

The Correct, Sound Ta'wīl and the False Ta'wīl

Ibn al-Qayyim - رحمه الله - wrote:¹⁹²⁹

The sound and correct ta'wīl is actually the first two types [covered previously] which are: a) the reality of the actual meaning and what something becomes, or ends up as, or is outwardly expressed as, or occurs or b) explanation (tafsīr) and elucidation (bayān) of the meaning. And this ta'wīl incorporates that which is decisive (muḥkam), ambiguous (mutashābih), the command (amr) and information (khabar). Jābir bin 'Abd Allāh said, in the ḥadīth of the farewell pilgrimage, "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to be amongst us, the Qur'ān would be revealed upon him, and he would know its ta'wīl, hence whatever he acted upon from it, we acted upon it also."¹⁹³⁰

Thus, his (ﷺ) knowledge of its ta'wīl is actually his knowledge of its explanation (tafsīr) and what it indicates and directs to. And his acting by it is actually the ta'wīl (fulfilment, outcome) of what he had been commanded with and prohibited. And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) entered Makkah for the Umrah, and 'Abd Allāh bin Rawāḥah was holding on to his camel, and he said (in poetry):

Remove the disbelievers from his path, remove, for every goodness is in His Messenger, O Lord I am a believer in [his] leadership, I know the right of Allāh through his acceptance, We fought you upon it's ta'wīl,¹⁹³¹ just like we fought you for [its] revelation (tanzīl), with a blow that would remove one from his abode and would make one forget his intimate friend.

...What is intended by fighting them upon the ta'wīl (of the Qur'ān) is actually the ta'wīl of His, the Most High's saying, "**Certainly, you will enter al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, if Allāh wills, secure...**" (48:27).

And their entry into al-Masjid al-Ḥarām was in the last year, while being secure and safe, then this is the actual ta'wīl (expression, outcome, fulfilment) of this dream that the Messenger (ﷺ) saw, and which Allāh revealed in His Book. This shows that the above poetry is appropriately addressing the disbelievers.

¹⁹²⁹ Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Mursalāh 'alal-Jahmiyyah wal-Mu'aṭṭilah (1/181-201).

¹⁹³⁰ Reported by Muslim (2/887), Abū Dāwūd (5/364 in 'Awn al-Ma'būd), Ibn Mājah (2/1023), al-Dārimī (1/375).

¹⁹³¹ Meaning, of the Qur'ān.

It then remains to be said that "There was no actual fighting, such that it can be said that 'We fought you'." [So in reply to this] it is said, that this is a form of instilling fear and making a threat, meaning "If you fought us, then we would have fought you, and we would have fought you upon [both] the ta'wīl and the tanzīl [of the Qur'ān]". However, in any of the above two considerations, the intent behind ta'wīl (in this poetry) is not taking the word away from its true and real meaning to its metaphorical meaning.¹⁹³²

Also from this (type of ta'wīl) is the [what is indicated in the] saying of al-Zuhrī, "The fitnah occurred while the companions of Muhammad were in abundance, and they agreed that all wealth and blood that was taken by way of ta'wīl (interpretation) of the Qur'ān is mere wastage, and they treated them [those who took wealth and blood by way of ta'wīl of the Qur'ān] just like the people of Jaahiliyyah". He means that the two parties in the tribulation fought each other based upon their ta'wīl of the Qur'ān, which is its tafsīr (explanation, interpretation) and upon what was apparent to each of the groups from it, until it led them to fight. Hence, the people of the Camel, and those of Şifīn, they both fought each other based upon the ta'wīl (interpretation) of the Qur'ān. That group used it as evidence and this group also used it as evidence. Yes, the false ta'wīl was that of the people of Shām due to his (ﷺ) saying, to 'Ammār, "The oppressive group will [fight and] kill you."¹⁹³³ But then they said, "We did not kill him, but those who brought him to us, until they put him in front of our archers, they are the ones who killed him". This is a false ta'wīl (explanation) that is in opposition to the true and real meaning of the word (in the above ḥadīth), and in its apparent sense. For the one who killed him was the one who killed him directly, and not the ones whose help he solicited (in killing him). And for this reason, those who were more worthy of [knowledge] of the truth and of the reality amongst them refuted them (in this false ta'wīl) of their's by saying "Thus [in light of your argument, it can equally be said that], the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and his companions, they are the ones who actually killed Ḥamzah and the martyrs with him, because they brought them there until they made them come under the swords of the Mushriks."

¹⁹³² Rather, the ta'wīl mentioned here is referring to the outcome of Allāh's promise in the Qur'ān, and this is in line with one of the two meanings of ta'wīl, which is the outcome, end-result of something.

¹⁹³³ Reported by al-Bukhārī (1/541 in Faḥ al-Bārī), Muslim (4/2235).

Also from this (type of ta'wīl) is the saying of 'Urwah bin Zubayr, when he reported the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah, "The prayer was made obligatory in sets of two rakahs (each prayer was two rakahs), then the prayer for the one who is resident was increased to four, whereas the prayer of the traveller was left as it was." So then someone said to him, "Then why did Ā'ishah complete her prayers (with four rakahs) during the journey? So he replied, "She acted (تأولت) as 'Uthmān acted (تأول)."¹⁹³⁴

However, his intent here was not that 'Ā'ishah and 'Uthmān interpreted the verses related to shortening the prayers in opposition to their apparent meanings,¹⁹³⁵ but his intent was that they interpreted an evidence which admitted the permissibility of completing (the prayers to four rakahs), hence, they acted in accordance with (what the evidence required and allowed for them). Thus, their acting in accordance with it was its actual ta'wīl (outcome, fulfilment), since acting in accordance with the evidence for a particular command is its ta'wīl (enactment, fulfilment, outcome). Just as the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to enact (يتأول) the Exalted's saying, "**So glorify the praises of Your Lord, and seek His forgiveness**" (110:3) by fulfilling this order by saying [in rukū' and sujūd], (سبحانك اللهم ربنا وبحمدك اللهم اغفر لي), "*Sublime you are O Allāh, O our Lord, and praise be to you, O Allāh forgive me.*" And similarly, 'Ā'ishah and 'Uthmān used to enact His saying, "**So when you are secure and safe, then establish the prayer...**" (4:103) [based upon their understanding] that completing the prayer (with four rakahs) is from its establishment (iqāmah).

It has also been said that 'Ā'ishah interpreted in the following manner: That since she was the Mother of the Believers, she was their mother wherever she was, hence, it is as if she is a resident amongst them (wherever she was), and that 'Uthmān was the Imām of the Muslims, thus wherever he was, that place was his place of residence; or that he had intended on settling in Minā, or that he had taken a wife and whoever had taken a wife then he is not judged as being a traveller; or that the bedouins increased in number in that season, and hence, he wanted to show them how the obligatory prayer is performed and that it is four rakahs - and other such ta'wīls, which they thought are evidences that restrict the absoluteness (of the command) of shortening prayers, or which restrict the generality of the command - even though all of them are quite weak.

¹⁹³⁴ Reported by al-Bukhārī (2/569 in Fatḥ al-Bārī) and Muslim (1 /478).

¹⁹³⁵ This is the innovated approach of the Mutakallimīn.

But the truth is what is contained in the guidance of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), for he used to be the Imām of the Muslims and 'Ā'ishah was the Mother of the Believers in his life and after his life, and she had shortened the prayers alongside him, and 'Uthmān was not resident in Makkah, but it reached him that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had allowed it for three days for the muhājir (emigrant) as a concession, after he had completed the rituals (of Hajj). Further, when the traveller gets married during his journey, the judgement of being a resident is not established for him merely on account of marriage, so long as his intent and resolution is not to remain (at that place) and to end the journey.

So, in summary, the ta'wīl that is in agreement with what is actually indicated by the texts, and whatever the Sunnah has come with, and is in concordance with it, is the sound, correct ta'wīl. And as for the ta'wīl which is in opposition to what the texts indicate and what the Sunnah has come with, then it is a corrupt ta'wīl.¹⁹³⁶ And there is no difference in this between the issues of information (khabar) and command (amr). And every ta'wīl that agrees with what the Messenger came with is accepted, and whatever opposes it is rejected.

¹⁹³⁶ The intent behind the previous examples that Ibn al-Qayyim has used is to show that the ta'wīl that is made can be correct and sound if by the ta'wīl a person arrives at what is actually intended and desired by the particular text in question, be it something that comprises khabar (information) only or something that comprises a command (amr). Or it can be false, if a person fails to arrive at what is actually desired and intended by the words be that in relation to information, or a command. Thus, the examples given above by Ibn al-Qayyim are illustrations of ta'wīls that were erroneous, while the type of ta'wīl that were made in these cases, was from the correct and affirmed types of ta'wīl which are a) the ta'wīl that is indicated in the Qur'ān of the performance, fulfilment (of a legislative matter), the end-result, outcome of something, of the goal of something, or the actual reality or occurrence of something and b) the ta'wīl with the meaning of tafsīr (explanation) and bayān (elucidation). Ibn al-Qayyim is illustrating that ta'wīl – even if it is of the two correct and affirmed types – can still be erroneous, if the person fails to arrive at what is actually intended by the text and that this is an erroneous, false ta'wīl that has been made, even if in its type it does not depart from the types of affirmed ta'wīl as explained. After this Ibn al-Qayyim moves on to explain the various false types of ta'wīls that the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah perform of the texts, which are not really the legitimate ta'wīl, but taḥrīf.

And the false ta'wīl is of various types:¹⁹³⁷

The First: [A ta'wīl] that the word cannot plausibly allow on account of the way it is composed (in the sentence), such as making ta'wīl of his (ﷺ) saying, "...until the Lord of Honour places His foot (rijlahu) over it..."¹⁹³⁸, that the word *rijl* refers to "a group of people" since this is not known at all in the language of the Arabs.¹⁹³⁹

The Second: [A ta'wīl] that the word cannot allow on account of its specific construction in the dual or plural form – even though it may allow it in its singular form, such as the ta'wīl of His saying, "...to whom I have created with both My Hands" (38:75), to mean *qudrah* (power).¹⁹⁴⁰

The Third: [A ta'wīl] that the word cannot allow on account of its sequence and composition (in the sentence) – even though it may allow it in a different sequence (in a sentence), such as the ta'wīl of His saying, "**Do they wait for anything other than that the Angels should come to them, or that your Lord should come, or that some of the signs of Your Lord should come...**" (6:158), that the coming (ityān) of the Lord means the coming of some of His signs (āyāt), which are His command (amr). However, the sequence of the sentence rejects this completely, for it is impossible for it to be carried to mean that, on account of the division, repetition, and categorisation that occurs in the verse [that the Angels, and Allāh, and the signs will come, and the word "come" being repeated for all three].

And like the ta'wīl of his (ﷺ) saying, "*Verily, you will see your Lord with your eyes, just like you see the full moon on a clear night, without there being any clouds, and just like you see the sun on an afternoon,*

¹⁹³⁷ Pay close attention here for this is an amazing exposition of the misguidance of the Ash'arites and their likes who traverse the way of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in trying to deal with those texts that clash with their proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām.

¹⁹³⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī (8/595 in *Faḥḥ al-Bārī*) and Muslim (4/2186,2187)

¹⁹³⁹ Many of the ta'wīls of the Jahmites are of this nature and they originated with a people who were ignorant of the Arabic language.

¹⁹⁴⁰ It is for this reason that the early Kullābī Ash'arīs like al-Ash'arī himself, al-Bāqillānī, and al-Bayhaqī all refuted this particular ta'wīl, which was championed by the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah. Unfortunately, the later Ash'arites adopted this and many other ta'wīls that were spread into the Ummah by Bishr al-Marīsī al-Ḥanafī al-Jahmī.

without there being any clouds."¹⁹⁴¹ So making ta'wīl of the vision (the seeing) that has been mentioned in this particular sequence of words with something that opposes its reality, and its apparent meaning is completely impossible, and it is in reality rejection and denial (of the text) but which is being concealed as ta'wīl by the one who does this.¹⁹⁴²

The Fourth: The [ta'wīl of a word] whose usage has never been authored (written) with that particular meaning in the language of the speaker, even though it may have been authored (with that meaning) due to a later convention. And this is a matter in which many people have erred, and in which their understandings have strayed, in that they made ta'wīl of many of the words that occur in the texts with a meaning that has never been written for that word at all in the language of the Arabs, even though it may have been used in the convention of the later scholars. And this is something that needs to be pointed out since much lying has been made against Allāh and His Messenger on account of it.

So for example, a group made ta'wīl of His saying, "...**but when it (the star) set (afala)...**" (6:76), to mean *ḥarakah* (movement), and then they said, "He (Ibrāhīm) argued that on account of its movement (*harakah*) it cannot have *Ruboobiyyah* [since movement is a quality of bodies and (movement) is not permitted for Allāh]." And this is completely unknown in the language in which the Qur'ān was revealed – not even in a single place [in the body of oral and written Arabic tradition, has it occurred] that *ufūl* (setting) is actually *ḥarakah* (movement).

¹⁹⁴¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī (13/419,420,421 in *Fath al-Bārī*) and Muslim (1/167) and the hadīth has been reported by 30 companions.

¹⁹⁴² This is the action of the Mu'tazilah, as for the Ash'ariyyah, then their position is one of hypocrisy, pretending to agree with Ahl al-Sunnah by saying the vision is possible and will take place, but then adding "*not in a direction*", or explaining it to mean a vision other than the vision of the eyes, such as a vision through higher faculties Allāh will give to the Believers. In reality, they agree with the Mu'tazilah, whilst pretending to agree with Ahl al-Sunnah, and they are forced into these deceptions and games because they cannot contradict the proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām* which necessitates that if something is perceived by the sense of seeing, it must be in direction and anything in direction must be in a place (*makān*), and anything in place must be a body (*jism*), and this does not agree with the proof of the *Jahmiyyah*, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah in establishing the universe is originated and has a creator, hence it must be rejected, or distorted. But we see here that these texts are such that it is impossible to make ta'wīl of them with the ta'wīl that is in reality *taḥrīf*, leaving the apparent meaning for a less well-known and obscure meaning.

Likewise, the ta'wīl of al-Aḥad (the One) to mean the thing, one part of which cannot be distinguished from another. Then they said that if He (Allāh) was above the Throne, He would not then have been One (Aḥad). So the ta'wīl of al-Aḥad with this particular meaning is not known to a single Arab, and nor to the people of the language, and nor has its usage with this meaning known to have occurred in a single place in the language of the people, rather it is the convention of the Jahmiyyah, the Philosophers and the Mu'tazilah and whoever agreed with them.¹⁹⁴³

And also like the ta'wīl of His saying, "**Then he ascended (istawā) over the Throne**" (7:54), that the meaning is "He then embarked upon (turned to) creating the Throne ", for this is not known in the language of the Arabs, rather not in the language of any of the other nations, that when someone "embarks, turns to something" that it is said (استوى عليه) "he made istiwā' (ascension) over it". So it is not said to the one who embarked upon a journey, "he has made istiwā' over it", and nor to the one who embarked upon any action, such as reading or writing, or constructing something, that "he made istiwā' over them", or to the one who turned towards food that "he made istiwā' over the food". So this is the language of the people, and their words and their customs are present, and yet none of this (type of speech) exists at all.

And this ta'wīl is falsified from many different angles, and we shall mention them in the relevant place, and had there not been amongst them except that this entails rejection (takdhīb) of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) by the one who made this ta'wīl, it would have been sufficient. For it has been established in the Ṣaḥīḥ that, "*Allāh determined the decrees of the creation before He created the heavens and the earth by fifty-thousand years, and His Throne was above the water.*"¹⁹⁴⁴ Hence, His Throne was present before the creation of the heavens and the earth by more than fifty-thousand years, so how can it be said that He created the heavens and the earth in six days then he turned to create the Throne?

¹⁹⁴³ This innovated understanding of al-aḥad was taken by Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī from the Philosophers and he used the argument of the Philosophers against the Ash'arites for negation of the attributes, as an argument against Ahl al-Sunnah for negation of Allāh's 'uluww, and this characterizes the generality of the polemic of the Ash'arites against Ahl al-Sunnah, hypocrisy and intellectual fraud. Some later Ash'arites like Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (d. 895H) did reprimand al-Rāzī for falling into the snares of the Philosophers in this matter.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Reported by Muslim (4/0244) and al-Tirmidhī (6/362).

And when ta'wīl contains rejection (takdhīb) of the Messenger, then that is sufficient for its falsehood. And most of the ta'wīls of the people are actually of this nature, and there will soon pass by you (in this discourse) from them (the refutation of the false ta'wīls) that which is the pleasure of the eye of every muwaḥḥid (monotheist) and the tear of the eye of every mulhid (deviant).

The Fifth: The [ta'wīl of the word] which has been employed in writing with that particular meaning, however it has been used in this case in a compositional structure other than the type of composition which occurs in the [revealed] text, hence, the one who makes ta'wīl allows ta'wīl of it in this particular composition [in the revealed text] which does not allow it, basing this upon the fact that it has come in another compositional structure which does allow making that particular ta'wīl of it.

And this is from the greatest of mistakes and of [the greatest of] deception, such as making ta'wīl of His saying, the Most High, "**What prevented you from prostrating to whom I have created with both My Hands** (بيدي)" (38:75), to mean *ni'mah* (favour), and there is no doubt that the Arabs do say, (لفلان عندي يد) "So and so has a favour with me)", and 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd said to al-Ṣiddīq, "Had it not been that you have a favour (لولا يد لك عندي) from me that I have not recompensed, I would have responded to you."¹⁹⁴⁵ However the occurrence of *yad* in this particular composition in which Allāh, the Sublime, has annexed an action to Himself, and then this action is also transitive to the *yad* (Hand) by way of the preposition *bā* (with), which is just like saying "*I wrote with the pen*", but meaning the hand, and then making this specific to someone whom He had chosen for Himself, Ādam, as opposed to anyone else, just like He specified al-Masīh (Īsā) for blowing into him from His spirit, and like He specified Mūsā for speaking to him directly, without any intermediary, then this is from that which makes it impossible to make ta'wīl of *yad* (hand) to mean *ni'mah* (favour), even though in another compositional structure it is correct to do that. Hence, just because it is possible for a word to carry a particular meaning within a given composition, does not mean that it can carry this particular meaning in all possible compositions (of this word).¹⁹⁴⁶

¹⁹⁴⁵ Reported by al-Bukhārī (5/330 in Faṭḥ al-Bārī).

¹⁹⁴⁶ The early Kullābī Ash'arīs were more sound in knowledge and reason than the later ones who became followers of the ways of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah. They all affirmed two hands for Allāh, the Most High, and they include, Ibn Kullāb (d. 248H), al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243H), al-Qalānisī, al-Ash'arī (d. 324H), Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī (d. 380H), al-Bāqillānī (d. 403H), al-Bayḥāqī (d.

Similar to this is His saying, "(وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ)" **Some faces that day shall be shining and radiant. Looking at their Lord.**" (75:22-23), it is impossible to make ta'wīl of the looking (نظر) to mean "waiting for the reward," since he annexed the looking to the faces which is where the looking actually occurs from, and then he also made it transitive by the preposition (إلى) "towards" which when connected to the verb (نظر) "to look", then it refers to the looking of the eye, and nothing else.

And [as for] describing the faces with radiance, then this cannot be attained except in the presence of that with which pleasure is found [looking at their Lord], and not in being disturbed by having to wait for it. Hence, it is impossible alongside this compositional structure for ta'wīl to be made of *nadhhar* (looking) by other than actual seeing (*ru'yah*) – even though *nadhhar* can also be with the meaning of *intidhār* (waiting), for it has been used in His saying, "(انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ)" **Wait for us, let us take something from your light...**" (57:13), and also His, the Most High's saying, "(فَنَاطِرَةٌ يَوْمَ يَرْجَعُ) ...and see (wait) with what answer the Messengers return" (27:35).

And also similar to this (false type of ta'wīl) is the saying of the deceiving Jahmite, "When a Mushabbih (anthropomorphist) says to you, "(الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى)" **The Most Merciful ascended over the throne**" (20:5), then reply to him, "To us, 'Arsh carries seven meanings, and *istiwā'* has five meanings. So which meaning is actually intended? For the mushabbih will be confused and he does not know what he is saying".¹⁹⁴⁷

So it said in reply to this oppressive ignoramus, who bewilders and is himself bewildered: Woe be to you, what sin is there is upon the muwahḥid whom you and your associates have called a mushabbih, when he has only said to you whatever Allāh Himself has said,¹⁹⁴⁸

458H) and also Ibn Fawrak (d. 406H). But the likes of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baḡhdādī (d. 429H), al-Juwaynī (d. 478H), al-Ghazālī (d. 505H), al-Rāzī (d. 606H) and those after them preferred the way of the Jahmiyyah and the Mu'tazilah.

¹⁹⁴⁷ This is the same deception attempted by today's Ash'arites.

¹⁹⁴⁸ The reason why the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah have a problem with al-*istiwā'* is because it is an action tied to Allāh's will and power, which to

and by Allāh, if he had been a mushabbih as you claim, then Allāh and His Messenger would be more befitting of this (accusation) from you, since this person has not exceeded the text itself.

As for you saying that the 'arsh has seven meanings and that istiwā' has five meanings, then this is deception on your behalf, and it is a form of confounding the ignorant ones, and is a clear lie, for there is only one meaning for the 'Arsh of al-Rahmān which He ascended over, even though the word 'arsh from the point of view in its occurrence in a sentence can carry numerous meanings. For the lām (in the verse) is for definitiveness (the definite article), and hence the throne becomes something specified and unique on account of this, and it is the Throne of the Lord, Exalted is His Majesty, and this is the elevated seat (sarīr) over His dominion (mulk), which all of the Messengers are agreed upon, and which all of the nations have affirmed, except those who shunned the Messengers.

And as for your saying that istiwā' has numerous meanings, then this is another deception, for istiwā' which is made transitive with the particle 'alā (على) does not have except a single meaning. And as for istiwā' which is general and unrestricted, then it can have a number of meanings, for the Arabs say, (استوى كذا إذا انتهى وكل) "he reached such and such (state or condition), when he finished and became complete", such as in His, the Most High's saying, "وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ (أَشَدُّهُ وَأَسْتَوَى) **And when he attained his full strength (istawā') and was perfect (in manhood)...**" (28:14).

And you also say, (استوى كذا إذا سواه) "it settled, when it became level, equivalent", such as their saying, (استوى الماء والخشبة) "the water and plank became level", and (استوى الليل والنهار) "the day and night became equivalent."

them implies *ḥudūth* (recency), and it also necessitates 'uluww, which to them is place (*makān*) and place implies *jismiyyah* (being a body), and it also implies movement, and to them motion necessitates *jismiyyah*, and because all of this clashes with the proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām*, they took from the Sabean star and idol-worshipping pagan disbelievers, then they are forced into making these distortions of the Book and the Sunnah.

And you also say (استوى إلى كذا), when he faced it and embarked upon it, in height and elevation, such as when some elevates to a roof, or a mountain. And also (استوى على كذا), meaning when he rises over it and ascends over it. The Arabs do not know anything other than this [understanding of] istiwā, when it comes in this particular composition [transitive with the particle (على), meaning over].

Just like as it occurs textually in His saying, "(وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَى)"
And when he attained his full strength (istawā) and was perfect (in manhood)..." (28:14), it does not carry any meaning other than this one (that he reached perfection and finished in his maturing and growing). Just like it when occurs textually in their saying, (استوى) (الليل والنهار) "the day and night became equivalent", and its meaning does not carry any other meaning but this. Therefore, leave alone this deception, for it does not bring anything upon you except hatred from Allāh and from those who believe.

The Sixth: The word whose usage has been employed [by convention] with a meaning that is apparent, but its usage has not been employed in the interpolated (mu'awwal) meaning, or its usage has been employed for this meaning, but very rarely. Hence, to make ta'wīl of this word when it comes in this manner, and to carry its meaning upon other than that which is conventionally used is falsehood, for this contains deception, and deceit, and contradicts what is clear [in speech], and what is guidance.

And when they desire to employ such a word with other than its conventional meaning, they surround it with other pointers (qarā'in) that would indicate their intent (their false ta'wīl) to the listener, just in case the listener's understanding grasps the actual meaning of the word, [before they have been able to force his mind to think of their interpolated meaning]. And whoever reflects upon the language of the people, and the perfection of this language, and wisdom contained in its construction, will realise the correctness of this [observation]. And as for when they come to a particular word which has a meaning that has been employed [in written authorship in the body of classical Arabic literature], and they remove it from this meaning and use it for other than its [real and intended] meaning, despite the fact that there are pointers [in the written text] which indicate emphatically, that they [the writers of classical Arabic literature] meant its original meaning, then this is the most impossible of matters (for them, the deniers, distorters).

An example of this is His saying, the Most High, "(وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا)"
And Allāh spoke to Musaa directly" (4:164). And his (ﷺ) saying, "There is none of you except that His Lord will speak to him, without there being between Him and him a translator who will interpret for him, and nor any screen that screens him,"¹⁹⁴⁹ and also his (ﷺ) saying, "Verily, you will see your Lord with your eyes..."¹⁹⁵⁰ And this is the nature of the vast majority of the texts that mention the attributes [as will become clear to him] whose chest Allāh has expanded to accepting them and rejoicing with what Allāh has revealed upon His Messenger concerning them (the attributes) when he reflects upon them. He will see that [the mentioning of the attributes] are surrounded with pointers, indicators, and what only further emphasizes (the actual meaning), and all of this negates the [false] ta'wīl of the one who makes ta'wīl.

The Seventh: Every ta'wīl that causes the original and base meaning of the text to be nullified is itself futile. Such as the ta'wīl¹⁹⁵¹ of his (ﷺ) saying, "Whichever woman performs her own nikāḥ (marriage) without the permission of her guardian, then her marriage is invalid"¹⁹⁵² by carrying it to mean the slave-girl. This ta'wīl, despite the fact that it severely contradicts the apparent wording, also nullifies the original text, which is his (ﷺ) saying (in what follows), "But if (her husband) enters her, then she has the right to the dowry, due to his making lawful her private parts for himself." As for the dowry of the slave-girl, then it is actually the right of the master. Then they go on to say that they carry it to mean "writing down" (meaning, that the dowry is indeed for the slave-girl and that the master is only responsible for writing it down, as a contract), and again this also nullifies the original and base meaning of the text from another angle. This is because the text has come with the word (أي) "whichever", which is used as a condition, and it is one of the particles used to indicate generality, and then it is also

¹⁹⁴⁹ Reported by al-Bukhārī (13/423 in Faḥ al-Bārī) and in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad (4/256,377).

¹⁹⁵⁰ Reported by al-Bukhārī (13/419,420,421 in Faḥ al-Bārī) and Muslim (1/167) and the hadeeth has been reported by 30 companions.

¹⁹⁵¹ The example given here by Ibn al-Qayyim is an example of how some of fuqūhā make ta'wīl in order to take away a text away from its clear, apparent meaning so that it agrees with, or does not clash with the opinion in their juristic school of thought.

¹⁹⁵² Reported by Abū Dāwūd (2/98,99 in 'Awn al-Ma'būd), al-Tirmidhī (4/54,55), Ibn Mājah 1/605), Musnad of Imām Aḥmad 6/47), al-Ḥākim (2/168), and it is in Irwā' al-Ghalīl of al-Albānī (2/243).

strengthened by the particle (لَا), which necessitates the emphasis upon the generality already indicated, and additionally, it has also mentioned (مَرَّةً) without the definite article, during the mention of the condition, and this again necessitates generality. And the text also linked the futility of the marriage to a description that is appropriate for the marriage (to be described with) and which necessitates the judgement (of its futility) merely by its presence, and this is that she performs her own nikaah. And the text also indicated the reason that necessitates the futility of the marriage, which is that she has lied upon her guardian and attributed that which is false to him. And the text also emphasises the futility of the marriage three times. Hence, to carry the meaning of the hadeeth and the present it in a form that very rarely occurs, then this nullifies the actual desired intent behind the hadeeth. And when you reflect upon the generality of the ta'wils of the Jahmiyyah, you will find them to be of this nature, rather even worse and reprehensible.

The Eighth: The ta'wīl of a word which has a clear, apparent meaning, and which when applied unrestrictedly, cannot have any other meaning other than it, with an obscure meaning which none but the unique ones from amongst the specialists (in the language), or those of rhetorical speech (kalām) can actually discern. Such as the ta'wīl of word al-Aḥad - which is understood properly by the common people and the specific people (with greater knowledge and insight) - so the ta'wīl of this to mean "an essence (dhāt) that is devoid of all attributes and which does not admit to two meanings from any angle whatsoever."¹⁹⁵³ And if this was possible to exist externally (outside of one's imagination), then it could not be known except after laying some extensive, and very difficult foundations (for it to be conceived in the mind). How can it be when it is actually impossible for this to be the case in external reality?¹⁹⁵⁴ Rather, this is something that the mind alone makes binding (but is not externally possible). Then, they seek to find evidence for its external existence.¹⁹⁵⁵ Thus, in light of this, it is

¹⁹⁵³ This is the definition of the Philosophers and it is used to deny the attributes of Allāh.

¹⁹⁵⁴ There is no such thing in existence who can be said to be "one" (al-Aḥad) with this particular thing, since every existing thing has at least an attribute, otherwise, the negation of attributes, is the negation of existence itself, and this applies to Allāh and His creation.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Meaning, they conceive of this idea in their mind - which does exist externally - then they seek to find deduce proof for its outward existence with sophistries.

impossible to use a word that is well known and famous to every one with a meaning that is extremely obscure and hidden, and what is similar in example to this will come soon if Allāh, the Most High, wills.

The Ninth: The ta'wīl which necessitates the negation of the meaning which entails complete ascendancy and nobility and then to lower it to another meaning which is lower than the original meaning by many levels. This is similar to removing a ruler from his dominion and authority of rule to a level other than that of the king by a great deal.

And this is like the ta'wīl of the Jahmiyyah of His saying, "وَهُوَ الْأَعْلَىٰ" (فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ) **And He is al-Qāhir (all-Powerful, Compelling), above His servants**" (6:18), and also His saying, "يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ" **They fear their Lord who is above them**" (16:50), and whatever is similar to this to mean that it refers to the highness of nobility (sharf), just like the saying, "the dirham is above the fals (small coin)" and "the dīnār is above the dirham".

So just reflect upon the ta'wīl (negation, divestment) of those who interpolate the reality of this unrestricted highness, which is actually from the special characteristics of Rubūbiyyah and which necessitates the greatness of the Lord, the Majestic, and diminish this to something the extent of which is merely that His rank is above the rank of the sons of Ādam, and that He is more noble than them.

And likewise, their ta'wīl of Allāh's 'uluww (highness, ascendancy) with this same meaning, and that it is like the ascendancy of gold over silver. Likewise, their ta'wīl of His istiwā' over the Throne to mean His power over it, and that He is one who conquers it and is a victor (ghālib) over it. So O Allāh, How amazing! Have the intellects gone astray and have the senses perished, and have the intelligent ones doubted that He, the Sublime, was powerful over His Throne, a victor over it, such that He Himself, the Sublime, had to inform about it in seven places in His Book, all with just a single word, and in not a single of these places is there a meaning [amongst the meanings] that the interpolators (mu'awillūn) have contrived. And so all of this praise and veneration (in these seven verses) is actually to inform us that He is powerful over His Throne, victorious over it, and all of this is after He created the seven heavens and the earth. And do you consider that Allāh, the Sublime, was not a victor over His Throne, having power over it during the period that is more than fifty-thousand years, and then

this power and victory over the Throne came to Him, after He created this universe?!¹⁹⁵⁶

The Tenth: The ta'wīl of a word with a meaning for which there is not any indicative evidence from the sequence (of words in the sentence), and nor is there any additional pointers (in the text) which requires this meaning, and the likes of this (meaning) is clearly not intended or desired by [Allāh who is] al-Mubīn (the Manifest), al-Hādī (the Guide), in His words. If He had actually intended this particular meaning, He would have surrounded the word with additional pointers that indicate the meaning that is opposed to its apparent meaning, such that the one who is listening is not drawn into any confusion or error. And Allāh, the Sublime, revealed His words, as clarification (bayān) and guidance (hudā). Hence, if he desired (a meaning) opposed to the apparent meaning (of the words), and did not surround (His words) with additional pointers which indicate the meaning that would lead others to come to understand it, then it would not be an explanation (bayān) nor guidance (hudā).

So these are some of the angles by which the correct, sound ta'wīl is differentiated between the false ta'wīl, and with Allāh do we seek aid.

This is an amazing insight from Ibn al-Qayyim into the reality of the deceptions and sophistries of the Philosophers, Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah who are all on side of the fence in that they have made the language and terminology of the Greek and Sabean star and idol-worshipping pagan disbelievers as the platform of debate and speech regarding Allāh, the Exalted. For this reason, they all share with each other in their distortion of the texts of the Book and the Sunnah, whilst naming it as ta'wīl. However, this ta'wīl is not the legitimate sound ta'wīl, but simply a mechanism for distorting the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ), and they are forced into this taḥrīf because of the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām.

¹⁹⁵⁶ This exposes the docility and feebleness of the intellects of the Jahmiyyah Ash'ariyyah who play and fool with the texts, and these very same texts expose them as liars against Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ).

The Reality of Ta'wīl Is To Inform About The True and Real Intent Behind Speech

The reality of ta'wīl is to inform others about the true and real intent of the speaker behind his words. With this in mind, it becomes clear that the ta'wīls of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah are lies upon Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ), since they are claiming to explain the actual intent of Allāh. It is for this reason that the later Ash'arites did not feel comfortable with the approach of ta'wīl as their souls knew it entailed lying upon Allāh and entailed great inconsistency. Hence, they innovated tafwīd and then tried to ascribe it to the Salaf. In this passage, Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates upon the true purpose behind the legitimate ta'wīl.

Ibn al-Qayyim - رحمه الله - wrote:¹⁹⁵⁷

Concerning the Fact that Ta'wīl Is Informing About the [Actual and True] Intent [Behind the Words] of the Speaker and [that Ta'wīl Is] Not Inventing or Devising [A (New, Ambiguous) Meaning And Claiming that This Is the Speaker's Intent, and That This is What is Known as Ta'wīl].¹⁹⁵⁸

This is a topic in which many of the people err, in a very repugnant way. For the purpose (behind ta'wīl) is to actually understand the intent (murād) of the speaker behind his words. Hence, when it is said, "The meaning of the word is such and such", then this is informing about that which the speaker desired and meant. And if this informing is not in agreement with [the speaker's intent], then it is a lie upon the speaker.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Mursalāh (1/201-204).

¹⁹⁵⁸ Pay attention to this difference, for the Mutakallimīn from the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah claim that ta'wīl is inshā' (devising new meanings for words based upon what is otherwise permissible linguistically). Thus, the approach of the Jahmites and their offshoots (Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah) is based upon their rejection - through the argument of reason based upon the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām - of what Allāh has described Himself with in the revealed texts, and thus, they consider it from Tawḥīd to find novel meanings for words that have come in the reveal texts through which attributes and actions are affirmed for Allāh. These novel meanings are found by drawing upon strange, long-winded, obscure, far-fetched usages in the language. The texts of the attributes themselves falsify these particular usages, and examples have already preceded in the previous section.