

Sharh Aqeedat ul-Waasitiyyah

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Part 5: How to Believe in the Names and Attributes of Allaah

Text:

وَمِنَ الْإِيمَانُ بِاللَّهِ: الْإِيمَانُ بِمَا وَصَفَ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ الْعَزِيزِ، وَبِمَا
وَصَفَهُ بِهِ رَسُولُهُ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؛ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَحْرِيفٍ وَلَا
تَعْطِيلٍ، وَمِنْ غَيْرِ تَكْيِيفٍ وَلَا تَمْثِيلٍ.

And it is from eemaan in Allaah to have eemaan in what Allaah has described Himself with in His Book and in what His Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) has described Him with, without changing the original meaning [of these texts] (Tahreef), without denying such attributes for Allaah (Ta'teel), without enquiring into their true nature (Takyeef) and without likening [His attributes] to those of the creation (Tamtheel).

Explanation:

After the author (rahimahullaah) mentioned, in a general way, the fundamental principles having eemaan in which is obligatory, he mentions them in a detailed and elaborate way. He commences with the first foundation and that is having eemaan in Allaah, the Exalted. He says that included in this pillar is to have eemaan in His attributes with which He has described Himself in His Book or which His Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) has described Him with in his Sunnah. This can only occur if we establish and affirm such attributes for Allaah in the precise way they have come in the Book and the Sunnah, with the same words and intended meanings, without changing the words used for these attributes, denying their meanings, likening them to those of the creation and enquiring into their true nature. Furthermore, this occurs if we depend upon the Book and the Sunnah only. We do not go beyond the Qur'aan and the Hadeeth since they restrict (the use of whatever is besides them such as intellect and other such matters).

The meaning of (...**Tahreef**...) is to introduce a change or make an alteration (taghyeer) and also to turn something away from its true position (imaalah). It is

said: He has deviated (inharafa) from such and such when he digressed and turned away from it. Tahreef is of two types:

The First Type: Changing the Word. This is to refrain from (accepting) this word as it is and instead adopting another word either by adding or taking away an additional letter or word or by changing a vowel point. An example is the saying of the people of misguidance regarding the speech of Allaah:

Ar-Rahmaan ascended (istawaa) the Throne [Taahaa 20:5]

They say: istawlaa, which gives it the meaning of conquered and have therefore added a letter to the verse. Also, their saying about the speech of Allaah

And your Lord comes (jaa'a) with the angels in rows [Fajr 89:22]

They say: The command (amr) of your lord, meaning the command of your Lord comes. Therefore, they have added a word. Also their saying about the speech of Allaah:

And Allaah spoke to Moses direct [Nisaa 4:164]

They change the vowel point in the word Allaah, so they made it from Allaahu to Allaaha giving it the altered meaning: And to Allaah Moses spoke direct. So they have changed the vowel point from a dhamma to a fatha to enable a change in the meaning.

The Second Type: Changing the Meaning. This means to refrain from (accepting) the (established and proven) meaning (of the word in question) as it is, to refuse its reality and to give the word signifying it the meaning of another word. An example is the saying of the innovators: The meaning of mercy (rahmah) is: The desire to bestow favours, and that the meaning of anger (ghadab) is: The desire to seek revenge.

The meaning of (...Ta'teel...) in the language is to leave and vacate (al-ikhlaa'). It is said: He neglected it, left it (atalahu) meaning he vacated it (akhlaahu). The intended meaning of it here is the denial of Allaah's attributes, free and sublime is He from all imperfections, the Exalted. The difference between tahreef and ta'teel is that tahreef is to deny the correct meaning which is proven by the texts (of the Book and the Sunnah) and substituting another incorrect meaning for it. Ta'teel is to merely deny the proven and established meaning without substituting it for another meaning and this is the way of the Mufawwidah. Therefore, anyone who changes the meaning of the word (a muharrif) is also one who denies the proven and correct meaning (a muattil) but one who denies the meaning indicated by the word is not one who actually changes the proven meaning.

The meaning of (...Takyeef...) is to specify the exact nature and reality of the established meaning of the attribute. It is said: He gave something a shape or form (kayyafa) when he made for it a known quality. Committing takyeef with Allaah's attributes is to specify their precise nature, state or condition and their form or shape. This is impossible for mankind since the knowledge of this is amongst that knowledge which Allaah has kept to Himself. Therefore, there is no way of knowing the precise nature of His attributes because the attribute follows the Self (dhaat). Just as it is not possible for a person to know the exact nature of the Self of

Allaah, it is likewise impossible to know the exact nature of His attributes. Their exact nature is not known. This is why when Imaam Maalik was asked about the verse:

Ar-Rahmaan has ascended (istawaa) the Throne [Taahaa 20:5]

How is the ascending (istawaa)? He replied: "The ascending is known, its reality is unknown, having eemaan in it is obligatory and asking about it is an innovation."

And this is said with respect to all of Allaah's attributes.

The meaning of (...**Tamtheel**...) is resemblance (tashbeeh) and it is committed when it is said that Allaah's attributes are like the attributes of the creation. For example, it might be said: The hand of Allaah is like our hands and His hearing is like our hearing. High is Allaah above such things. Allaah said:

There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing [Shoora 42:11]

Therefore, it cannot be said that His attributes are like our attributes or that they resemble our attributes just like it cannot be said that the Self of Allaah is like our selves or that it resembles our selves.

The believing muwahhid is the one who establishes and affirms all the attributes in the manner that befits and suits the might and grandeur of Allaah. The mu'attil is the one denies all of them or some of them and the mushabbih, the mumaththil is the one who likens them to those of the creation and affirms them in a way that does not befit Allaah but rather befits the creation.