



Islamic Studies Correspondence Course

Islamic Creed

Tawheed-Islamic Monotheism

Part 5

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Tawheed al Asmaa wa Sifaat (Names and Attributes)

Tawheed al Asmaa wa Sifaat (Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes) Meaning: Having faith in everything Allah informed us about Himself from His Names and Attributes, affirming some and negating others. Whether they are in the Quran or the authentic Sunnah, without distorting, altering, or changing their meanings.

- 1) The reason we believe this: is because all that we know from Allah's speech regarding His names and attributes is from the informative type of speech which revolves around negation or affirmation. So we must have complete faith in what Allah informed us about Himself and we do not disbelieve in anything that He or His Messenger told us.
- 2) Allah is the Most Knowledgeable about Himself and others, and the best of speech is His speech, it is not permissible for us to contradict or conflict with anything that He told us about Himself by making distortions or false interpretations about the meanings.
- 3) The Prophet is the most knowledgeable of Allah from amongst the creation, with what Allah informs him of His names and attributes. It is obligatory upon us to believe and accept everything which came in the authentic sunnah regarding Allah's names and attributes
- 4) Allah has no partner or associate, He cannot be compared to His creation, it is obligatory upon us to leave off questioning 'how' His attributes are, unless it came in the Quran and Sunnah, and leaving the evidence as it has come to us without alterations.

The Noble Scholar Shaykh Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah ibn Baz - *hafidhahullâh* - said: (*Al-'Aqîdatus-Sahîhah wa Ma Yudâdahâ* (pp.9-13).)

From *îmân* (faith) in Allâh is to have *îmân* in those of His *Asmâul-Husnâ* (beautiful Names) and *Sifâtul-'Ulyâ* (lofty Attributes) that occur in His Great Book and that have been affirmed by His trustworthy Messenger *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* - without *tahrîf* (distorting the wording or the meaning), *ta'tîl* (divesting or denying the Attributes), *takyîf* (asking how) or *tamthîl* (resembling Allâh to any of His creation). Rather, it is obligatory to leave them as they came, without *takyîf*. Along with this, it is also obligatory to have *îmân* in the meaning that Allâh - *the Mighty and Majestic* - has been described with, in a way which befits Him; without resembling Him to His creation in any of His Attributes.

Allâh - *the Most High* - says:

{لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ}

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.” (ash Shura 42:11)

Allâh - *the Mighty and Majestic* - also says:

{فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ}

“And do not put forward any similitude for Allâh. Indeed, Allâh knows and you do not know.” (An Nahl 16:74)

So this is the *'aqîdah* (belief) of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* from the Companions of the Messenger of Allâh *sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and those that followed them in goodness. This is what has been recorded also by Imâm Abûl-Hasan al-Ash'arî (d.324H) - *rahimahullâh* - in his book: “*Al-Maqâlât 'an Asbâbul-*

Hadîth wa Ahlus-Sunnah.” This has also been stated by many others from the people of knowledge and *îmân*.

The words of the companions and the scholars about this matter are very numerous indeed and it is not possible to relate them all here. However whosoever desires to be further acquainted with this topic then let him turn to the books by the scholars of the Sunnah about this subject, such as ‘Kitabus Sunnah’ by Abdullah the son of Imam Ahmed, ‘Kitabut Tawheed’ by the great Imam ibn Khuzaymah, ‘Sharhus Sunnah’ by al Laalikaanee and many others. Refer also to the books of Sheikul Islam ibn Taymiyyah ‘Aqidatul Hamawiyyah’, ‘Aqidatul Tadmuriyyah’ and ‘Aqidatul Wasitiyyah’.

All those who oppose Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa’ah in their creed concerning Allah’s Names and Attributes have indeed fallen into opposing the textual evidences as well as opposing sound reasoning. They have also fallen into clearly contradicting all that Allah has affirmed or negated for Himself.

Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaa’ah affirm for Allah what He has affirmed for Himself in the Quran or what has been affirmed for Him by His Messenger Muhammad in the authentic Sunnah. Affirming without resemblance ‘tamthil’ and freeing Allah from any resemblance to His creation, whilst also rejecting and being free from divesting ‘ta’til’, distortion ‘tahrif’, and explain ‘how’ Allah’s attributes are ‘takyif’.

Examples of each:

Tahrif تحريف: changing the wordings of Allah’s Names and attributes or changing their meanings. Like the saying of the Jahmiyyah that ‘istiwa’ (ascending above) is ‘istowla’ (conquering and having dominion over) and the saying of some of the innovators who say that ‘al ghadab’ (Anger) when referring to Allah claiming it means ‘intending to punish’ and that ‘ar rahmah’ (Mercy) means ‘intending to send blessings’.

Ta’til تعطيل: removal of Allah’s attributes and to deny them for Allah the Most High. Saying Allah is Al Baseer (All Seeing, but cannot see). It is taken from their false statements: ‘A graceful neck without adornment’ (mu’attal). This is what the Jahmiyyah do and those who tread upon their path, those who divest Allah of His attributes. This statement of theirs is totally futile because it is impossible for anything in existence to be without attributes and the Quran and Sunnah affirm attributes for Allah that are befitting to His greatness and Majesty.

Takyif تكيف: explaining or asking how the attributes are. So it is not said: How did He ascend? Or How is His Hand? Simply because speaking about the attributes of Allah follows the same principle and is treated the same as speaking of Allah’s essence. So just as Allah’s essence is unknown then likewise ‘How’ His attributes are, is unknown to us, except via authentic texts in the Quran and Sunnah.

Tamthil تمثيل: making resemblance. So it is not said: Allah’s essence is like our essence, rather the believer must always remember Allah’s statement ‘There is nothing like unto Him’, i.e. no one and nothing resembles Allah the Most High.

Types of Disbelief in Allah's Names and Attributes

Type of Disbelief	Meaning	Evidence
Disbelieving in Allah's verses proving His creation	-Denying Allah's existence and denying that He is the creator of everything, which are considered as proofs of His existence	
Disbelieving in naming/designation	-Naming Allah with a name He didn't name Himself, and what doesn't benefit Allah, as naming Him 'father', or the 'active justification/reason'	<p>وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ</p> <p>And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do. (Al-A'raf 7:180)</p>
Disbelief by changing the meanings	<p>-like how the people of innovations try to read:</p> <p>وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا</p> <p>"and to Mûsa (Moses) Allāh spoke directly." (An-Nisa 4:164) with a 'fathah' on Allah's name instead of a 'damma' which changes the meaning</p> <p>-or by changing the meaning by explaining</p> <p>ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ</p> <p>"and then He Istawâ (rose over) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty). (al-A'raaf 7:54) to mean: to take over, occupy, seize</p>	<p>مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمِعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لَيْتَ بَالْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنًا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمِعْ وَانظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا</p> <p>Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from (their) right places and say: "We hear your word (O Muhammad SAW) and disobey," and "Hear and let you (O Muhammad SAW) hear nothing." And Râ'ina with a twist of their tongues and as a mockery of the religion (Islām). And if only they had said: "We hear and obey", and "Do make us understand," it would have been better for them, and more proper, but Allāh has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not except a few. (An-Nisa 4:46)</p>

	<p>-The people of innovations call this 'ta'weel', this 'ta'weel' is false and dispraised, because it is chaning the word from its original understanding to another understanding without evidence.</p>	
<p>Disbelief by disabling the meanings</p>	<p>-linguistically:leaving off and taking away the actions of the words</p> <p>-technically: Denying Allah's names and attributes completely or partly</p> <p>Divisions:</p> <p>A)complete denial</p> <p>B)Partial denial, denying Allah's attributes and affirming His names, or denying some attributes and affirming others</p>	<p>كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لَتَتْلُوَ عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ فُلْهُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ</p> <p>Thus have We sent you (O Muhammad SAW) to a community before whom other communities have passed away, in order that you might recite unto them what We have inspired to you, while they disbelieve in the Most Beneficent (Allâh) Say: "He is my Lord! Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He)! In Him is my trust, and to Him will be my return with repentance." (Ra'd 13:30)</p>
<p>Disbelief in asking 'how' are Allah's attributes</p>	<p>-searching for 'how' are the attributes of Allah, someone saying Allah's hand is like this or that</p> <p>-Allah's attributes they have descriptions, qualities and properties, but knowledge of this is not known to us, this is because the qualities are specifically related to His essence</p> <p>-We entrust Allah with knowledge of the descriptions and qualities of His attributes and as for the existence of meanings , then we believe in them and affirm them</p>	<p>وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا</p> <p>"and they will never compass anything of His Knowledge. (Ta-Ha 20:110)</p> <p>وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا</p> <p>And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not, etc.) that of which you have no knowledge (e.g. one's saying: "I have seen," while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard," while he has not heard). Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allâh). (Al-Isra 17:36)</p>

<p>Disbelief by striking similarities and comparisons</p>	<p>-technical meaning: affirming that there is something similar to Allah in His Divine Essence or His attribute or His names.</p>	<p>لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ</p> <p>There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. (Ash-Shura 42:11)</p> <p>رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ شِئًا</p> <p>Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (Alone) and be constant and patient in His worship. Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer]. (Maryam 19:65)</p> <p>وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ</p> <p>"And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." (Al-Ikhlās 112:4)</p>
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Why don't Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'aah ask about 'How' are Allah's names and attributes?

- 1-Because Allah's essence is unseen and speech about attributes revolves around and is built upon speech of His essence.
- 2-Because Allah has no comparison, so He cannot be compared to anything.
- 3-Because no authentic statements have reached us clarifying the qualities of Allah's attributes, so one must not search for 'how' they are, but he must believe in their existence.

The Methodology of Ahl Sunnah regarding Allah's names and Attributes:

- 1- The Prophet is the most knowledgeable of Allah from amongst the creation, with what Allah informs him of His names and attributes.
- 2-It is not permissible to describe Allah with an attribute which did not come in the Quran and authentic Sunnah even if it had a correct meaning.
- 3-Many of Allah's attributes can be seen and understood by our intellects, for example: knowledge, wisdom, ability, mercy. These attributes can be observed in Allah's creation, so this is evidence that Allah possesses these characteristics. Because the action is a proof for many qualities of the one who does or performs them. So by observing the creation of Allah we see the traces of perfection, care, creation, which no doubt is a proof that the creator is able, knowledgeable, wise and merciful.

-Speech, listening, sight: we can prove that these are qualities of Allah by observing and keeping in mind what Allah negates from Himself from deficient attributes. When Allah negates Himself from having deficiencies, this means that we establish the opposite as being perfect and complete. From these deficiencies are deafness, blindness, being dumb. So Allah negates himself of having these characteristics, so this means that Allah is All-Seeing, All-Hearing and Speaks.

4-So whatever attribute comes to us and we have no way of establishing it, except for the Quran and Sunnah, we believe in it.

5-We are certain and we affirm that whatever comes to us authentically from Allah and/or His messenger, then a sound, healthy intellect cannot deny or negate it, nor conflict or contradict it. Nor can the intellect say that it is impossible to occur, even if it was something difficult and complex in understanding.

Important principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah regarding Allah's names and attributes:

1."Affirmation of everything that Allaah affirmed for Himself in His Book, or which His Messenger sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam affirmed for him; without tahreef (distorting the wording or the meaning of the Attributes), without ta'teel (denying them), without takyeef (asking how the Attributes are), and without tamtheel (making any resemblance of them to the creation).("Aqeedatus-Salaf wa Ashaabul-Hadeeth (p.4) of as-Saaboonee and Majmoo' Fataawaa (3/3, 4/182, 5/26, 6/38) of Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah.)

2."To deny for Allaah everything which He has denied for Himself in His Book, or which His Messenger denied for Him; along with believing that its fully-perfect opposite is confirmed for Allaah - the Most High."(Al-'Aqeedatut-Tadmuriyyah (p.58) and al-Jawaabus-Saheeh (3/139) both by Ibn Taymiyyah)

3."The Sifaat (Attributes) of Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - are tawqeefiyyah (i.e. only to be spoken of in accordance with a text). Thus, nothing is affirmed for Allaah, except that which Allaah affirmed for Himself, or was affirmed for Him by His Messenger. Likewise, nothing is denied for Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - except that which He denied for Himself, or was denied for Him by His Messenger sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam."(Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/26).)

4."To cease with regards to vague terms which are not found to be affirmed or denied textually; in wording or meaning. So further explanation is sought. Then, if something false is meant by it, then we declare allaah free of that and reject it. If, however, it is something that is true and something that is not to be denied for Allaah, then it is accepted and the correct terminology - as found in the Book and the Sunnah - is to be made clear. One should call for the useage of the correct terminology, in place of this vague and newly-introduced wording."(Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/299, 6/36) and at-Tadmuriyyah (p.65).

An example of this is the term jihat (direction). We halt - neither immediately affirming or denying it, and we ask the one who says it: What do you mean by the term jihat (direction) for Allaah? If he says that he means a place which contains Him, then we say that this is something false and rejected, and Allaah is to be

declared free from this. But if he says that it means that Allaah is unrestrictedly above, then we say that this is true; and it is not to be denied for Allaah. So we accept the meaning from him, but we say that it is more befitting that it be said: Allaah is above the heavens, or that he is above. Since these wordings occur in the authentic texts. But as for the term jihah (direction), then it is vague and is a novelty, so it is better to leave it.

5. "Every Attribute that is established by an authentic report most definitely agrees with the sound 'aql (intellect). 'Mukhtasarus-Sawaa'iqul-Mursalat (1/141, 253).

6. "To cut off any hope in reaching the reality of how the attributes are; as Allaah - the Most High - said: "And they will never encompass anything of His Knowledge." [Soorah TaaHaa 20:110]."(Manhaj wa Diraasaat li Aayaatil-Asmaa was-Sifaat (p.25) of Shaykh Muhammad Ameen ash-Shanqeetee.)

7. "The Sifaat of Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - are affirmed specifically and in detail; whereas denial is done in general." 'Majmoo' Fataawaa (6/37, 6/515).

Example of detailed and specific affirmation is like affirming Hearing and Seeing, for Him and the rest of the Attributes. An example of generalised denial is like denying for Him any likeness; as in His saying: "There is nothing like Him." [Soorah Shooraa 42:11].

8. "Every Name confirmed for Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - is inclusive of an Attribute, but the opposite is not the case." 'Badaai'ul-Fawaa'id (1/162) of Ibn al-Qayyim and also al-Qawaa'idul-Muthlaa fee Sifaatillaahi wa Asmaa'il-Husnaa (p.30) of Ibn al-'Uthaymeen.)

For example: Allaah's Name ar-Rahmaan (the Most Merciful) incorporates the attribute of mercy; al-Kareem (the Munificent) incorporates the attribute of munificence; and al-Lateef (the Most Gentle, the All-Perceiving) incorporates the attribute of being gentle and all-perceiving; and so on. However, as for His Attributes; such as His Iraadah (Will), His Majee (Coming), His Istawaa (Ascending) - then names are not to be derived from them, such as: the One Who Wills, The Comer, the One Who Ascends; etc.

9. "The Attributes of Allaah - the Most High - are perfect, containing no deficiency in any sense at all. (Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/206) and Badaai'ul-Fawaa'id (1/168).

10. "Attributes of Allaah are Dhaatiyyah (those pertaining to His Self), and Fi'liyyah (those pertaining to His Actions). And there is no limit or end to His Actions." (Al-Qawaa'idul-Muthlaa (p.30).

Since Allaah says: "And Allaah does whatever He chooses." [Soorah Ibraaheem 14:27].

11. "The proof from the Book and the Sunnah for establishing an Attribute is either by clearly stating it, or by its being incorporated by the Name, or by clear statement of an action or description proving it." (Al-Qawaa'idul-Muthlaa (p.38).

Examples of the first: Mercy, Might, Power, His face, His Hands, His Fingers; etc. Examples of the second: al-Baseer (the all-Seeing) incorporates the Attribute of sight, and as-Samee' (the all-Hearing) incorporates the attribute of hearing; etc. Examples of the third: "The Most Merciful made istawaa (ascended) over the Throne." [Soorah Taa Haa 20:5]. This proves His having ascended. And: "Indeed I will extract retribution from the criminals." [Soorah as-Sajdah 32:22]. This proves that He extracts retribution.

12. "One may seek refuge with Allaah - the Mighty and Magnificent's - Attributes, and swear an oath by them." (Majmoo' Fataawaa (6/143, 229) and refer also to Sharhus-Sunnah (1/185-187) of al-Baghawee.)

From this is his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam's saying: "I seek refuge in Your Pleasure from Your Wrath, and of Your granting safety from Your Punishment." Reported by Muslim (no.486).

Therefore Imaam al-Bukhaaree headed a chapter heading in the Book of Oaths and Vows: "Chapter: Swearing an oath by the Might of Allaah and His Attributes and His Word."

13. "Speech concerning the Sifaat (Attributes) is like speech concerning the Dhaat (Self)." (Al-Kalaam 'alas-Sifaat (p.20) of al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, al-Hujjah fee Bayaanil-Mahajjah (1/173) of Qawaamus-Sunnah al-Asbahaanee, and Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/330, 6/355).

Since, just as His Dhaat (Self) is real and does not resemble that of other than Him, then likewise, it is characterised by real Attributes which also do not resemble the attributes of others. And just as affirmation of His Dhaat is an affirmation of existence, but not of how He exists, then the same is true for the Attributes.

14. "Speech concerning some of the Attributes is like speech concerning the rest of them." (At-Tadmuriyyah (p.31) and Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/212).

So whosoever affirms the Attributes of Allaah; like Hearing Seeing and Will, must therefore affirm Allaah's Loving, being Pleased, His Anger and His Hating. Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Whosoever differentiates between one Attribute and another, despite their being the same with regards to reasons for their being literal or metaphorical, then he is contradicting himself, erroneous in his position, and resembling those who believed in a part of the Book whilst disbelieving in other parts."

15. "Whatever is attributed to Allaah and is not something separate from Him, then it is an Attribute of His and is not something created. And everything that is attributed to Allaah, but is something separate from Him, then it is something created. So not everything that is attributed to Allaah is necessarily an Attribute of His." (Al-Jawaabus-Saheeh (3/145), Majmoo' Fataawaa (9/290) and also Majmoo' Fataawaa wa Rasaa'il (1/166) of Ibn al-'Uthaymeen)

Examples of the first: Allaah's Hearing, seeing, being Pleased and Wrath. Examples of the second: The House of Allaah, the She-Camel of Allaah.

16. "The Attributes of Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - and all other matters of 'aqeedah (belief) are established by whatever is [authentically] established from Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam - even if it is an Aahaad narration." (Mukhtasar Sawaa'iqul-Mursalah (2/332, 412, 433).

17. "The meaning of Allaah's Attributes which are established in the Book and the Sunnah, are known and are explained with their dhaahir (apparent and literal) meaning, never with their majaaz (metaphorical or figurative) meaning. But as for their kayfiyyah (how they are), then that is unknown." (At-Tadmuriyyah (pp.43-44) and Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/36-42). For a full reply to the doubts refer to ar-Risaalatut-Tadmuriyyah, Munaazaratil-'Aqeedatil-Waasitiyyah, ar-Risaalatul-hamawiyyatul-Kubraa and ar-Risaalatul-Murraakashiyyah - all within Majmoo' Fataawaa in order (3/1-128), (3/160-194), (5/5-121) and (5/153-193).

18. "Whatever occurs in the Book and the Sunnah, then it is binding upon every Believer to hold what it entails as his saying and to believe in it; even if he does not understand its meaning." (At-Tadmuriyyah (p.65) and Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/298).

19."The domain of the reports [about Allaah and His Actions] is wider than that of the Attributes. So things related about Allaah are not necessarily dependant upon a text; such as Allaah is the pre-existing, that He is a thing, that He exists; etc." (Badaa'i'ul-Fawaa'id (1/162).

20."No analogy is made regarding the Attributes of Allaah." (Sha'nud-Du'aa (p.111) of al-Khattaabee.) So no analogy is made between His Sakhaa (liberty) and His Jood (Generosity), nor between His Jalad (Strength) and His Quwwah (Might), nor between His Istitaa'ah (Capability) and His Qudrah (Power), nor between His Riqqah (Compassion) and His Rahmah (Mercy). This is because, with regards to Allaah's Attributes, then we cannot go beyond the principle of halting until a text is found; as was explained in the third principle.

21."The Attributes of Allaah - the Mighty and Magnificent - cannot be enumerated, since every Name of Allaah comprises an Attribute, and Allaah's Names cannot be enumerated; since from them are those which Allaah has retained with Himself in the Knowledge of the Unseen." (Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/176)

The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "No pre-occupying concern, nor grief inflicts a servant whereupon he says: O Allaah, I am your slave, the sone of your slave, the son of your female-slave. My forelock is in Your Hands; Your judgement is continually being carried out upon me; Your decree upon me is just. I ask you with every Name that is Yours, with which You have named Yourself, or sent down in Your book, or taught to any of Your creation, or have kept for Yourself in the hidden knowledge wich is with You ..." (Saheeh: Related by Ahmad (1/391). It was authenticated by al-Albaanee in Saheeh Kalimut-Tayyib (no.102).)

(See Manhaj wa Diraasaat li Aayaat al-Asmaa' wa's-Sifaat, by Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him)

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that the Qur'aan indicates that the issue of the Divine Attributes is focused on three principles. Whoever follows all of them has reached the correct view, and attained the belief which the Prophet and his Companions and the righteous Salaf adhered to. Whoever misses out one of these three principles is misguided.

He stated that each of these three principles is indicated in the Qur'aan:

The first principle: Declaring that Allah is far above any of His Attributes resembling any of the attributes of His creatures. This principle is indicated by the aayaat (verses):

{لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ}

...There is nothing like Him...(Ash-Shura 42: 11)

And Allah says:

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ}

And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.(al-Ikhlaas 112: 4)

And Allah says:
{فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ}

So put not forward similitudes for Allah (as there is nothing similar to Him, nor He resembles anything)...(an-Nahl 16: 74)

The second principle: Believing in Allah as He has described Himself, because Allah cannot be described by anyone who knows Allah better than Allah:

{قُلْ أَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ}

...Say, 'Do you know better or does Allah?...' (Baqarah 2: 140)

And (this principle includes) believing in what the Messenger ﷺ has said describing Allah, because no one knows Allah, after Allah Himself, better than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of whom Allah said:

{وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (3) إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ}

Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed. (an Najm 53: 3-4)

The third principle: the one on which the issue of the divine Attributes revolves – as Ash-Shanqeeti says – is that there is no hope of understanding the true nature of how these attributes are, because understanding their true nature is impossible, Allah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala) has stated this clearly in Soorah Ta-Ha where He says:

{يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا}

He (Allah) knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them (in the Hereafter) but they will never compass anything of His Knowledge. (Taha 20: 110)

This means that it is impossible for the human mind to encompass the attributes of the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

What the Shaykh said about the impossibility of ever knowing the true nature of Allah or His Attributes is sound logic, because the human mind, no matter how intelligent it is and how great its powers of understanding, is totally incapable of knowing the true nature of things.

Man is incapable of knowing the true nature of the soul that resides in his body; he is incapable of knowing the true nature of light which is the most apparent of things; he is incapable of understanding the true nature of matter, or of the atoms of which matter is composed, so how can he hope to understand the true nature of the Divine Essence and Attributes?

In summarization:

1-They affirm and establish everything which has been narrated to us without making comparisons or similarities. We negate from Him all similarities and comparisons. Allah the most High says:

{لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ}

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. (Ash-Shura 42:11)

Allah's saying: {لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ}: this is the negation of all similarities

Allah's saying: {وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ}: This is affirmation and establishment

2-They go into detail and elaborate in establishing and affirming Allah's names and attributes, and the abridge/summarize in negation and denial

Ex. Allah says :

{هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ}

He is Allâh, than Whom there is Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen (open). He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. (Al-Hashr 59:22)

In this verse by Allah elaborating in the affirmation of His names and attributes, His great and magnificent qualities are apparent and clear, and the completeness/perfection of the only one worthy of being praised. An example of summarizing/abridging in the negation of attributes, is Allah's saying:

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ}

"And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." (Al-Ikhlâs 112:4)

And Allah's saying:

{لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ}

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. (Ash-Shura 42:11)

So elaboration in negating a dispraised quality or attribute, decreases that which is praised (other than Allah).

3-They elaborate in negation, for certain reasons:

A)For the reason to refute, rebuke and respond to the ones who lie upon Allah, by saying He has a son. Allah denied this attribute in the Quran, as He stated:

{لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ}

"He begets not, nor was He begotten; (Al-Ikhlâs 112:3)

And Allah says:

{وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا}

But it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Beneficent (Allâh) that He should beget a son (or offspring or children). (Maryam 19:92)

B)To retract and extinguish any delusions or doubts regarding Allah's attributes of completeness and perfection, as Allah says:

{اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ}

Allâh! Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter . And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursî extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.

[This Verse 2:255 is called Ayat-ul-Kursî.] (Al-Baqarah 2:255)

4-They affirm/establish the complete/perfect opposite of what has been negated. Every negation necessitates the complete affirmation and establishment of its opposite in order to be praiseworthy. Ex. Allah's saying:

{وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ}

And indeed We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six Days and nothing of fatigue touched Us. (Qaf 50:38)

Allah The Most High in this verse negated from Himself fatigue, so in turn we establish and affirm Allah's complete ability and power.

Another example, as Allah says:

{لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ}

"He begets not, nor was He begotten; (Al-Ikhlās 112:3)

Allah negates that He was born and negates giving birth to anything, so in turn we establish and affirm that Allah is self-sufficient and independent of all things.

Another example, as Allah says:

{لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ}

Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. (Al-Baqarah 2:255)

In this verse, Allah negates slumber and sleep, so in turn we establish that Allah is All-Aware, and we affirm Allah's everlasting existence.

Another example, as Allah says:

{وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ}

And put your trust (O Muhammad SAW) in the Ever Living One Who dies not, and glorify His Praises, and Sufficient is He as the All-Knower of the sins of His slaves; (Al-Furqan 25:58)

Allah negated from Himself death, so in turn we establish that Allah is ever-living, everlasting, eternal.

Clarification of how Ahl Sunnah views striking similarities to Allah's Names and Attributes:

1-'Hearing': this attribute can be used for a young healthy man, and an old man who has reached his last days. The word hearing is one, but the meaning has different degrees and levels. There is no comparison between the hearing of a young man and the hearing of the elderly man. So if it is permissible to find inequalities/differences/variations between two of the creation, then variations and inequalities between the creator and the creation are foremost.

2-'Power': this attribute can be used to express the strength or power of an elephant and the power of an ant, between them is the similarity in the general meaning. Meaning both of them

possess power, but the power of the elephant is not like the power of the ant, each species is considered accordingly. So in turn, the variation of the meaning of power occurs.

*Our goal in this is to clarify that between Allah's attributes and between the names of attributes of some of the creation there are similarities. This is similarity in names of the attributes themselves and the general meaning. So with what we observe and understand of the descriptions of the creation, we can understand some of the meanings of Allah's names and attributes. But when it comes to ascribing and specification, giving each its specific meaning, then Allah's attributes are those which befit and are unique for Him alone, and He has no partner in this. And the attributes of the creation are described with what befits them. There is no comparison between the attributes of the creation and the creator, except for some of the general meanings and names of the attributes.

The Methodology of the Intellectuals and misguided sects regarding Allah's names and attributes (Mu'tazilah, Ashaa'irah, Jahmiyyah, Soofiyyah, etc...)

1-The foundation which precedes everything in affirming and establishing Allah's characteristics is the intellectual/logical proofs.

2-Whatever cannot be established by their intellectual reasoning and what has come in the Quran and Sunnah, they consider the Quran and Sunnah as contradictory and conflicting the intellect. They allow their intellects to precede everything. As for the texts of the Quran and Sunnah, then they either:

A) Explain it with a false, distorted meaning

B) Deny it altogether

*In reality, they allow their personal views and opinions and general technical terms to precede the Quran and Sunnah

Questions for Part Five Correspondence Course

Aqeedah

(Please detach these questions, complete them and return them to iMacD for grading)

Multiple choice questions. 5 points each. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The foundation which precedes everything in affirming and establishing Allah's characteristics is the intellectual/logical proofs.

Is this statement correct? Who believes this statement to be correct?

- a) Yes, people of innovations
- b) No, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah
- c) No, people of innovations
- d) Yes, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah

2. If we negate that Allah sleeps, this means that we establish for Him:

- a) He is everywhere
- b) He punishes whoever He wills
- c) He forgives whoever He wills
- d) Allah's omniscience, complete knowledge, everlasting existence

3. The Attributes of Allah:

- a) Are only 99
- b) Cannot be enumerated
- c) Can be counted
- d) Are infinite

4. The Names of Allah:

- a) Are only 99
- b) Are more than 99
- c) Are less than 99
- d) Are only three

5. A Muslim believes in and affirms Allah's Names and Attributes found in:

- a) Quran and weak ahadith
- b) Quran and authentic ahadith
- c) Quran and statements of Imams
- d) The sky

6. Swearing or taking an oath using Allah's Names and Attributes is:

- a) Impermissible
- b) Permissible
- c) Disliked
- d) Obligatory

7. Every Attribute that is established by an authentic report most definitely agrees with the sound 'aql (intellect)

Is this statement true or false. Who believes this?

- a) False, people of innovations
- b) False, people of the sunnah
- c) True, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah
- d) False, Soofiyyah

8. It is _____ to describe Allah with an attribute which did not come in the Quran and authentic Sunnah even if it had a correct meaning.

- a) Permissible
- b) Impermissible
- c) Obligatory
- d) Recommended

9. Naming Allah something that He didn't name or call Himself is:

- a) Permissible
- b) Impermissible
- c) Haraam
- d) Wajib

10. Tahrif means:

- a) Disabling Allah's attributes
- b) Changing and distorting the meanings of Allah's names and attributes
- c) A type of Arabic science
- d) Following one's opinions

Grade: _____/50)

True or False questions. 5 points each. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Prophet Muhammad is the most knowledgeable of Allah from amongst the creation, with what Allah informs him of His names and attributes.

- a) True
- b) False

2. Scholars and Imams know the unseen because they have piety and read a lot of Quran.

- a) True, they have been given special powers

b) False, only Allah knows the unseen, this is 'Shirk' and takes someone out of the fold of Islam.

3. It is not permissible to describe Allah with an attribute which did not come in the Quran and authentic Sunnah even if it had a correct meaning.

a) True

b) False

4. Allah has no partner or associate, He cannot be compared to His creation, it is obligatory upon us to leave off questioning 'how' His attributes are, unless it came in the Quran and Sunnah, and leaving the evidence as it has come to us without alterations.

a) True

b) False

5. Tamthil means: striking resemblances with Allah's attributes

a) True

b) False

6. "The Sifaat (Attributes) of Allaah - the Mighty and Majestic - are tawqeefiyyah (i.e. only to be spoken of in accordance with a text)

a) True

b) False

7. Many people of innovations have distorted and changed the meanings of Allah's Names and Attributes

a) True

b) False

8. Allah spoke to Prophet Musa

a) True

b) False

9. One of the best books containing Allah's Names and Attributes is the Quran

a) True

b) False

10. A great book elaborating on Allah's Names and Attributes is 'Aqeedatul Waasitiyyah'

a) True

b) False

Grade: _____/50

Total Grade: _____

*Please detach these questions, complete them to the best of your ability. Whoever scores 90% or more will receive the next lesson. Mail your answers to iMacD for correction.

May Allah make you successful.