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Al-Qawa'id al-Muthla: Course Handout

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Names & Attributes of Allah (Al-Qawa'id al-Muthla)

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القواعد المثلى في صفات الله وأسمائه الحسنى

Al-Qawaa`id al-Muthlaa

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

All praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide him and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide him. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah alone without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) is His Servant and Messenger.

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THE FIRST PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.1 - ALL OF THEM ARE ATTRIBUTES OF PERFECTION - THEY ARE NOT DEFICIENT IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER

Some of Allaah's Attributes are, for example: Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, Mercy, Honour, Wisdom, Loftiness, Greatness, etc. The perfection of these Attributes can be proven by textual, intellectual, and instinctive evidence.[1]

Textual Evidence: Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْأَخِرَةِ مَثَلُ ٱلسَّوْءِ ۖ وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ ﴾

«**Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, they are the worst example; and for Allaah is the loftiest example; and He is the Possessor of Honour, the All-Wise**.» [*an-Nahl* (16):60]

Meaning: In each and every case, we say: «**for Allaah is the loftiest example**.» So, for every single thing you conclude with, Allaah is Better and more Complete than what your understanding reaches.

The «**loftiest example**» means the loftiest possible description.

Intellectual Evidence: Everything that truly exists must have an attribute, and that attribute must either be a perfect one or a deficient one. The latter is rejected when referring to the Perfect Lord who deserves our worship.

Notice that the intellectual evidence here, already relies on some belief in the Book and the *Sunnah*. For example, if someone were to come and say, "I do not believe that Allaah is the Most Perfect and deserves our worship," we understand that intellectual evidence cannot be used with him, rather the instinctive evidence could be used. So, *ad-daleelul-`aqli* (intellectual evidence) is used for people who have a grounding in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

(continued...) Because of this, Allaah the Most High, has exposed the futility of worshipping idols by describing them with deficiencies and incapability.

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[1] The *Shaykh* (*rahimahullaah*) here, makes reference to three types of evidences:

- **The first is textual evidence** and this refers to the Qur`aan and the *Sunnah*.
- **The second is intellectual evidence** and this refers to those evidences that are generally based on the first type, meaning conclusions and analogies based on the Qur`aan and the *Sunnah*.
- **The third is instinctive evidence** and this refers to evidences used by people who have never touched the Book or the *Sunnah*, meaning basic human instincts (*fitrah*) to arrive to certain conclusions. What is the benefit of human instincts? We can use it to invite people to *Tawheed* using instinctive evidences that their natural disposition agrees with. Before they even believe in the Book of Allaah, they could be guided by what they find within themselves.

Important point: Every attribute can be categorized into a perfect attribute or a imperfect one. When someone with a 'perfect' 20/20 vision is asked to look beyond a fog, his vision will not enable him to do so, he cannot see behind objects nor can he see in an unlimited manner. His 'perfect' vision is relative to the human eye, meaning, he has the best vision available to the human eyeball. And at the end of the day, his eye is imperfect vision; he cannot see everything, he can only see some things with it, he cannot see every detail of what he is seeing - even if he held up binoculars with his 20/20 vision, he would see more with his eye would let him see than he would without the binoculars. So, when we say 'perfect,' we mean the best of what the human eye can see.

Now, which is befitting to apply to Allaah? The perfect attribute or the imperfect attribute? **He is described with the Perfect Attribute**. He is Allaah, who has **none** similar to Him.

Anyone who has imperfect attributes does not deserve worship. This reason is sufficient for them to be undeserving of worship. If Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) is Perfect in each of His Attributes, and He is the One who deserves our worship, how could those less than Allaah with imperfect perfect attributes, deserve our worship? This is the intellectual angle here.

He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَن لَّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُۥٓ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَآئِهِمْ غَٰفِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ ﴾

«**And who is more astray than the one who calls on other than Allaah, those who will not answer them (from now) to the Day of Standing, while they (those called upon) are heedless of their supplications**.» [*al-Ahqaaf* (46):5]

So, He has described the false objects of worship as being those that do not respond and are *ghaafiloon* (they have no recognition of the supplications being addressed to them). So, how could they be worthy of worship when their attributes are as such?

And He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْوَٰتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَآءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾

«**And those who call upon those less than Allaah, those who do not create anything, rather they have been created, (they are) dead, not alive, and they do not (even) know when they will be brought forth (from their graves)**.» [*Nahl* (16):20-21]

Those who are worshipped besides Him are described with death, is Allaah described with death? No. Is He described with ignorance? No. Can we say that Allaah does not create? No. Those described in the *aayah* do not create anything. They themselves were created. They themselves being created is an attribute of

deficiency. The fact that you were created, and do not exist on your own accord, and you are dependent on a creator is a deficiency in of itself. More so, human beings go through stages of weakness, they die and when they die, they do not know when they are going to be sent forth. They do not know when the Day of Judgment will be, so they are in their graves, ignorant to when they will be sent forth - all of these things are deficiencies, and these deficiencies prove that whoever is described with them cannot be the object of worship, rather worship is directed to the One who deserves it and the One who deserves it must be the one who has Perfect Attributes, Allaah.

And He said, quoting the statement of Ibraaheem when he was debating his father:

﴿ يَـٰٓأَبَتِ لِمَ تَعۡبُدُ مَا لَا يَسۡمَعُ وَلَا يُبۡصِرُ وَلَا يُغۡنِى عَنكَ شَيۡـًٔا ﴿٤٢﴾ ﴾

«**O my father! Why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see, nor does it bring you any benefit?**» [*Maryam* (19):42]

Ibraaheem (*`alayhi salaam*), as a Prophet, used this angle of intellectual proof: «Why do you worship that which **cannot hear** you and **cannot see** you, **nor does it bring you any benefit**?»

These are deficiencies in attributes, and they lead you to the clear intellectual understanding that someone with these deficiencies should not be worshipped. This was the line of argument for Ibraaheem with his own father.

And when he debated his people:

﴿ أَفَتَعۡبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنفَعُكُمۡ شَيۡـًٔا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمۡ ﴿٦٦﴾ أُفٍّ لَّكُمۡ وَلِمَا تَعۡبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِۖ أَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾

«**So then are you going to worship other than Allaah, something that cannot befit or harm you? Woe to you! And (woe) to what you worship other than Allaah! Will you not then think reasonably?**» [*al-Anbiyaa`* (21):66-67]

«**Will you not then think reasonably?**» is the line of argument appealing to the intellect of the human being. If you have an intellect and you want to use it, can you worship something that can neither help you nor harm you? Can Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) help us? Yes. Can He harm us? Yes. In fact, can anyone help us if Allaah does not want that help to reach us? No.

«**واعلم أن الأمة لو اجتمعت على أن ينفعوك بشيء ، لم ينفعوك إلا بشيء قد كتبه الله لك ، ولو اجتمعوا على أن يضروك بشيء ، لم يضروك بشيء إلا قد كتبه الله عليك**»

«**Know, if all of the people gathered to benefit you, they would not be able to do so except by what Allaah has decreed for you, and if they all gathered together to harm you, they would not be able to do so except by what Allaah has decreed for you**.»[2]

Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*) is the Only One who brings about benefit and harm, so, anyone less than that cannot really harm you and cannot benefit you, except by the Permission of Allaah. Could that person or object deserve worship in truth? Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) could put you in the Hell-Fire, therefore you are afraid. Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) could put you in Paradise, therefore you are hopeful. He is the Only One who could put you in the Hell-Fire. It is His decision alone, and it is His decision alone to place you in Paradise. The polytheists agree that Allaah is the only One who makes the decision about who attains Paradise, and it is His decision alone about who goes to the Hell-Fire, so then intellectually, what is before us now? As an intellectual conclusion, Allaah alone is deserving of worship and none besides Him. What would the benefit of worshipping others be, when Allaah is the only one who makes the decisions?

So, once we establish that things that are deficient in their attributes do not deserve worship, the conclusion is: Allaah is the one who deserves mankind's focus and worship in every aspect, so then Allaah's Attributes must all be Perfect and complete in every way and angle.

Furthermore, it is known that some of the created beings have been given some attributes of perfection[3] from Allaah, so then the One who gave them these Attributes of perfection has more right to them Himself.

When we talk about the perfection of a created being, we are talking about one within the human capacity. Ask those with 'perfect memory' if they remember when they were one or two years old, ask them what they saw and what they were exactly told. There is obviously a limit to the perfection of their memory with regards to a certain book or attempts at memorization. It is not unlimited like Allaah's Perfection. For example, Allaah's Knowledge is Perfect from every angle in an unlimited and unrestricted way. Similarly, someone can have perfect hearing, but the meaning of that perfect hearing is inasmuch as the ear would allow; there are ranges of sounds that our ears do not pick up that animals hear, and we do not say that a person with perfect hearing can hear all ranges of sounds, we only say: he hears everything that is expected from him. So, it is all relative to the device that is being used. When we talk about the Hearing of Allaah, we are not limiting it to a device or to an attribute of a human being, rather we say that Allaah's Hearing is Perfect and Complete, not reliant on a device, and His vision is Perfect and Complete, not relative to any device or human limitation, but beyond all limitations and without restriction.

Instinctive Evidence: All pure, untainted souls are naturally inclined to love Allaah, declare His Greatness, and worship Him.

Small societies that haven't been influenced by the outside world have this natural feeling that there is a creator out there, and that they need to show worship to that creator. As a result of that, some people have created a number of different religions, and they have made for themselves systems for worshipping; some

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[2] Reported in *Saheeh al-Jaami`* no. 7957 from a *hadeeth* of `Abdullaah bin `Abbaas. *Shaykh* al-Albaanee declared it *saheeh*.

[3] Like someone with a "perfect memory", 20/20 vision, a strong body with no weaknesses, etc. *Shaykh* Muhammad Amaan Jaamee (may Allaah have Mercy on him) commented here: "And the Perfection that He (Allaah) is described with is absolute perfection, a perfection that no one shares with Him."

people have laid down idols and others have worshipped the winds, trees, and objects of nature, all because mankind has this instinct deep within, to worship.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

«**And I (Allaah) created not the *jinns* and humans except that they should worship Me (alone)**.» [*ath-Thaariyaat* (51):56]

People have been created to worship. You find people without a book, without a *Sunnah*, without a Messenger, without any guidance and without a teacher - finding a need to worship something and a need to bow down. They have a need to find something greater than themselves. This is the instinctive need we are discussing here. Many times, people identify one creator that does not have a shape - it is not a tree, it is not in front of them - rather, it is a creator who is distant from them and who is all-seeing and all-hearing, yet they do not have any revelation telling them that! For example, when they are afraid, they look up to the sky, pleading, "Help me!" They do not know why they look up. No one told them that their Lord is up, no one brought them proofs from the Qur`aan that Allaah is above the seven heavens, that He rose above His Throne. Rather, they have this instinct that causes them to look up when they have a need to call upon the creator, their god, or object of worship.

Since they have this instinct to worship and extol a deity, would you then love, extol and worship something other than the One you know has the most perfect Attributes that befit His Lordship and His Right to be worshipped?

When a person contemplates the creation of the heavens and the earth, and that everything around him has a system, an order, and there are mountains, wildlife, eco-system where certain animals eat other animals, and that everything is relative to a water supply, and that it is much interactive and interdependent...a complete system that could have not come together randomly and could not have just self-constructed because evolving organisms - when a person sees all of this, his instinct tells him that someone made this. It tells him that there is a creator somewhere. The person instinctively goes to the idea that there is someone that deserves my worship - the One who created the perfect and interconnected system around is the One who has the Attributes of perfection. That is the One whose creation is an Attribute of perfection. That is the One whose knowledge is complete. That is the one whose ability is unlimited. That is the One whose wisdom is perfect unlike our wisdom. That is the One who deserves my worship.

So, if an attribute is deficient, less than perfect, then it is impossible for it to be one of Allaah's Attributes. Examples of this are death, ignorance, forgetfulness, incapability, blindness, muteness, etc. This is due to His Statement:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱلْحَيِّ ٱلَّذِى لَا يَمُوتُ ﴾

«**And put your trust in *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living), the One who does not die**.» [*al-Furqaan* (25):58]

And His Statement, quoting Moosaa (Moses):

﴿ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنسَى ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾

«**My Lord is not unaware, nor does He forget**.» [*Taa-Haa* (20):52]

And His Statement:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُۥ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَلَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ ﴾

«**And nothing in the heavens or on earth is beyond Allaah's Capability**.» [*Faatir* (35):44]

Meaning: His Capability is not limited nor restricted to boundaries.

And His Statement:

﴿ أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَىٰهُم ۚ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ ﴾

«**Or do they think that We do not hear their secrets or their private discourses? Of course (We do), and Our messengers are with them, writing**.» [*az-Zukhruf* (43):80]

This *aayah* speaks clearly about the Perfect Attribute of hearing and of knowledge of a person's secret discourse.

And the Prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) said about the *Dajjaal*

((إِنَّهُ أَعْوَرُ، وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَيْسَ بِأَعْوَرَ))

«**Verily, he is one-eyed, and your Lord is surely not one-eyed**.»[4]

Having one eye is an attribute of deficiency and Allaah is Exalted beyond attributes of deficiency.

And in a *hadeeth* - when the companions would travel, it was from their habit when they reached a high hill or passageway, that they say: "*Allaahu Akbar*!" and when they descended, they would say: "*SubhaanAllaah*." So, one time they raised their voices, saying: "*Allaahu Akbar*!"[5] and when the Prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) saw this action from them, he took a moment to advise them and teach them something about Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*).

He said:

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[4] Collected by al-Bukhaaree (7131) and Muslim (2933) on the authority of Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him).

[5] It is not understood that they were saying it congregation, rather it is understood that they were all saying "*Allaahu Akbar*" by themselves while raising their voices.

((أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! ارْبَعُواْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ!
فَإِنَّكُمْ لاَ تَدْعُونَ أَصَمَّ وَلاَ غَائِباً!))

«**O people! Remember (Allaah) to your own selves (quietly), for verily you are not calling on someone deaf, nor an absent one!**»[6]

The Prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) negated two attributes from Allaah, here: deafness and absence.

As a base ruling, when one makes *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allaah, he should keep his voice low. There is no need to raise your voice to call upon Allaah, simply pronounce on your tongue what you want to ask Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) without raising your voice, since Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) does not need us to raise our voices for Him to hear us.

And Allaah, the Exalted, has decreed punishment for those who describe Him with attributes of deficiency, as in His Statement:

﴿ وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ يَدُ ٱللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ ۚ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا۟ بِمَا قَالُوا۟ ۘ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ ﴾

«**And the Jews said the Hand of Allaah is tied up. Rather, their hands are tied up and they are cursed for what they said! For both of His Hands are outstretched, He gives however He likes**.» [*al-Maa`idah* (5):64]

«**And the Jews said the Hand of Allaah is tied up**.» They meant that Allaah is stingy, and this was their mockery of the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) and his call to *Tawheed*, when they heard him asking the people to give their money in charity for the sake of Allaah. So, they said: «They have a Lord who needs money.» They took this opportunity say negative things about Allaah and the religion of Islaam.

«**Rather, their hands are tied up**...» Allaah shows the reality of the Jews in that time and in all times. They are the ones who are stingy! All of the creation that have dealt with the Jews are witnesses to that, Allaah is accurate in His description of the Jews. They are the ones whose hands are tied up, they are the ones who cannot spend, they are the ones who are stingy, and «**they are cursed for what they have said**.» The curse of Allaah is distance from His Mercy. When you ask Allaah to curse someone, you are asking Allaah to put His Mercy far away from that person. So this is the meaning of «**and they are cursed**.» Allaah has moved them away from His mercy for what they have said, «**Rather both of His Hands are outstretched, He gives however He likes**.» Meaning: He has described Himself with the perfect attribute of Generosity and the perfect attribute of Giving and Spending on His creation. He has also described His creation as being deficient and stingy.

And His Statement:

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[6] Collected by al-Bukhaaree (6384) and Muslim (2704) on the authority of Aboo Moosaa al-Ash`aree (may Allaah be pleased with him).

﴿ لَّقَدْ سَمِعَ ٱللَّهُ قَوْلَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَآءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُواْ وَقَتْلَهُمُ ٱلْأَنۢبِيَآءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُواْ عَذَابَ ٱلْحَرِيقِ ﴾

«**Verily, Allaah has heard the statement of those who have said: "Allaah is poor and we are rich!" We will write what they say, and also their killing of the prophets with no right. And We will say (to them): Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire!**» [*Aali-`Imraan* (3):181]

....«**and also their killing of the prophets with no right**» The prophets would come to them, calling them to the worship of Allaah and His obedience alone, and they would plan and plot to kill the messenger in each and every case throughout history. They even plotted and planned to kill the last Messenger, Muhammad (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*).

Furthermore, He has glorified Himself far above the deficiencies they ascribe to Him, as He has said:

﴿ سُبْحَٰنَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ ٱلْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَسَلَٰمٌ عَلَى ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ ﴾

«**Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above how they describe Him! And peace be upon the messengers, and all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of all that exists**.» [*as-Saaffaat* (37):180-182]

So, Allaah has exonerated Himself, and the believers exonerate Allaah using this verse and others, to show that Allaah is exonerated and far above the claims of those people who describe Him with attributes of deficiency, like poverty and ignorance, etc.

«**Glorified is your Lord**» meaning: Allaah is exonerated above false claims of deficiencies. So, when someone says: "Allaah has a son," likely the first thing you will say, if you understand the phrases of *dhikr* is, "*subhaanAllaah*" (Allaah is exonerated above that). So, when Allaah mentions the claims against Him in the Qur`aan, His common response is similar to the likes of this *aayah*, «**Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour, above how they describe Him!**»

And Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ مَا ٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُۥ مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ ۚ إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَٰهٍۭ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ ﴾

«**Allaah has not taken a son, nor was there (ever) any deity along with Him. And (if there had been other deities) then each deity would have gone off with what it created, and some of them would have taken position over others. Glorified be Allaah above what they describe Him with!**» [*al-Mu`minoon* (23):91]

«**and (if there had been other deities)**...» each deity would go off with some of its creation, and there would be competition between them, and some would overtake the others, and in the end there would be One who would be more dominant (if there were many creators).

So, even if that was the case, there would still be One supreme creator who would be more dominant and deserving of worship than others! Yet Allaah is One and the Only Creator. So with this idea, that had there been multiple creators, and each one would have gone off with its creation, and there would have been competition between them, it is said «**Glorified be Allaah above what they describe Him with!**»

And if an attribute is considered perfect on some occasions, and deficient on others (depending on the situation), then we cannot affirm such an attribute for Him without limit, nor can we negate it without limit.

Important point:

What happens when there are attributes like plotting? Is it negative or positive? Is it a good attribute or a bad one? Is it good in some situations and bad in others?

For example, it is a good thing when there are some people plotting to defend or clarify the religion of *Islaam*. However, as for people who want to take over the *masjid* by creating *fitnah* between the people, and attempting to divide them and turn one against the other, then this is evil plotting. May Allaah save us from that, *aameen*.

Jews plotting against *Islaam*? This is evil plotting.

So, plotting (i.e. designing a plan) can either be good or bad, depending on the situation. Can we describe Allaah with plotting or planning? In situations where the plotting is good, we say Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) is described with that kind of plotting when it is to counteract the plotting of someone else and turn it against them.

﴿ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَٰكِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾

«**And they were plotting, while Allaah plots (as well), and Allaah is the best of plotters**.» [*al-Anfaal* (8):30]

Look at how Allaah mentions it, He does not call Himself *al-Maakir* (the Plotter). He is not Allaah the Plotter. It is not a Name that is established. It is not an attribute that is perfect in every situation. It is an attribute of perfection in **some** situations. So Allaah only affirms this attribute for Himself in response to the plotting of those with the evil type of plotting.

...if an attribute is considered perfect on some occasions, and deficient on others (depending on the situation), then we cannot affirm such an attribute for Him without limit, nor can we negate it without limit. There is a need for a more detailed explanation. It is permissible to describe with Allaah with such an attribute **only** when that attribute would be considered perfect. It would be impossible to describe Allaah with that attribute when that attribute would be considered deficient. This is the case for attributes like planning (against someone), plotting, and deception.

These attributes would be attributes of perfection when counteracting someone who performs that sort of action. In such an instance, it shows that someone is fully capable of matching the enemy's move, or even outdoing him.

On the other hand, these Attributes would be considered deficient other than this scenario. This is why Allaah, the Exalted, did not mention any of these kinds of Attributes in an unrestricted manner. He has only mentioned them in response to those who deal with Him and His Messengers in such a way. This can be illustrated by His Statement:

﴿ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَٰكِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾

«**And they were plotting, while Allaah plots (as well),**
and Allaah is the best of plotters.» [*al-Anfaal* (8):30]

The proof there is that the word for '*Makar*' does not come in the Qur`aan as an attribute or action of Allaah, except in response to their plotting. This is the case with all four of the aforementioned examples.

And His Statement:

﴿ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَهِّلِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ أَمْهِلْهُمْ رُوَيْدًۢا ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

«**They are planning a serious plan,**
while I, too, am planning a serious plan.» [*at-Taariq* (86):15-16]

And His Statement:

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَأُمْلِى لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ كَيْدِى مَتِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾ ﴾

«**And as for those who disbelieve in our signs, We will gradually**
lead them into a punishment from where they do not know.
So leave Me to them, verily My Plan is strong.» [*al-A`raaf* (7):182-183]

If you ask a Muslim, "can we describe Allaah with deception?" He would likely say: "Never! Our Lord Allaah is exonerated beyond that." Yet deception with regard to the human being is praiseworthy in a few situations. For example, when you are at war and you are applying a military strategy, do you tell the enemy that you will at their coast Tuesday morning at six, so be prepared to fight us? Or do you do things to confuse and deceive them? The Prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) said: «**War is deception**.» So, if military strategies are line with the *Islaamic* goal of spreading truth and repelling corruption, spreading the statement of the *shahadatayn* and justice on earth, repelling obstruction of justice and oppression, then this would be something praiseworthy for the Muslim to be involved in under a Muslim government. In this case, his act of deception in line with the strategy of war, becomes a praiseworthy attribute. The leader who is straightforward with his tactics by telling his enemy what he will be doing, and he does not use deception, he is not successful in his strategy. He is not a good planner for the army. And each and every country on earth, Muslim or non-

Muslim, affirm this for this military. So, deception is agreed upon during war-times - it is a tactic that is needed and it is something that accomplishes the goal of the military.

However, we are not going to establish 'deception' as an attribute of Allaah unless there is something in the Book of Allaah to attribute to Him, deception. Otherwise, we say: No, we cannot attribute to any attribute or a name without a proof.

His Statement:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ يُخَٰدِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَٰدِعُهُمْ ﴾

«**Verily, the hypocrites (think they) deceive Allaah, while (actually) He is the One deceiving them**.» [*an-Nisaa`* (4):142]

Allaah deceives the *munaafiqeen*. How does the deception of the *munaafiqeen* happen? They claim to be Muslims outwardly, and they conceal the disbelief in their hearts. They think that they have reached a level of success, because the people accept their outward statements and actions. They become pleased with themselves, and they begin to think they are upon goodness until they become so confused with this self-deception that they forget their corruption and disbelief in Allaah from within. So in reality, during their disillusion of attempting to deceive Allaah with this act, Allaah is deceiving them!

So, we say that Allaah deceives in this situation **only**. We **cannot** use deception for general understanding and conclude that Allaah is a deceiving Lord. We do not call Him *al-Khaadi`* (the Deceiver) just as we do not call him *al-Maakir* (the Plotter). We call Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*) by the Names He has established for Himself. And if an attribute can be good in some situations and bad in others, we only refer to Him with the attribute when it is befitting to Him as He has mentioned in His Book. So, do not say blanketly that Allaah is the Deceiver. We say: Allaah deceives the *munaafiqeen* and leads them into self-deception, and that is His deception of them, because they seek to deceive Him. In response to their efforts, Allaah has deceived them.

Does Allaah mock people? He mocks them in a restricted way to some instances, and that is when they mock Him, His religion, and/or His Messenger.

And His Statement (regarding the *munaafiqeen* again):

Allaah mocks people in some instances, and that is when they mock Him, His religion and His Messenger.

﴿ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ ٱللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ ﴾

«**They said: 'Verily, we are (really with you, we were only mocking.' Allaah makes mockery of them**.» [*al-Baqarah* (2):14-15]

Allaah makes a mockery of them in a complete and perfect way. So, do we call Allaah the Mocker? No, we say that Allaah makes a mockery of the hypocrites who try to mock Him, His Religion, and His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*).

What about *Khiyaanah* (betrayal)? Can we say that Allaah betrays people in some situations? No. Betrayal is when someone gives you their trust and you 'pull the rug from under their feet' by betraying them. When someone puts all their trust in you, and they are betrayed, it is not a positive attribute in any way in any situation. Betrayal is only done in an evil way. It never has a good application.

In the following Verse, notice how Allaah does not say that He betrays those who betray Him, rather, He, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَإِن يُرِيدُوا۟ خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾

«**And if they desire to betray you, then surely they have betrayed Allaah in the past, and He gave (you) power over them. And Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise**.» [*al-Anfaal* (8):71]

«**and He gave (you) power over them**» Allaah has given others the power to overtake them despite their betrayal. He did not say that "He gave authority to others to betray them..." or "We guided people to betray them..." rather, Allaah said «**And He gave (you) power over them. And Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise**.»

So....

He said, «**And He gave (you) power over them**,» and He did not say, "And He betrayed them," since betrayal is only done after trust has been built, and it is always a lowly attribute. Based on this, it becomes clear that what some of the common people say, "Allaah betrays those who betray Him," is a grossly evil statement that must be censured.[7]

[7] Similarly, as *Shaykh* Muhammad Amaan al-Jaamee (may Allaah have mercy on him) explained, is the saying of some of the people, "So-and-so oppressed me, so may Allaah oppress him!" (فلان ظلمني الله يظلمه) This is also not allowed, as oppression is blameworthy in all instances, and thus Allaah cannot be described with it, especially in light of His Statement in the *hadeeth qudsee*, «**O my Servants! Verily I have prohibited Myself from oppression, so do not oppress one another!**...» [Collected by Muslim (2577)]

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.2 - KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES IS MORE EXPANSIVE- THAN KNOWLEDGE OF HIS NAMES

Knowledge of Allaah's Attributes is more expansive than knowledge of His Names, since each one of His Names includes an Attribute, as has preceded in *The Second Principle Concerning Allaah's Names*. This is also the case since some of the Attributes are connected to Allaah's Actions, and there is no end to the Actions of Allaah, just as there is no end to His Statements.

Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مِن شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَٰمٌ وَٱلْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ
سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَٰتُ ٱللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ ﴾

«**And if every tree on earth was a pen, and the sea was extended seven times over (and used as ink), the words of Allaah would still not be finished. Verily, Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise**.» [*Luqmaan* (31):27]

From the examples of this are the following Attributes of Allaah: Coming, Going, Seizing, Taking, Striking, etc. **The attributes <u>cannot be</u> enumerated**.

Compare this to the names: they cannot be enumerated either. You can attempt to name ninety-nine of His names and get a reward for listing them, but the prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) used to supplicate to Allaah with the following:

((...أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ،
أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ،
أَوِ اسْتأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ...))

«...**I ask You by every Name that You have, those You named yourself with, those You revealed in Your Book, those You taught one of Your created beings, and those You kept with Yourself as knowledge of the Unseen**...»

So, there are names for Allaah that He has not informed us of. It is not humanly possible to enumerate the names of Allaah. And based on the author's statement: "The attributes cannot be enumerated," - we should not understand from that a comparison between the names and then say: "The names can be enumerated and the attributes cannot." Rather, the author is simply talking about the expansive nature of the attributes and not making a comparison in that sentence.

The point here is: For every name, there is an attribute, but not from every attribute is there a name. Many verses in the Qur`aan talk about the attributes of Allaah and many others talk about His names. Every verse that talks about a name can lead you to affirm an attribute for Allaah. But not every verse that talks about an attribute establishes a name.

So then, we see here that the attributes and our knowledge and discussion of the attributes will be far more expansive and detailed, because we have more attributes to discuss than we do names.

Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ ﴾

«**And (when) your Lord has come**...» [*Fajr* (89):22]

Can we name Allaah as *al-Jaa.ee* or *al-Aatee* (the one who comes)? **No**. Why? This is because not every attribute establishes a name. Would "the Arriver" be from the most perfect idea of a Name? **No**, since it is not a name of majesty and beauty. It is simply a description of Allaah that He will arrive and come on the Day of Judgement.

﴿ هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ فِى ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْغَمَامِ ﴾

«**Are they waiting for anything other than Allaah to come to them in their shadows of the clouds**?» [*al-Baqarah* (2):210]

This is another verse that mentions the coming of Allaah.

﴿ فَأَخَذَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ﴾

«**So Allaah seized them because of their sin**s.» [*Ghaafir* (40:21]

Should we name Allaah as *al-Aakhith* (the Seizer)? It is not a befitting name for Allaah. Likewise, a name is not established from an attribute, but names can be used to establish attributes.

﴿ وَيُمْسِكُ ٱلسَّمَآءَ أَن تَقَعَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦٓ ﴾

«**And He holds back the skies so that they do not fall down upon the earth except by His Permission**.» [*Hajj* (22):65]

﴿ إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ١٢ ﴾

«**Verily the Striking of your Lord is a severe one**.» [*Burooj* (85):12]

Do we affirm *al-Baa<u>t</u>i<u>sh</u>* (the Striker) as a name for Allaah? No. We do not call Allaah the Striking One.

﴿يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُمُ ٱلْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ ٱلْعُسْرَ﴾

«**Allaah wants ease for you,**
and He does not want any difficulty for you.» [*al-Baqarah* (2):185]

Can we name Allaah as *al-Mureed* (the one who wants)? It is not a name of perfection and thus, He has not named Himself with that name. So, we do not describe Him with that name.

And the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا...))

«**Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven**...»[1]

Can we call Allaah, the Exalted, *an-Naa<u>z</u>il* (the descending one)? No. It is not a name befitting of His Majesty. It is not a name that He has named Himself with, so we refrain from naming Him with it.

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[Q]: Can I say that *an-Naazil* is not one of Allaah's Names?
[A]: No, because we do not know the names which Allaah has named Himself with, that He has kept to Himself. When we say: "This is not a name of Majesty that Allaah has affirmed for Himself, so we do not name Him with it," you should not understand that [as though] we are saying: It is not one of His names. Rather, we say: "Do not establish that as a name for Allaah because He has not named Himself with that name in His Book." There is a big difference between saying that and saying it is not one of the names of Allaah.

Sometimes you find scholars saying, for example: "an-Naa<u>s</u>ir is not one of the names of Allaah, so it is not permissible to call yourself `Abdun-Naa<u>s</u>ir," as *<u>Sh</u>ay<u>kh</u>* ibn Baaz said, "Anyone with that name has to change it." So, Naa<u>s</u>ir (on its own) is OK, but `Abdun-Naa<u>s</u>ir is not permissible because he said that Naa<u>s</u>ir is not one of Allaah's names. We understand that he meant to say: "We do not have textual proof to establish an-Naa<u>s</u>ir as one of Allaah's names."

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So we describe Allaah, the Exalted, with these Attributes in the way that they are reported in the texts, and we do not ascribe names to Him based on them. For example, we do not say that the following are from Allaah's Names: *al-Jaa.ee* or *al-Aatee* (the one who comes), *al-Aa<u>kh</u>i<u>th</u>* (the seizer), *al-Mumsik* (the withholder), *al-Baa<u>t</u>i<u>sh</u>* (the striker), *al-Mureed* (the one who wants), *an-Naa<u>z</u>il* (the descending one), etc. We do not attribute these to

[1] Collected by al-Bu<u>kh</u>aaree no. 1145 and Muslim no. 758 on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah (*ra<u>d</u>iyallaahu `anh*).

Him as names, even though we have been informed that they are His Attributes and we describe Him with them.

The principle:

Knowledge of the attributes are more expansive than knowledge of the names based on the idea that from every name there is a meaning and that meaning allows us to understand an attribute. And not so is the case with the attributes - we do not understand from every attribute a name with which we can name Him.

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Benefit:

You can never ever deduce that Allaah has fingers. However, from looking at the creation, you can make an intellectual conclusion and say: "Allaah has Greatness and Wisdom." You can look at what He has created and say: "He has wisdom, I do not need a text. I can see in the creation that Allaah is Powerful, Great, Wise, and has Capabilities." These are attributes that can be understood without texts. Then there are some things that you cannot understand about Allaah - **ever** - except with a text.

You could not rationalize and say: "Oh, the way the creation is, I can deduce that Allaah has fingers." There is no information in the creation within the way Allaah has made things and the signs that He has given you other than the texts of the Book and the Sunnah to inform you of something as such. You can only reach these conclusions [e.g. "I know that Allaah has a hand, a face, or fingers] with texts affirming them for Allaah. The Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) has affirmed for Allaah fingers, a hand, and a Face. So, now, do we say that Allaah is the Fingered one? The handed one? The Faced one? Obviously not. We cannot use these attributes to establish a name for Allaah, the Exalted.

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THE THIRD PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.2 - ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES MAY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINDS- ATTRIBUTES OF AFFIRMATION AND ATTRIBUTES OF NEGATION

When do you think you can say: "Allaah does not have this attribute?" For example, we negate with all clarity and surety, ignorance from Allaah, the Exalted.

﴿ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنسَى ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾

«**My Lord is neither unaware nor He forgets**.» [*Taa-Haa* (20):52]

We also have texts about His Knowledge and how expansive and all-inclusive it is. All of this leads us to understand that we can negate the attribute of ignorance from Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*). He is not ignorant of anything from any situation, so He is not ever described with ignorance.

Thus, when the attribute is not praiseworthy, simply negative and contains complete deficiency AND when the text has negated that from Allaah, we negate them as well.

On the other hand, we affirm attributes for Allaah which have been affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Allaah's Attributes may be divided into Attributes of Affirmation and Attributes of Negation.

Attributes of Affirmation (**الصفات الثبوتية**), *as-sifaat ath-thubootiyyah*, are those that Allaah has affirmed for His own Self in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace). All of them are Attributes of perfection having no deficiencies whatsoever, like Life, Knowledge, Power, Ascension over the Throne, Descent to the lowest heaven, His Face, His Two Hands, etc. It is binding to affirm these for Allaah, the Exalted, literally, in the way that is befitting to Him, based on both textual and intellectual evidence.

Textual Evidence: Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ ءَامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ
وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ ﴾

«**O you who believe! Believe in Allaah, His Messenger, the Book that was sent down to him, and the Book that was sent down before that.**

And whoever disbelieves in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, or the Last Day has gone far astray indeed.» [*Nisaa.* (4):136]

So believing in Allaah as mentioned in this Verse includes believing in His Attributes, just as believing in the Book that was sent down to His Messenger includes believing in the Attributes of Allaah that are mentioned in it. Also, believing in Muhammad (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) as His Messenger includes believing in everything he reported on behalf of the One who sent him, Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic.

Intellectual Evidence: Verily, Allaah, the Exalted, has informed us about Himself, mentioning these Attributes, and He is more knowledgeable about them than anyone else, and He is more honest in Speech and more precise in His narrations than anyone else. So then, it is obligatory to affirm these Attributes without hesitation, as Allaah himself is the One who has informed us of them. Hesitation in accepting a report only occurs when the one reporting may be ignorant, or perhaps lying, or even incapable of expressing what he wants to say. All three of these faults are impossible for Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic. Thus, it is binding to accept everything He tells us about.

There are people who claim to be Muslims, yet when they read an *aayah* about an attribute (for example, anger), they say: "That attribute is not something we can affirm for Allaah. It is not allowed to say that Allaah is angry because anger is boiling of the blood and perhaps an attribute that leads to injustice or oppression." The answer is this intellectual angle: Allaah is the one who has described Himself with it. We are not concluding or deducing this from what we see from the creation. Allaah, who is the most accurate of anyone to describe Himself, has described himself with this attribute and His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) has conveyed that message to us and affirmed that attribute. So, there should be no wavering nor any consideration that this report may be inaccurate and that we cannot affirm it for Allaah. Allaah knows best about himself and He has described himself with an attribute, so it is up us to affirm it without questioning it or without being doubtful in anyway whatsoever.

And we believe similarly in the reports of the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) that he conveyed from Allah. For verily, the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) was the most knowledgeable of the people concerning his Lord, the most truthful of them in his narrations, the purest of them in his intentions, and the most eloquent of them. Therefore, it is binding on us to accept his reports as they are.[2]

[2] *Shaykh* ibn al-`Uthaymeen says: "We believe in all that He assigned to Himself or what His Messenger described Him with, of names and attributes....We negate all what He negated about Himself or what His Messenger negated about Him. We believe that negation implies the affirmation of its perfect opposite. We do not discuss what He or His Messenger did not mention about Him.

We believe that following this approach is a must, because what Allaah affirmed or negated concerning Himself is a statement He made about Himself. He knows Himself best. His words are most just and trustful, and people cannot know everything about Him. What Allaah's Messenger affirmed or negated about Him is a statement that he made about Allaah. Besides knowing Allaah better than anyone, he is the most truthful, sincere, and eloquent among people. Thus, in what Allaah said and what His Prophet said concerning His names and attributes is the truth, knowledge, and clarification. Therefore, we have no excuse to reject or even hesitate in accepting it." [*The Muslim's Belief*].

Attributes of Negation (**الصفات السلبية**), *as-sifaat as-salbiyyah*, are those that Allaah has declared Himself free from, either in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace), and all of them are attributes of deficiency, and thus, unbefitting to Him. Examples of this are death, sleep, ignorance, forgetfulness, incapability, and fatigue.

It is binding upon us to negate them and not associate them with Allaah as mentioned, **while affirming their opposites as Attributes of perfection**. This is because whatever Allaah has negated about His own Self, then the intent is to negate them in order to affirm their opposite, not to merely negate them alone. This is so because negate something does not necessitate perfection, unless it implies affirming some kind of perfection, since negation alone is basically the absence of something, and the absence of something is nothing, so then it could not be considered as something perfect.

For example, Allaah cannot be described with the attribute of death, so what is the meaning of negating that attribute, except that we are going to affirm life? When we say that Allaah does not die, we are not simply making a negation, rather we are making a negation that leads us to an important point: Allaah does not die **because** He is the Possessor of Complete and Perfect Life. So, when we negate something from Allaah, the intention is to affirm the opposite as a perfect and complete attribute of His.

So negating an attribute could lead you to simply deny something, like if you said: "The wall does not oppress anyone." This does not necessitate that the wall is just and fair.

Negating an attribute could also be understood as describing something as being incapable as well, as the poet once said:

قُبَيِّلَةٌ لاَ يَغْدِرُونَ بِذِمَّةٍ وَلاَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ حَبَّةَ خَرْدَلِ

"*A small tribe that does not ever betray a trust,*
Nor does it oppress the people a single bit."

It is a small tribe with no fighters, no abilities, no skills, and they do not oppress anyone. So, when we say that this tribe has not oppressed anyone, it does not affirm that they are just. It only negates that they have not oppressed anyone. In fact, in this case, it is because they have neither the power nor ability to oppress (someone) even if they wanted to; so it does not establish a good attribute for them. This is different to how we negate things from Allaah, the Exalted.

Another poet said:

لَكِنَّ قَومِي وَإِنْ كَانُواْ ذَوِي حَسَبٍ لَيْسُواْ مِنَ الشَّرِّ فِي شَيْءٍ وَإِنْ هَانَا

"*However, my tribe, even though they are people of rich heritage,*
they are not evil in any way, not in the least manner."

An example of this principle can be found in Allaah's Statement:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱلْحَيِّ ٱلَّذِى لَا يَمُوتُ ﴾

«**And put your trust in *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living), the One who does not die**.» [*al-Furqaan* (25):58]

In this Verse, Allaah has negated death for Himself, which necessitates the Attribute of perfect Life. So both are mentioned, an affirmation that He is the Ever-Living and an negation of death.

Another example is found in His Statement:

﴿ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾

«**And your Lord does not oppress anyone**.» [*al-Kahf* (18):49]

Negating oppression includes an affirmation of the Attribute of perfect Justice.

A third example can be found in His Statement:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُۥ مِن شَىْءٍ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَلَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ﴾

«**And nothing in the heavens or on earth is beyond Allaah's Capability**.» [*al-Faatir* (35):44]

Allaah has negated incapability, and this implies perfect Knowledge and Capability. Thus, He says after that:

﴿ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾

«**Verily, He is All-Knowing, All-Capable**.» [*al-Faatir* (35):44]

This is because incapability is due to either ignorance of the reasons for the existence of things or a lack of power. So due to the perfect Knowledge of Allaah, the Exalted, and His Capability, nothing in the heavens or on earth is beyond His Capability.

Through this example, we learn that the negation of these attributes necessitates an extension of His Perfection.

Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*) does not sleep nor slumber. Is this an attribute of negation? It **is** an attribute of negation. We negate that Allaah sleeps or slumbers. What is the object of negating sleep or slumber? It implies that Allaah is vigilant and Aware of All Things. The one who sleeps is unaware of his surroundings, so it is an attribute of deficiency, and it is not befitting to describe Allaah with it. So, when we negate sleep and slumber from Allaah, we affirm perfect and total awareness and knowledge of the creation.

Another attribute of deficiency that we negate from Allaah is stinginess. The Jews say that the Hand of Allaah is tied up (i.e. He is stingy or miserly). Is this a *sifah thubootiyyah* or *sifah salbiyyah*? It is *salbiyyah*, we negate it

from Allaah. When we negate stinginess from Allaah, what is the objective? We affirm Generosity for Him in the most complete and perfect way. We affirm that He gives without limit to whomever He pleases.

So any negation that we make from Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*) based on the texts that He does not have this attribute, we affirm the opposite attribute in the perfect and most complete manner.

If Allaah has negated a son for Himself and we negate from Him the idea of having a son, what do we affirm for Him? As a result, we affirm for Him absolute unique Oneness, independence, no reliance upon His creation or anyone else. Total independence. Total unique oneness.

﴿ قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾
وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

«**Say (O Muhammad): He is Allaah, the One. The Self-Sufficient Master.**
He begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none
co-equal or comparable unto Him.» [*Ikhlaas* (112):2]

Allaah has negated similarities to Himself. He has negated that there is anything in His creation that could be similar to Him. So, what does this negation affirm for Allaah? It affirms uniqueness, oneness, and the idea that Allaah, the Exalted, is uniquely one.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.4. POINTS OF WISDOM BEHIND THE NEGATION OF CERTAIN ATTRIBUTES

Allaah's established Attributes are Attributes of due praise and perfection, and the more variety that is found in their meanings, the more apparent the perfection of the One being described is.

Likewise, Allaah's Attributes of affirmation that He informed us about are greater in number than the attributes He negated, as is known. His Attributes of negation are normally mentioned in only three instances:

Firstly, they are mentioned to clarify the generality of His Perfection. This can be found in His Statements;

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ﴾

«**There is nothing similar to Him**.» [*Sooratush-Shooraa* (42):11]

﴿ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

«**And there is nothing comparable to Him**.» [*Sooratul-Ikhlaas* (112):4]

So, Allaah completely negates any type of similarity in a manner that clarifies the generality of His Perfection. These verses establish that He is uniquely Perfect in each and every way of perfection.

Secondly, they are mentioned to negate the false claims made against Him by the liars. This can be found in His Statement:

﴿ أَن دَعَوْا۟ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَمَا يَنۢبَغِى لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾ ﴾

«**They have claimed that the All-Merciful has a son!**
And it is not befitting for the All-Merciful to have a son.» [*Soorah Maryam* (19):91-92]

Who is it that is saying: "It is unbefitting for Allaah to have a son?" Is it our opinion? Is it the opinion of the Prophet? Or is it Allaah Himself saying that this is not befitting for Himself to have a son? Allaah Himself has described Himself as being above having a son.[1]

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[1] *Ustaadh* Moosaa: Another indication here as **a side point**: The Book of Allaah, from its being to its end, is a Book of refutations. Those who say: "We should not be focused so much on refutations," often do not understand the reality of what they are saying. Refutations are necessary in Islaam to clarify the truth.

Allaah has made a refutation in this verse, and by way of this refutation, made His *tawheed* and attributes of perfection much clearer and more understandable to His creation. Refutations are used by Allaah in His Book in many occasions, from the beginning of the Book to its end; refuting the hypocrites, the idol-worshippers, the enemies of the prophets, the statements of the false claimants against His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) and refuting the claims made by the Jews and the Christians; mentioning some of them by name and others by general references.

Thirdly, they are mentioned to repel an inappropriate conclusion about His Perfection relating to a specific affair, like what is mentioned in His Statements:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَٰعِبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

«**And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for play**.» [*Sooratud-Dukhaan* (44):38]

And like His Statement:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِى سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُّغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

«**And verily We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no fatigue reached Us**.» [*Soorah Qaaf* (50):38]

It can be said that the third point of wisdom can be interrelated to the second point of wisdom. The second point of wisdom was to refute the false claims of the false claimants and the third one is to repel inappropriate conclusions. The last verse is a refutation of the Christians and a refutation of a false idea that someone, who is not affected by the Christians, might produce. He (the latter) might say: "Creating the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in a period of six days, must be exhaustive." So, without a proper understanding of Allaah, they could fall into an assumption that Allaah had become fatigued. May Allaah be exonerated above such a claim.

Similarly, it is a specific claim made by the Christians, they said: "Allaah has created the heavens and earth, on the seventh day, He rested," implying that He needed to rest because of the work He did. And Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*) is exonerated and exalted above false claims.

So refutations are part of our religion. People should not make statements similar to: "Refutations harden the heart," since the book of Allaah contains refutations and this would necessitate that Allaah's Book will harden your heart. Rather, you could say: "Being obsessed with the peoples refutations of each other and neglecting Islaamic duties can have negative effects. (If you want to advise someone)." But do not say that refutations harden the heart. Refutations can protect the heart and keep it soft.

This statement was mentioned to our *Shaykh* Rabee` ibn Haadee. They said to him: "People say refutations harden the heart." He said: "Then what softens the heart? Ignorance of innovation? Falling into innovation? Contradictions to the order of Allaah? That's what softens the heart?" This is the result of neglecting refutations and being aware of people who oppose the religion of Islaam, that you fall into their traps and speech. So, being aware of evil for the sake of avoiding evil is something that will keep your heart soft and protect it in the guidance that Allaah has given you.

Student's additional notes: *Shaykh* Saalih al-Fawzaan was asked: "What is your view on the one who says the books of refutations harden the heart?" He responded: "No, leaving off refutations is what hardens the heart, because the people will live upon error and misguidance, so their hearts will harden. But if the truth is clarified and falsehood is refuted, then this is what softens the heart. *Na`am* (yes)."

For further benefit, read: Refutations are from the Religion of Islaam.

To conclude, this is the fourth principle regarding Allaah's attributes; every negation of an attribute includes an affirmation of a perfect opposite and every negation come with one of three main points of wisdom:

> **The first**: to express the generality of Allaah's perfection.
>
> **The second**: to refute a false claim that has been made.
>
> **The third**: to repel an assumption that has been made based upon ignorance or not being aware of Allaah in the best manner.

Building on the previous principle, the negation must have an affirmation of the complete opposite. Let us apply it to the three examples here.

The first example is the negation of similarity to Him. What would that entail? Total perfection in His uniqueness. Someone who is uniquely perfect cannot be compared to anyone. Someone who is perfect, but not uniquely perfect, can be compared to other things. But uniquely perfect means that it is perfect and on a level of its own. So, Allaah's uniqueness and perfection are understood to be unparalleled and incomparable to anything in His creation.

The second example is the negation of a son. What would that affirm for us? If Allaah has negated having a son, it would affirm unique oneness and being Eternal. Why do human beings have children? They have to die and someone has to continue after them, so Allaah made them *khulafah* (to follow each other in succession) on earth. Having a son is a weakness, because it indicates that you are getting old and someone has to take over. So, Allaah does not have a son because there is no type of weakness that will approach Him (*`azza wa Jall*). There is no type of weakness that He could be described with. He does not need an heir, He is not going to be absent. He is not going to be dead, *ta`aala Allaah*, so He does not need a son. This leads to the attribute of independence and lack of reliance upon anything or anyone else. This is what we can affirm from the negation of a son.

The third example is the negation of creating the heavens and earth in jest. If Allaah negates from Himself play, jest or pointless creation, what does it affirm? It affirms purposeful creation, a goal, and wisdom behind the creation. It affirms having a direction planned for this creation. It was not created for the sake of having fun. Rather, it was done with a goal and a purpose. So, the negation of play and jest means that they were created with purpose and wisdom.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

«**And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind**
except to worship Me.» [*Sooratudh-Dhaariyaat* (51):56]

The fourth example is the negation of fatigue. What does this entail? It entails strength that is perfect and does not have any weakness or limit to it. Rather, it is perfect and complete strength befitting to the Majesty of Allaah.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.5. THEY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINDS - PERMANENT, CONTINUOUS ATTRIBUTES AND CHOSEN ACTIONS

Allaah's affirmed Attributes might either be permanent Attributes that He is always to be described with, or Actions that He performs when He likes.

His permanent Attributes (الصفات الذاتية), *as-sifaat ath-thaatiyyah*, are those He never ceases to be described with, like having Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, Honor, Wisdom, Highness, and Greatness. Some of them are Attributes that are only known to us through His reports (الصفات الخبرية), like His Face, two Hands, and two Eyes.

His chosen Actions (الصفات الفعلية / الاختيارية), *as-sifaat al-fi`liyyah*, are the actions that related to His Will. If He wants, He does them, and if He does not want to do them, He does not do them, like His Ascent over the Throne and His Descent to the lowest heaven.

Do we always say that Allaah is rising above His Throne? Notice the difference here: Allaah is the Lofty One above His creation. Is He described with this always or sometimes? He is always described with this attribute. Allaah is Lofty, and we will never have an occasion wherein we could say: "Allaah is now beneath something," or "There are things above Allaah." We have no text to establish anything like this. Allaah's loftiness and highness has been established as an attribute that He is always described with.

Now, the act of ascending above His Throne - do we say: "Allaah is always ascending over His Throne," or "He continues to ascend above His Throne?" Or is it something that He has done when He liked? It is something that He did and is not continually described with.

Also, an Attribute may also be a combination of both a permanent Attribute and a chosen Action, like His Speech for example. His Speech is, in a basic and more general understanding, a permanent, continuous Attribute, since Allaah, the Exalted, did not stop, nor will He stop speaking.

We can say that because we have many narrations about Allaah speaking, yet we have no narration that says: "And Allaah remained silent," or "Allaah stopped speaking." We only have affirmations that Allaah speaks, and we have no text and verse that Allaah remained silent. So, to describe Allaah with silence requires a proof that we do not have. And to describe Allaah with speech requires a proof, which we have. Since, we have many texts regarding the speech of Allaah and we do not have texts regarding silence as an attribute for Allaah, we must refrain from attributing silence to Allaah. We must only describe Him with speech. This is in the general sense.

How is Allaah's Speech? We do not know the reality of Allaah's speech in each and every situation. We know some of the words that He has spoken to some of His creation in some circumstances. Allaah spoke to Moosaa. He spoke to the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*). Allaah said to the angels such-

and-such on such-and-such circumstance. So, we have individual phrases that have been relayed to us by Allaah Himself about what He said to some of His creation at certain occasions. These are *sifaat fi`liyyah*.

So, for example, do we say: "Allaah is speaking to Moosaa permanently?" or do we say: "Allaah spoke to Moosaa?" We say that Allaah has spoken to Moosaa and we do not say that Allaah is always described as speaking to Moosaa.

With this, the specific things He said are considered chosen Actions, since they are related to His Will - He speaks whenever He wants, saying whatever He wants. This can be understood from His Statement:

﴿ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾

«**His affair is such that whenever He wants something, He merely says 'Be' and it is**.» [*Soorah Yaa-Seen* (36):82]

And every Attribute that is connected to His Will is in accordance with His Wisdom. This Wisdom may or may not be known to us, as we may be unable to grasp it. However, we know with conviction that He does not want anything that is not in accordance with His Wisdom. This is alluded to in His Statement:

﴿ وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾

«**And you will not want to (draw near to your Lord) unless Allaah wants that, verily Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise**.» [*Sooratul-Ihsaan* (76):30]

In summary, the principle here, is a distinction between *sifaat fi`liyyah* and *sifaat thaatiyyah*. An example of the latter: Allaah is Great. We always describe Him with this attribute. An example of the former: Descending to the lowest heavens. We do not always describe Him with this attribute. We describe Allaah with it in the last third of the night as He has informed us of in the speech of His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*).

Allaah's Wisdom: Is it a *sifah thaatiyyah* or a *sifah fi`liyyah*? It is a *sifah thaatiyyah*. Why? Everything He does and says and all of His other attributes are related to His Wisdom. He creates with Wisdom, He fashions and shapes with Wisdom, and He brings the rains to the people with Wisdom. He gives some people boys from His Wisdom and He gives others girls from His Wisdom. All of the things He does are based on His Divine and Perfect Wisdom. So, then, we can never say that something happened during which Allaah was not wise. This would be a serious claim made against Allaah. So, Allaah, in each and every instance, is to be described with permanent and continuous wisdom.

Allaah's Guidance: "Whoever Allaah guides, none can misguide him. And whoever Allaah lets stray, none can guide him." The Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) was distressed at the loss of his uncle Aboo Taalib, and Allaah consoled him, saying:

﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ ﴾

«**Verily! You (O Muhammad *sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) guide not**

whom you like, but Allaah guides whom He wills.» [*Sooratul-Qasas* (28):56]

So, Allaah negated that the Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) could guide, i.e. make someone accept the truth. (Not the guidance of teaching, however, because he was a guide, i.e. he taught the people and showed them the legislation). This is only for Allaah. So, we can say: with regard to specific individuals and instances, Allaah does not guide every single person. Allaah lets some people to stray. So it would be a *sifah fi`liyyah*.

We can also say, from a more broader sense however, that Allaah is guiding someone in each and every situation or that Allaah is always guiding the people in some capacity. So here, from a broader sense, we can say it is a *sifah thaatiyyah*, without a specific mention to individuals. We do not say, however, that Allaah is always guiding Yoosuf, but we can say that Allaah is constantly guiding His creation in a general way.

ar-Rahmaan (the Extremely Merciful) and *ar-Raheem* (the Bestower of Mercy):

﴿ وَكَانَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾ ﴾

«**And He is Ever Merciful to the believers**.» [*Sooratul-Ahzaab* (33):43]

The *Rahmah* (i.e. *ar-Raheem*) that is specific to the believers on the Last Day can be called *sifah fi`liyyah*. It is not for everyone. It is reserved to the believers who have believed in Him and it is the mercy that He will give them on the Last Day.

ar-Rahmaan denotes the attribute of perfect mercy in an all-encompassing way. It is the mercy that is shown to even the disbelievers. It is the mercy that each person receives, constantly, day and night. His heart beats while he sleeps and his lungs breath in air and keep him alive. All of this is from the mercy of Allaah (*ta`aala*). Each and every person's provisions have been laid out for him for his entire life.

So, there is a kind of mercy that is all-encompassing, constant and permanent. It is constantly reaching the creation and affecting them in each and every way, day and night. This mercy never stops. And there is a kind of mercy that some people will receive in the Hereafter and some will not based on their adherence to Allaah's orders to worship Him alone. The people who worshipped Allaah alone and did not associate others in their worship, will receive the specific mercy of Allaah that is for the Hereafter. It could be in the form of entering Paradise initially and it could be absolute forgiveness from all sins. It could be in the form of being punished in the fire, taken out of it, then being allowed to go into the Paradise. In any of those cases, a person will receive specific mercy that is not available to the non-Muslims.

So the Mercy that reaches all of the creation is a *sifah thaatiyyah* and the Mercy that is specific to the believers is a *sifah fi`liyyah*.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.6. THE DANGERS OF *TAMTHEEL* AND *TAKYEEF*

Tamtheel is from *mathala*, *yumathilu*, *tamtheelan*, and *takyeef* is from *kayyafa*, *yukay-yifu*, *takyeefan*.

Affirming His Attributes requires one to shun two very dangerous thoughts: *tamtheel* (التمثيل) and *takyeef* (التكييف).

Tamtheel is when the affirmer believes that the Attributes he affirms for Allaah are similar to the attributes of the creation. This belief is falsehood, as understood from both textual and intellectual evidence:

Textual Evidence: Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ﴾

«**There is nothing similar to Him**.»[1]

﴿ أَفَمَن يَخْلُقُ كَمَن لَّا يَخْلُقُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

«**Then is the One who Creates like the one who does not create?**
Do you not reflect?»[2]

﴿ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُۥ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾ ﴾

«**Do you know anything comparable to Him?**»[3]

﴿ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

«**And there is nothing comparable to Him**.»[4]

These texts are very clear in each and every case, there is nothing similar to Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*). No similarities could be assumed from the first impression, nor could they be concluded after reflection. So, there is nothing in Allaah's Book that produces the meaning of similarities, nor would the proper *tafseer* of any verse be that Allaah has an attribute or action similar to those of His creation. Any *tafseer* of any verse or *hadeeth* that leads to that understanding must be false because of the clarity found in these verses here.

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[1] *Sooratush-Shooraa* (42):11.
[2] *Sooratun-Nahl* (16):17.
[3] *Soorah Maryam* (19):65.
[4] *Sooratul-Ikhlaas* (112):4.

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ﴾

«**There is nothing similar to Him**.»[5]

This is absolute negation: There is absolutely nothing similar to Him.

﴿ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ٤ ﴾

«**And there is nothing comparable to Him**.»[6]

These explicit statements from Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) negating similarities are very clear.

Intellectual Evidence: This is from a number of angles:

Firstly, everyone knows that there are differences between the Creator Himself and the Creation. This necessitates that there be differences in their attributes, since the attributes of each and every thing are attributes that befit it, as is apparent in the various things Allaah created. For example, the strength of a camel is not like the strength of an atom. So when it becomes clear that the created things differ between themselves in attributes that they share in common, **then it becomes even more clear that there must be a stronger and more obvious difference between the attributes of the creation and the Attributes of the Creator**.

Secondly, it can be said: "How can the Lord, the Perfect Creator, the One who is Perfect from all angles, be similar in His Attributes to His Creation that He provides for, while they are deficient and in need of someone to take care of them? Isn't believing this taking away from the Right of the Creator, since making the perfect one similar to a deficient causes him to be deficient as well?"

If we agree that things in Allah's creation are imperfect and that Allaah is perfect, then to compare the perfect one to the imperfect one is an unjust comparison. For example, one might say: "The mother's love is great, and Allaah's love is similar to that, but greater." This is oppression. However, to say: "Allaah's love for His creation is **greater** than a mother's love for her child," then that is a permissible statement. Allaah's love for His creation is **indeed** greater than a woman's love for her baby. But to say: "Allaah's love for His creation is **like** the love of a woman for her baby, but stronger," then that is a similitude and thus, it is impermissible, since the Lord of all that exists has denied and negated similitude for Himself. There is nothing comparable to Him.

Thirdly, we witness created things that share the same name but differ in their details and realities. We see that the human being has a limb that is not like the limb of an elephant, while the elephant has a strength that is different from the strength of a camel, while they are both possessors of the same attribute called strength. Both have limbs, and both have strength, while between the two there is a clear difference in their details. So then, it becomes known that the sharing of a name of an attribute does not necessitate sharing the same qualities.

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[5] *Sooratush-Shooraa* (42):11.

[6] *Sooratul-Ikhlaas* (112):4.

Another example is between an infant who is beginning to walk and a racehorse - both have strength in their legs, but is there any real comparison here? Is there any way to compare the two? The strength of the racehorse's legs is incomparable to the strength of that of the baby who is now beginning to walk. So, within the creation, there are great differences between the individuals and the species. There are attributes that differ so greatly, so much so you would say: 'The attribute of this animal is incomparable to the attribute found in other animals,' while you are talking about the very same attribute! i.e. strength, intelligence or creativity, etc.

Now, within the creation, there are differences so great that two things become incomparable. If this is found in the creation, how much more should we regard Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) and His Knowledge? Think about our knowledge and the knowledge of Allaah. In regards to this, we say: Allaah has perfect and complete knowledge incomparable to our knowledge in each and every way. Our knowledge is deficient. Our knowledge is weak. Our knowledge is limited by our abilities. Our knowledge is based on other weak attributes. Our knowledge is gained through sight and hearing which are both weak attributes containing deficiencies. Whereas, Allaah's knowledge is not based on any deficiency. Allaah's knowledge is not preceded by weakness nor does forgetfulness follow it. None of these things can be related to the knowledge of Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*).

So, we must agree that whatever greatness in distance between two creatures regarding an attribute, the Creator has more right to be considered far and above the attributes of the creation in an incomparable manner.

What do you think about the basic knowledge of a common person versus the knowledge of *al-Imaam* Maalik (*rahimahullaah*)? Can we say it is comparable? Or do we say that *Imaam* Maalik has more knowledge than the common Muslim? Is that an accurate description of *Imaam* Maalik's knowledge? It is not a fair statement to say about him, because his knowledge is incomparable to the average every-day Muslim! So, if there is a huge difference between the knowledge of two people in the creation of Allaah, so much so that you would say: 'You cannot compare a common person to a scholar of the religion,' what about the Creator and the creation?! We have an obligation to say that Allaah's knowledge is incomparable to the knowledge of His Creation. His Knowledge is perfect from every angle, etc.

Tashbeeh is from *shabaha*, *yushabihu*, *tashbeehan*.

Tashbeeh (التشبيه) is similar to *tamtheel*. **The difference between the two words is that *tamtheel* is (to claim) total equality in all attributes, while *tashbeeh* is (to claim) equality in most, but not all attributes**. Therefore, to negate *tamtheel* is more appropriate and in accordance with the *Qur`aan*:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ﴾

«**There is nothing similar to Him**.»[7]

[7] *Sooratush-Shooraa* (42):11.

There is no *tamtheel* allowed, nothing can be like Him in all of His attributes. Further, we say: There is nothing like Him in some of the attributes. Even further: There is nothing that can be compared to Him in even one of His attributes! He cannot be compared to in any way, whatsoever.

So, the *tamtheel* is a negation of all similarities; there is no one who could be entirely similar to Allaah, and *tashbeeh* is a negation of some attributes, no one can be similar to Him in some of the attributes.

Where does this idea of comparison come from? For example, why would someone say: 'Allaah has a Hand, so the Hand is like our hand?' [It may be the result of] becoming affected by those who distorted the religion from the people of the book, they began to speak about Allaah with anthropomorphism. And you find in the passages of what we call the "bible" today, horrible accounts that we know are falsehood. They say, for example: "Ya`qoob wrestled Allaah and won." A wrestling match took place between a prophet and the Lord of mankind?! Exalted is He above what they claim. They say things about Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) which denotes that they think of Him as a human being.

So, to be influenced by the Christians and the Arabic philosophers, could lead someone to say: "If Allaah has a Hand while He has addressed us in the Arabic language, and we know what a hand is, and I'm looking at my hand now, I'm going to think of Allaah's Hand in this fashion." This is *tashbeeh*. This is the idea of thinking of Allaah in a way that is similar to His creation. In response, we simply say: "Allaah is the One who has informed you that He has these attributes AND He is also the one who negated similarities between Him and His creation." So, the correct understanding is that each and every attribute He affirmed for Himself or that His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) affirmed for Him, we understand it to be an attribute that is unique and befitting His Majesty and not comparable to our attributes.

Takyeef is when the affirmer believes in a specific understanding of the Attributes of Allaah, the Exalted, that they must be like this or that, without claiming them to be similar to something else. This belief is also falsehood, based on textual and intellectual evidence:

Textual Evidence: Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا ١١٠ ﴾

«**And they cannot encompass His Knowledge**.»[8]

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ
وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ٣٦ ﴾

«**And do not follow what you have no knowledge of.**
Verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart,
(you) will all be questioned (about each of them).»[9]

[8] *Soorah Taa-Haa* (20):110
[9] *Sooratul-Israa`* (17):36

And it is well known that there is no knowledge available to us about the specific details of the Attributes of our Lord, as He, the Exalted, **has only informed us *of* them and has *not* informed us of their specific details**.

Some things have been explained to us about some of the attributes of Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*), so if that explanation comes from the text of the *Qur`aan* and the *Sunnah*, then we can go as far as the explanation goes and not any further. For example, Allaah has described Himself as having a Hand, so He says:

﴿ تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ ﴾

«**Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion**.»[10]

But in another verse, He says:

﴿ وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ يَدُ ٱللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ ۚ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا۟ بِمَا قَالُوا۟ ۘ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ ۚ ﴾

«**The Jews say: "Allaah's Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty)." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills**.»[11]

So, Allaah (*ta`aala*) has given us further information about His Hands: «**both of His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills**.»

And in the authentic *hadeeth*, the Prophet (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) said:

((كلتا يديه يمين))

«**Both of His Hands are right-handed**.»[12]

So, now we have given more details about the attribute of a hand, but **notice** that each and every detail we give is based on a text from Allaah or His Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*). So the author is speaking *relatively*, meaning: we do not seek after the specific details which are not found in the texts of the Book and the Sunnah.

Therefore, seeking to know their specific details would be considered following after what we have no knowledge of and speaking with what it is not possible for us to understand.

Intellectual Evidence: The details of something's attributes can only become known to us after having knowledge of the details of the thing itself, or by knowing about it through descriptions of something similar or equal to it. All of this is clearly impossible with regards to the details of the Attributes of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic. Thus, it is binding to reject *takyeef*.

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[10] *Sooratul-Mulk* (67):1
[11] *Sooratul-Maa.idah* (5):64
[12] Reported by Muslim no. 1827 from a *hadeeth* of `Abdullaah ibn `Amr (*radiyallaahu `anhumaa*).

So you cannot possibly know about the attributes of something if you do not know about the reality of *adh-Dhaat* (actual presence). What is the reality of Allaah's actual presence? If you do not know about the specific details of that, then how could you know about the specific details of the individual attributes that you learned of from the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah*?

If I told you, for example, that there is a new incomparable cell-phone from Apple which you have not seen before - could you possibly, without having ever seen the phone, begin to understand the specific details of this phone and how it works? And it is not like the old iPhone, rather it is completely different and there is nothing comparable to it. Now, do you think that you are able to understand the details of how it works without knowing what it is in the first place? You have to know what it is to have an idea about it, afterward, you can begin to understand its details.

So, how can a person, who does not have detailed knowledge about Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*) and His Presence, be able to gain detailed knowledge about the actions and attributes of Allaah (*subhaanahu wa ta`aala*)? It would be beyond the scope of his intellect.

Furthermore, which specific details about the Attributes of Allaah, the Exalted, are you able to estimate? Whatever specific details you estimate in your mind, then Allaah is Greater and More Lofty than that! No matter what details you imagine, **you are a false claimant**, **since you have no knowledge of what you claim**! So now, you understand the obligation of refraining from guessing about the specific details of Allaah's Attributes in your heart, speaking with your tongue based on that, and from acting by that with your limbs.

When *Imaam* Maalik[13] (may Allaah have Mercy on him) was asked about the Statement of Allaah, the Exalted:

﴿ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلۡعَرۡشِ ٱسۡتَوَىٰ ٥ ﴾

«**The All-Merciful ascended above the Throne**.»[14]

He was asked: "How did He ascend?"

The man who posed this question to *Imaam* Maalik was seeking the *takyeef* (specific details) of this *istiwaa*. This was an indeed strange question, because it during a period when the people were upon the language of the *Qur`aan*. Perhaps this was the first time a question like this was even asked in a hundred and fifty years since

[13] *Imaam* Maalik was a great *Imaam* and scholar. His book *Muwatta* was a book that the whole nation in his time considered to be the very first and foremost to memorize after the *Qur`aan*. Later, almost 100 years after *Imaam* Maalik, (in terms of *hadeeth*) *Sabeeh al-Bukhaaree* overtook that position and became more reliable and focused on. But for a good 80 years from the *Imaams* time, his book was the relied upon text.

Imaam ash-Shaafi`ee, for example, who came shortly after *Imaam* Maalik read the *Muwatta* to *Imaam* Maalik when he was a boy of 10 years. He read the text to *Imaam* Maalik from his heart, so *Imaam* Maalik recognized something in him and said: Fear Allaah because you are going to have a big role.

Imaam Maalik carried the *`Aqeedah* of the companions and their children from the city of al-Madeenah. He brought it to the *Ummah* and explained it to them.

[14] *Soorah Taa-Haa* (20):5

the revelation! Innovations have now crept into the Muslim ranks to such an extent they began to ask innovated questions about the attributes of Allaah.

Imaam Maalik put his head down[15] until he began sweating, and then said:

"الاِ سْتِوَاءُ غِيْرُ مَجْهُولٍ، وَالْكَيْفُ غَيْرُ مَعْقُولٍ،

وَالإِيْمانُ بِهِ وَاجِبٌ، والسُّؤَالُ عَنْهُ بِدْعَةٌ."

"The ascension is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible,
believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"[16]

To seek information from the position of an ignorant person is not an innovation, rather it is from our religion. However, "questioning about it is an innovation" means to ask beyond the text and to seek the specific details which we do not have.

And it has also been narrated that his teacher, Rabee`ah, also said: "His Ascension is not unknown, and the details of it are not comprehensible."[17]

The people of knowledge after them remained upon this understanding. If the specific details cannot be rationally deduced, and there are no texts of revelation in the matter, then both kinds of evidence, textual and intellectual, are absent, so it is binding on us that we refrain from speaking in these cases.

So I warn you about *takyeef*! I warn you about it, since if you were to seek after the details of Allaah's Attributes, you will fall into a trap that you would never be able to escape from! So if Satan whispers about it

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[15] In some narrations, he began to sweat and turn red, and in other narrations, he remained silent with his head down for a very long time. In some narrations, he ordered the man to be banished from the study circle and then he said the statement, and other narrations say that he said the statement and then ordered the man to be removed.

[16] Refer to *Sharh Usool I`tiqaad Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah* no. 664.
Shaykh `Ubayd al-Jaabiree (may Allaah preserve him) says here: "*Imaam* Maalik (may Allaah have mercy on him) took a tough stance with this person and did not go easy on him. Indeed, he called for his removal and said: 'I only know you to be astray!' or according to another narration, 'I only know you to be an innovator!'

Shaykh Muhammad Amaan al-Jaamee (may Allaah have Mercy on him) said, explaining the author's words:

> This was at a time when the tribulations caused by theological rhetoric had appeared and began to spread. The *Imaam* (Maalik) was one of the *imaams* who were severe in their opposition to these ideas being introduced to the people. Thus, he used to say: "Is it that every time a man comes sharper in his skills of debate than the one before him we are to abandon what Jibreel brought to Muhammad (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace)?! He was like the rest of the *imaams* in their stern opposition to the implications and meanings of theological rhetoric when it appeared, and this is why he became upset and astonished.

[17] Refer to *Sharh Usool I`tiqaad Ahlis-Sunnah wal-Jamaa`ah* no. 665.
Shaykh Muhammad Amaan al-Jaamee (may Allaah have Mercy on him) said here, "What is authentic is the narration from Imaam Maalik. The people of knowledge have stated that what is attributed to Rabee`ah, and Umm Salamah as well, has problems and that what is authentic is the narration from *Imaam* Maalik.

into your heart, then know that it is from his evil whisperings and seek refuge with your Lord, for verily with Him is your refuge. Do what He has ordered you to do, since He is your Doctor![18]

Allaah has said:

﴿ وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾ ﴾

«**And if an evil whisper from the *Shaytaan* comes to you, then seek refuge with Allaah. Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing**.»[19]

Do you think the statement of *Imaam* Maalik is specific to the ascension of Allaah? Or is it a principle that we can use with all of the attributes of Allaah? We use it unrestrictedly with all of Allaah's Attributes.

For example: Allaah has a hand. How is the Hand of Allaah? We say: "The Hand is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

Some people have said: 'So long as we cannot explain an attribute of Allaah, we should negate it,' or 'To explain it could only mean to explain it as it relates to our human attributes,' and so they would talk about the hands of the creation and would say unbefitting things about Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*). This is the angle of argument that the *Ashaa`ira* use.

Furthermore, there is an error in their reasoning. They say: 'Allaah has a Hand and we know what a hand is. Allaah couldn't have a hand like that, so He could not have a hand.' The person denying the attribute first made a *tashbeeh*, as soon as he heard about the hand, he thought about it in relation to Allaah, so he said: 'There can be no hand, because I know what a real hand is, so it must be figurative speech.' So what lead them astray is *tashbeeh* firstly - they did not keep in mind the verse:

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[18] This is based on a *hadeeth* in the *Musnad* of Ahmad (4/163) and *Sunan Abee Daawood* no. 4206, on the authority of Aboo Rimthah (may Allaah be pleased with him), who narrated that his father said to the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace): "Let me see what is wrong with your back, I am a doctor." The Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and granth im peace) said:

((اللهُ الطَّبِيبُ! بَلْ أَنْتَ رَجُلٌ رَفِيقٌ، طَبِيبُهَا الَّذِي خَلَقَهَا!))

«**Allaah is the *tabeeb* (doctor). You are merely a kind man. Its doctor is the One who created it**.»

This is Aboo Daawood's wording. Refer to *Silsilatul-Ahadeethis-Saheehah* no. 1537.

Teacher Moosaa Richardson: Can we refer to Allaah as our doctor (not as a Name but as a *khabar*)? Can we say that Allaah is the one who cures people? When we say that Allaah is a *tabeeb*, we mean that Allaah is the One who gives us the medicine and He is the One who allows the medicine to take effect. He is the One who grants success to any medical treatment. This is the meaning. The Messenger (*sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam*) spoke with words like that, otherwise, we are not going to refer to Allaah as the *tabeeb*.

[19] *Soorah Fussilat* (41):36

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ﴾

«**There is nothing similar to Him**.»[20]

When you think of any attribute, let it be in the forefront of your mind that there is nothing similar to Him! He ascended in a way that is not like an ascension you know. He has a Hand that is not like the hands you know. There is nothing similar to Him. If that was at the forefront when we thought about any attribute, we could not go far into thinking about it and drawing similitude.

The Foot of Allaah: We say: "The Foot is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

The Mercy of Allaah: We say: "The Mercy of Allaah is not unknown, the details of it are incomprehensible, believing in it is obligatory, and questioning about it is an innovation!"

Did you know: The *Asha`irah* say that Allaah does not have mercy? It is allegorical (to them). They worship a Lord with no mercy. They believe that anything regarding mercy in the *Qur`aan* does not really mean mercy, it really means an intention to reward someone or protect them from harm. This is the meaning of mercy (according to them).

They believe that mercy is a weakness of the heart, since showing mercy towards someone necessitates compassion and thus, that is weak. So, they believe that one cannot describe Allaah with that. But (notice): they are talking about the specific details of the creation's mercy! And because they have compared Allaah to the creation, they said: "It is not befitting," thus rejecting the idea of mercy for Allaah (*`Azza wa Jall*). This is where they have deviated.

[20] *Sooratu<u>sh</u>-<u>Sh</u>ooraa* (42):11.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE
CONCERNING ALLAAH'S ATTRIBUTES

2.7. THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAAH ARE *TAWQEEFIYYAH* - THERE IS NO PLACE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREE-THINKING REGARDING THEM

Knowledge of Allaah's Attributes is *tawqeefiyyah*, meaning that you do not seek to establish attributes for Allaah, except that which is affirmed in the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Imaam Ahmad, may Allaah have Mercy on him, said: "Allaah may not be described except with what He has described His own Self with, or with what His Messenger has described him with. This can not go beyond the Qur`aan and the *hadeeth*." Refer back to '*The Fifth Principle Concerning Allaah's Names*.'

Attributes are established for Allaah from the Book and the Sunnah by one of three ways:[2]

One: The Attribute is clearly mentioned, like Honor, Strength, Mercy, His Striking, His Face, His two Hands, etc.

Two: It is derived from one of His Names, like how *al-Ghafoor* (the Ever-Forgiving) includes Forgiveness, and *as-Samee`* (the All-Hearing), includes Hearing, and so on. Review '*The Third Principle Concerning Allaah's Names*.'

Three: It is directly understood from an Action or a Description, like:

(1) His Ascension over the Throne;

(2) His Descent to the lowest Heaven

(3) His Coming to judge between the servants on the Last Day

(4) His Retribution for the acts of the criminals.

The proofs for these Attributes are as follows, in order:

[1] Allaah, the Exalted, has said:

﴿ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلۡعَرۡشِ ٱسۡتَوَىٰ ٥﴾

«**The All-Merciful ascended above the Throne**.» [*Soorah Taa-Haa* (20):5]

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[2] *Shaykh* `Ubayd al-Jaabiree (may Allaah preserve him) points out here that it is as if the author (may Allaah have Mercy on him) was answering a question that could be asked here, "If there is no intellectual free-thinking regarding the Attributes of Allaah, the Honored and Exalted, and one must rely solely on textual evidences, then how can one use texts from the Book and the *Sunnah* to know about the Attributes?"

[2] The Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) said:

((يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّماءِ الدُّنْيَا...))

«**Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven**...»[3]

[3] Allaah has said:

﴿ وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَٱلْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾

«**And (when) your Lord has come with the Angels, rank after rank**.» [*Sooratul-Fajr* (89):22]

[4] Allaah has said:

﴿ إِنَّا مِنَ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾

«**Verily, We will get retribution from the criminals**.» [*Sooratus-Sajdah* (32):22]

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[3] Collected by al-Bukhaaree no. 1145 and Muslim no. 758 on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him).