

## Tafwīḍ And Pass Them On As They Have Come, Without, Tafsīr, Ma'nā, Kayf and Ḥadd

Also from the talbīs of the Jahmites is that they ascribe their own innovated approach of tafwīḍ<sup>1369</sup> to the Salaf. In this regard they used the narrations from the Imāms of the Salaf from the second century after hijrah in which the Salaf said, "Pass them on as they have come", and likewise their prohibition of any *kayf* (asking how), *ma'nā* (new meaning), *tafsīr* (explanation), *waṣf* (additional description), *ḥadd* (definition) in refutation of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah. These factions claimed that these texts necessitate tajsīm and tashbīh and began to invent new meanings (*ma'ānī*), explanations (*tafsīrāt*) and interpretations (*ta'wīlāt*).

Imām al-Awzā'ī (d. 157H) said:

Makḥūl [d. 113H] and al-Zuhrī [d. 124H] were asked about the explanation of the āḥādīth reported about the attributes, and they said: Pass the āḥādīth on as they have come.<sup>1370</sup>

And Walīd bin Muslim said:

I asked al-Awzā'ī [d. 157H], Sufyān al-Thawrī [d. 167H], Mālik bin Anās [d. 179H], and al-Layth bin Sa'd [d. 175H] about these āḥādīth in which the Ru'yah is mentioned, and they said: Pass them on without asking "How?"<sup>1371</sup>

And also from Walīd bin Muslim:

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<sup>1369</sup> Tafwīḍ means to consign and submit, in this case the Jahmites claim that the verses pertaining to the attributes are mere collections of letters that did not come with any meanings in truth, and that whatever meanings are understood from them according to the language of the Qur'ān and the Arabs was simply as a means of tribulation, to test the believers and that the correct approach towards these texts is to first abolish their apparent meanings, and then to consign and submit the knowledge of their meanings to Allāh, the Exalted. This approach was spoken of by the Ash'arites such as al-Juwaynī (d. 478H) who could not find satisfaction in the approach of ta'wīl as a means to protect the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām for the sake of which all of this toying and playing with the revealed texts was taking place.

<sup>1370</sup> Reported by al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharh Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (3/431), and also by Ibn Qudāmah in *Dhamm al-Ta'wīl* (p. 29).

<sup>1371</sup> Reported by al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharh Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (3/503)

I asked al-Awzā'ī [d. 157H], Sufyān al-Thawrī [d. 167H], Mālik bin Anās [d. 179H] about these āḥādīth in which the Ru'yah is mentioned, and they said: Pass them as they have come on without asking "How?"<sup>1372</sup>

All of these narrations are from the second century hijrah, starting from Makhūl (d. 113H). This was the time when al-Ja'd bin Dirham (ex. 118H) manifested the rejection of the Attributes. Ibn Kathir writes in al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah:

And he (Ibn Asākir)<sup>1373</sup> mentioned that he (al-Ja'd) used to frequent Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110H) and that every time he came to Wahb, he would wash himself and would say, "It is good for the intellect", and he used to ask Wahb about the attributes of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. So Wahb said to him one day, "Woe be to you O Ja'd! Cut short this matter from that (type of questioning), indeed I consider you from the destroyed ones. If Allāh had not informed us in His Book that He has a Hand, we would not have said that, and [if Allāh had not informed us] that He has an Eye, we would not have said that, and [if Allāh had not informed us] that He has a self (*nafs*, meaning essence), then we would not have said that, and [if Allāh had not informed us] that He has hearing, then we would not have said that..." and he (Wahb) mentioned the attributes such as *ilm* (knowledge), and *kalām* (speech) and others. Then al-Ja'd did not tarry for long before he was crucified and then killed.<sup>1374</sup>

The Salaf stood against this vile innovation and clarified that the texts are to be passed on with their meanings intact, and that it is not to be asked "How?" regarding any of that. When the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah began to invent their *ta'wīls* and play around with the sanctity of the texts, the Salaf emphasized this methodology of leaving the texts alone, passing them on intact, without distorting or changing their meanings or inventing new ones, and without asking "How?" And this statement of the Salaf represents their methodology in this subject which is affirmation (*ithbāt*) without asking how (*takyīf*). Thus, "*pass them on as they have come*" is affirmation and "*without asking how?*" is negation of *takyīf*, and this is synonymous with the saying of Allāh, the Exalted:

<sup>1372</sup> Reported by al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharh Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (3/527)

<sup>1373</sup> Quoting from *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571H).

<sup>1374</sup> *Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah*, (9/350).

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

**There is no likeness unto Him and He is the all-Hearing, the all-Seeing (42:11).**

The first half of the verse purifies and exonerates Allāh from their being any likeness to Him, in His essence, names, attributes or actions, The second half of the verse affirms the names, al-Samī and al-Baṣīr, which at the same time affirm the attributes of al-sam' (hearing) and al-baṣr (sight), and it also affirms His action of hearing and seeing His creation. This is itḥbāt (affirmation) with the negation of takyīf.

Imām al-Dārquṭnī<sup>1375</sup> (d. 385H) reports with his isnād to Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām (d. 224H):

Muḥammad bin al-Makhlad narrated to us: Al-'Abbās bin Muḥammad al-Dawrī narrated to us, he said: I heard Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām, and he mentioned the subject in which the [āḥādīth] of the Ru'yah, the Kursī, the place of the two feet, the laughter of our Lord at the despair of His slave, and the nearness of others, and where our Lord was before He created the heaven, and that Hellfire will not become full until your Lord (ﷻ) places His foot in it and it will say, "Enough, enough" and the likes of these āḥādīth. So he said, "These āḥādīth are authentic. The people of ḥadīth and the jurists narrated them from each other (in transmission), and in our view they are true, we do not doubt about them. However, when it is said, 'How does He place His foot?' and 'How does He laugh?', **we say that this is not to be explained (lā yufassar), we have not heard anyone explain this.**"<sup>1376</sup>

<sup>1375</sup> He is the Imām and Shaykh of Islām, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin 'Umar bin Aḥmad bin Mahdī al-Baghdādī al-Ḥāfidh. His ascription comes from *al-Dar al-Quṭn*, a large region in Baghdād. He was born in the year 306H and he sought knowledge from his youth in his own land and sat in the gatherings, despite being young in age. He visited Baṣrah, Kūfah, Wāsiṭ and Shām in pursuit of knowledge. He heard from many great scholars, including Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī, Ibn Sā'id and Aḥmad bin Iṣḥāq bin al-Bahlūl. And from his most prominent students are al-Hākim, Abu Hāmid al-Isfrā'nī, Abd al-Ghaniyy bin Sa'īd al-Ḥāfidh and others. He has numerous works in the field of ḥadīth and its sciences including *al-Sunan*, *Kitāb al-'Ilal*, *al-Mukhtalaf wal-Mu'talaf* and *al-Dū'afā*. He also wrote *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt* and *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*. Refer to *Tārikh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī for his biographical details (12/36).

<sup>1376</sup> *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt* of al-Dārquṭnī (taḥqīq, Dr. 'Alī Nāṣir al-Faqīhī, 1983) pp. 68-69.

And the negation of *tafsīr* (explanation) is whatever is in addition to the ḥadīth itself, no other explanations are given, the āḥādīth are left intact with the meaning they came with.

And al-Wakī bin al-Jarrāh (d. 197H) said:

We submit to these āḥādīth as they have come,<sup>1377</sup> and we do not say "How is this?" and "Why has this come (in the texts)?"<sup>1378</sup>

And Sufyān bin 'Uyainah (d. 197H) said in response to Aḥmad bin Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī, who had asked him about the āḥādīth of the ṣifāt:

They are as they have come, we affirm them, and we narrate them, without asking "How?"<sup>1379</sup>

And Imām al-Zuhrī (d. 124H) said:

Submit to the Sunnah, do not oppose it.<sup>1380</sup>

And al-Marwazī said:

I asked Abū 'Abdullāh [Imām Aḥmad] about the narrations pertaining to the attributes and he said, "We pass them on as they have come."<sup>1381</sup>

The saying of the Salaf, "*pass them on as they have come*" and "*without asking how?*" is clear evidence that they affirmed these texts upon their meanings, for if there were no meanings, and the Salaf were upon tafwīd as is alleged, then there is no need at all for it to be said, "*pass them on as they have come*" and "*without asking how?*" This is because, upon the claim of tafwīd, nothing exists except a collection of letters

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<sup>1377</sup> This clearly establishes the intent of the Salaf, in that they affirm the āḥādīth with the meanings that they have come with and do not challenge or oppose these meanings with questions or with explanations.

<sup>1378</sup> *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt* of al-Dārquṭnī (taḥqīq, Dr. 'Alī Nāṣir al-Faqīhī, 1983) p. 71. And this statement of al-Wakī clearly establishes that the Salaf affirmed the meanings (ma'ānī), in opposition to the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah who were questioning and resentful of what has come in the texts, hence their statement "Why has this come?!"

<sup>1379</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>1380</sup> Ibid, p. 76. The Ahl al-Kalām challenge the Sunnah, opposing, contradicting it, questioning it, and claiming it is tajsīm and tashbīh.

<sup>1381</sup> Reported by Ibn Qudāmah in *Dhamm al-Taw'īl* (pp. 21-22).

that make up words which are meaningless.<sup>1382</sup> And it is not said about anything that is meaningless, "without asking how?" Hence, the meaning of *imrār* (passing them on) means *ithbāt*, and *iqrār* (affirmation, corroboration), and only then can it be said, "without asking how?"

This is what is meant in the sayings of the Scholars, that the āhādīth are taken upon their dhāhir (apparent) meanings, those meanings that are clear and apparent from the language and wording.

Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī<sup>1383</sup> (d. 376H) wrote:

As for what you have asked regarding the Attributes and what has come of them in the Book and the Sunnah, the way of the **Salaf is to affirm them, and to carry them upon their apparent meanings (alā**

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<sup>1382</sup> In such a case, these words which have come in the revealed texts are like foreign words about which nothing is known except that a series of letters have been combined to make a word about which nothing is known. As an example, if you don't speak Russian, and you come across this word, *подниматься*, you don't have any idea as to what it means, and thus it is redundant, irrelevant and unnecessary to say, "without asking how?" However, this is what the later Ash'arites ascribe to the Salaf, that the Salaf made redundant, unnecessary speech in prohibiting the asking of "How?" for words that, allegedly, do not have any meanings and are just collections of letters. It is also for this reason that the Ahl al-Kalām, such as the Ash'ariyyah and Māturīdiyyah are divided as to whether *ta'wīl* is the legitimate way or *tafwīd* is the legitimate way and they have conflicts in this regard. Then, the conclusion that these Jahmites come to in order present a coherent and consistent front for their doctrinal school is that the Salaf, allegedly, practiced generalized *tafwīd* with a bit of *ta'wīl*. But they are faced with other problems as they go further into the ditch, which is that they need to provide an answer as to exactly what is the criterion for making *ta'wīl* of a text, and why are some texts made *ta'wīl* of and others are not, so what are the factors and parameters upon which this is decided, and who decides it. And it is here that their lie against Allāh (ﷻ) is exposed, for they have no sound answer, and what it really comes down to is whether or not a text gives the presumption of *tajsim* and *tashbīh* to the intellect of one of them.

<sup>1383</sup> He is Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm bin Khaṭṭāb al-Bustī, he was affected by the Mutakallimūn in some aspects of 'aqīdah but at the end of his life he recanted and turned to the way of the Salaf. He wrote the book *al-Ghunyah 'an 'ilm al-kalām*. Refer to *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā'* (17-23-28).

**dhāwāhiriḥā**) and to deny [knowledge of] their kaifiyyah (their true reality) and [to deny] tashbīh (resemblance) for them.<sup>1384</sup>

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463H) wrote:

As for what has been reported of such attributes in the Authentic Compilations (al-Sunan al-Siḥāḥ), the way of the Salaf - may Allāh be pleased with them all - **is to affirm them, and to carry them upon their apparent meanings ('alā dhāwāhiriḥā)** and to deny [knowledge of] their kaifiyyah (their true reality) and [to deny] tashbīh (resemblance) for them.<sup>1385</sup>

Imām al-Baghawī (d. 516H) said, after mentioning the texts pertaining to the attributes:

These, and their likes are attributes for Allāh, the Exalted, they revelation has come with them, it is obligatory to have faith in them, **and to pass them upon their apparent [meanings] (imrāruhā 'alā dhāhiriḥā)**, turning away from figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*), and avoiding resemblance (tashbīh), believing that the Creator, the Sublime and Exalted, nothing from His attributes resemble the attributes of the creation, just as His essence does not resemble the essences of the creation.<sup>1386</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728H) said:

From their way (the Salaf) in belief is: Belief in the attributes of Allāh, the Exalted, and His names which He described Himself with and which He named Himself with in His Book and revelation or upon the tongue of His Messenger, without any addition thereto or decrease therein. And to not exceed beyond them, and nor to explain (*tafsīr*) them, and nor to make *ta'wīl* of them with what opposes their apparent meaning,<sup>1387</sup> and nor to resemble them with the attributes of the creation, or the qualities of the originated

<sup>1384</sup> In his book *al-Ghunyaḥ 'an 'ilm al-kalām*, as is cited by al-Dhahabī in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluww* (p. 257), and also in *Kitāb al-Arba'īn Fī al-Ṣiḥāḥ*.

<sup>1385</sup> Reported by al-Dhahabī in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluww*, p. 273. And this is found in a single preserved manuscript in al-Dhāhiriyyah Book House in Damascus, collection no. 16.

<sup>1386</sup> *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* of Imām al-Baghawī (taḥqīq, al-Arnā'ūt, Shāwīsh, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1983) 1/170.

<sup>1387</sup> This is a reference to the saying of the Salaf, *bilā ma'nā* (without an innovated meaning that is not what is clear and apparent from the text with respect to its meaning).

(beings).<sup>1388</sup> Rather, they passed them on as they (the texts) came, and returned the knowledge (of their realities) to the one who stated them, and [return] their meaning to the one who spoke with them.<sup>1389</sup>

What further invalidates this claim is that the phrase "pass them on as they have come" has been used by the Salaf in relation to matters besides Allāh's attributes. In the risālah of Imām Aḥmad, *al-Sunnah*, narrated through al-İstikhṛī, there occurs:

And withholding from [harming] the people of the qiblah, you do not declare any one of them a disbeliever on account of a sin, and you do not expel him from Islām on account of an action<sup>1390</sup> unless there is a ḥadīth in that regard. **In that case, the ḥadīth is reported, just as it has come, and just as it has been related, and you believe it and accept it, and you know that it is just as it has been reported,** such as [the āḥādīth pertaining to] the abandonment of the prayer, drinking intoxicants and what is similar to that.<sup>1391</sup>

And in Uṣūl al-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad (d. 241H) said:

And faith in the intercession of the Prophet (ﷺ), and in a people who will come out of the Fire after they have been burnt and turned to coal, they will be ordered to enter a river by a gate of Paradise, **as has come in the narration** ... and that faith is speech and action, it increases and decreases, as has come in the report ... and if he is killed in that condition whilst he is defending himself and his wealth, I hope for martyrdom for him, as has come in the ḥadīth ... and whoever meets Him after having the prescribed punishment meted out to him for that sin, then that is its expiation, **as has come in the report** from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ... and these āḥādīth that have come, "There are three traits, if they are found in anyone, he is a hypocrite", this is upon *taghlīdh* (severity of warning), **we report them just as they have come and**

<sup>1388</sup> Hence, the saying of the Salaf, *bilā kayf, bilā hadd* and the likes which mean, without asking how and without defining how the attribute is.

<sup>1389</sup> *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (4/2). And returning their meaning to the one who spoke with them, means to affirm that meaning which came from the one who spoke with them and not from the variety of innovated tafsīrs and ta'wīls which come from other than Him, so the meaning is taken from Allāh and His Messenger, and is not returned to the distortions of the distorters.

<sup>1390</sup> Meaning an action that in and of itself does not negate faith and which is minor disbelief.

<sup>1391</sup> Refer to *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* (1/24).

**we do not explain them...** And [likewise] his saying, "Do not become disbelievers after me, [astray], striking the necks of each other." And, "When two Muslims meet with their swords then [both] the killer and the killed are in the Fire." And, "Cursing a Muslim is wickedness and fighting against him is disbelief." And, "Whoever says to his brother: 'Disbeliever', then it returns back to one of them." And, "It is disbelief in Allāh, for the one who denies his kinship, even if it is insignificant [remote]." And what is similar to these āhādīth from what is authentic and has been preserved. For we submit to it, even if their tafsīr is not known, and it is not to be spoken or disputed about, and these āhādīth are not to be explained (*tufassar*) except with the likes of what has come...<sup>1392</sup>

Note here that Imām Aḥmad prohibited tafsīr for these āhādīth which are not in relation to Allāh's attributes and it shows the intent behind the prohibition of the Salaf of tafsīr of the attributes, it means to bring some other meaning and explanation besides the meaning that is apparent in the text itself. And similarly in the 'aqīdah of 'Alī bin al-Madīnī (d. 234H), there occurs:

Then, attestation (*taṣdīq*) in the āhādīth and faith (*īmān*) in them, it is not said, "Why?" and "How?" It is but mere attestation and faith in them ... and the deeds of the servants will be weighed **as has come in the narrations** ... and faith in the Pool (*Ḥawḍ*) ... its vessels are as the number of stars in the sky, **upon what has come in the narration** ... and the removal of a people from the Fire after they had been burned therein, and so they will be ordered to enter a river by a gate of Paradise, **as has come in the narration**, however Allāh wills and as Allāh wills, it is but attestation and faith therein ... and faith that there is written between the two eyes of the [False] Messiah, the Dajjāl, the [word] *kāfir*, **on account of the āhādīth that have come regarding it** ... And [likewise] his saying, "Do not become disbelievers after me, [astray], striking the necks of each other." And, "When two Muslims meet with their swords then [both] the killer and the killed are in the Fire." And, "Cursing a Muslim is wickedness and fighting against him is disbelief." And, "Whoever says to his brother: 'Disbeliever', then it returns back to one of them." And, "It is disbelief in Allāh, for the one who denies his kinship, even if it is insignificant [remote]" ... **we do not explain (*lā nufassiru*) these āhādīth except upon what they have come with,**<sup>1393</sup> and we do not reject them.<sup>1394</sup>

<sup>1392</sup> Refer to al-Lālikā'īs *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (1/156-164).

<sup>1393</sup> This means that no explanation is given to the ḥadīth except the one that it has come with.

<sup>1394</sup> Refer to al-Lālikā'īs *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (1/165-171).



So the Salaf used the phrases, "as has come in the report, narration", "as it has come" and what is similar to them, indicating that the meaning is left intact, it is not further explained, nor added to, nor distorted, nor rejected and nor is it asked "How?" They used this phrase for the texts of the Attributes just as they used it for texts pertaining to other matters of creed, and all of this collectively shows their true and real intention behind these statements. It was not to make tafwīd as is spuriously claimed by the Ahl al-Kalām.

In light of the above, the meaning of the various other statements of the Salaf also become clear, when they showed rejection against the Jahmiyyah for their specification of *ma'nā* (meaning) and *tafsīr* (explanation) in addition to what came in the revealed texts. Al-Lālikā'ī reports from Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189H), the associate of Abū Ḥanīfah, that he said:

Verily, these āhādīth have been reported by the trustworthy ones, and we report them [too], we believe in them and we do not explain them (*lā nufassiruhā*).<sup>1395</sup>

And also from Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī regarding these texts:

All of the jurists from the East to the West are unanimously agreed in having faith in the Qur'ān and the Āhādīth which have come through the trustworthy narrators from the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding the description (*ṣifah*) of the Lord (ﷻ) without change (*taghyīr*), and nor description (*waṣf*) and nor resemblance (*tashbīh*). So whoever explained (*fassara*) anything from that today, then he has departed from that which the Prophet (ﷺ) was upon and he has separated from the Jamā'ah, for they did not describe (*lam yaṣifū*) and explain (*lam yufassirū*), however they gave verdicts upon what is in the Book and the Sunnah, then they remained silent.<sup>1396</sup> So

<sup>1395</sup> Refer to al-Lālikā'ī's *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (2/433).

<sup>1396</sup> Note how al-Shaybānī first states that the Salaf affirmed the *ṣifah* (attribute) of the Lord, then denies that they made *taghyīr* (change), or added a description (*waṣf*) from themselves [that was not from revelation], and nor did they make *tashbīh* (resemblance) for it. Then later he says, the Salaf did not describe and nor explain (*waṣf*, *tafsīr*). So this is clearly understood, and it is best presented with an example. Allāh affirms the attribute of face, and it is an attribute of His essence. The Salaf never changed this attribute, nor add any additional descriptions for it except what itself has come in the Book and the

whoever spoke with the saying of Jahm, then he has separated from the Jamā'ah because he described Him with the description of a non-entity.<sup>1397</sup>

This statement from al-Shaybānī is crucial to understanding what the Salaf meant by rejecting any *ṣifah* (description), and *tafsīr* (explanation) and *ma'nā* (meaning) for the texts of the attributes. They were referring to the Jahmiyyah who were bringing their own descriptions, meanings and explanations, aside from what was in the āhādīth, and the Imāms of the Salaf rejected this from them.<sup>1398</sup>

And al-Ḥāfidh al-Humaydī (d. 220H), one of the shaykhs of al-Bukhārī wrote in his treatise, *Uṣūl al-Sunnah*, in the course of mentioning the

Sunnah, such that it is full of majesty and honour (dhul-jalāl wal-ikrām), and that His face has radiance (subuhāt) and whatever else has come in the Sunnah. So to make any *wasf* and *tafsīr* besides this is not from the way of the Salaf, and this is the intent behind all of these statements that have come from the Salaf.

<sup>1397</sup> Refer to al-Lālikā'īs *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (2/432-433). This report invalidates and exposes the academic and historical fraud of today's Jahmite machinery in their claim that the statements of the Salaf that have come to negate *tafsīr*, *ma'nā* and *ṣifah*, prove that the Salaf were upon tafwīd. This is a falsification of history, because these statements were made in the second and early third centuries by the Imāms of the Sunnah against the Jahmite negators who were inventing their own ta'wīls and tafsirs in order to deny the apparent meanings because they considered them to be tajsīm and tashbīh. So the Salaf prohibited ta'wīl and tafsīr and ordered that the texts be left upon the meanings that they came with and that they be faithfully transmitted as they have come, without addition, decrease, ta'wīl or tafsīr.

<sup>1398</sup> The great Imām, 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd al-Dārimī (d. 280H) wrote a work called *al-Radd 'alā Bishr al-Marīsī*, which was intended as a refutation of an individual who was spreading the ta'wīls of Bishr al-Marīsī al-Jahmī (d. 218H) in the second half of the third century. Al-Dārimī mentions that this person compiled and listed thirty odd attributes mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah, arranging them in order and proceeding to make ta'wīl of them, letter by letter, using the ta'wīls of Bishr al-Marīsī. From the attributes he listed were *wajh* (face), *sam'* (hearing), *baṣr* (seeing), *ghaḍab* (anger), *riḍā* (pleasure), *ḥubb* (love), *bughḍ* and *kurh* (hatred, dislike), *ḍahak* (laughter), *'ajab* (amazement), *irādah* (wish), *mashī'ah* (will) amongst others. And these explanations (tafsīr, ta'wīl) are the ones intended in these statements of the Salaf, not what the actual texts themselves came with of meanings.

attribute of hand (*al-yad*), and Allāh's ascent over the Throne (*al-istiwā'*), and seeing Allāh in the Hereafter (*al-ru'yah*):

And affirmation of the *ru'yah* after death, and whatever the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth have expressed, such as "**And the Jews say the hand of Allāh is tied up, be their hands tied!**" (5:64), and like [His saying], "**And the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand**" (39:67) and whatever is similar to that from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. We do not add to it, nor do we explain it (*lā nufassiruhū*). We pause at where the Qur'ān and Sunnah paused, and we say, "**The Most Merciful ascended over the Throne**" (20:5), and whoever claims other than this is a negator, Jahmite.<sup>1399</sup>

Again, the negation of *tafsīr* here, relates to what is said pertaining to meanings that are not established in the Book and the Sunnah. Similar to this is what has been related from Imām al-Shāfi'ī:

Rabī bin Sulaymān said: I asked al-Shāfi'ī - رحمه الله - about the attributes of Allāh and he said: It is ḥarām for the intellects to make likeness for Allāh, the Exalted, and [ḥarām] upon the imaginations to define Him (تحدده), and [ḥarām] upon the opinions to be certain, and [ḥarām] upon the souls to reflect, and [ḥarām] upon the hearts to ponder deeply, and [ḥarām] upon the thoughts to [be able to] comprehend, and [ḥarām] upon the intellects to understand, except what Allāh has described Himself with, or upon the tongue of His Messenger (ﷺ).<sup>1400</sup>

A-Shāfi'ī has corroborated here the way of the Salaf which is to affirm what Allāh or His Messenger affirmed for Him in the revealed texts and the negation of *taḥdīd*, *tafsīr*, *ma'nā*, *kayf* for which nothing has come in the revealed texts, and which the intellects, souls, thoughts and imaginations may wrongly presume about Allāh. This is why he made an exception at the end for whatever Allāh and His Messenger described Him with, for any *ma'nā* (meaning), *tafsīr* (explanation) and the likes which has not come from Allāh and His Messenger, then it is unlawful to speak with it.

And Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām (d. 224H) was asked about the *āḥādīth* pertaining to Allāh's laughter, the *Kursī* being the place of the

<sup>1399</sup> Refer to *Sharh Uṣūl al-Sunnah lil-Ḥāfiḍh al-Ḥumaydī* of 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Bukhārī (Dār al-Istiqāmah, 1st edition, 2008), p. 16.

<sup>1400</sup> Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (4/6).

two feet, and Allāh placing His foot into the Hellfire, and what is similar to these āhādīth:

These āhādīth in our view are truth, the trustworthy have narrated them, one from another. Except that when we are asked about their explanation (*tafsīr*), we say, "We have not reached anyone who explained (*yufassir*) anything from them, and we do not explain (*nufassir*) anything from them, we believe in them and we remain silent."<sup>1401</sup>

Hence, the *tafsīr* which is negated it is whatever is additional to the meaning of detail and definition, or what distorts and changes the meaning that is apparent from the texts. And al-Wakī bin al-Jarrāh (d. 197H) was asked about the same āhādīth and he replied:

We reached Ismā'īl bin Abī Khālid, Sufyān and Mas'ar all narrating these āhādīth, and they did not explain (*yufassarūna*) [them] with anything.<sup>1402</sup>

By prohibiting *tafsīr* the Salaf meant to refute the Jahmiyyah who brought their own fabricated *tafsīr* which they called *ta'wīl*, and similarly, those from the people of *tamthīl* who tried to liken the attributes of Allāh to those of the creation and began to explain what is above and beyond what the text came with.

All of the above indicates the error of the later Ash'arites such as al-Juwaynī (d. 478H) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) who tried to claim that the way of the Salaf was *tafwīd*. Some of them tried to argue for this approach by using these statements of the Salaf whose context is very clear, they were against the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah. The real reason why they made this allegation of *tafwīd* was because the approach of *ta'wīl* was not satisfactory to them,<sup>1403</sup> they were not at ease in their souls that the *ta'wīls* they were holding on to were correct or not, because this approach involved speaking about Allāh and His Book with speculation and uncertainty. And in order to ensure the texts did not clash with the proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām*, they brought a new saying,

<sup>1401</sup> Refer to al-Lālikā'īs *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Ī'tiqād* (3/526).

<sup>1402</sup> In *Yahyā bin Ma'īn wa Kitābihī al-Tārīkh* (taḥqīq, Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Yūsuf, Jāmi'ah Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz, 1979).

<sup>1403</sup> In their attempts to defend the rational proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām* for whose sake they were making these *ta'wīls* in the first place.

claiming that the way of the Salaf was *tafwīd*. However, in the approach of *tafwīd* there is greater evil. Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

As for *tafwīd*, then it is known that Allāh ordered us to reflect upon the Qur'ān, and encouraged us to grasp and understand it. How can it then be possible, alongside this, that what is [actually] desired from us is to turn away from understanding it and knowing it ... Upon the saying of those [Mutakallimūn], the Prophets and Messengers did not know the meanings of what Allāh revealed to them of such texts, and nor did the Angels, or the very first [Believers]. In that case, the Prophets did not know the meaning of whatever Allāh described Himself with in the Qur'ān or much of what He described Himself with [in the revealed Books], and they just uttered speech whose meaning they did not understand ... And it is known that this is a revilment upon the Qur'ān and upon the Prophets. If Allāh revealed the Qur'ān and informed that it is guidance and clarification for the humanity, and He ordered the Messenger (ﷺ) to convey it, with a manifest conveyance ... and then no one knows its meaning, it is not understood, nor reflected upon, the Messenger (ﷺ) not having explained what has been revealed to the people from their Lord, and nor having conveyed with a manifest conveyance. Hence, every heretic and innovator is able to say [in this situation] that the truth in this very matter is whatever I have come to know through my intellect, and there is nothing in the [revealed] texts that contradicts [what I have come to know]. This is because those texts are ambiguous, difficult, no one knows their meanings at all, and that whose meaning is not known by anyone cannot be used as evidence. Thus, this type of speech constitutes a barrier to the guidance and clarification that came from the Prophets, and the opening of the door for whoever wishes to oppose [the Prophets] and say that guidance and clarification is found in our way, not in the way of the Prophets, because we know what we are saying and we explain it with rational evidences, but the Prophets, they did not know what they were saying, let alone explained what they intended. From all of this it becomes clear that the saying of the people of *tafwīd* who claim that they are following the Sunnah and the Salaf is from the most evil of the sayings of Ahl al-Bid'ah.<sup>1404</sup>

It is established clearly from the above that the Salaf affirmed the texts regarding the attributes upon their apparent meanings, condemned the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah for bringing their own tafsirs, which are their innovated ta'wīls, and ordered that the texts be passed on,

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<sup>1404</sup> *Dar' al-Ṭa'arūḍ al-'Aql wal-Naql* (/204-205).

exactly as they have come, intact in wording and meaning, without addition, deletion, distortion or explanation. Whoever claimed other than this, then he is either ignorant or merely pretending to be ignorant, a follower of desires and a liar upon the entirety of the Salaf.

It is for this reason, that the Imāms of the Salaf said that these texts are to be passed on without *kayf*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadd*, *ṣifah* and *ma'nā*. As for the use of the term *ḥadd*, then it has already been discussed in the relevant section in this book, and it is a topic in which the contemporary Jahmiyyah are much confused, in they do not distinguish between *ḥadd* which means the definition of a thing in words,<sup>1405</sup> and *ḥadd* which means that by which one entity is distinguished from another in its existent reality (*qadr*) and description (*ṣifah*).<sup>1406</sup> Consider the saying of Ḥanbal bin Ishāq:

I asked Abū 'Abd Allāh about the āḥādīth which report that Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, descends to the lowest heaven, and that Allāh will be seen, and that Allāh will place His foot [in the Hellfire] and what is similar to these āḥādīth, so Abū 'Abd Allāh said:

We believe in them, we affirm them, there is no *kayf*, and no *ma'nā*, and we do not reject anything from them. And we know that whatever has come from the Messenger is the truth if it has come with authentic chains of narration. And we do not reject the saying of Allāh, and Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, is not described with more than what He has described Himself, without *ḥadd* and *ghāyah*.

There is none like Him in His essence, just as He described Himself, and He, the Blessed and Exalted, mentioned the attribute for Himself, and so He defined the attribute for Himself (فحد لنفسه الصفة) which nothing resembles. Hence, we worship Allāh [who has these] attributes, they are not defined (محدودة) or known except through

<sup>1405</sup> And the definition (*ḥadd*) of the reality of something can only be known through directly observing it, or through a truthful report regarding it, and both of these are denied for Allāh and His attributes, except what Allāh Himself has revealed in the revelation. Hence, to make *taḥdīd* (define the reality in words) is impossible and denied for Allāh's attributes.

<sup>1406</sup> Not affirming *ḥadd* with this meaning for Allāh and for the rest of His creation is tantamount to denying Allāh's existence altogether, or tantamount to the doctrine of unity of existence, where is no distinction between the Creator and the created.

what He described Himself with.<sup>1407</sup> Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted said, "**And He is the all-Hearing, all-Seeing**" (42:10), without ḥadd (definition) or taqdīr (estimation, consideration), and those who describe are not able to reach description (of Him) [except with what He Himself has described]... We believe in all of the Qur'ān, that which is definitive (muḥkam) from it and that which is ambiguous (mutashābih), and we do not cease (affirming) an attribute from His attributes due to any repugnance that is displayed ... all of this shows that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter, and making taḥdīd (defining in words) in this matter is an innovation. It is a matter of making taslīm (submission) to Allāh with His command, without any [further] description (صفة) or definition (حد), except with what Allāh describe Himself with. He is hearing, seeing, He never ceased to be one who speaks, knowing, forgiving, knower of the unseen and seen, knower of all that is hidden. These attributes that He has described Himself with are not to be rejected or repelled, and He is upon the Throne without ḥadd (definition), just as the Exalted said, "**Then He ascended over the Throne**" (7:54), however He willed, the will (mashī'ah) belongs to Him, the Mighty and Majestic, and all ability lies with Him, there is no likeness unto Him, and He is the creator of everything, and He is just as He described Himself, hearing, seeing, without ḥadd (definition) or taqdīr (estimation, consideration). And He, the Exalted said, quoting the saying of Ibrāhīm to his father, "**Why do you worship that which does not hear nor see?**" (19:42). So it is established that Allāh is hearing, seeing. Thus, His attributes are from Him, we do not go beyond the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, and the narration pertaining to Allāh's laughter, we do not know how that is unless [it comes through an] affirmation (taṣdīq) of the Messenger and affirmation (tathbīt) of the Qur'ān, hence, those who describe cannot describe it, and nor can anyone define it, exalted is Allāh from what the Jahmiyyah and Mushabbihah say. I said to him: The Mushabbihah, what do they say? He said: Whoever says seeing like my seeing, hand like my hand - [and Ḥanbal said in another place] - foot like my foot, then he has likened Allāh to His creation, and this one has defined it (يحدده), and this is evil speech, and this has now been defined (محدود), and I do not like speech in this matter. 'Abd Allāh said, "They stripped the Qur'ān [of its mention of attributes for Allāh]." And the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He will place His foot [in Hellfire]", we believe in it and we do not define it

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<sup>1407</sup> So this makes the meaning clear, any ḥadd (definition) or taḥdīd (giving a definition) for Allāh and His attributes besides what He himself has defined of the knowledge He revealed in the Book and the Sunnah, is impermissible.

(نجده), and nor do we reject [this] from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), rather we believe in it. Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted said, "**And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he prohibits you from, then withhold from it**" (59:7). And Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, has ordered us to take whatever he came with, and to withhold from what he prohibited, and His names and attributes are uncreated, and we seek refuge in Allāh from slips and doubts, indeed He is powerful over all things.<sup>1408</sup>

From this quote it is very apparent that the meaning of *ḥadd* and *taḥdīd* that is spoken of by the Salaf is to give an additional explanation, description, meaning, or detail above and beyond what has come in the revealed texts. And the negation of all of these terms, *kayf*, *ḥadd*, *ma'nā*, *tafsīr* all carry the same meaning in this regard. The Salaf intended refutation of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah through negation of the *ma'nā* and *tafsīr*, since they were innovating new meanings and distorting the texts and saying "*hand means power, and seeing means knowledge, and istiwā' means conquering*", and they intended refutation of the Mushabbihah through the negation of *kayf* and *ḥadd*, since they were saying "*seeing like my seeing, and hand like my hand*", thereby affirming a *kayf* and a *ḥadd*.

As for those who came from the later Ash'arites who took the way of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in the subjects of 'uluww, *istiwā'* and the *ṣifāt khabariyyah*, they misappropriated these statements of the Salaf in order to legitimize their innovated *tafwīd*. They used the statements of the Salaf in negating *kayf*, *ḥadd*, *tafsīr* and *ma'nā* - the intent of which has been made clear in what has preceded - in order to support their own innovation, which is making *ḥudūth al-ajsām* to be the foundation of their speech regarding Allāh through which the presumption of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* for all the texts pertaining to the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* is necessitated, then using *ta'wīl* or *tafwīd* as methodological approaches to deal with the *problematic* texts that give the presumption of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* in their misguided opinion.

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<sup>1408</sup> Refer to *al-Tis'īniyyah* of Ibn Taymiyyah (taḥqīq, Muḥammad al-'Ajlān, Maktabah al-Ma'ārif, 1999) pp. 317-321.