

**TAWHĪD AL-ASMĀ WAS-SIFĀT:
Oneness in the Names and Attributes**

Definition: To have faith (Imān) in that which Allāh affirmed for Himself or the Messenger (salallāhu 'alaihi wasallam) affirmed for Him from His Names and Attributes

**1ST PRINCIPLE
To affirm the Names and Attributes of Allāh as they are textually reported
in the Book and Sunnah upon the apparent Arabic meaning**

1. All of Allāh's Attributes are lofty to the highest degree of perfection and praise, without any deficiency.

4. Each Name refers to: i) Allāh Himself (Dhāt), ii) Carries the Attribute it implies, iii) that Attribute has an effect upon the creation if it is transient. E.g. Name: The Most Merciful, Attribute: Mercy. Effect: Shows Mercy to who He wills.

1. All of the Names of Allāh are beautiful.

**3RD PRINCIPLE:
THE ATTRIBUTES**

**2ND PRINCIPLE:
THE NAMES**

2. The Names of Allāh are not confined to a fixed number.

4. We believe: i) Every Attribute is real, and not metaphorical, ii) "How" (takyīf) an Attribute is, is not known. iii) The Attributes cannot be likened or compared to the creation

3. The Names of Allāh are only known by textual proofs, not by the intellect or desires.

2. The Attributes of Allāh are divided into two Categories: Those which He has affirmed for Himself (ath-Thubootiyyah) – e.g. Seeing and Hearing and those which He has negated from Himself (as-Salbiyyah) – e.g. oppression and slumber.

**4TH PRINCIPLE
Refuting al-Mu'attilah
(The Negators)**

The Mu'attilah is any sect that negates the Names and Attributes, whether partially or in totality, whether by rejection or by false interpretation. They are astray because:
i) They oppose the clear and apparent texts.
ii) They contradict the understanding of the Sahābah.
iii) They have no proof to support their interpretations.

3. Those Attributes which Allah has affirmed (ath-Thubootiyyah) are divided into two further categories: i) Those which He is never ceased to be described with (adh-Dhātiyyah) – e.g. Hearing and Knowing, and, ii) those which He does as and when He wishes (al-Fi'liyyah) – e.g. Ascending over the Throne after He created the Heavens and Earth and Descending to the nearest Heaven in the last third of each night.

**Ref: From the classes in explanation of al-Hā'iyyah of
Imām Ibn Abī Dawood as-Sijistānī (died 316H)
Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid, Salafi Publications 2012.**

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THE FIRST PRINCIPLE
Applies to both the Names and the Attributes

To affirm the Names and Attributes of Allāh as they are textually reported in the Book and Sunnah upon the apparent Arabic meaning, without distortion or change.

To ascribe another meaning other than what is apparent is to speak about

Allāh with knowledge and that is forbidden. Proof: Al-A'rāf: 33

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَالْإِنَّمِ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Say, "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities, what is apparent of them and what is concealed, and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allāh that which you do not know."

Ref: From the classes in explanation of al-Hā'iyyah of Imām Ibn Abī Dawood as-Sijistānī (died 316H) Principles extracted from Ibn 'Uthaimīn's explanation of Lum'atul-I'tiqād of Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620H) and Ibn 'Uthaimīn's al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā. Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid, Salafi Publications 2012.

1. All of the Names of Allāh are beautiful.
Proof: "To Allāh belong the most Beautiful Names."
TāHaa 20:8, Al-A'rāf 7:180

SECOND PRINCIPLE: THE NAMES.
This has 4 branches

4. Each Name of Allāh must be understood to encompass three affairs: i) The Name refers to Allāh Himself, His Dhāt. ii) Each Name has a real meaning and refers to the Attribute that it implies. iii) The effect of that Attribute if it is transient (has a effect upon the creation).

E.g. Ar-Rahmān (The Most Merciful):

- i) Ar-Rahmān refers to Allāh Himself,
- ii) It encompasses the Attribute of Mercy (ar-Rahmah), i.e. His Mercy. So it is not merely a name with no meaning,
- iii) That which results from that from its effect is that Allāh grants Mercy to whom He wills. An example of a non-transient Name is Al-Hayy (The Ever-Living):
 - i) The Name refers to Allāh Himself,
 - ii) It encompasses the Attribute of Life, so it not merely a name with no meaning or attribute.
 - iii) It is not transient.

3. The Names of Allāh are not derived by the intellect rather they are established by the Revealed Texts only. Proof: That it not allowed to speak about Allāh without knowledge, and to use the intellect to give names to Allāh is to speak about Him without knowledge. See al-A'rāf 7:33.

2. The Names of Allāh are not confined to a fixed number. Proof: "I ask you, O Allāh, by everyone one of your Names by which You have named Yourself or Revealed in Your Book, or those which You have taught to one of Your creation, or You have kept to Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You."
Ahmad (1/394, 452), as-Sahīhah (no. 199)

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THIRD PRINCIPLE: THE ATTRIBUTES.
This principle has 4 branches

1. All of Allāh's Attributes are lofty to the highest degree of perfection and praise possible, and there is not any deficiency in them from any aspect whatsoever. Proof: An-Nahl: 60

If an Attribute that is perfect from an aspect and deficient from another aspect, then it is not affirmed for Him absolutely nor negated from Him absolutely, rather a detailed explanation is made, and that is that it is affirmed for Him in its perfect aspect and negated from Him in its deficient aspect. E.g. Plotting, "al-Makr" (al-Anfāl: 30, at-Tāriq: 15-16), Deception, "al-Khidā'" (an-Nisā: 142). So these Attributes are perfect IF they are mentioned in response to those who act deceitfully against Allāh, or those who scheme and plot against the truth or against the believers, as in: "The hypocrites seek to deceive Allāh, but is Allāh who deceives them." (an-Nisā: 142). This is to show that Allāh is not unable to respond to their schemes and deceit, so in that sense the Attribute is one of perfection.

2. The Attributes of Allāh are divided into two Categories: Affirmed Attributes and Negated Attributes.

ONE:
 Affirmed Attributes (Thubootiyyah): Those Attributes which Allāh has affirmed for Himself, such as Life, Knowledge and Ability

TWO:
 Negated Attributes (Salbiyyah): Those attributes of deficiency which Allaah has negated from Himself, such as slumber and oppression. Additionally, the Muslim is required to affirm perfection in the opposite of the negated deficiency – e.g. Oppression is negated from Allāh and at the same time perfect Justice is affirmed for Him (see al-Kahf: 49). The reason for this is that negation of deficiency does not necessitate perfection on its own. One human may withhold from oppressing another not due to him possessing justice and honesty, but because he not able due to weakness – however if he was strong, he would certainly oppress! Not so with Allāh, the One free of all imperfections, He does not oppress, because oppression is an attribute of deficiency, so we negate oppression and affirm for Him perfect Justice (al-'Adl).

3. The Affirmed Attributes (Thubootiyyah) are divided into two further categories: Dhātiyyah and Fi'liyyah

ONE: Adh-Dhātiyyah: Those Attributes that He is never ceased to be described with – He is always described with them, such as Hearing (as-Sam'a) and Seeing (al-Basr).

TWO: Al-Fi'liyyah: These Attributes are connected to the Will of Allāh. If He wishes, He does them, and if He wishes, He does not do them, such as ascending over His Throne and His Coming on the Day of Resurrection to pass judgement upon His servants and between them.

There are also some attributes that are both Dhātiyyah and Fi'liyyah, such as His Speaking. So He Speech is an Attribute that He is never ceased to be described with and He is always described with Speech (al-Kalām). And it is Fi'liyyah in the sense that He speaks to whom He wishes whenever He wishes.

4. Every Attribute of Allāh brings forth Three Questions:
 i) Is this Attribute real (Haqeeqiyyah)?
 Answer: Yes, due to the fact that the origin regarding the Arabic language is that it is taken upon what is apparent in meaning, and it is not permitted to distort it or change its meaning without clear proof.
 ii) Is it allowed to enquire 'how' an Attribute is? (i.e. to perform takyeef). Answer: It is not allowed to enquire with regard to 'how' an Attribute is, so it forbidden to ask "How did Allāh Ascend over His Throne?" or "How does He descend to the lowest Heaven?". This is due to the fact that Allaah has not informed us of this information and the human intellect could never perceive such matters independently! (See Tāhā: 110).
 iii) Is there likeness between the Attributes of Allāh and those of His Creation (i.e. tamtheel)?
 Answer: No, and never! Allāh has stated: "There is nothing like unto Him." (ash-Shoorah: 11).
 This is because Allāh is described with the utmost perfection, and there is nothing like unto Him in perfection! So the creation cannot be like Him, because the creation is deficient.

The difference between takyeef (to enquire as to how an Attribute is) and tamtheel (to liken an Attribute with the creation) is subtle. So tamtheel is to be direct in likeness to a specific thing, e.g. "Allāh's ascension is like a human ascending the stairs." Whereas as takyeef is to enquire into an Attribute without mentioning a specific example, such as to imagine how Allāh ascends in one's mind and pondering that. Both of these are strictly forbidden by the Qur'ān, Sunnah and unanimous Consensus of the Companions and early Scholars.

Ref: From the classes in explanation of al-Hā'iyyah of Imām Ibn Abī Dawood as-Sijistānī (died 316H) Principles extracted from Ibn 'Uthaimīn's explanation of Lum'atul-I'tiqād of Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620H) and Ibn 'Uthaimīn's al-Qawā'id al-Muthlā. Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid, Salafi Publications 2012.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE: Tools to refute the Sects who deny the Attributes of Allaah. These sects are collectively known as the Mu'attilah (the Negators).

The Mu'attilah encompass any sect which negates (i.e. ta'teel) or falsely interprets (i.e. ta'weel or tahreef) any of the Attributes of Allāh such that the apparent meaning is lost.

Their deviations are rejected on the following grounds:

- i) They contradict the clear apparent meaning of the Revealed texts without proof.
- ii) They contradict the understanding of the Companions and the early Salaf.
- iii) They have no authentic proof to support their methodology.
i.e. Those who claim that Allāh's two Hands refer to His "Two Powers" or His "Two Bounties" have no proof to support such an assertion – they speak about Allāh without knowledge.

THE ASHĀ'IRAH (The Ash'arees): They are the followers of Abdullah Ibn Kullāb (died 240H) though they lay claim to Abul-Hasan al-Ash'aree (died 324H), even though he repented and left the deviation of negation and false interpretation. They affirm (in their own way) only seven attributes: Hearing, Seeing, Speech, Life, Ability, Will, and Knowledge. They negate the rest and explain them away. They regard it as an obligation to alter the apparent meaning of any attribute that they regard to entail resemblance. They are present in our times, and regard themselves to be Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah. They ascribe to the four Imāms in fiqh only, and follow other than their Creed.

THE MUMATHHILAH (Those who liken Allaah with His Creation): They are sometimes referred to as the Mujassimah (those who ascribe to Allāh bodily organs like those of His creation), or Mushabbihah (those who make resemblances between Allaah and His Creation). Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah are innocent of these sects, and regard their belief to be kufr (unbelief) and far away from the way of the Companions and the early Salaf. Whilst ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah are obligated to affirm the Attributes of Allāh as they have been revealed, they are also obligated to negate any likeness or resemblance to the Creation. So the Attributes of Allāh, such as His Face, His Hands, His Ascension are all real and must be affirmed, yet it is obligatory to negate any resemblance to the Creation. The founder of the Mushabbihah was Maqātil bin Sulaimān, who executed for his anthropomorphic beliefs in 150H.

The Mātūrīdiyyah: They are the followers of Abu Mansoor al-Mātarīdee (died 333H). They are by in large Hanafee in fiqh, though clearly not followers of Abu Haneefah (Died 150H) in Creed. They perform ta'weel (distorting the meanings of Revealed Texts). They are very similar to the Ash'arees in Creed, and like them [falsely] regard themselves to be Ahlus-Sunnah.

THE JAHMIYYAH: They are the root of all of the sects of the Mu'attilah in their denial of all of the Names and Attributes. Every sect who questioned or distorted the Names and Attributes took their lead and their principles from the Jahmiyyah. Their founder was Jahm bin Safwaan who was executed in 128H for his negation of the Names and Attributes, which ultimately leads to denial of the Lord Himself and atheism.

THE MU'TAZILAH: Their founder was Wāsil bin 'Atā (d. 131H) and they came about at the beginning of the second century. Their defining trait is to give precedence to the intellect of the human mind over and above the Qur'ān and Sunnah. They quickly became well known for many deviations and from them was negation of the Attributes of Allāh in totality, and though they affirmed the Names, they believed the Names carried no meanings!

THE MU'ATTILAH (The Negators): They encompass numerous sects.

The Astray Sects

A defining trait of the Mu'attilah sects is their false accusation against the Salafis that they are Mujassimah, or Mushabbihah or Mumaththilah, whilst in reality the Salafis are the ONLY Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah to the exclusion of the other sects.

Ref: From the classes in explanation of al-Hā'iyyah of Imām Ibn Abī Dawood as-Sijistānī (died 316H) Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid, Salafi Publications 2012.