

Allah's Names and Attributes

By His Eminence Shaykh

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May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah, we praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and repent to Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our souls and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray none can guide. I bear witness that there is no true god but Allah alone who has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger, whom Allah has sent right before the Hour as a bearer of glad tidings, warner, caller to Allah by His permission and a luminous lantern. He conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, communicated sincere advice to his Ummah, and strove as due in the cause of Allah by his tongue, hand, and wealth until he passed away. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them with good conduct until the Day of Judgment. Dear Brothers, I remind myself and you of the blessing of Islam which Allah has bestowed upon this land in past and recent times. This land was the place where Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), the last of messengers, started his mission as he was sent to all the people; rather, to all humans and Jinn. This land from which Islam started and to which it shall return, as authentically reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) as he said: "Indeed, faith retreats to Madīnah just as a serpent retreats to its hole."

This land, the like of which I have never seen - and Allah is my witness - among all other Muslim countries, in terms of its holding fast to Islam, not just by its people, rather, by both its people and those whom Allah entrusted to rule it.

This great blessing may soon vanish if we fail to show gratitude for it as due. Unless we preserve this blessing by protecting and defending it, disbelief could replace faith and arrogance could replace submissiveness to Allah.

Dear Brothers,

This land, due to this great blessing of Islam, has been a central target for attacks that aimed at averting its people from their religion, not only in the field of ethics, but in matters of belief as well. Therefore, I address the youth, in particular; being the men of the future who have stronger resolve and determination than the elderly people, and being the main target of those attacks.

I address them to protect their land from the schemes of their enemies, who direct their attacks at them successively, so as to eliminate Islam; that great favor that Allah has bestowed upon us.

O Youth,

Seek Allah's help by knowledge of sharia that He taught you, then by the wisdom of the trustworthy and honest scholars who possess knowledge and clear proof. Seek help by all that to protect your land from the schemes of its enemies. You should know that the worldly life is subordinate to religion. You should know that the favor will not be complete, nor will the worldly life be perfect and good without faith and good deeds. Allah Almighty says, {Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do.} [Surat an-Nahl: 97]

Dear Brothers,

Troubles in our age are indeed numerous, and I have chosen to speak about Allah's Names and Attributes and Ahl-us-Sunnah's stance on them. Perhaps many of you are wondering why I chose this topic in particular? Don't we all, especially the people of this Peninsula, believe in Allah's Names and Attributes as due to Him, without any distortion or denial of their meanings?! Don't the elderly and the young, and the male and female among us all believe in Allah's Names and Attributes without any distortion or deviation in their meanings? So why then did I choose to address this topic in particular?

My answer to this is that I chose this topic for two important reasons:

First: The importance of this topic. Actually, this is an important topic, contrary to what some people may think, and I do not refer here to common people, but even some students of knowledge believe that addressing this topic, i.e. Allah's Names and Attributes, is of no significance. In fact, this is incorrect assumption, since knowing Allah's Names and Attributes and celebrating His Oneness

accordingly represent one of the three sections of Tawhīd (Allah's Oneness). Scholars divided Tawhīd into three sections:

First: Oneness of Lordship.

Second: Oneness of Divinity.

Third: Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes.

Hence, the topic we address is a significant element in the subject of Tawhīd that we must have knowledge of.

Moreover, knowledge of Allah's Names and Attributes is one of the pillars of belief in Allah. Complete belief in Allah is not achieved unless four conditions are met:

1- Belief in Allah's existence.

2- Belief in His lordship, comprehensive dominion, and all-powerful authority.

3- Belief in His divinity, that He alone is worthy of worship, and that worshiping anything else besides Him is false.

As to the fourth condition without which belief in Allah cannot be complete, it is the topic of our lecture. It is belief in Allah's Names and Attributes.

I cannot imagine that anyone could worship a god whose names and attributes he does not know. How could this be when he stretches his hands as he implores Him saying: "O Lord, O Lord"? If he does not know that his god has attributes and names by which he is called upon, how can he accept him as a competent god, a refuge, a shelter, and a helper? That is the reason why Prophet Abraham said to his father, {O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all?} [Maryam: 42] Therefore, knowledge of Allah's Names and Attributes is a matter of great religious importance which one must acquire and act according to it.

The second reason for choosing this topic is that there has recently been much false argument about it. During our journey for seeking knowledge, we used to regard misconceptions about this topic as something far from our time and place. However, we now see them in our publications and in the text books of some educational institutions.

Hence, we have to know the stance of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah regarding Allah's Names and Attributes so as to be alert and careful, knowing well how to judge what is published or assigned in curricula. Recently, the topic of Allah's Names and Attributes has been subject to discussions that rarely involve the truth and mostly involve falsehood. Therefore, it is a must that we present a full and verified study of this topic in order to stay safe from personal inclinations or erroneous assumptions. I would sum up my speech in the following points:

1- The stance of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah regarding Allah's Names and Attributes.

2- The texts dealing with Allah's Names and Attributes.

3- Adopting a stance other than that of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

4- Going to extremes in exalting Allah Almighty above some implications of His Names and Attributes entails annulment of the religion entirely.

5- Some of those who adopt Tahrīf (distortion) and Ta'tīl (negation of the function of Allah's Names and Attributes) accused Ahl-us-Sunnah of committing Tashbīh (likening), Tamthīl (drawing resemblance) and Tajsīm (anthropomorphism).

6- Those who commit Tahrīf and Ta'tīl falsely accused Ahl-us-Sunnah of applying allegorical interpretation of the texts so as to force them into doing this in the rest of the texts. They also accused them of duplicity. In refutation of these false claims, we stress the following points:

1- The stance of Ahl-us-Sunnah regarding the Names of Allah Almighty:

The Names of Allah Almighty: They are all the names which Allah gives to Himself in His Book, or by which His messenger Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), the most knowledgeable among His creation of Him, called Him.

The stance of Ahl-us-Sunnah regarding these Names: They believe that they are Allah's Names, that He gave them to Himself, and that they are the best names that involve no aspect of deficiency whatsoever. Allah say, {And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them. And leave those who practice deviation concerning His names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.} [Al-A'raf:180]

They confirm these names to be Allah's names and confirm the attributes that these names imply.

For example: The All-Knowing is one of Allah's names, so they confirm it as a name of Allah Almighty and call upon Him by saying: "O All-Knowing". They also confirm that knowledge is an attribute of Allah which is indicated by His Name "The All-Knowing". The All-Knowing is derived from knowledge. Any name that is derived from a meaning must necessarily include the meaning from which it is derived. This is a well known rule in the Arabic language and all other languages as well.

They also confirm all the consequences implied by the name if it is derived from an infinitive of a transitive verb.

For example: the Most Merciful is one of Allah's Names. Ahl-us-Sunnah believe that it is one of Allah's Names and believe in the attribute of mercy it implies, being a true attribute affirmed to Allah as denoted by His Name "the Most Merciful", and that it means true mercy, not tendency to kindness or kindness itself; which are, in fact, some consequences of such mercy. They also believe in the effect of this mercy, which is that Allah shows this mercy to whomever deserves it. Allah Almighty says: {He punishes whom He wills and has mercy upon whom He wills, and to Him you will be returned.} [Al-'Ankabūt: 21]

This is the rule of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah regarding Allah's Names.

- 1- They believe that they are names that Allah gave to Himself, so they invoke Him by those names.
- 2- They believe in the attribute implied by the name, since all Allah's names are derived, and it is known that the derived word indicates the meaning from which it is derived.
- 3- They believe in the effect of the name if it is transitive, like "the All-Knowing", "the Most Merciful", "the All-Hearing", and "the All-Seeing".

But if the name is derived from an intransitive infinitive, its effect does not extend to others. For example: "the Ever-Living" is one of Allah's names. It denotes the attribute of being alive, which describes the living entity itself and does not extend to others.

Another example is the name "the Most Great"; greatness is the attribute of "the Most Great" only without extending to others.

Hence, Allah's Names are of two types: transitive and intransitive. Belief in the transitive names is not fulfilled except by three matters: belief in the name, then in the attribute it denotes, then in its effects.

As to the intransitive names, belief in them is not fulfilled except by establishing two matters: the name, and the attribute it denotes.

The stance of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah regarding Allah's Attributes is that they affirm all the attributes that Allah ascribes to Himself, and those which His Messenger, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ascribed to Him. But, such affirmation involves neither Takyīf (questioning their nature), nor Tamthīl (likening), nor Tahrīf (distorting), nor Ta'tīl (negation of function), whether the attribute is related to Allah's essence or actions.

If someone said: explain to us the difference between the attributes related to Allah's essence and those related to His actions?

Our answer is: the attributes related to Allah's essence are those intrinsic attributes that are inseparable from His essence; i.e. they are attributed to Him eternally and permanently.

The Attributes related to Allah's actions, on the other hand, are those that are based upon His will, so He does them according to His wisdom.

Example of the first type is the attribute of living. It is an essence-related attribute because Allah has been living since eternity and He never ceases to be living. In confirmation, Allah Almighty says, {He is Al-Awwal (The First) and Al-Ākhir (The Last)} [Al-Hadīd: 3] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) explained it by saying, "You are the First, so there is nothing before You, and You are the Last, so there is nothing after You." Allah Almighty says, {And rely upon the Ever-Living who does not die, and exalt with His praise.} [Al-Furqān: 58] Likewise, the attributes of seeing, hearing, and omnipotence are all essence-related attributes, and there is no need to enumerate them since we can recognize them by way of the relevant rule. That is, every attribute that has always been an attribute of Allah since eternity and will never cease to be His is one of the essence-related intrinsic attributes of Him. Meanwhile, every attribute that is relevant to Allah's will, that he does according to His wisdom, is one of the action-related attributes, such as the attribute of Allah's Istiwā' (establishment) over the Throne, and His descent to the nearest heaven. Allah's Istiwā' over the Throne is one of His action-related Attributes, because it is connected to His will. Allah Almighty says, {Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then rose over the Throne} [Al-A'rāf: 54] In the verse, the verb 'rose' is joined to the first verb 'created' by the conjunction 'then' that indicates the order of events. Descent to the nearest heaven is an attribute that is ascribed to Allah by the most knowledgeable among the creation of Him; Allah's Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said in a Hadīth that is authentically reported from him by consecutive narrations: "Our Lord descends every night to the nearest heaven in the last third of the night and says: Who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Who asks Me so that I may give him? Who asks Me for forgiveness so that I may forgive him?" This Descent is one of the action-related attributes since it is connected to Allah's will. Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe in this; however, they avoid Tamthīl or Takyīf, meaning that they never come to think that Allah's descent is like that of the created beings, or that His establishment on the Throne is like theirs, or that His coming to judge between the slaves is like theirs. That is because they believe that: {There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.} [Ash-Shūra: 11] They know by virtue of reason the enormous difference between the Creator and the created beings with regard to essence, attributes, and actions. They would never ask themselves: How does Allah descend? Or how did He rise over the Throne? Or how will He come to judge between His slaves on the Day of Judgment? They never seek to know how His attributes are like, although they believe that they occur in a certain manner, but such manner is unknown to us. Thus, they can never imagine such manner, nor can they utter something related to it or believe it in their hearts. Allah says, {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those will be questioned.} [Al-Isrā': 36] And also says: {Say: "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed – and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know."} [Al-A'rāf: 33] Because Allah Almighty is far greater and more exalted than to be encompassed by human perception, He says: {He knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but they cannot encompass Him in (their) knowledge.} [Taha: 110] And you, if you imagine a certain nature for Allah's Attributes, in what form would you imagine it to be? If you make such an attempt, then know that you are misguided and will never reach a truth, because this is a matter that your mind cannot encompass, and it is not for a slave to discuss it or ask about it. For this reason, Imam Mālik (may Allah have mercy upon him) made his statement that gained fame among scholars when a man asked him: "O Abu 'Abdullah, Allah says: {The Most Merciful rose over the Throne.} [Taha: 5] How did He rise over?" Mālik lowered his head (in contemplation of the question) and started to sweat profusely due to the gravity of the question, then made his famous statement: "The rising is known but its nature is unknown; believing in it is obligatory; and asking about it is innovation in religion." It is also narrated that he said: "The rising is not unknown but its nature is inconceivable. Believing in it is obligatory and asking about it is innovation in religion." Thus, we know the meanings

of Allah's Attributes, but we do not know their nature. It is impermissible for us to ask about their nature or to try to imagine how they are. Likewise, it is impermissible for us to liken or draw resemblance between Allah's Attributes and those of humans. Allah Almighty says: {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.} [Ash-Shūra: 11] Whoever makes an equal to Allah with regard to His Attributes, has, in fact, belied the Qur'an, and harbored ill thoughts about his Lord. Moreover, he attributed a deficiency to his Lord as he likened Him – when He is Perfect in all aspects – to an imperfect being. This meaning is reflected in the words of a poet who said,

Do you not see that you belittle the sword when you say that it is sharper than a staff?!

I say this to illustrate the meaning only; otherwise, there is a great difference between the Creator and the created beings. It is a difference that does not exist between the created beings.

What matters, dear Brothers, is that we must believe in all the attributes that Allah ascribed to Himself and the attributes which His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ascribed to Him, whether they are essence-related or action-related attributes, but without Takyīf and without Tamthīl. Takyīf is forbidden because it constitutes giving information about Allah without knowledge. Allah Almighty says, {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.} [Al-Isrā': 36] Tamthīl (drawing resemblance) also is forbidden because it involves belying Allah Almighty's statement: {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.} [Ash-Shūra: 11] It is also a statement that does not benefit Allah Almighty since it likens Him to the created beings.

The second point: The texts dealing with Allah's Names and Attributes.

The conflict between Ahl-us-Sunnah and the advocates of Bid'ah (innovation in religion) concerning these texts is a conflict that clearly highlights the massive difference between the people of sunnah and the people of bid'ah. That is because the people of Sunnah affirm the texts based upon their true apparent meaning without applying Tahrīf or Ta'tīl. This is the path taken by Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. We chose the term Tahrīf (distortion) rather than Ta'wīl (allegorical interpretation), because Tahrīf is invalid in all cases, and Allah Almighty dispraised the one who does it in His saying, {they distort words from their [proper] usages} [An-Nisā': 46] Ta'wīl, on the other hand, may include what is valid and what is invalid and unacceptable. The invalid and unacceptable is what is referred to as Tahrīf. That is the reason why Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) chose the term Tahrīf rather than Ta'wīl in his book Al-'Aqīdah Al-Wāsiyyah which summarizes the beliefs of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. Though many books on creed use the term Ta'wīl, they mean by it Tahrīf (distortion); meaning such Ta'wīl that lacks proof. Rather, proof is contrary to it. So it is, in fact, Tahrīf.

Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah say: we believe in these verses and Hadīths without distorting their meanings because doing so is a form of saying about Allah what one has no knowledge about from two aspects.

This is clearly shown in Allah's saying: {And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank.} [Al-Fajr: 22] Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah say: {And your Lord has come} means that He Himself comes; however, this takes place in a manner that befits His Grandeur and Majesty. It is a coming that does not resemble that of humans and that can in no way be subject to Takyīf (questioning its nature). We must ascribe the action to Allah just as He ascribed it to Himself. So, we say that Allah Almighty comes on the Day of Judgment in the true sense of the word; He Himself comes.

On the other hand, the people of Tahrīf say: the verse means that the command of your Lord has come. This is a violation against the text from two aspects:

The first aspect: negating its apparent meaning, as whence do they know that Allah Almighty does not intend the apparent meaning of what He ascribed to Himself, although Allah Almighty says about the Qur'an that it was revealed in a clear Arabic language?! So, we have to employ the implications of that term according to what is entailed by the clear Arabic language. How can we claim that Allah Almighty did not intend the apparent meaning of the term? In fact, negating the apparent meaning of the text is saying something about Allah without knowledge. The second aspect: affirming a meaning that is not

denoted by the apparent indication of the term. Do they have knowledge that Allah Almighty intended the meaning to which they referred the apparent indication of the term?! Do they have knowledge that Allah meant in the verse the coming of His command?! Perhaps it is something ascribed to Him other than His command.

Hence, anyone who distorts the meaning of the text by interpreting it beyond its apparent meaning without a valid sharia evidence has said something about Allah without knowledge from two aspects:

First: negating the apparent meaning of the text.

Second: affirming a meaning other than that apparent meaning.

That is why Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah always disavowed Tahrīf and believed it to be a violation of texts, and that it is not possible that Allah says something to us while He intends a meaning other than the apparent one without clarifying that to us. Allah Almighty has sent down the Book as a clarification to all things, and the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) explained to the people what was sent to them from their Lord by His permission. As for Tamthīl, it is obvious that applying it involves belying of the Qur'an, since Allah Almighty says, {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.} [Ash-Shūra: 11] Therefore, the way of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah concerning the texts of Allah's Attributes, whether verses or Hadīths, is to affirm them based on their true and apparent meaning as befits Allah, without Tahrīf or Ta'tīl. Ibn 'Abdul Barr reported the consensus of Ahl-us-Sunnah on that matter in his book At-Tamhīd, and Ibn Taymiyyah quoted this consensus from him. Also, it was reported that Al-Qādi Abu Ya'la said: "Ahl-us-Sunnah unanimously agreed that it is forbidden to indulge in applying Ta'wīl to the verses and Hadīths (about the Names and Attributes of Allah), and that it is obligatory to keep their apparent indications."

The third point: adopting a stance other than that is considered extremism that falls between excess and negligence:

Adopting a stance other than that of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah is extremism that is either in the form of excess or negligence, because people have gone in three ways in this issue: two extreme ways and a moderate one. One group went to extremes in exaltation until they negated what Allah has affirmed to Himself, while another group went to extremes in affirmation, until they affirmed what Allah has negated from Himself. Some of the people of Bid'ah affirmed the apparent meaning of the texts, yet they interpreted them in a way that implied resemblance between Allah and His creation. So, they affirmed aspects of imperfection to their Lord by likening Him to the imperfect creation. They were mistaken in believing that the apparent meaning indicated resemblance. They affirm the attribute of hearing, the face, the eye, and the hand, but they likened Him to humans in this regard. So, they went to extremes in affirmation until it led them to apply Tamthīl. Nu'aym ibn Hammād al-Khuzā'i, the tutor of Al-Bukhāri, said: "Whoever likens Allah to His creation is a disbeliever." There is no doubt that he is a disbeliever, and Allah Almighty does not intend in these texts that apparent meaning that such a person claims.

Someone might say: what proof supports your claim that Allah does not intend this meaning?

I say that there is textual and logical proof.

As for the textual proof, there are several verses that negate Allah's likeness to His creation; the most explicit and clearest thereof is Allah's statement, {There is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūra: 11]

As for the logical proof, it is absolutely impossible that the Creator could be similar to the created beings in any attribute, given the enormous difference between them in terms of essence, attributes, and actions.

Some of the advocates of Bid'ah have distorted the texts away from their apparent meaning and negated their indication that befits Allah. Those distorters fall into three groups:

First group: those who have gone to enormous extremes to the extent of negating both the attribute and its opposite by saying: "Do not say that Allah is existent, and do not say that He is nonexistent.

For, if you say that He is existent, you liken Him to the existent beings, and if you say He is nonexistent, you liken Him to nonexistent beings.”

This is certainly unacceptable by all intellects, since it is impossible to negate one of the two opposites. Existence and nonexistence are two contradictory opposites that can neither be true together nor untrue together.

Second group: those who say: we affirm the attributes that imply negation of any aspect of imperfection but we do not affirm attributes of perfection. That is, we do not ascribe to Allah any positive attributes, but we ascribe to Him attributes based on Sulūb (absolute negation) and Idāfāt (contradictories). Also, we affirm His Names aside from their meanings. This is the approach of most of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah.

The third group: Those who say: we affirm some attributes that are proved by reason and deny other attributes since they are not proved by reason. Some of them say: because reason denies such attributes.

All three groups, despite the variance in their distance from the truth, are incorrect. They have all gone to extremes.

The moderate approach is that of Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. It is to affirm the attributes that Allah affirms for Himself in a way that involves neither Takyīf nor Tamthīl. By so doing, we act upon the sharia texts from both aspects, without focusing on one aspect and neglecting the other.

By so doing, we observe due politeness with Allah and His Messenger, as we do not put forward our opinion before them. Instead, we adhere to ultimate politeness; we hear, believe, obey and affirm for Allah attributes that He affirmed for Himself and those that His Messenger affirmed for Him. Similarly, we negate what Allah negated from Himself and what His Messengers negated from Him, and we remain silent regarding what Allah has made no mention of.

4- Going to extremes in exalting Allah Almighty above some implications of His Names and Attributes entails annulment of the religion entirely.

We mentioned that there are people who exaggerate in exalting Allah Almighty above some implications of His Names and Attributes until they eventually deny the attributes or some of them, or deny the positive attributes, or the positive and negative altogether. Actually, exaggeration in exaltation in all of its forms leads to the annulment of the entire religion.

Example: If the exalter affirms some attributes and denies others, we ask him: on what basis do you affirm or deny?

He replies: I affirm the attributes that are proved by reason, and I deny those which are not proved by reason, or those that reason proved that they should be negated.

Others would say to him: we deny all the attributes because they are not proved by reason or because reason proved that they are to be negated.

The first person would fail to answer them, because if he says that it is reason that affirms or denies such-and-such attribute, he will be answered that what is proved by his reason may not be proved by other people's reason. So, as long as reason is the reference, anyone may deny what his own reason does not prove. However, this does not stop at the subject of Attributes. Rather, there are the people of Takhyīl (those who adopt deviant philosophic doctrines) who deny the Last Day, the divine messages communicated by the messengers, and even deny the existence of Allah in principle – we seek refuge with Allah from that. They say that their minds do not accept the idea of reviving the bones of the dead after they are decayed, nor the idea of Paradise and Hell. They base their argument on reason, just as the others did.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: “Affirming Allah's Attributes is more recurrent in the Qur'an and the Sunnah than affirming the resurrection. Anyone who denies

Allah's Attributes will have no argument whereby he refutes the claim of those who deny the resurrection. Undoubtedly, denying the resurrection and the legislations invalidates the entire religion."

Salvation from all that is to follow the safe way by affirming the Names and Attributes that Allah affirms for Himself and negating the attributes He negates from Himself, and remaining silent concerning what He makes no mention of. Thereby, no one can prove us wrong, because we say that these are matters related to the unseen that can be learned only through texts of Shariah and the statements reported from the infallible Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Minds are variant and different. Each one of those who advocate reason as a reference claims to be necessary what another claims to be impossible, or just possible to exist but not necessary.

5- Some of the people of Tahrīf and Ta'tīl say that Ahl-us-Sunnah apply Tashbīh, Tajsīm, and Tamthīl:

It is strange that one is accused of believing in what he actually denies. In fact, Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah deny Tashbih and Tamthīl. They even hold that whoever likens Allah to His creation is a disbeliever. So, how could they be claimed to uphold what they openly deny?! This is absolute aggression.

Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah rather say: we do not apply Tashbīh or Tamthīl; rather, we affirm what Allah affirms for Himself and what His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) affirms for Him without Tamthīl or Takyīf. So, why do you tarnish our approach by accusing us of applying Tamthīl and Tashbīh?!

It is not strange, however, that Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah be subjected to such accusations because casting accusations at the people of the truth is a hereditary habit of the enemies of the prophets (peace be upon them). Prophets were accused of being magicians and of being madmen. {Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman."} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 52] But, would the truth ever diminish by such accusations? No. Instead, it overflows and becomes stronger and clearer, praise be to Allah. Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah disavow such faults which those who distort words from their proper usage accuse them of. They also accuse Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah of applying Tajsīm! How could this be? What is the meaning of Tajsīm? In fact, you will never come across the term Tajsīm if you read the whole Qur'an and reviewed the tradition of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in full. You will not find the term Jism (body) affirmed for Allah or negated from him, neither in the Book of Allah nor in the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Why then do we tire our minds and thoughts by trying to communicate a negative image for those who affirm for Allah the attributes of perfection according to the way that Allah wills?! Since the term Jism is not mentioned in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah follow their own approach regarding it. They remain silent regarding it. So, they say: we do not affirm the attribute of Jism but we also do not deny it literally. Rather, we scrutinize its meaning by asking the speaker: what do you mean by Jism? If you mean the true essence that possesses the perfect attributes that befit it, then indeed, Allah Almighty has been and will always be Living, All-Knowing, Omnipotent, and possessing the attributes of perfection that befit Him. But, if you mean something else, like the corporal nature of humans, where each part of the body needs the other parts and needs nourishment necessary for its survival, then this is a meaning that does not befit Allah, the Exalted and Glorified. In this way, we have dealt with the meaning properly. As for the term itself, we are not allowed either to affirm or negate it. But we remain silent about it, because if we affirm it, we will be asked to present our proof, and if we negate it, we will also be asked to present our proof. Therefore, we should remain silent regarding the term, but when it comes to the meaning, we should follow the approach that we have mentioned above in detail.

6- The people of Tahrīf and Ta'tīl claim that Ahl-us-Sunnah apply Ta'wīl to some texts, in order to force them to do the

same in the rest of the texts or, at least, relax their strict stance in this regard.

This is a claim that aims at producing confusion and doubt. It was published by some newspapers. The writer said: "You, Ahl-us-Sunnah, criticize us by saying that we apply Ta'wīl, when you yourselves do the same. So, why are you blaming us for something that you do?!"

In fact, this argument, if true, would be a strong one. It is not for anyone to control when Ta'wīl can be done, cannot be done, or must be done. However, Ahl-us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah say that this claim aims at spreading confusion and doubt. We have never adopted the approach they claimed. You accuse us of it either to force us into adopting Ta'wīl just as you did or to force us to remain silent in response to your distortion and compromise. Yet – with Allah's help – we will never remain silent before such false accusations, of which we are innocent.

In response to that claim which some of the advocates of Ta'wīl made and accused Ahl-us-Sunnah of, we have two answers :

First: We refuse the claim that the way adopted by Ahl-us-Sunnah is Ta'wīl, since Ta'wīl means, according to the later generations –which is the meaning those claimants intend – interpreting terms beyond their apparent meanings.

Ahl-us-Sunnah state that the apparent meaning of speech is what is understood from it based on the context or the speaker's condition. Words do not have an intrinsic meaning for which they were created and cannot be used otherwise; rather, their meaning appears through the context and the state of the speaker.

As we studied rhetoric, we learned that the interrogative form denotes different meanings, and prepositions as well. So, what is the criteria for determining these meanings? Is it not the context? Then, the true meaning of speech is that indicated by its context, and its apparent meaning is that indicated by its context as well, based on the structure of the speech and the state of the speaker. This is a general answer, that we say that we do not assert that the apparent meaning is other than what is indicated by the context or the speaker's state. Rather, what is indicated by the context is the true and apparent meaning of the speech, even if this term is used in another place to indicate a different meaning. Using the term in this place to denote the meaning indicated by the context is, actually, its true meaning. This is the first answer. The second answer: If we take it for granted that a term is interpreted beyond its apparent meaning, then Ahl-us-Sunnah never do this without supportive proof from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, whether part of the same context or not. I challenge anyone to provide any proof from the Qur'an or the Sunnah that deals with Allah's Names and Attributes which Ahl-us-Sunnah interpret beyond its apparent meaning, unless they have proof of that from the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). In that case, if the new meaning (not the apparent one) is supported by proof from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, then, in reality, they do not interpret the term away from the meaning that Allah wills, since they have known from other proof the meaning that Allah intended. Praise be to Allah, they never interpret texts beyond what is said to be their apparent meanings. There is not a single one among Ahl-us-Sunnah who employs his reason to reach a conclusion that negates what Allah affirms for Himself or to affirm something that is not understood from the speech's apparent indication – praise be to Allah. If you wish, you may review their books to examine this fact.

The second answer: If we take it for granted that a term is interpreted beyond its apparent meaning, then Ahl-us-Sunnah never do this without supportive proof from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, whether part of the same context or not.

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There is not a single one among Ahl-us-Sunnah who employs his reason to reach a conclusion that negates what Allah affirms for Himself or to affirm something that is not understood from the speech's apparent indication – praise be to Allah. If you wish, you may review their books to examine this fact.

We will present some examples here, not all the examples. For, if we address all the examples where Ahl-us-Sunnah are accused of applying Ta'wīl by interpreting terms beyond their apparent meanings, it would take us a long time indeed, but we will mention some examples:

First example: The people of Ta'wīl say: You, Ahl-us-Sunnah, apply Ta'wīl to Allah's saying: {Then He [istawa] directed Himself to the heaven} [Al-Baqarah: 29] So you said that Istiwā' here means intention and will. While you say that the meaning of Istiwā' in Allah's saying: {then He [istawa] rose over the Throne.} [Al-A'rāf: 54] is highness and elevation. This is but Ta'wīl applied to one of the two texts, which you cannot clear yourselves of. It is known that the verb "istawa" in the second verse obviously denotes being high over something, then when you say that the same verb "istawa" in the first verse implies intention and direction, then you interpreted the term "istawa" beyond its apparent meaning. Our answer to this is as follows: the meaning of the term "istawa" is determined according to the words to which it is joined. For instance, "istawa over the Throne" indicates rising high over it in a way that befits His Majesty, and in no way resembles the highness of a created being over another created being. However, in 'istawa to the Heaven', the preposition joined to it is 'to' which denotes destination, not highness. Being so, then the verb implies a meaning that indicates destination, and that meaning is the intention and will. This is the choice of some of Ahl-us-Sunnah, as they say that 'istawa to the Heaven' means 'qasad' (aimed at/intended). When the 'qasd' is perfect, it is expressed as 'istiwā', The root of the word "istiwā" in Arabic denotes perfection, as shown in Allah's saying: {And when he attained his full strength, and [istawa] was perfect (in manhood)} [Al-Qasas: 14]

{Then He [istawa] directed Himself to the heaven}

[Al-Baqarah: 29]

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Another answer is that we can say that 'istawa to the Heaven' means rose high. Al-Baghawi said: "This statement is reported from Ibn 'Abbās and the majority of scholars of Tafsīr."

However, we must not believe that the attribute of Highness did not belong to Allah Almighty when He created the earth; rather, Allah Almighty has always been and will forever be High because Highness is an intrinsic essence-related attribute of Him. It is true that *istiwā*' here means rising high; however, we do not know how it takes place. This is another answer about the verse. In short, if we interpret "istawa to the Heaven" to mean directed Himself to it in a way that befits His Perfection, then we do not go beyond the apparent meaning of the term. And we explained that this variance resulted from the difference in the prepositions used in the two verses.

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If, however, we adopt the second view which is attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and most of the scholars of Tafsīr that *istawa* means rose high, then we may not hold the false supposition that Allah has never been high before.

The second example: the people of Ta'wīl say: "You, Ahl-us-Sunnah, explained Allah's saying {Sailing in Our Eyes} [Al-Qamar: 14] to mean 'sailing under our observation', which is contrary to the apparent meaning of that statement."

In reply, we ask them: "What do you understand from this statement?" Can anyone understand that the preposition 'in' in this verse denotes place, whereby the meaning is that the Arc of Noah (peace be upon him) sails 'in' the Eye of Allah?! This is impossible. No one would understand the statement as such. It is probable that the Arabic preposition 'bi' could denote a place in some cases, but never in this one.

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Hence, we would never concede that the apparent meaning of this verse is what you claim it to be.

Those who interpreted the verse as {Sailing under Our observation} did so by way of interpreting a term based on its *lāzim* (a meaning associated with it), and this is correct and is not considered going beyond the apparent meaning. That is because the *dilālah* (signification) of a term has three cases: *dilālat mutābaqah* (identical signification), *dilālat tadammun* (partial signification), or *dilālat iltizām* (associative signification: a signification not explicitly reflected by the term but is necessarily associated with it). All three cases do not take the term away from its apparent indication.

I will explain these three types of *dilālah* with the following example: The term 'house'. It refers to the whole house by way of *dilālat mutābaqah* (identical signification). That is, it means a building consisting of chambers, rooms, halls, and so on. The term also refers to each room or chamber or hall of that house by way of *dilālat tadammun* (partial signification), and denotes that that house necessarily has a builder who built it by way of *dilālat iltizām* (associative signification).

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We say that Allah Almighty sees it with His Eye and takes care of it, so it, actually, is {Sailing under Our observation} which is a correct meaning.

We may answer differently by saying that the meaning is that it (the Arc) sails while visible by Our Eyes.

What matters is that we affirm from this verse that Allah Almighty has Eye that does not resemble the eyes of created beings, and it is beyond our minds to visualize its nature. Thus, we do not go beyond the term's apparent indication.

Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) interpreted the saying of Allah Almighty: {that you would be brought up under My eye} [Taha: 39] to refer to the real eye. The meaning is that Moses (peace be upon him) is raised under Allah's Eyes. The third example: The people of Ta'wīl say: "You, Ahl-us-Sunnah apply Ta'wīl to Allah's saying: {And We are nearer to it than you} [Al-Wāqī'ah: 85] as you say that it means: We are nearer by Our angels." This is Ta'wīl, because if we consider the apparent meaning of the words, then the pronoun 'we' refers to Allah Almighty, and 'nearer' is a predicate that is linked to the subject "Allah". Then, nearness is attributed to Allah. However, you, Ahl-us-Sunnah, do not believe in that. You do not hold that Allah Almighty draws near to the dying person until He is present with him because this can never be, since it agrees with the advocates of Hulūl (incarnation) who deny that Allah Almighty is High above His creation. Instead, they say that Allah is present with his own Self everywhere; the statement that you, Ahl-us-Sunnah strictly disapprove.

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The third example: The people of Ta'wīl say: "You, Ahl-us-Sunnah apply Ta'wīl to Allah's saying: {And We are nearer to it than you} [Al-Wāqī'ah: 85] as you say that it means: We are nearer by Our angels."

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Instead, they say that Allah is present with his own Self everywhere; the statement that you, Ahl-us-Sunnah strictly disapprove.

So, what do you say about that, O Ahl-us-Sunnah?! Do you not say that the meaning is that Allah is nearer to the dying person through His angels. In other words, the angels come to the dying person and seize his soul. Isn't this Ta'wīl?!

The answer is simple – praise be to Allah. Indeed, it is the angels that come to the dying person, {until when death approaches one of you, Our Messengers (angel of death and his assistants) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty.} [Al-An'ām: 61] {And if you could but see when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands, [saying], "Discharge your souls! } [Al-An'ām: 93] It is the angels who come to the dying person. In the same verse, there is an indication that what is meant is not the nearness of Allah Almighty Himself, as He says: {And We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see.} [Al-Wāqī'ah: 85] This denotes that the entity that is near the dying person is present, but we cannot see it. That is because the angels belong to the realm of the unseen where invisibility is the principle state.

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[Al-Wāqī'ah: 85]

This denotes that the entity that is near the dying person is present, but we cannot see it. That is because the angels belong to the realm of the unseen where invisibility is the principle state.

Then, we do not go beyond the apparent meaning of the verse since there is a word in the verse that explicitly indicates the intended meaning. We wholeheartedly accept whatever is supported by a proof from the Qur'an or the Sunnah.

The fourth example: The people of Ta'wīl say: "You, Ahl-us-Sunnah, apply Ta'wīl to Allah's saying: {and He is with you wherever you are.} [Al-Hadīd: 4] as you say that it means: He is with you with His Knowledge. This is Ta'wīl, since Allah Almighty says: {and He is with you} and the pronoun 'He' refers to Allah. So, you, Ahl-us sunnah, applied Ta'wīl to this verse and you said that He is with you with His Knowledge. So, why do you blame us for applying Ta'wīl? Our answer: we did not apply Ta'wīl; rather, we interpreted the verse based on its lāzīm (associative signification) which is here knowledge. That is because no reasonable person, who is aware of Allah's greatness, would ever think that He is present everywhere with His creation wherever they are. This is impossible. How could Allah be with you at home, with another in the mosque, with a third on the road, with a fourth on land, with a fifth in the air, with a sixth in the sea, etc...?! How many gods would there be in this case?! If we hold this view, then it entails that Allah Almighty should have either a multiple or divisible nature – Exalted Is He above that claim – which is undoubtedly impossible. Therefore, we say that whoever understands the verse this way is misguided, and whoever believes this is misguided if he imitates others in this respect. He is also a disbeliever if he received knowledge about that, yet he insisted on his opinion. Anyone who ascribes to the Salaf (earlier Muslim generations) that they said that the apparent indication of the verse means that Allah is with them by His self wherever they are, then he is a liar without doubt.

This is Ta'wīl, since Allah Almighty says: {and He is with you} and the pronoun 'He' refers to Allah. So, you, Ahl-us sunnah, applied Ta'wīl to this verse

and you said that He is with you with His Knowledge. So, why do you blame us for applying Ta'wīl?

Our answer: we did not apply Ta'wīl; rather, we interpreted the verse based on its lāzīm (associative signification) which is here knowledge. That is because no reasonable person, who is aware of Allah's greatness, would ever think that He is present everywhere with His creation wherever they are. This is impossible.

How could Allah be with you at home, with another in the mosque, with a third on the road, with a fourth on land, with a fifth in the air, with a sixth in the sea, etc...?!

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If we hold this view, then it entails that Allah Almighty should have either a multiple or divisible nature – Exalted Is He above that claim – which is undoubtedly impossible.

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Hence, Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah say: we believe that Allah Almighty is on His Throne, that none of His creation can encompass Him, and that He is with His creation as He said in His Book, but we also believe that He is High above the creation.

Being with His creation cannot be something other than encompassing them by His Knowledge, Omnipotence, Authority, Hearing, Seeing, Managing of affairs, and other implications of lordship. But, to mean that He is present with them wherever they are, or that His nature is mixed with theirs, as claimed by the advocates of Hulūl and Ittihād (incarnation/indwelling and unity) doctrine, then this is an invalid belief that can never be the apparent indication of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

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Hence, we did not apply Ta'wīl to the verse, nor did we interpret it beyond its apparent indication. For, although Allah Almighty says about Himself {and He is with you} [Al-Hadīd: 4] He also says about Himself: {And He is the Most High, the Most Great.} [Al-Baqarah: 255] and {He is the subjugator over His servants.} [Al-An'ām: 18]

This means that Allah is High above His slaves. It is impossible that He is with them in the places where they are; yet He is with them, encompassing them with His Knowledge, Omnipotence, Authority, Management of affairs, and so on. Allah being with those of His Messengers and their followers who deserve support entails that, in addition to His encompassing them with His Knowledge and Omnipotence, He encompasses them with His Help and Support. By Allah's favor, we do not go beyond the apparent indication of the words so that they should insistingly accuse us of doing that. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) explained in his brief and elaborate books that there is no contradiction between the true meaning of Ma'iyyah (Allah being with His slaves) and His Highness over His creation. He said: "That is because there is nothing like unto Him with respect to all His Attributes. Indeed, He is High in His Descent and is Near in His Highness."

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He said: "That is because there is nothing like unto Him with respect to all His Attributes. Indeed, He is High in His Descent and is Near in His Highness."

He added: "People would normally say: 'we kept walking with the moon with us.' Even though the moon is in the sky, they say: with us. If this can be acceptable with regard to a created being, then it is acceptable with regard to the Creator with greater reason."

What matters here is that we, Ahl-us-Sunnah, never said and will never say that the apparent indication of the verse is what you have understood, and that we interpret it beyond its apparent indication. Rather, we say that it means that Allah Almighty is with His creation in a way that befits Him. He encompasses them with His Knowledge, Omnipotence, Authority, Management of affairs, and so on. In fact, the texts of Ma'iyyah (Allah being with His slaves) and those of 'Uluww (Allah being High over His creation) cannot be reconciled except in the way that we have explained. Verily, Allah's speech explains itself by itself. The fifth example: the people of Ta'wīl say that it is authentically reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Allah Almighty said: 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshiper of Mine. And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatory acts of worship till I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks (something) from Me, I give him, and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him.'" So, do you, Ahl-us-Sunnah, believe that Allah becomes the

hearing, seeing, hand, and leg of whoever He loves in the true sense of the words? If not, then you have interpreted the Hadīth beyond its apparent indication, since Allah says: "I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his leg with which he walks."

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The fifth example: the people of Ta'wil say that it is authentically reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Allah Almighty said: 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshiper of Mine. And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatory acts of worship till I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks (something) from Me, I give him, and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him.'"

So, do you, Ahl-us-Sunnah, believe that Allah becomes the hearing, seeing, hand, and leg of whoever He loves in the true sense of the words?

If not, then you have interpreted the Hadīth beyond its apparent indication, since Allah says:

"I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his leg with which he walks."

Our reply is: none would understand that this is what is indicated by the apparent meaning of the Hadīth, i.e. that Allah becomes the hearing of that person, his seeing, leg, and hand in the true sense of the words. None can understand it this way except a dimwit, or someone whose heart is darkened by imitation or invalid claims.

The Hadīth does not imply that man's hearing, seeing, leg, and hand are Allah, Exalted and Glorified. It can in no way indicate that meaning. Read it again: "I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshiper of Mine. And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him." So, the Hadīth confirms that there is a worshiper and a worshiped god, and one who comes nearer and one whose nearness is sought. "and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatory acts of worship till I love him." So, it confirms that there is one who loves and one who is loved. "and if he asks (something) from Me, I give him," So, it confirms that there is one who asks and one who is asked, and one who gives and one who is given. "and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him". Finally, it confirms that there is one who seeks refuge and one whose refuge is sought. It is known that each of these two parties is not the other without doubt. Once this is confirmed, then how can someone understand that this Hadīth Qudsī: "I become his hearing" means that Allah Almighty becomes a part of this created being which comes nearer to Him, seeks His refuge, and asks Him for what he needs?! This could never be understood from the context of the Hadīth.

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So, the Hadīth confirms that there is a worshiper and a worshiped god, and one who comes nearer and one whose nearness is sought.

"and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing supererogatory acts of worship till I love him."

So, it confirms that there is one who loves and one who is loved.

"and if he asks (something) from Me, I give him,"

So, it confirms that there is one who asks and one who is asked, and one who gives and one who is given.

“and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him”.

Finally, it confirms that there is one who seeks refuge and one whose refuge is sought.

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This could never be understood from the context of the Hadīth.

In this way, the meaning of the Hadīth that actually agrees with its apparent meaning is that Allah Almighty rectifies the hearing, seeing, and actions of that person. Thus, he hears by Allah’s help and for His sake, sees by Allah’s help and for His sake, seizes by Allah’s help and for His sake, walks by Allah’s help and for His sake. This is the exact and true meaning of the Hadīth that agrees with its apparent indication, without involving any trace of Ta’wīl.

Sixth example: The people of Ta’wīl say: You, Ahl-us-Sunnah, apply Ta’wīl to the saying of Allah’s Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him): “Verily, the hearts of the sons of Adam are between two fingers of the Fingers of the Most Compassionate.” You said that the intended meaning is that Allah Almighty controls the hearts, and it is not possible that the hearts are between two Fingers of the Hand. This statement entails the concept of Hulūl, and that Allah’s Fingers are there in the chest of every person. We say: This is lying about the Salaf who never applied such Ta’wīl, nor did they say that the Hadīth is a metaphor for Allah’s authority and His control of the hearts. Rather, they said: we affirm that Allah Almighty has fingers, and that every human heart is between two fingers of Allah truly. This, however, never entails the concept of Hulūl. Being in a position between two things does not necessarily entail touching and direct contact. Consider Allah’s saying, {and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth} [Al-Baqarah: 104] Does this statement entail that the clouds are sticking to the heaven and earth? It does not. The hearts of all mankind are – as said by our Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) who is the most knowledgeable of Allah – between two fingers of the Fingers of the Most Merciful. This does not mean that there is physical contact. Instead, we say as our Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said. We also emphasize that this is a truth that involves no Ta’wīl.

“Verily, the hearts of the sons of Adam are between two fingers of the Fingers of the Most Compassionate.”

You said that the intended meaning is that Allah Almighty controls the hearts, and it is not possible that the hearts are between two Fingers of the Hand.

This statement entails the concept of Hulūl, and that Allah’s Fingers are there in the chest of every person.

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It does not. The hearts of all mankind are – as said by our Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) who is the most knowledgeable of Allah – between two fingers of the Fingers of the Most Merciful. This does not mean that there is physical contact. Instead, we say as our Prophet (may

Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said. We also emphasize that this is a truth that involves no Ta'wīl.

Along with this, we affirm that Allah Almighty directs these hearts as He wills as mentioned in the Hadīth. Therefore, we say: "Oh Allah, Who directs the hearts, direct our hearts toward obeying You."

The seventh and last example: "The Black Stone is Allah's Right Hand on the earth." The people of Ta'wīl say: You apply Ta'wīl to this Hadīth, since you cannot say that the Stone is Allah's Hand. We say: this is true, for none can claim that the Black Stone is the Hand of Allah, the Exalted and Glorified. But, before we answer this, we have to clarify that this Hadīth is false, as it is not authentically attributed to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Ibn Al-'Arabi said about it: This is a false Hadīth. Ibn Al-Jawzi also said in his book Al-'Ilal Al-Mutanāhiyah: This Hadīth is not authentic. Also, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "It is reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) with an inauthentic chain of narrators." Therefore, the Hadīth is not accepted by Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah for it is not authentically attributed to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). But Shaykh al-Islam added: The Hadīth is known to be attributed to Ibn 'Abbās; nevertheless, it does not denote the meaning suggested by those people: that the Black Stone is Allah's Right Hand. That is because he said: "Allah's Right Hand on the earth." So, this is a qualified statement. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "Qualified speech is not like unqualified speech. He did not say that it is Allah's Right Hand without any qualification; rather, he added the qualifying words: 'on the earth'. It is quite known that Allah's Right Hand is not on the earth." He also said in the same Hadīth – as reported by Ibn Taymiyyah –: "So whoever touches it, it is as if he shakes hand with Allah." The simile indicates that they are not the same thing, but that they are separate entities. In conclusion: By Allah's favor, it is impossible that Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah interpret the speech beyond its apparent meaning, because the apparent and true meaning of the speech is what is indicated by the context, and it varies according to the context and situations. If someone, however, insists on interpreting a term literally, then we say that Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah never admit such literal interpretation unless there is evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah to support this. Whenever the Qur'an and Sunnah prove something, it is obligatory to adopt it, whether or not it agrees with what is said to be the apparent indication of the term. We all pursue what Allah said about Himself and what His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said about Him. For example, Allah Almighty says in an authentic Hadīth reported in Sahīh Muslim: "O My slave! I was hungry, but you did not feed Me... O My slave! I was sick, but you did not visit me... so he says: 'How can I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds?! How can I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?!' Allah then says: 'Did you not know that my slave was hungry, but you did not give him food, and that he was sick, but you did not visit him?'" This Hadīth explicitly indicates that whatever attributes Allah ascribes to Himself in the Qur'an and the Sunnah is true as understood from its apparent meaning, unless explained otherwise by a text reported from Allah or His Messenger, in which case we adopt the explanation reported from Allah and His Messenger.

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He also said in the same Hadīth – as reported by Ibn Taymiyyah –:

“So whoever touches it, it is as if he shakes hand with Allah.”

The simile indicates that they are not the same thing, but that they are separate entities.

In conclusion: By Allah’s favor, it is impossible that Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah interpret the speech beyond its apparent meaning, because the apparent and true meaning of the speech is what is indicated by the context,

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This Hadīth explicitly indicates that whatever attributes Allah ascribes to Himself in the Qur’an and the Sunnah is true as understood from its apparent meaning, unless explained otherwise by a text reported from Allah or His Messenger, in which case we adopt the explanation reported from Allah and His Messenger.

This last Hadīth is a crystal clear proof of the banning of Ta’wīl that lacks proof from the Qu’ran and the Sunnah, and perhaps it is suitable to suffice with these examples for the sake of brevity.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. May Allah’s peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his Companions.

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