

Lesson 10

Summary Notes

The Allegorical Texts (II)

"Allāh is exalted above limits, extremities, essential parts, limbs and instruments. He is not confined by the six directions in the manner in which originated things are." [38]

"Whoever describes Allāh with the attributes of humans has disbelieved. Hence, whoever looks into this takes warning, refrains from the like of the disbelievers' words, and knows that He, along with His attributes, does not resemble mankind." [34]

"He is independent of the Throne and that which is below it. He encompasses everything and that which is above it.." [50-51]

"He (Allāh) it is who has sent down upon you the Book, part of which (comprises) decisive verses - they are the essence of the Book - and others which are allegorical. As for those in whose hearts is a disease, they follow that of it which is allegorical, seeking discord and seeking to interpret them, although none knows their interpretation except Allāh. And those firmly grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it, all is from our Lord.' And none reflect except those with perception." Qur'ān[3:7]

A. Summary of Schools of Thought

1. Mu'tazilites, Qadariyyah, Imāmiyyah : gave priority to reason over texts. Interpreted without any exception.
2. Ash'aris and Māturīdis : used both reason and text. They interpreted for the most part, but resorted to **tafwid** when the texts were overwhelming.
3. Mujassimah, Mushabbihah, Hashawiyyah : gave priority to texts, even over reason. Took the verses and aḥādīth literally and used them to extrapolate unacceptable things.
4. The way of the Salaf : refrain from any discussion or interpretation, except where it is unquestionably called for.

B. Allegorical Attributes in the Qur'an

- **al-Wajh** ("Countenance")

"Everything will perish except for His Countenance." Qur'ān [28:88]

"And there endures the Countenance of your Lord, the Possessor of Majesty and Dignity." Qur'ān[55:27]

- **al-Yad** ("Hand")

"The Hand of Allāh is over their hands." Qur'ān [48:10]

".. What prevents you from prostrating to that which I have created by My (Two) Hands?" Qur'ān [38:75]

— It is not a limb, nor does it have a shape or image. [Fatwā of Qādi 'Iyāḍ/ Imām Mālik.]
- **al-'Ayn** ("Eye")

"And in order that you (Moses) may be brought up under My Eye." Qur'ān [20:39]

"Floating under our Eyes." Qur'ān [54:14]

"For you are under Our Eye." Qur'ān [52:48]

— It is not an organ nor is it a sensor of light.
- **al-Nafs** ("Self")

"And Allāh warns you of His Self." Qur'ān [3:28]

"He has prescribed mercy upon Himself." Qur'ān [6:12]

"I have created you for Myself." Qur'ān [20:41]

C. Other verses

- "On the day when **Sāq** shall be exposed, and they shall be called upon to prostrate, but they shall not be able." Qur'ān [68:42]

— **Sāq** means : a severe affliction [Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) and others]; or a great light; or the reality of things.
- "Allāh is the Light (**Nūr**) of the Heavens and the Earth." Qur'ān [24:35]

— Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said : the Guide of the Heavens and the Earth.[Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr]

Anas ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said : Allāh says that His light is His guidance " [Ṭabarī]
- "The heavens, We have built them with **Ayḍin**." Qur'ān [51:47]

— Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said : it means 'with power.'
- "Nay, His two Hands are widely extensive." Qur'ān [5:64]
- "And your Lord will **come**." Qur'ān [89:22]

— We say with submission and acceptance that 'Allāh will come' in a manner which does not involve traversal of distance, nor motion, nor dwelling within any part of creation.

- **al-Istiwā' and al-'Uluww**

"The Most Gracious, **Istawā'** upon the Throne." Qur'ān [20:5]

"Then He **Istawā'** upon the Throne." Qur'ān [7:45], [13:2], [25:59]

"Do you consider yourself safe from He who is '**in the sky**'?" Qur'ān [67:16]

"He asked her, 'Where is Allāh?' She said, '**In the sky**.'" [Muslim]

"He asked her, 'Do you testify that there is no god but Allāh?', she said, 'Yes.'" ['Abdur-Razzāq]

"If My servants ask about me, then (let them know that) **I am close**." Qur'ān [2:186]

"Let none of you say that I am better than Jonah." [Bukhārī]

"Allāh is established upon the Throne in the manner in which He has said, and according to the meaning He intended. (It is) an establishment exalted above contact (with the Throne), stillness, fixation, in-dwelling (within His creation) and motion. He is not borne by the Throne; in fact the Throne, and its bearers, are themselves sustained by the benevolence of His power, and subject to His power. He is above the throne and above everything . . . a Highness which does not make Him any closer to the Throne or the sky, just as it does not make Him any further from the earth, and along with this He is close to everything in existence, and is closer to the Servant than his jugular vein, and He is a witness over all things." [Imām Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah*]

D. Some Allegorical Aḥādīth

1. "Allāh created Adam in his image." [Bukhārī, Muslim]
2. "Their Lord will come to them in a form they do not know Him by." [Bukhārī, Muslim]
3. "Hell will continue to have (people and things) thrown into it, and saying, 'Are there any more?' until the Lord of Might will put qadamahu (rijlāhū) into it." [Bukhārī, Muslim]

"What is obligatory upon us is to believe that the Self of Allāh cannot be subdivided, nor confined by space, nor is it appropriate to describe Him in terms of change or movement." [Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf'u Shubah al-Tashbīh*]

4. "Our Lord 'descends' (sends down a messenger) every night to the lowest heaven, when the last third of the night remains, saying, 'Who is there calling to Me that I might respond to him?' " [Nasā'ī, (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī, Bazzār)]

Imām Mālik said: Allāh's decree descends; He himself is eternal and does not move. "Allāh 'descends' without any apparatus, motion or movement from one location to another." [Ibn Ḥibbān]