that at-Tabarī was 'Ash'arī!!? We have transmitted much from his works in regards to issues of creed within this very book. Here we will certify what we have transmitted from him and expand further on:

Allāh's 'Uluww with His Essence over His creation:

Adh-Dhahabī stated in *al-'Uluww*:

The tafseer of Ibn Jareer traverses the way of the *Salaf* in affirmation (of the Attributes) and transmitted the saying of Allāh,

“Then He directed Himself to the heaven...”

{*al-Baqarab* (2): 29}

From Rabī' bin Anas that the meaning is: risen above. He also transmitted in regards to the tafseer of,

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“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

{*al-A'rāf* (7): 54}²

¹ Abu'l'Abbās al-Qalānisī

² **Translator's note:** the *tafseer* of Ibn Katheer states:

As for Allāh's statement,

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“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

And in all other instances in the Qur'ān means: high above and risen over. He relayed the saying of Mujāhid and then said: there is no Islamic sect who denies this except for the Jahmiyyah and others.¹

Ibn Jareer says in the *tafseer* of the verse,

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“There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them...”

{*al-Mujādilab* (58): 7}

The meaning of:

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“...He is the fourth of them...”

{*al-Mujādilab* (58): 7}

...the people had several conflicting opinions over its meaning. However, we follow the way that our righteous predecessors took in this regard, such as Mālik, al-Awzā'ī, ath-Thawrī, al-Layth bin Sa'd, ash-Shafi'ī, Ahmad, Ishāq bin Rāhawayh and the rest of the scholars of Islam, in past and present times. Surely, we accept the apparent meaning of, al-Istawā', without discussing its true essence, equating it (with the attributes of the creation), or altering or denying it (in any way or form). We also believe that the meaning that comes to those who equate Allāh with the creation is to be rejected, for nothing is similar to Allāh,

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

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

Indeed, we assert and affirm what the Imams said, such as Nu'aym bin Hammād Al-Khuzā'ī, the teacher of Imām al-Bukhārī, who said, “Whoever likens Allāh with His creation, will have committed Kufr. Whoever denies what Allāh has described Himself with, will have committed Kufr. Certainly, there is no resemblance (of Allāh with the creation) in what Allāh and His Messenger have described Him with. Whoever attests to Allāh's attributes that the plain Ayat and authentic Hadeeths have mentioned, in the manner that suits Allāh's majesty, all the while rejecting all shortcomings from Him, will have taken the path of guidance.”

Refer to Online version of *tafseer*:

http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1242&Itemid=62

¹ *Al-'Uluww*, p.205

Is that: He is with them with his knowledge and He is over His Throne as 'Abdullāh bin Abī Zayd narrated to me saying: Nasr bin Maymoon al-Madroob narrated to me saying: Bakeer bin Ma'roof narrated to us from Muqātil bin Hayān from ad-Dahhāk who said about,

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“There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them...”

{*al-Mujādilah* (58): 7}

That He is over His Throne and is with them with His Knowledge.¹

Affirming Allāh's Two Hands:

He regarding the saying of Allāh,

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“Rather, both His Hands are Outstretched...”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 64}

The people of discussion and interpretation have differed over the meaning of the verses, some said it means “His Two Bounties” (Ni'matāhu), others said it means “power” (Quwwah) while other said it means “His Dominion” (Mulkuhu). Some others from them said that “it is one of His Attributes and indicates His Hands which are not like the limbs of Banī Ādam.” This group continued by saying that Allāh, Exalted be His Mention, informed of His specifying Ādam with being created by His Hand and they said: “If the meaning of “al-Yad” was Ni'mah or “al-Quwwah” or “al-Mulk” then it would be understood from this that Ādam would not have been particularised with it because all of Allāh's creation are created by His Power (Quwwah) and He wills blessing (an-Ni'mah) in His creation and Allāh is the Possessor (al-Mālik) of all of them.”

Up to where he said:

They say in regards to Allāh's saying,

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“Rather, both His Hands are Outstretched...”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 64}

¹ *Tafseer at-Tabarī*, vol.18, p.12

His informing His servants that His Blessing is innumerable, as we described, does not make sense therefore in the language of the Arabs that the dual can indicate plurality? This results from the error of the one who says that “al-Yad” means in this instance “an-Ni’mah” and the accuracy of the who says that the Hand of Allāh is His Attribute. They said: “So with this the narrations are manifest from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) and this is what the ‘Ulama and commentators have held.”¹

Affirming Allāh’s Coming:

He stated in regards to the *tafseer* of

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“Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come or that there come some of the signs of your Lord? The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had earned through its faith some good. Say, "Wait. Indeed, we [also] are waiting.”

{*al-An’ām* (6): 158}

Allāh, glorified be His Praise, says: O Muhammad, do those who equate idols with their Lord wait for the angels to come to them with death and take their souls or for their Lord to come to them on the Day of Judgement?

Affirming the Attributes in the Real Sense without Tashbeeh:

At-Tabarī stated in *at-Tabseer fī Ma’ālim id-Deen*:

Allāh mentioned His Names and Attributes in His Book and His Prophet informed his Ummah of them. None of the creation is able to comprehend the Attributes which are based on proofs from the Qur’ān which revealed them and on what has been authenticated as a saying of the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*). Whatever is contrary to this, after the proofs have been

¹ Ibid., vol.6, pp.301-302

established via the reports which expound upon it, has no way to comprehend the reality of His Knowledge except by perception and the ignorant person is excused due to ignorance, because the knowledge of that (Allāh's Attributes) cannot be comprehended by minds, narration or contemplation.

So for example: Allāh informs us that He is Hearing and Seeing, and that He has Two Hands,

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“Rather, both His Hands are Outstretched...”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 64}

And that He has a Right Hand,

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“...while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand.”

{*az-Zumar* (39): 67}

And that He has a Face,

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“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rabmān* (55): 27}

And that He has Feet based on what was stated by the Messenger of Allāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam): “...until the Lord places His Foot into it (i.e. *Jabannam*)...”¹

And that He Laughs (or Smiles) at His believing servants based on what was stated by the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) in regards to the one who was killed in the way of Allāh: “He will meet Allāb, Mighty and Majestic, while He is smiling at him.”

And that Allāh descends to the heavens of the dunya every night based on what the Messenger of Allāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) informed about. And that Allāh is not one-eyed based on what was stated by the Prophet when he mentioned the Dajjāl: “He is one-eyed and your Lord is not one-eyed.”

¹ **Translator's note:** the full hadeeth, which is agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, is: “(On the Day of Judgment) when a group of unbelievers is thrown into Hell, Hell will ask for more until the Lord puts His Foot into it; then it folds up saying: ‘Enough, enough.’”

And that the believers will see their Lord on the Day of Judgement with their eyes just as they see the sun and as they saw the moon on the night of a full-moon, as the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) stated.

And that He has fingers based on the statement of the Prophet said: “*There is no heart except that it is between two fingers of the fingers of ar-Rabmān...*”

Up to where at-Tabarī said:

So if a report has been mentioned regarding this it takes the status of a proof which has been witnessed or heard, then the one who hears it in reality has to believe religiously in the testimony of the report, just as when one witnesses or hears something.

Up to where at-Tabarī said:

So if it is said to us: ‘What are the correct meanings of these Attributes that have been mentioned some of which have been mentioned in the Book of Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, and some of which have been mentioned by the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*)?’ It should be said in response: ‘What is correct in regards to this is to say that: we affirm their reality based on what we know via affirmation and negating *tashbeeh* just as He negated it from Himself when He said,

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

{*ash-Shūrā (42): 11*}

Up to where at-Tabarī says:

We affirm all of these meanings which we have mentioned and which have arrived in the reports, the Book and the revelation which are understood by the reality of affirmation, and we negate *tashbeeh* from him.¹

Affirming Allāh’s Nuzool:

He stated in *at-Tabseer*:

It should be said to him (i.e. the Mu’attil): ‘what do you reject from the report which has been relayed from the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) wherein he said: “He descends to the heavens of the dunya”?’

If he says: ‘I reject that, because *huboot* (descent) is moving and it is not permissible to move from place to place because that is an attribute of created bodies.’

Say to him: Allāh has said,

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¹ *At-Tabseer*, pp.134-142

“And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

So is it permissible to ascribe ‘coming’ to Allāh?’

If he says: ‘that is not allowed, rather the meaning of the *ayah* is: the affair of your Lord will come.’

It should be said to him then: ‘Allāh has informed us that He will come along with the angels and you claim that His affair will come and not Him. Therefore you say: the angels will not come, rather the affair of the angels but not the angels, just as you say that the meaning of ‘coming of the Lord’ is that his affair will come.’

If he says: ‘I don’t say that about the angels, I only say that about the Lord.’

Then say to him: ‘The report about the coming of the Lord and the angels is one and the same report yet you claim that the report about the Lord is regarding the coming of His Affair and not Him. You have also claimed however that the angels will come themselves and not that their affair will come. So what is the difference between you and the one who opposes you and says ‘Rather the Lord will come and as for the angels then their affair will come and not themselves?!’

Up to where at-Tabarī says:

So if he says to us: ‘What do you say the meaning of it is?’

It is to be said to him: ‘The meaning of that is what the apparent text indicates, for there is no report except that we submit to it and have *īmān* in it. So we say: Our Lord, Mighty and Majestic, will come on the Day of Judgement with the angels rank upon rank, and He descends to the heavens of the *dunya* every night and we do not say: ‘the meaning of that is that His affair descends’. Rather we say: His affair descends from Him at every moment and hour from all of His creation that is in existence as long as they exist. There is no hour that is devoid of His affair so there is no way to specify the descent of His affair to a certain time as long as it is in existence and present.’¹

The Qur’ān and the Allāh’s Speech is Uncreated:

At-Tabarī stated in *Sareeb us-Sunnah*, when affirming that the Qur’ān is Allāh’s Speech that is Uncreated and refuting the creed of the ‘Ash’arīs in regards to the matter:

Whoever says other than that (the Qur’ān is Uncreated) or claims that the Qur’ān in the heavens or the earth is the same as the Qur’ān that we recite with our tongues and write within our Mus-hafs; or believes something else with his heart or conceals something else, or says it openly with his tongue – then the person by Allāh is a disbeliever and his blood becomes permissible to shed (i.e. execute). The person is free from Allāh and Allāh is Free from the person based on Allāh’s saying,

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¹ Ibid., pp.146-149

“But this is an honored Qur’ān, [Inscribed] in a Preserved Slate.”

{*al-Burooj* (85): 21-22}

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“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh.”

{*at-Tawbah* (9): 6}

So Allāh informed that the Qur’ān is written in the Preserved Slate and that it was heard from the tongue of Muhammad (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), and that there is one Qur’ān from Muhammad (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), written and preserved in the Preserved Slate, it is also preserved within the chests and recited by the tongues of the old and young.¹

This nullifies the belief of the 'Ash'arīs who claim that there are two Qur’āns, one which is the Uncreated Speech of Allāh which is established within Allāh Himself and another which is created, which is that which is preserved, recited and written. This has been explained prior in chapter two of the third section. At-Tabarī stated about the *Lafdhiyyah*:

As for the statement about the servant’s pronouncement of the Qur’ān then there is no narration about it that we know of from a Companion who has passed, or from a Successor who judged.....

For Abū Ismā‘eel at-Tirmidhī stated to me: I heard Abū ‘Abdullāh Ahmad bin Hanbal say: the Lafdhiyyah are Jahmiyyah in regards to Allāh’s saying,

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“...so that he may hear the words of Allāh.”

{*at-Tawbah* (9): 6}

So who will they hear from then? Then I heard a group of our companions, whose names I have preserved, mention that he (i.e. Imām Ahmad) used to say: “whoever says that my recital is created is a Jahmī and whoever says ‘it is Uncreated’ is an innovator.”²

Then he stated in regards to the definition of *īmān*:

What is correct in regards to īmān I to say: ‘it is speech and action, it increases and decreases’ this is what has been reported from a group of the Companions of the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) and the people of deen and virtue were upon this.³

¹ *Sareeh us-Sunnah* (Kuwait: Maktabat Ahl ul-Athar, 1426 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Badr al-Ma’tooq), p.24

² *Ibid.*, p.37

³ *Ibid.*, p.35

This is all contrary to the creed of the 'Ash'arīs who view that *īmān* is just *tasdeeq* and that actions are not included in the reality of *īmān*. These are extracts of the words of Ibn Jareer (*rabimabullāh*) in regards to acknowledging creed which presents his conformity with the *Salaf* and his opposition to the creed of the 'Ash'arīs. How could this not be the case when Ibn Jareer at-Tabarī is the companion of Imāms Ibn Khuzaymah and Muhammad bin Nasr al-Marwadhī and other Imāms of the Sunnah?

Imām al-Hāfidh Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī bin 'Umar ad-Dāraqutnī (385 AH/995 CE):

Al-Hāfidh ad-Dāraqutnī is of those who the two authors try to include among the 'Ashā'irah in order to increase the number of followers, gaining satisfaction from what their have not been given. Al-Hāfidh ad-Dāraqutnī was a scholar and Imām and was of those who authored books on many subjects, such as works on: *al-Mu'taqad* (creed). Ad-Dāraqutnī has three well-known books that have been printed and are in circulation in regards to the creed of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah and these books are: *as-Sifāt*, *ar-Ru'yab* and *Abādeeth un-Nuzool*. Yet even though these books are extant within Islamic libraries we find that the two authors do not refer to them at all and completely ignore them! They instead utilise for their claim that he was 'Ash'arī a story wherein it is mentioned that ad-Dāraqutnī kissed the head of Abū Bakr al-Bāqilānī al-'Ash'arī, and praised him. Yet it is well-known that referring to such a story is not reliable in attesting to the creed of a well-known Imām who is famed for his books, such as al-Hāfidh ad-Dāraqutnī. This is even if ad-Dāraqutnī praise's some 'Ash'arīs within these books. So even if this report is authenticated then there are many possible reasons for it, such as:

- His praise of al-Bāqilānī could have been before he knew about him and before al-Bāqilānī's creed became apparent.
- The praise could have been relative as he could have praised his efforts in refuting the Mu'tazilah, Jahmiyyah and their likes, as al-Bāqilānī was well-known for refuting them. The praise in this instance then would not be due to al-Bāqilānī agreeing with the truth in his entire creed.

Ibn ul-Mabrad mentions ad-Dāraqutnī among those who opposed the 'Ashā'irah:

And from them: Imām Abu'l-Hasan ad-Dāraqutnī who opposed them (i.e. the 'Asha'rīs) there are some words from him wherein he censured them.¹

Here I will expound what ad-Dāraqutnī wrote within his books in order to show the futility of this claim to each and every intelligent person, and to show that ad-Dāraqutnī was an Imām of the Sunnah and at its head. He traversed the way of the *Salaf* and of the Imāms and was neither

¹ *Jam'ul- Juyūsh wa'd- Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, pp.208

'Ash'arī nor Kullābī, for he did not enter into *kalām* whatsoever. His book *as-Sifāt* was authored in order to affirm Allāh's Attributes which were falsely interpreted by the Mu'attilah from the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Kullābiyyah and 'Ash'ariyyah. Ad-Dāraqutnī included a chapter affirming Allāh's Foot, Mighty and Majestic; a chapter affirming the Two Hands; a chapter affirming Laughter; a chapter affirming the Fingers; a chapter about what has been relayed regarding the Kursī; a chapter concerning what is mentioned in Sūrat ur-Rahmān; a chapter regarding what is mentioned about the Lord's Handful;¹ a chapter about what is mentioned about Allāh's Two Hands, Mighty and Majestic and a chapter concerning ar-Rahmān's Palm. Then he concluded these chapters with a chapter explaining the *manhaj* of the Salaf in regards to these Attributes, the *manhaj* being leaving them upon their apparent meaning and resulting to neither *ta'weel*. He transmitted herein many texts of the Salaf of which we mentioned in the first chapter.

As for ad-Dāraqutnī's book *Abādeeth un-Nuzūol* then within it he affirms the Attribute of Allāh's Nuzool and that it is the truth to be accepted in a real sense without *tashbeeh*, *tabreef* and *ta'weel*. He also affirmed Allāh's Nuzool and that does not mean the *nuzool* of the dominion or of Allāh's affair or the likes which are falsely interpreted by the 'Ash'arīs and by all of the Mu'attilah. Within the book ad-Dāraqutnī compiled the *abādeeth* relating to Allāh's *Nuzūol* at the last third of every night, Sha'bān and the evening of 'Arafat. Ad-Dāraqutnī stated at the beginning of the book:

A mention of the narrations from the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) that Allāh, Blessed and Most High, descends every night to the heavens of the dunya and forgives those seeking forgiveness and gives those who ask.²

As for ad-Dāraqutnī's book *ar-Ruyah* then within the book he acknowledges the belief of the *Salaf* that Allāh will be seen on the Day of Judgement and the believers will see Him after they enter Jannah. Ad-Dāraqutnī compiled the transmitted *abādeeth* which mentioned this and he transmitted the words of the Sahābah, Tābi'een and Imāms in regards to affirming this, and that the most delightful blessing for the people of Paradise is to look at Allāh's Face, Blessed and Exalted. So after that how is it possible to include ad-Dāraqutnī among the 'Ash'arīs?! All his books are based on the way of the *Salaf* in establishing belief. He sought proofs from the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger and then the statements of the *Salaf* from the Sahābah,

¹ **Translator's note:** based on the hadeeth narrated by Abū Umāmah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) and reported by at-Tirmidhī, Ahmad and Ibn Hibbān, that the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: "My Rabb promised me that seventy thousand of my ummah would enter Paradise without being called to account and without being punished, and with each one will be seventy thousand, and three handfuls of people picked up by my Rabb [i.e. it will be a great number]."

² *An-Nuzool*, p.1

Tābi'een and those that followed them. He neither resorted to *kalām* issues whatsoever nor to “intellectual proofs”, rather ad-Dāraqtunī used to detest all of that. Ad-Dāraqtunī stated in his book *al-'Uluww*:

Al-'Allāmah al-Hāfidh Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī bin 'Umar was rare during his time and was a genius in this field for he authored the books *ar-Ru'yah*, *as-Sifāt* and he was a reference point for the Sunnah and the madhāhib of the Salaf.¹

Adh-Dhahabī stated in *as-Siyar*:

It is authentic from ad-Dāraqtunī that he said: ‘There is nothing more hated to me than 'Ilm ul-Kalām.’ I say²: the man did not enter into kalām or argumentation whatsoever and he did not engross himself in any of that, rather he was Salafī, Abū 'AbdurRahmān as-Sulamī heard that from him.³

Al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdillāh al-Asbahānī (d. 430 AH/1039 CE):

He is also of those who the two authors, in keeping with Ibn 'Asākir, include among the 'Ashā'irah. Ibn al-Mabrad took issue with Ibn 'Asākir including Abū Nu'aym from among the 'Ashā'irah and said:

...then he included al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym among them and this is not the case rather it is a fabrication.⁴

I will mention some of what has been reported in regards to creed in order for the reality of this to be clear to us. Abū Nu'aym stated in his book *Mabajjat ul-Wāthbiqeen wa Madrajat ul-Wāmiqeen* in what has been transmitted of it by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah:

They have concurred that Allāh is above His heavens and above His Throne, established over it and not that he conquered it as the Jahmiyyah say that he is everywhere, which opposes what has been revealed in Allāh's Book,

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“Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven...”

{*al-Mulk* (67): 16}

¹ *Al-'Uluww*, p.234

² i.e. adh-Dhahabī

³ *As-Siyar*, vol.16, p.457

⁴ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, pp.186

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“To Him ascends good speech...”

{*Fātir* (35): 10}¹

ä Ô

“The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established.”

{*Tā Hā* (20): 5}

So unto Him is a Throne which He is established over and a Kursī which encompasses the seven heavens and earths, as He says,

ä Ô ä ä

“His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth...”

{*al-Baqarab* (2): 255}

His Kursī is a form, while the seven heaven and seven earths compared to the Kursī is like a ring within the desert. His Kursī does not mean His Knowledge as the Jahmiyyah say, rather His Kursī will be placed on the Day of Judgement in order to separate the judgements among His servants, and the angels will come rank upon rank as Allāh says,

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“And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

¹ **Translator’s note:** Ibn Katheer mentioned in his *tafseer*: means, words of remembrance, recitation of Qur’ān, and supplications. This was the view of more than one of the *Salaf*. Ibn Jareer recorded that Al-Mukhāriq bin Sulaym said that “Abdullāh bin Mas’ood, may Allāh be pleased with him, said to them, “If we tell you a hadeeth, we will bring you proof of it from the Book of Allāh. When the Muslim servants says, ‘Glory and praise be to Allāh, there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, Allāh is Most Great and blessed be Allāh,’ an angel takes these words and puts them under his wing, then he ascends with them to the heaven. He does not take them past any group of angels but they seek forgiveness for the one who said them, until he brings them before Allāh, may He be glorified.” Refer to Online version of *tafseer*:

http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1912&Itemid=91

The Prophet (*sallāllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) elaborated further and said: “He, Exalted and Holy, will come on the Day of Judgement in order to divide the judgements among His servants. He will forgive whomsoever He wills from the sinful Muwahhideen and punish whomsoever He wills, just as He said,

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“He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills.”

{*Āl 'Imrān* (3): 129}¹

Adh-Dhahabī stated in *al-'Uluww*:

The major Hāfidh, Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdullāh bin Ahmad al-Asbahānī, author of *Hilyat ul-Anwiyā'*, stated in his book *al-I'tiqād*:

Our path is the path of the *Salaf* who followed the Book, Sunnah and Ijmā' of the Ummah, and from what they believed is that Allāh has always been Perfect with His Eternal Attributes. Allāh neither ceases nor goes and He has always been All-Knowing with knowledge, All-Seeing with sight, All-Hearing and Speaking with speech, then he brought things about from nothing. and the Qur'ān is the Allāh's Speech and likewise are all revealed scriptures, His Speech is Uncreated and the Qur'ān in all aspects whether it is read, recited, memorised, heard, written, pronounced – is Allāh's Speech in the real sense, it is neither a narrative nor a biography. When we recite it is Allāh's Speech which is Uncreated. The Wāqifah (those who merely stop without taking a position) and the *Lafdhīyyah* from the Jahmiyyah, and whoever intends that the Qur'ān in any way is created Speech of Allāh is regarded as a Jahmī according to the *Salaf* and the Jahmī is a disbeliever.

Then he continued:

As for the *abādeeth* which affirm the 'Arsh and Allāh's *istimā'* over it then they mention and affirm them without *takyeef* and *tamtbeel*, and that Allāh is Distinct from His creation and the creation is distinct from Him. Allāh is neither incarnate within them nor mixed in with them; He is established over His Throne above His heavens and not on the earth.²

Ibn ul-Qayyim transmitted from Abū Nu'aym in regards to his *'aqeedah*:

Indeed Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Seeing, All-Knowledgeable, All-Knowing, He speaks, Allāh is pleased, displeased, laughs, is amazed, and will appear to His servants on the Day of Judgement smiling. Allāh descends how He wills to the heavens of the dunya at the last third of every night and says “Is there anyone calling upon Me that I may answer him? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness from Me that I may forgive him? Is there anyone repenting to Me that I may accept his repentance”, until Fajr emerges. The Lord descends and it is not to be asked “how?” and without

¹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted this from him in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.60

² *Al-'Uluww*, p.243

tashbeeb and *ta'weel*. Whoever denies the *Nuzool* or falsely interprets it is a misguided innovator and all of the pure people of knowledge concur with this. Then he (Abū Nu'aym) said: Allāh is established over His Throne without it being asked “how?” And with neither *tashbeeb* nor *ta'weel*, for *istiwā'* is *ma'qool* and the “how” is *majbool*. Allāh is distinct from His creation and His creation are distinct from Him, Allāh is neither incarnate (within the creation) nor mixed in with them because He is Unique and Distinct from creation, He is Unique and Self-Sufficient from creation. He (Abū Nu'aym) also said: “Our way is that of the *Salaf* who follow the Book, the Sunnah and the *ijmā'* of the Ummah”, then he mentioned their beliefs and said: “From what they believed is that Allāh is in the heavens and not on the earth” And then he mentioned the rest of Allāh's Attributes.¹

So may Allāh have mercy unto you, contemplate upon this acknowledgement of the belief of the *Salaf* by al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym. Within it is affirmation of all of Allāh's Attributes without differentiating between Attributes; rather all are affirmed for Allāh without *tashbeeb* and *ta'weel*. Also contemplate on Abū Nu'aym's affirmation of Allāh's Attribute of *Nuzool* in the real sense and that Allāh is described with it, and that whoever falsely interprets it or denies it is to be deemed as a misguided innovator. So do the 'Ash'arīs acknowledge what al-Hāfidh Abū Nu'aym did in regards to creed?!

Shaykh ul-Islām al-Imām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel bin 'AbdurRahmān as-Sābūnī (d.449 AH/CE)²:

¹ *Ijtimā' ul-Juyoosh il-Islāmiyyah*, p.279

² **Translator's note:** He is the Imām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Ahmad bin Ismā'eel bin Ibrāhim bin 'Abid bin 'Amir an-Naysaburi as-Sābūnī. He was born in the year 373 AH. His father, also a scholar, was killed in 382 AH, when he was 9 years of age. His teachers in Hadith were: Abū Sa'id 'Abdallāh bin Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Wahhāb, when he was 9, Abu Bakr bin Mihrān, Abū Muhammad al-Mukhallidī, Abū Tahir bin Khuzaymah, Abu'l-Husayn al-Khaffāf, 'AbdurRahmān bin Abi Shurayh, Zahir bin Ahmad as-Sarakhsī and their generation. Among his students were: 'Abdul'Azeez al-Kattānī, Ali bin al-Husayn bin Sasra. Najā bin Ahmad, Abu'l-Qāsim b. Abi'l-'Alā, Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqī, his son 'AbdurRahmān bin Ismā'eel and others, of which the last one is Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad bin al-Fadl al-Furawī. He lived in Nisabur and travelled to: Herat, Sarakhs, the Hijāz, Shām, al-Jabāl and other places. He transmitted hadeeth in Khurasān, Jurjān (Gorgan, Northern Irān), al-Hind (India), al-Quds (Jerusalem) and elsewhere. Hāfidh al-Dhahabī called him: “**as-Sābūnī, the Imām, the Scholar, the Exemplar, the Commentator, the Preacher, the Muhaddith Shaykh al-Islām...**” Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī described him as: “Imām of the Muslims in reality and the Shaykh al-Islām truthfully, Abū 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī...” Abū Abdallāh al-Mālikī said about him: “**Abū 'Uthmān belongs to those for whom the leading scholars testified for being perfect in al-Hifdh [of hadeeth] and al-Tafseer (of the Qur'ān).**” 'AbdulGhafir al-Fārisī, author of a History of Nisabur, and a Hāfidh said: “**al-Ustādh Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel as-Sābūnī is a Shaykh al-Islām, al-Mufasssir, al-Muhaddith, al-Wā'iz, one of his time and he was a Hāfidh, heard and wrote a lot.**” and he said, “**he was accepted by friend and foe, and they were agreed upon that he was a Sword of the Sunnah and Repeller of**

The two authors claimed that Shaykh ul-Islām as-Sābūnī was 'Ash'arī basing this upon what was mentioned by Ibn 'Asākir in *Tabyeen Kadhib al-Muftarī* wherein Ibn 'Asākir said:

I heard Shaykh Abū Bakr Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ismā'eel bin Muhammad bin Bashhār al-Būshanjī (also well-known as “al-Khakurdī”) the *faqeeh* and *ḥābid* speak about some of his Shuyookh and say: Imām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'eel bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Ahmad as-Sābūnī an-Naysabūrī never used to go out to a gathering of his lessons except he would have in his hand the book *al-Ibānah* by Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī and would come across amazing things in it and say: “what is it that causes one to reject from this book wherein he explained his madhhab.” This is what Imām Abū 'Uthmān said and he is of the notable people of Athar (narration) from Khurāsān.¹

Using the likes of these stories as proof for the 'Ash'arism of as-Sābūnī is a serious error due to the following factors:

Firstly: The one who relayed this narration are unnamed and unknown, so how can the likes of this story be relied upon?

Secondly: It is not strange that *al-Ibānah*, which was authored by al-'Ash'arī toward the end of his life, was a work wherein he traversed the way of the *Salaf* and retracted from the way of Ibn Kullāb which he followed. This will be explained later in the fifth chapter of the third section.

For that reason we say: If the 'Ash'arism intended is that which al-'Ash'arī was upon is what is found within *al-Ibānah*, then we say “that is to be accepted”, but if the 'Ash'arism intended is that of the later 'Ash'arīs then we say “no” a thousand times!

Thirdly: Imām as-Sābūnī authored a great book explaining the creed entitled *'Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth* and it is famous and widely circulated. Yet the two authors do not transmit at all from it in order to see if as-Sābūnī was 'Ash'arī and agreed with them?! For within this book, as-Sābūnī clarified the correct belief of Ahl ul-Hadeeth and Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah and agrees with the book *al-Ibānah* by Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, therefore it is not strange that Imām as-Sābūnī praised the book *al-Ibānah*. Ibn ul-Mabrad mentions as-Sābūnī among those 'Ulama

Bid'ah... Al-Kattānī said: “**I have not seen a Shaykh like Abū 'Uthmān in terms of Zuhd and Knowledge! He use to memorise from every science, leaving nothing of it... and he was from the Huffādh ul-Hadeeth!**” Adh-Dhahabī comments upon this with: “**I say: He use to be from the Imāms of al-Athar; he has a composition on creed and the beliefs of the Salaf (lahu musannaf fi's-sunnah wa-l-tiqād as-salaf).**” The Imam and Shaykh al-Islām Abu 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī died in 449 AH, *rahimahullāh*. Yet with this some of the contemporary 'Asharites either make little or no reference to as-Sābūnī or strangely claim that as-Sābūnī was 'Ash'arī without even referring to his creedal book whatsoever!? His book *'Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth* based on the edit of Shaykh Badr al-Badr has been translated into English as: Imaam Aboo 'Uthmaan as-Saaboonee, *The Creed of the Pious Predecessors and the People of Hadeeth* (Brixton, London: Masjid Ibn Taymeeyah, 1420 AH/1999 CE), trans. Abū 'Ubaydah 'Amr Basheer.

¹ *Tabyeen Kadhib il-Muftarī* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1399 AH, ed. Muhammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī), p.389

who were opposed to the 'Ash'arīs, Ibn ul-Mabrad states: “and from them: Abū 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī, Shaykh ul-Islām, he was an Imām who opposed them.”¹

Here I will transmit some of what as-Sābūnī mentioned in his book in order to present and clarify his *'aqeedah*. He stated in discussing the *'aqeedah* of Ahl ul-Hadeeth:

They affirm for Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, what He affirmed for Himself in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*). They do not believe in making *tashbeeh* between Allāh's Attributes and the attributes of creation and they say “Allāh created Ādam with His Hand as He said,

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“O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands?”

{*Sād* (38): 75}

And they do not distort words from their place by saying that Two Hands means ‘Two Bounties’ (Ni'matayn) or ‘Two Powers’ (Quwwatyn) as the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah (may Allāh destroy them) distort the Attributes to mean. They (Ahl ul-Hadeeth) do not ask “how?” about the Attributes and they do not make *tashbeeh* of Allāh Two Hands with the hands of creation, as the Mushabbihah make *tashbeeh*, may Allāh humiliate them. Allāh granted refuge to Ahl us-Sunnah from *tabreef* and *takyeef* and blessed them with knowledge and understanding so that they traversed the way of *tawbeed* and *tanzeeb*. Ahl us-Sunnah also abandon *ta'teel* and *tashbeeh* in keeping with the statement of Allāh,

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

{*ash-Shūrā* (42): 11}

They (Ahl ul-Hadeeth) likewise say about all the mentioned Attributes which were revealed in the Qur'ān and transmitted in authentic narrations such as Hearing, Seeing, Eye, Face, Knowledge, Power, Ability, Honour, Greatness, Want, Will, Speech, Pleasure, Displeasure, Shyness, Awareness, Joy, Laughter and other Attributes without *tashbeeh* (comparing) to anything from the creation. Rather, they stop at whatever Allāh and His Messenger (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said without adding anything and without *takyeef* (asking how), *tashbeeh* (comparing), *tabreef* (distorting), *tabdeel* (substituting) or *taghyeer* (changing). Also without removing the wordings of the report from what is understood by the Arabs and without rejected interpretations. They (Ahl ul-Hadeeth) take the

¹ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, p.219

Attributes upon the apparent meaning and refer knowledge of the Attributes to Allāh and they acknowledge that only Allāh knows the true interpretation as Allāh stated about those firmly grounded in knowledge that they say,

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“But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord." And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.”

{*Āl 'Imrān* (3): 7}¹

See how he relayed the creed of Ahl us-Sunnah in regards to the *Sifāt* and that they traverse the way with affirmation without *tashbeeh*, *tabreef*, and *ta'weel*. This is their path in regards to all of the *Sifāt* and they do not differentiate between Notional Attributes (*Sifāt al-Ma'ānī*) and other Attributes such as the Face, Two Hands, Pleasure and Laughter.

I explained prior that his statement “they refer knowledge of it to Allāh and acknowledge that none know its interpretation except Allāh” – is in regards to the reality of the Attribute and how it is. The Attribute is to be affirmed upon its apparent meaning without recourse to *ta'weel* or anything else and if the wordings are not understood then they would not be left upon their apparent meaning. How could it be otherwise when we have explained the obligation of leaving the Attributes upon their apparent meaning without *takyeef*, and we have transmitted the *ijmā'* of the Ummah regarding Allāh being Transcendent and Established over His Throne with the meaning of *al-'Ulumū*? He (as-Sābūnī) stated in regards to *istinwā'* and *al-'Ulumū*:

Ahl ul-Hadeeth believe and testify that Allāh is above the seven heavens over His Throne as His Book states. The 'Ulama of the Ummah from the Salaf (rahimahumullāh) do not differ on the fact that Allāh is over His Throne and His Throne is above His heavens.

Then as-Sābūnī continued with:

I heard al-Hākim Abū 'Abdullāh mention in his books *at-Tāreekh* (which he compiled for the people of Naysaboor) and *Ma'rifat ul-Hadeeth*, which are both works the like of which were not authored before, that: I heard Abū Ja'far Muhammad bin Sālih bin Hānī' say: I heard Abū Bakr Muhammad bin Ishāq bin Khuzaymah say: “Whoever does not say that Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, is over His Throne above the seven heavens is a disbeliever. His blood becomes halāl unless he repents. If he does not repent then he is to be executed and his body is to be thrown onto the rubbish dump so that Muslims and non-Muslims who have agreements and pacts with Muslims are not harmed by the stench of his corpse. His wealth is to be taken as booty and no Muslim is to inherit from him because a Muslim is not to inherit from a disbeliever as the Prophet

¹ *'Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth*, pp.36-39

(*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) said: “A Muslim is not to inherit from a disbeliever and a disbeliever does not inherit from a Muslim” (Reported by al-Bukhārī).”

Then he mentioned the hadeeth of al-Jāriyah of “where is Allāh?” and said:

The Messenger of Allāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) ruled her to have Islām and īmān when she acknowledged that her Lord was in the heavens and knew her Lord by the Attribute of al-'Uluww (Transcendence) and al-Fawqiyah (Aboveness).¹

As-Sābūnī said:

The difference between Ahl us-Sunnah and Ahl ul-Bida' is that when they (Ahl ul-Bida') hear the reports about the Lord's Attributes they reject them outright from the original foundation and neither accept them nor submit to the apparent meaning. Then they falsely interpret the Attributes with interpretations with which they intend to raise the report from its original foundation...²

As-Sābūnī stated in regards to affirming Allāh's *Nuzūol*:

The People of hadeeth affirm the Lord's *Nuzūol* every night to the heavens of the *dunyā* without them making *tashbeeh* with the *nuzūol* of the creation and with neither *tamtheel* nor *takyeeef*. Rather, they affirm what the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) did and stop where he did. They leave the authentic reports as they have been relayed upon the apparent meaning and refer knowledge of it to Allāh.³

As-Sābūnī stated in regards to affirming *ar-Ru'yab*:

Ahl us-Sunnah testify that the believers will see their Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, with their eyes and will look at Him. This is based on what has been reported in the authentic reports from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*), such as like when he said: “Indeed you will see your Lord as you see the moon on the night of a full-moon.” The *tashbeeh* is in regards to viewing not in what is being seen.⁴

As-Sābūnī stated in regards to *īmān*:

Also from the madhhab of Ahl ul-Hadeeth is: that īmān is statement, action and knowledge, it increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience.⁵

As-Sābūnī stated in regards to the characteristics of Ahl ul-Bida':

The signs of the bida' and its adherents are clearly apparent and of the most manifest of their signs and characteristics is their severe hatred of those who carry the reports of the Prophet (*sallallāhu*

¹ Ibid., pp.44-45

² Ibid., p.48

³ Ibid., p.50

⁴ Ibid., p.76

⁵ Ibid., p.78

'alayhi wassallam) and mocking them by calling them "Hashwiyah" (insignificant), "Jahalah" (ignoramuses) and "Dhāhiriyyah" (literalists).¹

These are some of the acknowledgements of creed made by Imām Abū 'Uthmān as-Sābūnī which indicate that he followed the madhhab of the *Salaf*. They also indicate that he was opposed to the way of the Khalaf such as the 'Ash'arīs and others. As-Sābūnī transmitted much from Imām Ibn Khuzaymah in regards to creed and it is well-known that Ibn Khuzaymah opposed the Kullābiyyah and the 'Ash'ariyyah and cautioned against them. So after all of this do you view that it is correct to ascribe this Imām to the 'Ash'arīs?!

Imām al-Hāfidh al-Mufassir 'Imādudden Abu'l-Fidā' Ismā'eel bin Katheer (d. 774 AH/1373 CE):

The two authors claim that al-Hāfidh Ibn Katheer was 'Ash'arī basing this upon what was relayed within *ad-Durar al-Kāminah* in the biography of Ibrāheem bin Muhammad Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah:

Of his anecdotes are that there was a dispute between him and 'Imādudden Ibn Katheer in regards to teaching people. Ibn Katheer said to him: 'You hate me because I am 'Ash'arī.' Ibn Qayyim replied: 'Even if you had hair from head to toe the people would not believe that you're 'Ash'arī as your Shaykh is Ibn Taymiyyah.'²

Firstly: Ibn Hajar did not mention who reported this story.

Secondly: Even if it was authentic the claim is apparently void because Ibrāheem Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah did not believe Ibn Katheer when he mentioned the claim due to Ibn Katheer's Shaykh being Ibn Taymiyyah who was well-known for refuting the 'Ash'arīs and invalidating their beliefs which opposed the Book, Sunnah and way of the *Salaf* of this Ummah. This is something which is apparent, because how can a student of a person who has lengthy words supporting the *madhhab* of the *Salaf* and was harmed to the extent that the 'Ash'arīs got together to incite the imprisonment of him on a number of occasions, how can such a student of person be 'Ash'arī? This is something which is unheard of. For this reason you will find that Ibn Katheer does not have any statements against Ibn Taymiyyah within *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, except that he says regarding Ibn Taymiyyah: "our Shaykh, the 'Allāmah said...", "our Shaykh, the 'Allāmah used to say...", and would perhaps say at times: "the genius of the era, Shaykh ul-Islām Abu'l'Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah..." and at times would often say: "I heard our Shaykh Taqīuddeen Ibn Taymiyyah and our Shaykh al-Hāfidh Abu'l-Hajjāj al-Mizzī say to each other:

¹ Ibid., p.109

² Ibn Hajar, *ad-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mā'iat ith-Thāminah* (Cairo: Umm ul-Qurā' li't-Taba'ah wa't-Tawzee'ah, ed. Muhammad Sayyid Jād ul-Haqq), vol.1, p.60.

‘This man has read the Musnad of Imām Ahmad’ and both Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Mizzī heard it from him and he did not make any errors. It is enough that these two praised him and they are who they are.’ These quotes indicate Ibn Katheer’s veneration of Ibn Taymiyyah, so it is very unlikely that he would describe him like this if he opposed him in the most important matter which is *'aqeedah*. In his *Tāreekh* Ibn Katheer highlighted much of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah’s runnings with his 'Ash'arī opposers. The most famous of these events are the debates which took place between Ibn Taymiyyah and his 'Ash'arī opposition in regards to his *'aqeedah* work entitled *al-Wāsiyyah*. Within his book *Tāreekh*, Ibn Katheer supported Ibn Taymiyyah and stated:

The first of the three sessions that Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah had was on Monday 8th Rajab 705 AH (23 January 1306 CE) and the judges and 'Ulama attended. Shaykh Taqīuddeen bin Taymiyyah was present at the palace of the deputy governor. Shaykh Taqīuddeen’s creedal work *al-Wāsiyyah* was read and some research took place in regards to parts of it and as a result the matter was adjourned till the second sitting.

So after the prayer on Jumu'ah on the 12th Rajab, Shaykh Safīuddeen al-Hindī attended and spoke at great length with Shaykh Taqīuddeen however Ibn Taymiyyah overcame him like a sea overflowing. Then the situation led to the *'aqeedah* (of Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Wāsiyyah*) being accepted and the Shaykh returned home revered and honoured. These sessions were held on account of a document from the Sultan which had been sent (to the Sultān) by the Mālikī Qādī Ibn Makhloof, Shaykh Nasr al-Manbajī, Shaykh al-Jāshankeer and other enemies of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah. Shaykh Taqīuddeen had enemies from the fuqahā who envied him due to his prominent position within the State, his uniqueness in commanding the good and forbidding he evil, the people’s obedience to him, the people’s love of him, his vast amount of followers, his standing up for the truth, his knowledge and his action.

The third session was held on the 7 Sha'bān at the palace and the group concurred on being pleased with the aforementioned *'aqeedah* (i.e. *al-Wāsiyyah*), then a document was released on the 26 of Sha'bān which stated: ‘We have heard the investigation into Shaykh Taqīuddeen bin Taymiyyah and what he believes in has reached us within these sessions and he is upon the madhhab of the Salaf. We only wanted this in order to make him innocent of what had been ascribed to him.’¹

Ibn Katheer went to great lengths in mentioning these incidents and supported his Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah. It is well-known that *al-'Aqeedat al-Wāsiyyah* opposed the madhhab of the 'Ash'arāh in regards to Allāh’s Attributes, Qadr, the Qur'ān, *imān*, Prophethood, miracles and other matters of belief. As for an academic attestation of the beliefs of the Imāms then this is not gained via reference to stories as we have mentioned. Rather it is confirmed by clear texts that the scholars

¹ Ibn Katheer, *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'arif, 1977 CE, 2nd Edn.), vol.14, pp.34-36

authored. It is also well-known that the most famous works of Ibn Katheer are his *Tafseer* wherein he outlined his creed clearly and succinctly, and for this reason the two authors avoided referring to it except in one instance. This was perhaps due to the fact that they knew that the work nullifies their claim that he was 'Ash'arī. Ibn Katheer also has a treatise entitled *al-I'tiqād* wherein he clarifies his creed and says:

If the Mighty Book and the authentic reports report affirmation of Hearing, Seeing, Eyes, Face, Knowledge, Ability, Greatness, Willing, Wanting, Saying, Speaking, Pleasure, Displeasure, Love, Hate, Joy and Laughter – then it is obligatory to believe in that without tashbeeh of these Attributes with the attributes of the creation, and to end at what Allāh and His Messenger said without: adding, increasing, takyeef, tashbeeh, tahreef, tabdeel and taghyeer. And without removing and averting the words from what is known by the Arabs, all of this and the likes have to be withheld from.¹

This is clear speech affirming Allāh's Attributes in a real sense and prohibiting *ta'weel*, *taghyeer* and *tashbeeh* of the Attributes with those of the creation, and he did not differentiate between one Attribute and another. Here I will transmit some of Ibn Katheer's writings wherein he acknowledges the correct belief so that it will be known that Ibn Katheer was distinct from the 'Ashā'irah:

He stated in his *tafseer* of:

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“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

{*al-A'rāf* (7): 54}

He stated:

As for Allāh's statement,

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“...and then established Himself above the Throne.”

...the people had several conflicting opinions over its meaning. However, we follow the way that our righteous predecessors took in this regard, such as Mālik, al-Awzā'ī, ath-Thawrī, al-Layth bin Sa'd, ash-Shaffī, Ahmad, Ishāq bin Rāhawayh and the rest of the scholars of Islam, in past and present times. Surely, we accept the apparent meaning of, *al-Istawā'*, without discussing its true

¹ From the manuscript, transmitted by Ridā bin Na'sān bin Mu'tī, *'Alāqat ul-Ithbāt wa't-Tafweedh* (Riyādh: Dār ul-Hijrah, 6th Edn., 1416 AH), p.82

essence, equating it (with the attributes of the creation), or altering or denying it (in any way or form). We also believe that the meaning that comes to those who equate Allāh with the creation is to be rejected, for nothing is similar to Allāh,

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

{*ash-Sbūrā* (42): 11}

Indeed, we assert and affirm what the Imams said, such as Nu'aym bin Hammād Al-Khuzā'ī, the teacher of Imām al-Bukhārī, who said, “Whoever likens Allāh with His creation, will have committed Kufr. Whoever denies what Allāh has described Himself with, will have committed Kufr. Certainly, there is no resemblance (of Allāh with the creation) in what Allāh and His Messenger have described Him with. Whoever attests to Allāh’s attributes that the plain Ayat and authentic Hadeeths have mentioned, in the manner that suits Allāh’s majesty, all the while rejecting all shortcomings from Him, will have taken the path of guidance.”¹

This makes it apparent that Ibn Katheer agreed with the *Salaf* in regards to leaving the Attributes as they have come without resorting to *ta'weel* and *tabreef* and without believing in *tashbeeh* and *tamtheel*, and that affirming the Attributes upon the apparent meaning does not necessitate *tashbeeh* as he transmitted from Nu'aym bin Hammād. Ibn Katheer states at the end of his words: “The path of guidance is to describe Allāh with what befits Him”, this is clear in nullifying the claim of his 'Ash'arism, as the 'Ash'arīs resort to *ta'weel* and do not affirm the apparent text which befits Allāh. Rather they claim that the apparent meaning necessitates *tashbeeh* and we have clarified that the affirmation of the apparent meaning does not necessitate *tashbeeh* and that whoever understands from affirmation that this is comparing Allāh to His creation – then such a person is a Mushabbih. For this reason Ibn Katheer states:

It is clearly apparent at first to the Mushabbiheen to negate from Allāh (His Attributes), yet Allāh is not to be compared to anything from His creation.

So Ibn Katheer specified this sick understanding as only coming from the Mushabbihah who understand from Allāh’s Attributes what is applicable to the creation’s attributes. When Ibn Katheer mentioned the Imāms and leaders of the Sunnah in regards to issues of belief he did not mention Ibn Kullāb, al-Qalānisī,² al-Karābīsī, al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī, al-'Ash'arī or any of their

¹ Tafseer Ibn Katheer (Beirut: Dār ul-Fikr, 1401 AH), vol.2, p.221

Translator’s note: Refer to Online version of tafseer: http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1242&Itemid=62

² Abu'l'Abbās al-Qalānisī

companions. So it is impossible that Ibn Kātheer could be 'Ash'arī and then not refer to Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī in what they followed him in. Ibn Kātheer stated in regards to Allāh's saying:

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“...that you would be brought up under My Eye.”

{*TāHā* (20): 39}

“Abū 'Imrān al-Jawnī said, ‘this means, ‘You will be raised under Allāh’s Eye.’ Qatādah said: ‘To be nourished under Allāh’s Eye.’ Ma'mar bin al-Muthanā said: ‘So that He can see.’¹ This is affirmation of Allāh’s Eye and Ibn Kātheer did not resort to *ta'weel* or *ta'teel* of this. Ibn Kātheer stated in regards to Allāh’s saying,

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“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rahmān* (55): 27}

This is like when Allāh says,

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“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.”

{*al-Qasas* (28): 88}

Allāh described His Noble Face with Honour in this verse as He is,

ä ä äÔ

“...Owner of Majesty and Honor.”

{*ar-Rahmān* (55): 27}

Meaning: He is worthy of reverence and not to be disobeyed, and He is to be obeyed and not opposed.²

¹ Tafseer Ibn Kātheer, vol.3, p.148

² Ibid., vol.4, p.274

So contemplate on Ibn Katheer's affirmation of Allāh's Face which is described with Majesty and Honour. Ibn Katheer stated in regards to Allāh saying,

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“And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

Ibn Katheer said:

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“And your Lord has come...”

{*al-Fajr* (89): 22}

Means: to divide judgement among His creation. The Lord will come to judge has He wills and the angels will come rank upon rank before Him.¹

Ibn Katheer affirmed Allāh's Coming has He wills and did not say that it means “dominion” or “not coming but His Affair” or “His Punishment” and the likes. Ibn Katheer's *tafseer* is filled with similar to this, so where is his 'Ash'arism?!

What is also strange is that the two authors had transmitted from Ibn Katheer his affirmation that Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī went through three stages, the last of which was al-'Ash'arī's return to the Sunnah and his affirmation of Allāh's Attributes without differentiating between one Attribute and another. This was the stage wherein al-'Ash'arī left the way of the *Kullābiyyah-'Ash'ariyyah* yet the two authors strove hard to invalidate what Ibn Katheer said, then after this you see that the two authors claim Ibn Katheer was 'Ash'arī?! So if this is not a contradiction we don't know what is!?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is clear from what has preceded that those who we have mentioned are innocent from the claim of 'Ash'arism, and it has been explained that they followed the way of the *Salaf* in affirming Allāh's Attributes without *takyeef* and *tashbeeh*. I did not refer to all of those that the two authors ascribed to 'Ash'arism yet are in reality free of it, out of fear of the length. The two authors claimed that Abū Ja'far at-Tahāwī, Abu'l-Madhfar as-Sam'ānī, al-Hāfidh al-Mizzī and others were

¹ Ibid., vol.4, p.511

Translator's note: Refer to Online version here:
http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1174&Itemid=145

'Ash'arīs. Rather I mentioned a sample in order to demonstrate the distance of the two authors from academic verification and their gratification in what they have not been given. Indeed, the two authors unfortunately went even further than that by claiming that the Sahābah and Tābi'een were Mutakallimeen! For the two authors (p.270) transmit from 'AbdulQāhir al-Baghdādī who acknowledged this by saying:

The Mutakallimeen from the Sahābah made ta'weel such as: 'Alī bin Abī Tālib, may Allāh make his face noble, and then 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar. The Mutakallimeen from Ahl us-Sunnah from the Tābi'een made ta'weel such as: 'Umar bin 'Abdul'Azeez who has a valuable treatise refuting the Qadariyah, then Zayd bin 'Alī Zayn ul-'Ābideen then al-Hasan al-Basrī then ash-Sha'bī and then az-Zuhrī...

I do not know how this can be the case when 'Ilm ul-Kalām emerged at the beginning of the second Islamic century? And how can this be agreed upon when the *Salaf* censured 'Ilm ul-Kalām, forbade it and cautioned people against it?! The narrations regarding this are many and works were authored in this regard and it is almost impossible to find a book of Sunnah which does not contain a chapter censuring *kalām*.

INVALIDITY OF THE CLAIM THAT THE 'ASH'ARĪS ARE THE MAJORITY OF THE UMMAH

There is an oft-repeated claim from some of the 'Ash'arīs that they are the majority of the Ummah. This is a claim that many of them transmit and mention in their books and lectures and the ignorant people have become deceived by this due to their lack of knowledge of the reality. The two authors state (p.248):

The 'Ash'arī madhhab and those who agree with them from Ahl us-Sunnah are the majority of the Ummah and the major people of virtue within the Ummah.

The two authors also state (p.31):

This is the madhhab that nine centuries of the Islamic Ummah have adhered to including its vast majority, 'Ulama and the common masses.

There is no doubt that this is a mere claim which is devoid of proof and the historical reality denies such an assertion. What is sufficient to invalidate this claim is what has been mentioned prior explaining the madhhab of the *Salaf* and their way and the opposition of the 'Ash'arīs to this way and the expulsion from the way of the *Salaf*. All of their texts that we have transmitted within this book, beginning from the Sahābah, Tābi'een and those Imāms who came after them (*radi Allāhu 'anhum*), and those from the *Salaf* that we have not transmitted from – all oppose the 'Ashā'irah in regards to *Usool of I'tiqād* (principles of belief) and thus invalidate the statements of the 'Ashā'irah and their madhhab. Not to mention what we have transmitted from the *Salaf* in terms of the abuse of the 'Ashā'irah and deeming them to have left the fold of the Sunnah and the right path. What is mentioned in this regard from Ibn ul-Qayyim in *Ijtīmā' ul-Juyooṣḥ il-Islāmiyyah* and adh-Dhahabī in *al-'Ulum* from the Sahābah, Tābi'een, those who followed them, the Imāms and the 'Ulama is enough for you. For they all affirmed the matter of Allāh's *'Ulum* Himself over His creation which is contrary to the belief of the 'Ashā'irah, and this is just one matter of creed. So what if the remaining creedal issues which are contrary to the beliefs of the 'Ash'arīs were added?! So is it possible after this that it can be claimed that the 'Ash'arīs are the majority of the Ummah when they oppose the first virtuous generations. Ibn ul-Mabrad mentions in his book *Jam' ul-Juyooṣḥ wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir* that more than four hundred scholars, including Muhadditheen, *fuqahā*, worshippers and Imāms, who all opposed the 'Ash'arites and censured them. These scholars range from the time of al-'Ash'arī himself up until the time of Ibn ul-Mabrad. Abu'l-Hasan al-Barbahārī commenced and Jamāluddeen Yūsuf bin Muhammad al-Mardāwī, the author of *al-Insāf*, concluded. Ibn ul-Mabrad stated:

By Allāh, by Allāh, by Allāh! We have left out more than what has been mentioned and if we were to study the matter in more detail and follow-up all who oppose the 'Ash'arīs, from their day up to today, then the figure would go into thousands (of scholars who opposed the 'Ashā'irah).¹

Rather indeed, Ibn 'Asākir, who served the 'Ash'arīs with his book *Tabyeen Kadhib al-Muftarī*, admits that the majority of people during his time and before were not upon what the 'Ash'arīs followed. Ibn 'Asākir stated in *at-Tabyeen*:

So if it said: 'The vast amount of people in all epochs, and the majority of common people within all countries, do not follow al-'Ash'arī and neither uncritically follow him in everything nor agree with his madhhab. These are the vast majority and their path is the best way.'²

Ibn ul-Mabrad stated in commenting upon this:

These words indicate the accuracy of what we have stated, that during the time of Ibn 'Asākir and before, the 'Ashā'irah were over-powered and then after that their affair did not manifest.³

So if Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī was only born in 260 AH, or in 270 AH according to what some say, then what was the Ummah upon before him? Do you see that the Ummah followed the 'Ash'arī creed which was not mentioned at all as they claim?! Or was the correct '*aqeedah*' hidden from the Ummah until Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī emerged and awoke the Ummah from its slumber!?! So if someone was to say: **"al-'Ash'arī did not come with anything new rather he explained and clarified the issues when refuting the Mu'tazilah and exposing them. This is the reason for the ascription to him because he had become a scholar of the Sunnah that opposed the Mu'tazilah."** The answer to this is: there is no doubt that this understanding is far from correct verification not to mention historical reality. The emergence of the Mu'tazilah preceded that of al-'Ash'arī by more than a century, not to mention the emergence of the Jahmiyyah which had an even earlier manifestation than that of the Mu'tazilah. It is well-known that the emergence of these sects led to a stringent response from the Salaf and the Imāms who greatly rejected these two sects. The *Salaf* and the Imāms judged these sects as being misguided rather indeed they deemed the Jahmiyyah as being upon *kufr*. The Imāms of the Sunnah beginning with al-Hasan al-Basrī up to the time of al-'Ash'arī refuted the doubts of these heretical sects and exposed them. The books of the Sunnah are filled with narrations from the Salaf rejecting the beliefs of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah and refuting what they had innovated.

¹ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, p.281

² *Tabyeen Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p.331

³ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, no.2283

Refer to the book *as-Sunnah* by 'Abdullāh bin al-Imām Ahmad; *Usool ul-I'tiqād* by al-Lālikā'ī; *al-Ibānah* by Ibn Battah and many other works. We have transmitted much of their statements within this book. The *Salaf* did not suffice with just one or two words against these sects, rather they authored books and compilations refuting them, such as *ar-Radd 'ala'l-Jahmiyyah* by Imām Ahmad and his son 'Abdullāh, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Qutaybah, ad-Dārimī, al-Karāmī, Ibn Mandah, Abi'l-'Abbās as-Sirāj and many others. Not to mention what the books of the Sunnah include in terms of refutations of the Jahmiyyah as al-Bukhārī did in his *Sabeeh*. The other books of the Sunnah are also sufficient for you, which were authored in order to clarify the belief of the *Salaf* and refuted the people of innovation and the opposers from the Mu'attilah and Mushabbihah.¹

It is well-known that the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah gained power at the end of the 2nd Islamic century after the Caliph al-Ma'moon became affected by them and the major fitna occurred in which 'Ulama were tried and in which Imām Ahmad was severely punished – this was the *fitna* of the belief that the Qur'ān is created. Three Caliphs went through this *fitna*: al-Ma'moon, al-Wāthiq and al-Mu'tasim this led the *Salaf* exerting great efforts in exposing the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah and answering their doubts as the *Salaf* feared that they would affect people. Yet with all of these refutations that the *Salaf* and the Imāms did against the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, and with all of the *fitna* that occurred due to them, we do not find that any of the *Salaf* acknowledged what al-'Ash'arī did in *'aqeedah* (before he retracted), neither in terms of *ta'seel* (foundational matters) nor *taq'eed* (binding matters). We therefore find that the texts from the *Salaf* are frank in rejecting al-'Ash'arī's (prior) creedal principles regarding Allāh's Names and Attributes as has been explained in a previous chapter. Not to mention other areas of creed such as īmān, Qadar, Prophethood and other matters of belief which we have not highlighted within this book.

So whoever thinks that the *Salaf* were neither able to clarify the essentials of creed nor refute, expose, answer and critique the likes of the Jahmiyyah and the Mu'tazilah, until al-'Ash'arī came along and clarified what the *Salaf* did not know about and refute the Mu'tazilah from whence the *Salaf* were unable – has a bad opinion of the *Salaf* and has deemed the *Salaf* to be ignorant and incapable. This in itself is enough as misguidance and failure for such a person. Ibn ul-Mabrad stated in invalidating this claim:

¹ To know more about the books of the *Salaf* which refute the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah refer to the treatise: 'AbdusSalām bin Burjis, *Tāreekh Tadween al-'Aqeedah as-Salafiyyah* (Riyadh, KSA: Dār as-Samee'ī, 1426 AH, 1st Edn.).

Subhān Allāh! So before al-'Ash'arī's tawbah (from I'tizāl) are we to believe that the Muslims had no Imāms to guide them until an innovator who repented from his innovation was taken as an Imām?! As if the people died before had all passed away before him and there remained none suitable as an Imām until an innovator had repented from his innovation and then became an Imām for the Muslims!? Are we to believe that all of the people of Islām gave precedence to a Mutakallim over all of the Imāms of hadeeth during a situation when the 'Ulama were numerous? What is this folly?¹

Then Ibn al-Mabrad stated:

How can that be claimed about a man who spent 40 years of his life upon I'tizāl and then repented at the end of his life and lived a stage of repentance for ten years or more, or less, according to the different narrations about his life. How can one who was like this be an Imām for the Muslims? When did he study 'Ilm and become firmly grounded in it to become taken as an Imām besides the Imāms of the Sunnah and Ahl ul-Hadeeth? This is an insidious assertion, rather it is madness!

Ibn ul-Mabrad continued in his refutation of Ibn 'Asākir:

He (i.e. Ibn 'Asākir) affirmed that al-'Ash'arī spent most of his upon a way besides the Sunnah and that al-'Ash'arī was a Mu'tazilī Mutakallim and then repented from I'tizāl but not from kalām. SubhānAllāh! Can a person of this fashion and of this state be made into an Imām for the Muslims and be taken as one for guidance while the likes of Abū Haneefah, Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Ibn ul-Mubāarak are abandoned and not mentioned except for this person who was upon innovation for most of his life?²

It can also be said that Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, after returning to the way of the Kullābiyyah and then the way of the Sunnah, was not prominent in any of the Islamic sciences except 'Ilm ul-Kalām. So whoever's condition is like this has to follow the way of the *Salaf* and be ascribed to its Imāms of the Sunnah. This is a matter which Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī acknowledges and mentions in the first part of his book, which represents his last stage, *al-Ibānah*. For in this book he ascribes Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal to be an Imām of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah. As for him himself (i.e. al-'Ash'arī) being an Imām who is to be followed and ascribed to then this is not only foolhardy but rather it is deviated. It is well-known that the Muslims were seriously upon the Sunnah and the right way until the Kullābiyyah sect emerged and fitan developed and the Muslims were tested. By the end of the fourth Islamic century some of the 'Ash'arī founding fathers emerged along with other people of *kalām*. During this period of tribulation the Salafīs became powerful and they exposed the false and void ideas of the people of *kalām*. This reached

¹ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, p.105

² *Ibid.*, p.108

the extent that the Abbasid Caliph al-Qādir Billāh promoted the well-known 'aqeedah entitled 'al-Qadariyyah' which we have mentioned prior. He ordered that this creed be sent to all reaches of the Abbasid state and to all sections of the Islamic Ummah. This 'aqeedah was written by Abū 'Abdullāh al-Karajī also known as al-Qassāb (d. 360 AH/971 CE) as mentioned by Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in many instances within his books.¹ This means that he authored the creed for al-Qādir Billāh before he attained rulership of the Caliphate, because he assumed rule in the year 381 AH (991 CE) and then manifested it in his Khilāfah and sent it to different regions. Al-Wazeer Ibn Juhayr stated: during the days of al-Qādir the creed was read in Masājid and congregational mosques (Jawāmi').²

Those who implemented this order and disseminated the 'aqeedah (entitled al-Qadariyyah) and called the people to it were the major kings of the Ghaznawī state and the conqueror of India Mahmood bin Saboktakeen who used to rule over most of the Eastern Islamic world up to India.³ He ordered that the Sunnah be implemented and that the people of innovation (Ahl ul-Bida') be publically cursed upon the *Manābir* (minbars). Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Mahmood bin Saboktakeen depended upon what al-Qādir did in spreading the Sunnah and suppressing bida' within his kingdom. He went further also by commanding that the Ahl ul-Bida' be publically cursed on the Manābir (minbars) and as a result the Jahmiyyah, Rāfidah, Hulooliyyah, Mu'tazilah and Qadariyyah were all publically cursed, along with the 'Ashā'irah ('Ash'arīs).⁴

Ibn Taymiyyah also said:

For this reason many of the kings and 'Ulama attached great importance to the order of Islām and jihad against its enemies, to the extent that they cursed the Rāfidah, Jahmiyyah and others upon the Manābir (minbars). To the extent that every sect which was viewed as being upon bida' was publically cursed, thus the Kullābiyyah and 'Ashā'irah ('Ash'arīs) were publically cursed as occurred during the kingdom of Mahmood bin Saboktakeen.⁵

Adh-Dhahabī stated:

Ibn Saboktakeen represented the order of the Caliph al-Qādir by spreading the Sunnah within his kingdom and threatened to execute the Rāfidah, Ismā'eliyyah, Qarāmitah,

¹ See *Dar' at-Ta'arud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql*, vol.6, p.252 and *as-Safadiyyah*, vol.2, p.162.

² This was mentioned by Ibn ul-Jawzī in *al-Muntadham* in regards to the events of the year 360 AH (971 CE) also refer to the previous two citations in the footnote above.

³ The great Ghaznavid king who ruled between 388-412 AH (998-1021 CE).

⁴ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān Talbees al-Jahmiyyah*, vol.2, p.331-332

⁵ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.15.

Mushabbihah, Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah and they were all publically cursed on the Manābir (minbars).¹

Then during the Caliphate of al-Qā'im Billāh Ibn al-Qādir some of the 'Ashā'irah and their heads were raised up and the book *Ta'weel Mushkil ul-Hadeeth* by Ibn Fawrak emerged which was filled with false interpretations of Allāh's Attributes. Al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā established the truth and supported the Sunnah and authored *Ibtāl at-Ta'weelāt li-Akbbār is-Sifāt* which was a refutation of the *ta'weelāt* of Ibn Fawrak. A fitnah emerged and at this point the Caliph al-Qā'im Bi'amrillāh ordered that the creed entitled *al-I'tiqād al-Qādirī* be read and gained an agreement from the 'Ulama that this creed was authentic; this was in the year 433 AH (1042 CE). Ibn Katheer stated in regards to the events of the year 433 AH (1042 CE):

Within this year the creed entitled *al-I'tiqād al-Qādirī* was read and was compiled by the Caliph al-Qādir and was affirmed by the 'Ulama and Zuhhād of the day as being the authentic creed of the Muslims and that whoever opposed it had sinned and disbelieved. The first of the 'Ulama who attested to the creed was Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī bin 'Umar al-Qazwīnī and then other 'Ulama after him attested to it. Shaykh Abu'l-Faraj Ibn ul-Jawzī transmitted it in its totality in his *Muntadham*; it contains good sentences about the belief of the *Salaf*.²

Also from among the 'Ulama who signed to the *'aqeedah* was al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā as has been seen in what has been transmitted from his son in *at-Tabaqāt*. Then in the year 460 AH *al-I'tiqād al-Qādirī* was ordered to be read again within Jawāmi' and Masājid. Ibn ul-Jawzī stated:

It was read in the handwriting of Abū 'Alī bin al-Bannā who said: the associates, a group of *fuqahā* and the notables from the people of hadeeth gathered and asked about producing *al-I'tiqād al-Qādirī*. So I read it and they all answered, Abū Muslim al-Laythī al-Bukhārī was present and he had the book *at-Tawbeed* by Ibn Khuzaymah with him which he read to the gathering. Al-Qā'im supported Ibn Fawrak and the Mu'tadī'ah were openly cursed. Al-Bannā also said: there is no belief that we hold except for what this creed (*al-I'tiqād al-Qādirī*) includes and the gathering were thankful for that.³

Look at this support for renouncing Ahl ul-Bida', the 'Ashā'irah included and then look at what the two authors state (p.252) in reversing the real situation:

Rather we add and say that it is not far off that Ibn Jareer ascribed himself to him (i.e. al-'Ash'arī). So even though nothing has reached us from his books the historical accounts have mentioned that all of Ahl us-Sunnah in the Islamic world supported the way of Imām Abu'l-Hasan and Imām Abū Mansoor.

Ibn al-Mabrad stated in affirming what we have mentioned:

¹ Adh-Dhahabī, *as-Siyar*, vol.15, pp.135

² Ibn Katheer, *al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol.12, p.49

³ *Al-Muntadham* (events of 460 AH)

I will mention some words to you regarding how they were: al-'Ash'arī and his companions during his time did not make apparent what they were upon (of Kullābite creed) among the people, and none of them were able to even utter a word about what they followed and believed in. Then al-'Ash'arī and his companions passed away and we do not curse any of them as hopefully he made real *tawbah*, rather we ask Allāh to be easy with him¹ and his companions. This was during the time of Shaykh ul-Islām al-Ansārī² and if even one, two or three of them ('Ashā'irah) wanted to speak about what they adhered to in their madhhab they would have to hide it so that no one would see them fully. This was mentioned by Shaykh ul-Islām al-Ansārī and others and he is an accepted Imām by all of the sects, so whoever does not believe me should refer to the book *Dhamm ul-Kalām* wherein this ('Ash'arī concealment) is mentioned within many instances of it. **Then some time after that, during the time of al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī and others, they had some emergence yet they were overcome and publically cursed on the Manābir (minbars) and a group of them were negated.**³ Then some time after that, during the time of Ibn al-Jawzī, Abu'l-Khattāb and others, they ('Ashā'irah) manifested themselves, became prominent and became powerful and at times were established yet at other times things went against them. Then during the time of Ibn 'Asākir and others, they ('Ashā'irah) manifested themselves and became much more prominent than before and at times became manifest and established and at other times were vanquished. Then during the time of Shaykh Taqīuddeen Ibn Taymiyyah their affair became settled and they totally had the upperhand, however Ibn Taymiyyah resisted them along with his companions even though victory was apparently with them. Then after this calamity spread what they ('Ashā'irah) were upon gained the upperhand while the clear Sunnah and what the *Salaf* followed became hidden. *La hawla wa la Quwwata ila Billāhi al-'Alī al-'Adheem!*⁴

As for the reason for the dissemination of the 'Ash'arī *'aqeedah* within the later centuries, then it has been mentioned by al-Maqrīzī in his *Khutat* wherein he stated:

The madhhab of Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī spread in 'Irāq from around 380 AH and from there spread to Shām. When the victorious king Salāhuddeen Yūsuf bin Ayyūb took control over Egypt, his main judge Sadruddeen 'AbdulMalik bin 'Īsā bin Darbās al-Mārānī and himself were adherents to this school of thought. The madhhab was also spread by the just ruler Nūruddeen Mahmūd bin Zinkī in Damascus. Salāhuddeen memorised a text authored by Qutbuddeen Abu'l-Ma'ālī Mas'ood bin Muhammad bin Mas'ood an-Naysabūrī and this ('Ash'arī) text was then studied and memorised by Salāhuddeen's offspring. This gave prominence and status to the madhhab

¹ Because he died upon the correct creed insha'Allāh as exemplified in his books *al-Ibānah* and *Maqalāt ul-Islamiyyeen*. [TN]

² He is Shaykh ul-Islām Abū Ismā'eel 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad al-Ansārī al-Harawī (d. 481 AH/1088 CE).

³ As happened during the Khilāfah of al-Qādir Billāh, within the state of Mahmūd bin Saboktakeen and the Seljuk state of Tughrul Bek.

⁴ *Jam' ul-Juyūsh wa'd-Dasākir 'ala Ibn 'Asākir*, pp.281-282

(attributed) to al-'Ash'arī and was taken on board by the people during their rule.¹ This was continued by all of the successive rulers from Banī Ayyūb (the Ayyubids) and then during the rule of the Turkish kings (Mamluks).

Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Tumart, one of the rulers of al-Maghrib (Morocco), agreed with this ('Ash'arī) trend when he travelled to al-'Irāq. He took the 'Ash'arī madhhab on board via Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī and when Ibn Tumart returned to al-Maghrib he caused a clash² and began to teach the people of the land the 'Ash'arī madhhab and instituted it for the people. When he died 'AbdulMumin bin 'Alī al-Mīṣī succeeded him and was referred to as the 'leader of the believers', him and his sons seized control of Morocco and were named the "Muwahhidoon" ('the montheists'). This is how the Muwahhidoon state came to fruition in Morocco and they spilt the blood of all who opposed the 'aqeedah laid down by Ibn Tumart, who they viewed as being the infallible Mahdī.³ Look how many were killed during that the numbers of which can only be enumerated by Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, this is well known within the history books.

This was the reason for the spread of the madhhab (attributed to) al-'Ash'arī and how it spread within the Islamic lands. This is to the extent that all other madhāhib (of Sunnī 'aqeedah) have been forgotten and people are ignorant of if to the extent that today there exists no other madhhab (of Sunnī 'aqeedah) contrary to it! Except for the madhhab of the Hanbalīs who follow Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal (radi Allāhu 'anhu), for they were upon the way of the Salaf and did not view that any form of figurative interpretation be made about Allāh's Attributes. So after seven hundred years after the Hijrah the actions of the Hanbalīs became famed in Damascus due to Taqīuddeen Abu'l-'Abbās Ahmad bin 'AbdulHakam bin 'AbdusSalām bin Taymiyyah al-Harrānī. He supported the madhhab of the *Salaf* and exerted great efforts in refuting the *madhhab* of the 'Ash'arīrah and he strongly criticised them aswell as the Rāfidah and Sūfiyyah.⁴

The words of al-Maqrīzī here clarify the time and cause for the spread of the 'Asharite *madhhab*, the main cause being that it was obligated upon people to the extent that force and death occurred as a result, as in the case of Ibn Tumart and his rule over al-Maghrib and al-Andalus.

¹ Furthermore, the 'Ash'arīs in Egypt during that time were active against the Fatimiyyah Rawāfid who were ruling over Egypt, as a result the institution of a formal creed was a move to quell the development of the Rawāfid within Egypt and Shām. The Fatimid-Shi'a built *al-Azhar University* and when Salāhuddeen defeated the Fatimids their teachings were replaced with what the 'Ash'arīs there had codified. [TN]

² Ibn Tumart, after debating with the scholars of Fez, was deemed to be a radical and was thus imprisoned for his beliefs and views at the bequest of the Murābit (Almoravid) ruler at the time 'Ali bin Yūsuf.

³ Ibn Tumart actually declared himself to be a descendent of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and the Mahdī while he was promoting the 'Asharite creed in Morocco and North Africa and rebelling against the Murabitoon Muslim leaders!

⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khutāt: al-Mawā'idh wa'l-'Itibār bi Dhikr il-Khutāt wa'l-Athār* (Cairo: Maktabah ath-Thaqafiyyah ad-Deeniyyah, n.d.), vol.4, p.192

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah was tested, for he was harmed and imprisoned due to his clarification of the manhaj of Ahl us-Sunnah and his refutations of those who opposed.

As for the common Muslims then there is no doubt that if they were left without ('Ash'arī) instruction they would be upon their sound *fitra* and the '*aqeedah* of the *Salaf* and the people of hadeeth. They would not know about 'Ilm ul-Kalām, *ta'weel* of the *Sifāt* or anything of the sort. So it is not possible for anyone to claim contrary to this except one who is arrogant. The common person only knows that Allāh is above the heavens, over His 'Arsh and above the heavens, they know nothing of the 'Ash'arī statement that: "He is neither inside the world, nor outside of it, neither above nor below." The common person knows nothing except that Allāh speaks and that He spoke to Mūsā who heard Allāh's Speech, such a common person knows nothing about "Internal Speech" which compromises command, forbiddance and informing. The common person knows nothing except that Allāh loves those who repent, hates the disbelievers, is pleased with the obedient, displeased with the disobedient and does not know that these Attributes all refer to *irādah*. So if you wish just ask groups of Muslims and they will inform you of the reality of the situation which is that they are on their *fitrah*, as for the '*aqeedah* of the 'Ashā'irah then this is only known by one who studies it within institutes or schools. So the claim that the 'Ash'arī creed is that which the commonality of the Ummah adhere to is a totally and utterly void claim.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Firstly: At the end of his life, Abu'l-Hasan al-'Ash'arī returned back to the way of Ahl us-Sunnah and abandoned what he believed in before from Ibn Kullāb, this is written within his later books.

Secondly: Ibn Kullāb, al-'Ash'arī and their senior companions all agreed on affirming the *Sifāt* al-Khabariyyah which are relayed in the Qur'ān such as the Face, Two Hands, Two Eyes, *Istawā'*, not to mention *al-'Ulūww*. They also agreed on the invalidity of *ta'weel* of Allāh's Attributes and divesting them of the real meaning. They did not have two opinions on these Attributes at all and their books are clear in this regard.

Thirdly: The later 'Ash'arī opposition to the way of Ibn Kullāb and al-'Ash'arī after he returned back to the way of Ahl us-Sunnah. They also opposed the senior 'Ash'arī Imāms who were companions of al-'Ash'arī, for the later 'Ash'arīs inserted into the way of Ibn Kullāb and al-'Ash'arī some principles from the Mu'tazilah which they agreed with, such as *ta'weel* of the *Sifāt* al-Khabariyyah, rejecting Allāh's *Ulūww* above His creation and Allāh's *istiwā'* over His Throne.

Fourthly: The invalidity of the two authors' claim that they are followers of al-'Ash'arī and in agreement with the *Salaf*.

Fifthly: The falsity of 'Ashā'irah being the majority of the Ummah.