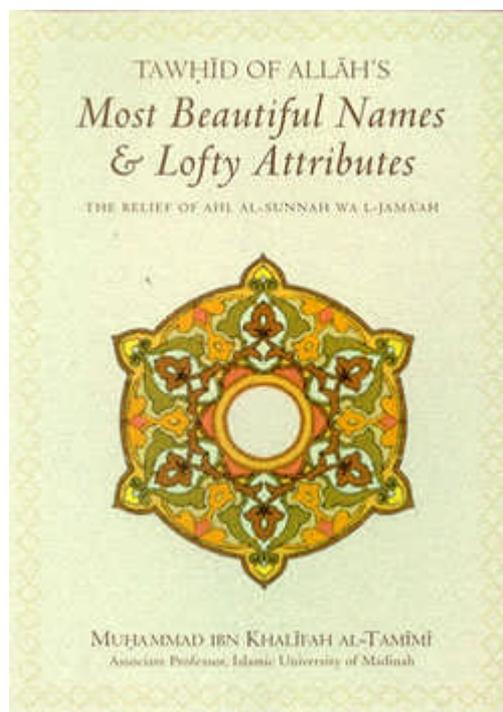


Tawhid of Allah's Most Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes



Tawheed/Tauheed/Tauhid of Allah's Most Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes : The Belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wal' Jama'ah

Among the subjects that have not been adequately covered in the English language, perhaps the most important of them is the one covered in the pages of this book.

The author presents the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, which is the creed of the first few generations of Muslims and those who followed in their footsteps. Besides outlining the principles and foundations of this creed he also highlights some of the foreign ideas and deviant concepts that have crept into the hearts and minds. The style in which this book has been written relates more to a textbook than to a book for casual reading. The author has carefully structured the book, divided it into clearly headed sections and provided all the necessary definitions and explanations that will facilitate a clear understanding of this immensely important branch of knowledge.

The Importance of Tawhīd al-Asmā' Was-Sifāt

1. This Tawhīd Represents Half of Īmān in Allāh

The Muslim is not oblivious of the importance of Īmān in Allāh, as it is the first article of Īman, in fact, it is the greatest of them all, for the others merely follow on from it and are its offspring.

This particular article is the single most matter for which creation was created, the Messengers were sent, books were revealed, and upon which the correct path was built.

Īmān in Allāh is the foundation of every good, the source of all guidance, and the reason for every success. Since man is a creation and is subject to Allāh's Lordship, he reverts back to his Creator and Maker in his knowledge and action. So, by Him he is guided, for Him he acts, and to Him he will return. Man cannot do without Him and averting to other than Him is the cornerstone of his destruction and ruin.

Man has Allāh as a substitute for everything whereas nothing or no one can dispense of Allāh [1]. So the slave cannot attain any goodness or success except through knowing his Lord and worshipping Him. If this occurs, then this is the intended objective for him and the reason for his existence. Anything else besides this is of extra benefit or superfluous, having no benefit, or is a harmful remnant.

The essential prerequisite for happiness, safety and success is obtained by actualizing the two categories of Tawhīd that Īman in Allāh is built upon. For the purpose of fulfilling this, Allāh sent His Messenger, and to it the earlier Messengers called, the very first of them to the very last.

One of the two categories is **Tawhīd al-'Ilmī al-Khabarī al-'I'tiqādī** [2], which compromises affirming Attributes of perfection for Allāh and declaring Him to be free of any similarity or likeness and elevating Him above descriptions of imperfection.

The second category of Tawhīd [3] is to worship Him alone, without any partner; to have absolute love, sincerity, fear, hope, and reliance in Him; to be pleased with Him as Lord, Deity, and Patron, and not to set up any partners alongside Him in anything.

Allāh has incorporated these two categories in the two Sūrahs of purity:

They are the Sūrah “ **Kul Yā Ayuhā Al-Kāfirūn**” which contains at-Tawhīd al-'Amalī

al-'Irādī, and the Sūrah "Kul Huwā Allāhu Ahad" which contains at-Tawhīd al-Ilmī al-Khabarī.

So, the Sūrah " Kul Hūwa Allāhu Ahad" entails an explanation of what Allāh possesses of Attributes of perfection and an explanation of His elevation over and above any imperfections and similitude, whilst the Sūrah "Kul Yā Ayuhā Al-Kāfirūn" entails the obligation of worshipping Him alone, without any partner, and the renouncement of worshipping anything besides Him.

Neither of the two categories is complete without the other. For this reason, the Prophet used to recite these two Sūrahs in the Sunnah prayers of Fajr, Maghrib, and Witr [4], which commence work-time and conclude work-time, so that the beginning of the day starts with Tawhīd and the end of the day closes with Tawhīd [5].

In summary, with regard to the Tawhīd that is demanded from the servant, **half** of it is represented in Tawhīd al-Asmā' was-Sifāt.

[1] i.e. one who relies on Allāh and entrusts his affairs to Him, truthfully and upon knowledge and insight, is content and manages without anyone or anything besides Him in both prosperous and troublesome times. At the same time, nothing or no one can dispense of Allāh in trying to achieve their welfare and repel any harm, regardless of the physical and mental strengths he has. These two meanings of Allāh's Name, 'Al-Qayyūm' as the qayyūm is the one who is self-sufficient and self-supportive and who supports and suffices all else, and that is Allāh alone.

[2] Al-'Ilmī, i.e. concentrating on knowledge as opposed to action (al-'Amalī).
Al-Khabarī, i.e. this knowledge is dependent upon revealed text (khabar).
Al-'Itiqādī, i.e. it takes form as part of the person's belief.

[3] At-Tawhīd al-'Amalī al-Irādī.
Al-'Amalī, i.e. concentrating on action.
Al-Irādī, i.e. that the heart and limbs worship, strive, intend, and desire only Allāh in their actions.

[4] Shaykh al-Albānī, may Allāh have Mercy upon him, mentions this fact for all three prayers and provides the Takhrij for it. Refer to *The Prophet's Prayer Described from the Beginning to the End as Though You See It*, pp. 31, 34, and 38.

[5] *Ijtimā' al-Juyūsh al-Islāmiyyah 'Ala Ghazwi al-Mu'attilah al-Jahmiyyah*, pp 35-36.

2. Tawhīd al-Asmā was-Sifāt is, Without Exception, the Most Noble and Most Important Branch of Knowledge

Indeed, the excellence of a particular branch of knowledge is dependent upon the excellence of that particular known thing itself, because of the assurance one has in the evidences and proofs for its existence, the intense need one has for knowing it, and the tremendous benefit it returns.

Without doubt, the Most Exalted, Most Magnificent and Greatest known entity is Allāh, Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, Lord of the Worlds, the Self-Sufficient and Sustainer of the Heavens and Earths; the King; the Reality; al-Mubīn [6]; the One described with all perfection; elevated above every defect; deficiency and like, and above any similitude to His Perfection.

There is no doubt therefore, that knowledge of Allāh, His Names, Attributes, and Actions is the most exalted and most excellent branch of knowledge. The comparison of this branch of knowledge to all the other branches is like the comparison of Allāh to all other entities. [7]

If it is questioned, “Knowledge is merely the means to action, and knowledge is acquired for it: action is the objective. Moreover, it is of common fact that the objective possesses a greater excellence than the means. So how is it that you prefer the means over its goals?”

It is replied: “Both knowledge and action have two parts: a part that is the means and a part that is the objective.”

So knowledge is not always the means and is not always indirectly sought after.

Knowledge of Allāh, His Names and Attributes is without exception the most excellent of all types of knowledge, and it is sought after in itself. Allāh Ta’ālā says:

وَأَنَّ قَدِيرٌ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ لَتَعْلَمُوا بَيْنَهُنَّ الْأَمْرُ يُنَزَّلُ مِثْلَهُنَّ الْأَرْضِ وَمِنْ سَمَاوَاتٍ سَبْعَ خَلْقَ الَّذِي اللَّهُ
عِلْمًا شَيْءٍ بِكُلِّ أَحَاطَ قَدْ اللَّهُ

It is Allāh Who has created seven Heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His commands descend between them, so that you may know that Allāh has power over all things and that Allāh completely comprehends all things with His knowledge. [8]

Allāh Subhānahu informs that He created the Heavens and earth and brings down commands between them so that His slaves may know that He is well-aware of everything and that He is over all things Omnipotent. So having knowledge of this is the desired objective. Allāh Ta’ālā also says:

اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِلَهَ لَا أَنَّهُ فَاعْلَمَ

So know that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh... [9]

The knowledge therefore of His Oneness and that none has the right to be worshipped except He, is sought for in itself, even though the person cannot suffice with this by itself. Rather, he must add to this worship of Allāh alone, without any partner. So they are two distinct matters which are sought after in themselves.

The first matter: to know the Lord by His Names, Attributes, Actions, and Laws.

The second matter: to worship Him in accordance and on the basis of this knowledge.

So just as worship of Him is demanded and directly intended in itself, then likewise, knowledge of Him is also demanded and directly intended in itself.

In fact, (acquiring) knowledge is from amongst the best acts of worship. [10]

[6] One of Allāh's most beautiful Names, the Evident, Whose presence and reality is an unquestionable certainty because of the multitude of proofs and signs He has shown and placed within His creation. Indeed, the evidences pointing to His Tawhīd, His Lordship, and His Sovereignty are more evident than the midday sun. He is also the One who has clearly shown to His creation the path to salvation and success.

[7] *Miftāh Dār as-Sa'ādah*, 1/86

[8] At-Talāq (65):12

[9] Muhammad (47):19

[10] *Miftāh Dār as-Sa'ādah* 1/178

3. Tawhīd Al-Asmā Was-Sifāt is the Origin of All Religious Knowledge [11]

Just as knowledge of the Names, Attributes and Actions of Allāh is the most exalted, noblest and greatest of knowledge, it is also the origin of all knowledge. All other branches of knowledge are its subsidiaries and are dependent on it for their very own verification. Knowledge of Him is therefore the origin and basis of every other type of knowledge. So, whoever knows Allāh will be able to know other than Allāh, and whoever is ignorant of His Lord, then he in fact possesses greater ignorance of everything else besides Allāh. Allāh says:

الْفَاسِقُونَ هُمْ أَوْلَانِكَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَانْسَاهُمْ اللَّهُ نَسُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَكُونُوا وَلَا

And be not like those who forgot Allāh and He caused them to forget their own selves. They are the transgressors [12]

Contemplate this Āyah, you will find within it a mighty and illustrious meaning: “Whosoever forgets his Lord, He will cause him to forget his very own self and soul.” He will not know his own reality or what constitutes his welfare. In fact, he will forget what constitutes his own prosperity in this life and the next. This is because he has departed from the original disposition he was created upon. He forgot his Lord, so Allāh caused him to forget his own self, its qualities, and what leads to its fulfillment, purification, and happiness in this life and the next. Allāh says:

فُرْطًا أَمْرُهُ وَكَانَ هَوَاهُ وَاتَّبَعَ ذِكْرَنَا عَنْ قَلْبِهِ أَغْفَلْنَا مَنْ تَطِعَ وَلَا

...and do not obey the one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own desires and whose affair (i.e. deeds) has been lost [13]

He did not give any remembrance to remembering His Lord and so his affair and heart went into disarray. As a result, no regard is now paid to the welfare, growth, or purification of his self and heart. Instead, he has sundered his heart and caused its downfall. He exceeded all bounds, is confused, and is unable to find the right way.

Thus, knowledge of Allāh is the origin of all knowledge, and it is the basis of the servant’s knowledge towards his happiness, perfection and betterment in this life and the next. Ignorance of Allāh necessitates ignorance of one’s self and of what constitutes its betterment, perfection, purification and success.

So, knowledge of Him proposes happiness for the servant, and ignorance of Him lies at the heart of his misery. [14]

[11] In turn, religious knowledge forms the basis of all other types of knowledge besides it. Hence, absolutely all types of knowledge return back to Allāh's Names and Attributes, as shown in the discussion.

[12] Al-Hashr (59):19

[13] Al-Kahf (18):28

[14] *Miftāh Dār as-Sa'ādah* 1/86

4. Knowledge of Allāh's Names and Attributes is a Great and Important tenet within the Methodology of the Salaf

Knowledge of Allāh's Names and Attributes is the foundation upon which the servant's actions are built. On the strength of this foundation the relationship that binds the servant to his Lord is determined, and in view of this foundation the Muslim worships his Lord and seeks to attain nearness to Him.

For this reason, the basis for the knowledge and action of the Salaf was:

1. Knowledge of Allāh
2. Action directed solely to Allāh

With this, they combined both belief based on knowledge and action based on love.

Furthermore, their belief, actions and love were based upon knowledge; so they were free of the harmful elements found amongst the deviant Mutakallimah (scholastics) and Sūfis.

With respect to the scholastics, the majority of their study and statements center on issues of affirmation, negation, existence, non-existence and on issues pertaining to belief. Their area of discussion therefore, concentrated on belief, knowledge and information.

Whereas the Sūfis, their main concern centered on love, hate, intentions, dislikes and physical actions. There are of discussion therefore, concentrated on love, submission, action and intentions.

Both of these two deviant groups have within them two corrupted elements:

The first:

The presence of speech that is not based on knowledge with respect to the scholastic, and the presence of action that is not based on knowledge with respect to the Sūfī.

This is a direct reference to the innovated speech and action that occurred from them, which lie in contradiction to the Book and Sunnah.

The second:

The neglect of deeds by the scholastic and the neglect of speech by the Sūfī. [15]

As for the Salaf and their followers, they fulfilled both matters:

The speech concerning creed that is based upon the knowledge of Allāh's Names, Attributes and Actions that are recorded in the Book and Sunnah, and the intention-based actions that emanate from abiding to commands and refraining from prohibitions in accordance with Allāh's legislations in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger.

Accordingly, their external and internal speech and actions were based upon knowledge and each of their knowledge and action were linked to the other; they are indeed the true Muslims. [16]

So, the Salaf and their followers made Tawhīd al-Asmā' was-Sifāt one of the two pillars on which they built their methodology.

This is directly due to the importance and status this category of Tawhīd holds, which is attested to by numerous texts of the Sharī'ah.

[15] This is the ruling, in general. One observes that theoretical and speculative discussions dominate the concern of Ahl al-Kalām, of old and new, but actions amongst them are few, especially acts of worship such as prayer, remembrance, recitation, etc. That which is observed from the Sūfiyyah on the other hand, is concentration on actions of the heart and limbs, but with negligence of determining precisely the knowledge-based issues and the validity of their actions. This is a ruling based on what is found to be dominant amongst them.

[16] *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* 1/41, slightly abridged

5. Knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allāh Opens the Door for the Servant to Knowing Allāh

The question of possessing love for something is primarily dependent upon firstly being acquainted with that thing. The most knowledgeable of Allāh amongst creation will therefore have the strongest love for Him. Everyone who knows Allāh loves Him, but here is no route to acquiring this knowledge except through the doorway of knowledge of Allāh's Names and Attributes.

The servant therefore, will only be able to attain knowledge of Allāh by acquainting himself with the Names and Attributes of Allāh recorded in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Consequently, knowledge of Allāh's Names and Attributes will open this mighty door for the servant, as Allāh did not designate the way to knowing Him through seeing Him directly. This doorway is blocked until the Day of Judgment just as we have been informed by our Prophet Muhammad when he said, "Know that none of you will see his Lord until he dies." [17]

Furthermore, it is impossible for the human intellect to independently attain and comprehend this knowledge in a detailed manner. [18] It is incapable of achieving this because Allāh is from the Unseen about which there is no way of acquiring any knowledge except by way of revelation. Allāh says:

قَلِيلًا إِلَّا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ أَوْتَيْنِئْتُمْ وَمَا

...You have not been given of knowledge except a little [19]

This Āyah clearly shows the limitations of man's knowledge.

The Mercy of the Mighty and Wise necessitated that He send Messengers who would inform the people about Himself and call them to Him. He made the knowledge of Himself by way of His Names, Attributes and Actions the key to their Da'wah and the essence of their message.

The basis of the Da'wah of the Messengers and the first tenet contained within it is knowledge of Allāh by His Names, Attributes and Actions. Two great tenets then follow on from this:

1. To acquaint the people with the way that leads to Allāh (i.e. His Sharī'ah that embodies His commands and prohibitions)
2. To inform the people of what awaits them in the Hereafter

These two tenets follow on from the first and are based upon it.

So the most knowledgeable of Allāh will be the one who follows best the way which

leads to Him and he will also be the most knowledgeable concerning the conditions of the people when they return to Him.

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- [17] Related by Muslim in his *as-Sahih*, the book of Fitan, Chapter: The mention of Ibn Sayyād, 8/193
- [18] As opposed to a very general manner. By looking around and contemplating over the universe, one can conclude certain Attributes of the Creator, such as Knowledge, Ability, Mercy, etc. However, without revelation, how can one know for instance, that our Lord descends to the lowest heaven at the least third of the night asking about how is beseeching Him, seeking His forgiveness and asking of Him, so that He may grant them what they seek?
- [19] Al-Isrā' (17):85

6. The Basis of Sound Knowledge is Īmān in Allāh and in His Names and Attributes

Correct Īmān, pure Tawhīd and all the dictates contained within the message (of Islām) stand upon the foundation of sound and correct knowledge of Allāh, His Names and Attributes.

This category of Tawhīd is the basis of guidance and Īmān and it is the foundation upon which the Religion stands.

This is why it is not conceivable for correct Īmān to be held by one who does not know His Lord. This knowledge is a must for the basis of Īmān to settle in the heart.

It is of extreme importance to the believer because of his dire need for it, for the benefit of the well being of his heart, the goodness of his belief and the uprightness of actions.

This knowledge of Allāh's Names, Attributes and Actions grants the servant the ability to differentiate between Īmān and Kufr, Tawhīd and Shirk, and between affirmation and negation.

It enables him to elevate his Lord over and above everything that does not befit Him and to depict Him in the Glorious and Majestic manner well deserving of Him.

This is achieved by contemplating over the words of Allāh and over what He has made known of His Names, Attributes and Actions to His servants upon the tongues of His Messengers, and also by contemplating over those attributes which do not

benefit Him, which He has declared Himself free of and elevated Himself over.

It is appropriate here to mention that knowledge of Allāh is of two levels:

The first level: General Knowledge

This knowledge is a necessary requirement for the believing servant to possess the basic Īmān. The degree to which this knowledge manifests is related to the level at which the servant is able to distinguish his Lord from all false objects of worship. By this knowledge, Īmān in its elementary stage exists, the servant escapes from the dangers of Kufr and Shirk that would otherwise expel him from the boundaries of Īmān [20], and he comes away from the realm of remaining ignorant of his Lord and as to what His rights are.

This knowledge can be readily obtained by reading Sūrat Al-Ikhlās, Āyat al-Kursī and other Āyāt, and by understanding their meanings.

This level of knowledge however, does not generate strength of Īmān, nor does it firmly establish it.

The second level: Detailed Knowledge

This comes to light by knowing the detailed evidences found within this subject are, learning them, believing that Allāh is depicted with such, understanding their meanings and acting in light of their instructions and rulings.

This is the level of knowledge that causes Īmān to increase and to ground itself solidly.

The more the servant knows of Allāh, the more his Īmān increases, and the greater will be his fear, love and attachment to his Lord.

الْعُلَمَاءُ عِبَادِهِ مِنْ اللَّهِ يَخْشَىٰ إِنَّمَا

It is only those of His slaves who have knowledge that fear Allāh [21]

This knowledge also imparts to the servant light and insight, which will protect him from areas of doubt and misconceptions that can (otherwise) cause him to stray and which protect him from unlawful desires and lusts.

[In reality, two types of knowledge are meant by the phrase ‘Knowledge of Allāh’]

The first: knowledge of Allāh Himself, i.e. of the Majestic and Honorable qualities He is characterized with and of what His most beautiful Names indicate.

If this knowledge is well established in ones heart it will most certainly produce fear of Allāh, because he will definitely know that Allāh rewards any obedience to Him and punishes any disobedience to Him.

The second: 'Knowledge of Allāh' means knowledge of the rulings of the Shari'ah, such as the commands and prohibitions and the lawful and unlawful.

This is why some of the Salaf have mentioned, 'The scholars are three:

1. One who knows Allāh and is ignorant of His Command
2. One who knows Allāh's Command but is ignorant of Allāh
3. One who knows both Allāh and His Command

The one who knows Allāh is the one who fears Allāh, and the one who knows His command is the one who knows the lawful and unlawful." [22]

[20]The type of Kufr and Shirk referred to here is the major type

[21] Fātir (35):28

[22] Majmū' Al-Fatāwā 3/333, slightly abridged

7. Knowledge of Allāh's Names and Attributes is Life to the Hearts

The heart is void of any life, comfort, happiness, security, and tranquility without knowing its Lord, Deity and Creator, and without Allāh being more beloved to it than anything else.

One who does not have Īmān in Allāh cannot obtain knowledge and guidance [23], and without being guided to his Lord, he will always be miserable and tormented, as is the case with the unbelievers.[24]

Allāh created man and assembled him with both body and soul.

He desired that the body be created from the earth. Allāh says:

تُرَابٍ مِنْ خَلْقِنَاكُمْ فَأَيُّ

...For We have created you all from earth [25]

Allāh made the body's life and livelihood dependant upon this same earth; he eats, drinks and takes his clothing from the land and what is found within it.

Allāh placed within this body, thoe soul. He said:

رُوحِي مِنْ فِيهِ وَنَفَخْتُ سَوِيئُهُ فَإِذَا

So when I have fashioned him (i.e. Ādam) and breathed into him the soul I have created for him... [26]

Allāh willed that the sustenance and livelihood for this soul be knowledge of Himself and worship of Him.

There is therefore nothing more pleasant to the servant, nor anything sweeter, more wholesome and blissful to his heart and life, than love for His Originator and Maker, being in a state of constant remembrance of Him, and always seeking to earn His pleasure.

Consequently, whoever possesses in his heart even of life or love for his Lord, a desire for Him, and a yearning to meet Him, then his pursuit for this subject area, his strong desire to know and increase his understanding of it and his query and investigation of it, will be his greatest goal and most glorious objective.

For this is the perfection, without which the servant cannot otherwise attain perfection. It is the reason behind his creation and because of it revelation descended, Messengers were sent, the Heavens and earth stand, and Paradise and Hell-Fire exist. For this very reason laws were legislated, the correct path was established, the Qiblah was determined and it is the pivot of creation and order, upon which they center.

It is by all rights, the finest thing which the hearts can possess, which the souls can attain and which the minds can grasp. Sound and healthy hearts and secure and tranquil souls do not yearn earnestly for anything greater than to know this matter, nor are they more joyful with anything other than succeeding in arriving at the truths contained within this matter. [27]

[23] i.e. knowledge, which is based upon correct principles pertaining to Īmān, whereby they ensure praiseworthy fruits in this world and the Hereafter. It is obvious that if the disbeliever exerts efforts, he will obtain some knowledge, but much of it is false and little of it is true, being limited in benefit and great in harm.

[24] The reality of the state of the disbelievers caused by their alienation to the religion of Allāh is something very evident. Just a quick glance at the effects of the spiritual vacuum they experience, may Allāh protect us from that, reveals for us a little of this reality; the great numbers of suicides, incurable mental illness, submersion into materialism, the inexhaustible amount of laughable and lamentable fashions, the regulation and legislation for sexual deviation, etc.

[25] al-Hajj (22):5

[26] al-Hijr (15):29

[27] See *al-Fatwā al-Hamawiyah al-Kubrā*, pp. 28-29

8. The Fruits of Knowing and Understanding Allāh's Names and Attributes

Another aspect which indicates and emphasizes the importance of this category of Tawhīd is the benefits derived in the believer's heart from knowing the Names and Attributes of Allāh. These include an increase in Īmān, firmness in certainty and the light and insight it instills (in one's heart), which protect him from areas of doubt and misconceptions that can (otherwise) cause him to stray and which protect him from unlawful desires and lusts.

Thus, if this knowledge is firmly established in the heart it will most definitely produce fear of Allāh.

Each and every Name of Allāh has a particular impact on the heart and character of the servant. If the heart comprehends the meaning of a specific Name, what it embodies, and is conscious of it, it will reply to these meanings and this awareness and understanding will reflect in the person's thinking and mode of behavior.

Likewise, every Attribute has a specific form of worship attached to it, which is the result of the requisites dictated by this particular Attribute.

The most beautiful Names of Allāh and His most exalted Attributes therefore yield worship as their effects.

This covers all forms of worship that appear on the hearts and limbs. For example, the knowledge of the servant that Allāh alone is able to Harm and Benefit, Give and Withhold, to Create, Sustain, to give Life and cause Death, will produce the worship of Tawakkul in its inner form (i.e. in the heart) and the requisites and fruits of Tawakkul in its apparent form (i.e. upon the limbs).

The servant's knowledge of Allāh's Hearing, Sight and Knowledge, and of the fact that not a single atom in the heavens and earth escape Him, and that He knows the secret and hidden, what the treacherous eyes behold what the breasts conceal, will make him preserve his tongue, limbs and the notions of his heart from anything that displeases Allāh. He will make these limbs devoted to what Allāh loves and is pleased with. So it yields modesty within him as well as manifesting it outwardly by making him steer clear of the prohibited and repulsive matters.

Knowledge of His Richness, Generosity, Kindness, Beneficence, and Mercy will grant the servant a wealth of optimism, and it will give birth to many types of hidden and apparent servitude, all in proportion to his understanding and knowledge.

Likewise, the knowledge of the Majesty of Allāh, His Greatness and Might generates for the servant humility, submission and love. These inner conditions in turn produce several apparent forms of servitude.

Similarly, knowledge of His Perfection, Beauty and exalted Attributes will grant him a specific love that becomes represented by many forms of servitude.

So all forms of servitude to Him are related back to the dictates of the Names and Attributes and are linked to it. [28]

In light of the above, it has become apparent that the servant's knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allāh in the correct manner, which Allāh has informed about in His Book and in the Sunnah of His Messenger, will certainly make the servant establish servitude to Allāh in the most perfect manner.

Hence, the more complete the servant's Īmān in the Attributes is, the stronger will be his love, sincerity, and worship. Additionally, the person who has the greatest servitude is the one who worships Allāh with **all** the Names and Attributes He has made known to mankind, as every Name of His has associated to it a specific form of worship on the basis of 'knowledge and understanding' and on the basis of 'state'.

'Knowledge and understanding', i.e. whoever knows that Allāh is named with this particular Name and understands what Attribute it entails, then believes in it, this in itself is worship.

'State', i.e. every Name belonging to Allāh has a specific meaning and particular

effect on the heart and character. If the heart therefore, comprehends the meaning of a specific Name, what it embodies and is conscious of it, it will reply to these meanings and this awareness and understanding will reflect in the person's thinking and mode of behavior.

This method is extracted from the heart of the Qur'ān, Allāh says:

بِهَا فَادْعُوهُ الْحُسْنَى الْأَسْمَاءَ ۗ

And to Allāh belong the most beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them... [29]

Calling upon Him (du'ā) incorporates invoking Him, praising Him and worshipping Him. Allāh calls His servants to know Him by His Names and Attributes, to praise Him with them and to take their share of servitude from them. [30]

[28] *Miftāh Dār as-Sa'ādah* 2/90

[29] *al-A'rāf* (7):180

[30] *Madārij as-Sālikīn* 1/420

9. The Importance of Steering Clear of Falsehood and Not Opposing the Way of Truth in This Domain

The realm of the Names and Attributes is regarded to be one of the most dangerous areas because of the fact that it has been the subject of severe and complex differences. [31] This war broke out between the Salaf on one end, and the philosophers, Ahl Al-Kalām (scholastics) [32] and Mushabbihah at the other.

Hence it is from the obligatory duties of the student of knowledge to profoundly understand to a deep level the truth that is based upon the Book and the Sunnah. Allāh Ta'ālā says:

وَالرَّسُولَ اللَّهُ لِي إِنْ فَرَدُّوهُ شَيْءٍ فِي تَنَازَعْتُمْ فَإِنْ

...and if you differ in anything, then refer it back to Allāh and the Messenger...

[33]

Referral back to Allāh is accomplished by referring back to His Book, and referral back to the Messenger after his demise is accomplished by referring back to his Sunnah.

Allāh Ta'ālā also says:

اللَّهُ أَمْ أَعْلَمُ أَنْتُمْ ۖ

...are you more knowledgeable or is Allāh? [34]

Allāh is more knowledgeable about Himself and He is the One who has informed us of His Names and Attributes in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger.

More so, the Prophet is the most knowledgeable person of his Lord as well as being the most truthful in speech, and Allāh has said of him:

يُوحَىٰ وَحْيًا إِلَّا هُوَ إِن * الْهَوَىٰ عَنِ يَنْطِقُ وَمَا

Nor does he speak from his desire. It is but a revelation which is revealed. [35]

It is compulsory upon the Muslim to study this field and to attain a deep understanding of it in accordance to what is found in the Book and Sunnah. [36]

He must be wary of the philosophical tendencies that brought harm to their advocators and which introduced them to endless deviation and loss. These tendencies barred the knowledge of their Lord from reaching their hearts. Consequently, their hearts darkened and became ignorant of the realities of Īmān. This caused them to turn away from Allāh and His remembrance and from loving Him and praising Him with His qualities of Perfection and Attributes of Majesty. As a result, the vigor of their love, longing and intimacy was directed elsewhere.

It is a common fact that the servant cannot attain any knowledge - or Īmān, for that matter - until he believes in the Names and Attributes of the Lord and he knows them to a level that removes him from the bounds of being ignorant of Him.

Thus, Īmān in the Names and Attributes of Allāh and understanding them is the foundation of Islām, the principle of Īmān and the fruit of the tree of Ihsān.

Whosoever denies them has indeed destroyed this foundation of Islām, principle of Īmān, and fruit of the tree of Ihsān, let alone, for him to be attributed to those who possess exceptional gnostic knowledge.

The believer therefore, must exert all his capabilities towards understanding and knowing the Names and Attributes. Furthermore, his understanding must be free of at-Ta'til and at-Tamthil which have put to trial many of the people of innovation, who stand in opposition to what the Messenger brought.

Correct knowledge is that which is taken from the Book and the Sunnah, and which

has been narrated from the Companions and their followers in righteousness. This is the beneficial knowledge which forever keeps its occupant at a high level of Īmān, a strong degree of certainty, and a tranquil state of affairs.

[31] There are a number of important points that have to be understood here, some of these are:

a) The basic principle is the simplicity, easiness and clarity of the whole religion, which includes this topic of Allāh's Names and Attributes

b) The complexity found within certain matters that pertain to the Names and Attributes does not emanate from the texts but instead from the philosophers and Ahl Al-Kalām as a result of the innovations and unintelligible terminology they introduced. This impelled Ahl As-Sunnah to refute their falsehood.

c) There lies no doubt that the fundamentals of this subject area, which our righteous predecessors are in agreement on, are built upon conclusive evidences, both in terms of the validity and establishment of such texts and in terms of the unequivocal meanings they indicate and signify.

[32] Ahl Al-Kalām (or Mutakallimūn) are the people of innovation, who spoke on areas of 'Aqīdah with false, innovated and censured speech. They are extreme in their reliance upon their deviant intellect at the expense of revelation. The philosophers however, are people of heresy who contest the concept of revelation and prophethood. They also discuss issues of 'Aqīdah upon the methodology of the Greek pagan philosophers. Ahl Al-Kalām are much affected by the false principles and laws laid down by the philosophers. Moreover, there are a number of people who are mistakenly attributed to Islām but are in fact philosophers, who are actually outside the fold of Islām because of their evident heresy. There are a number of differences between Ahl Al-Kalām and the philosophers just as there are a number of similarities. For a detailed explanation one can for example refer to Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Buraykān's work, *Ta'rif al-Khalaf bi Manhaj as-Salaf*, Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, K.S.A.

[33] An-Nisā' (4):59

[34] Al-Baqarah (2):140

[35] An-Najm (53):3-4

[36] The obligation for the layman is to acquire the knowledge he is required to be aware of, without having to delve too deeply in this field and any other area of Islāmic knowledge. The intention of the author here, however, is to express that as for the one who wants to proficiently study this field (the student of knowledge he refers to in an earlier paragraph) then he has to obtain such knowledge upon the methodology of the Book and Sunnah.