

## Sa'īd Foudah's Attempted Rebuttal of Ibn Rushd

Whilst the Philosophers such as Ibn Rushd were certainly more misguided than the Mutakallimūn, they often displayed coherence and sound reason that was absent from the polemics of the Ash'arites. Ibn Rushd is unique in that he opposed the rest of the Philosophers and all of the Mutakallimūn in their rejection of al-'Uluww for Allāh and he outlined a powerful rebuttal of them. Sa'īd Foudah, who is amongst the flagbearers of the dīn of the Jahmiyyah in the contemporary era, has made an attempted rebuttal of the argument of Ibn Rushd and we will address it here because it provides a perfect example of the reality of what the Mutakallimūn are upon and their great misguidance, away from what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with.

First, we need to outline some facts. The position of Ibn Rushd is equivalent to the position of the early Kullābī Ash'arīs, such as Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānisī, al-Ash'arī, Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī. They all held that Allāh is above the Throne and is not a jism, and this has been documented from them earlier. They also refuted the Karrāmiyyah who claimed, alongside their belief that Allāh is above the Throne, that He is a body (jism), in touch, contact (mumāss) with the Throne. The Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah therefore, said, "*Allāh is above the Throne, without contact, touch.*"

When Sa'īd Foudah saw this view being presented through the speech of Ibn Rushd, he took it as an opportunity to attack this view in the person of Ibn Rushd, whilst keeping his audience ignorant of the doctrine of the Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah, and this is from his intellectual dishonesty. Further, Sa'īd Foudah's disputant is not Ibn Rushd, who happened to oppose the rest of the Philosophers and Mutakallimīn by affirming Allāh is above His creation. Rather, Foudah's disputants are all the revealed Books, all of the sent Messengers, the four rightly-guided caliphs, the ten promised Paradise, the entirety of the Muhajirīn and the Ansār, the entirety of the Companions, then the Tābī'īn entering into the second century hijrah. Then the next two to three generations of the Imāms of the religion, entering into the third century hijrah, and then, the Imāms of the religion until we reach 300H, and then the early Kullābī Ash'arīs. These are the disputants of Sa'īd Foudah and his philosophical ramblings. So isolating Ibn Rushd and proclaiming a refutation of him upon philosophical and rational necessities is from the conniving of this dishonest contemporary Jahmite.

Second, before we read the counterargument of Foudah we need to see exactly where the rationalities and necessities he uses are derived from. They come from none but Aristotle bin Nicomachus (d. 322BC) himself, and Aristotelian Metaphysics.<sup>1468</sup> In his work title *Physics, Book 4, Part 4*, Aristotle discusses what is place (*makān*):

**What then after all is place [*makān*]?** The answer to this question may be elucidated as follows. Let us take for granted about it the various characteristics which are supposed correctly to belong to it essentially. We assume then: (1) Place [*makān*] is what contains that of which it is the place [*makān*]. (2) Place [*makān*] is no part of the thing. (3) The immediate place [*makān*] of a thing is neither less nor greater than the thing. (4) Place [*makān*] can be left behind by the thing and is separable. In addition: (5) All place [*makān*] admits of the distinction of up and down, and each of the bodies [*ajsaam*] is naturally carried to its appropriate place [*makān*] and rests there, and this makes the place [*makān*] either up or down.

Having laid these foundations, we must complete the theory. We ought to try to make our investigation such as will render an account of place [*makān*], and will not only solve the difficulties connected with it, but will also show that the attributes supposed to belong to it do really belong to it, and further will make clear the cause of the trouble and of the difficulties about it. Such is the most satisfactory kind of exposition... We say that a thing is in the world, in the sense of in place, because it is in the air, and the air is in the

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<sup>1468</sup> Whilst the Mutakallimūn intended to refute the Aristotelian beliefs that the universe is eternal, that matter was not created and nor will it perish, that there is no such thing as resurrection, and that Prophethood is something that can be acquired through skill, training and experience, they nevertheless agreed upon the platform of debate of the Philosophers by using their very language, terminology, classification and rationalities. They made it permissible to speak about Allāh upon the language and terminology that the atheist Philosophers devised for characterizing the observable universe. And what the Philosophers imposed of the rationalities and necessities arising from such language and terminology in their speech regarding the universe, the Mutakallimīn did the same in their speech regarding Allāh, the Exalted. This is from the greatest of their misguidance. When they made this permissible, they were forced to concur with the Philosophers in many issues. From them is the denial of His names, attributes and actions, or something from them; from them is to consider the proof of reason to be decisive and definitive over the revealed texts; from them is to reject Allāh's 'uluww; amongst other matters.

world; and when we say it is in the air, we do not mean it is in every part of the air, but that it is in the air because of the outer surface of the air which surrounds it... When what surrounds, then, is not separate from the thing, but is in continuity with it, the thing is said to be in what surrounds it, not in the sense of in place, but as a part in a whole. **But when the thing is separate and in contact, it is immediately 'in' the inner surface of the surrounding body, and this surface is neither a part of what is in it nor yet greater than its extension, but equal to it; for the extremities of things which touch are coincident...**

It will now be plain from these considerations what place [*makān*] is. There are just four things of which place [*makān*] must be one - the shape, or the matter, or some sort of extension between the bounding surfaces of the containing body [*jism*], or this boundary itself if it contains no extension over and above the bulk of the body [*jism*] which comes to be in it... Well, then, if place is none of the three - neither the form nor the matter nor an extension which is always there, different from, and over and above, the extension of the thing which is displaced - **place [*makān*] necessarily is the one of the four which is left, namely, the boundary of the containing body at which it is in contact with the contained body...** For this reason, too, place [*makān*] is thought to be a kind of surface, and as it were a vessel, i.e. a container of the thing. **Further, place [*makān*] is coincident with the thing, for boundaries are coincident with the bounded...**

According to Aristotle, place (*makān*) necessitates *jismiyyah* which is something being a body (*jism*). Thus, something with place is by definition a body, since place is the boundary of the body it contains. Whilst the Philosophers and Mutakallimūn simply differ on matters of definition, they both operate on the premise that this type of language and terminology that is applied to the universe, can also be applied to Allāh, the Exalted, and that all rationalities and necessities arising from it, are equivalent between the Creator and the created.

Third, Foudah's argument against Ibn Rushd is along the lines that since you are a Philosopher, holding on to the metaphysics of Aristotle, then affirmation of direction automatically necessitates that Allāh is a *jism* (body), because according to the Philosophers, *jihah* (direction) necessitates *makān* (place), which necessitates *jismiyyah*. However, Ibn Rushd's position is that these rationalities and necessities, even though they apply to what is within the universe, cannot be applied to Allāh. In holding this view, Ibn Rushd is to the

Philosophers as the early Kullābī Ash'arīs are to the rest of the Mutakallimūn in this particular matter.<sup>1469</sup>

Fourth, in what is to follow of the speech of Sa'īd Foudah, it will become clear that he is but a student of al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān (ex. 128H) and his miserable, perishing wife. Ibn Abī Hātim mentions with his isnād to 'Abd al-Malik al-Aṣma'ī (d. 215H):

The wife of Jahm came and a man said in her presence, "Allāh is above His Throne", so she said, "One *mahdūd* (limited, bound entity) upon another *mahdūd*." Al-Asma'ī said, "She is a disbeliever by this statement (of hers)".<sup>1470</sup>

With these matters in mind, we can now comment on Foudah's words. He said, in what was translated and distributed by his followers:<sup>1471</sup>

This is a very weakly-grounded argument,<sup>1472</sup> because he claimed that direction [jiha] does not necessitate place, and that place does not necessitate corporeality—and this is false.<sup>1473</sup> The inherent link between direction and place is clarified by the theologians' definition of place, for they say that a *ḥayyiz* (boundary) is a place and that a place is a conceptual void (*fārāgh*) occupied by an extended substance.<sup>1474</sup> As for direction, it is the relative connection of "where" between two substances or two limited/bounded things; therefore it is an ascription. Thus it is not possible to imagine a thing in a direction that is not

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<sup>1469</sup> Meaning, that the early Kullābī Ash'arīs held a position which the later Ash'arīs considered impossible and a contradiction. They held that Allāh is above the heaven, above His Throne, and not a body (*jism*). And Ibn Rushd held an equivalent view amongst the Philosophers.

<sup>1470</sup> *Ijtimā' Juyūosh al-Islāmiyyah* of Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 225, and also in *Mukhtasar al-Uluww*, p. 170. And she meant that affirming that Allāh is above, makes Him a body amongst the bodies (*ajsām*).

<sup>1471</sup> From his book *al-Kāshif al-Ṣaghīr*.

<sup>1472</sup> Referring to the argument of Ibn Rushd as has preceded.

<sup>1473</sup> This is based upon the *dīn* of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah and Philosophers in general that it is permissible to abandon the Book of Allāh (﷿), and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and to speak about Allāh (ﷻ) with such rationalities and necessities that are founded upon the language and terminology of Greek, pagan, idol-worshipping disbelievers.

<sup>1474</sup> This is because the Mutakallimūn followed the language and terminology of the Greek, pagan, idol-worshipping disbelievers, and accepted it as the platform for debate, they had to speak with the same rationalities and necessities it required in relation to belief in Allāh and His attributes.

bounded/limited.<sup>1475</sup> This view is correct even according to the philosophers—as we explained earlier.

If we say that Allāh is encompassed by directions<sup>1476</sup> it will necessitate immediately that He is limited. Ibn Rushd neglected to mention this inherent link between direction and limitation, for had he mentioned it—due to its clarity—his own view would have been invalidated and his words would have been demolished.<sup>1477</sup> So anyone who says that Allāh, the Exalted, is in a direction is forced by necessary implication to state that He is limited.<sup>1478</sup> But Ibn

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<sup>1475</sup> Thus, Jahmites like Foudah make it permissible for it to be said that if within the universe a thing is said to be in a direction, it is not possible to imagine except that it is a body, that the same must also be true of Allāh, the Exalted. Thus, they made tashbīh between Allāh and His creation in that both the universe and Allāh are subject to the rules, principles and necessities derived from the language and terminology of Greek, pagan, idol and star-worshipping disbelievers. Then at the same time, they claim they are the flagbearers of tanzīh.

<sup>1476</sup> There is no one who has said this in the course of this debate, neither Ibn Rushd, nor the early Kullābī Ash'arīs, nor Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah. Rather, they are agreed that Allāh is not encompassed or contained by the six directions, al-Ṭaḥāwī has stated this clearly. However, what Foudah wants to say is that ascribing direction to Allāh, saying He is above His Throne, is tantamount to saying Allāh is *maḥdūd*, and in this, he has taken the saying of al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān and his disbelieving wife. But take note of his dishonesty in presenting the view of Ibn Rushd which is that of Ahl al-Sunnah in this particular matter. He states, "If we say that Allāh is encompassed by directions" when no one has said that, but this is just a way to fool the ignorant and dumb-witted from his audience.

<sup>1477</sup> Ibn Rushd does not consider that such a rationality can be applied to Allāh, for it would necessitate his non-existence. Since Allāh must exist, outside of the mind and outside of the creation, Ibn Rushd's view is the equivalent to that of the early Kullābī Ash'arīs, which is that He is above His creation and not a *jism* (body). Further, this objection of Foudah is equally applicable to the early Kullābī Ash'arīs, however, it is better to refute Ibn Rushd for the sake of doctrinal bigotry and school camaraderie, than it is to point out what one believes to be a contradiction in the view of the early Kullābī Ash'arīs.

<sup>1478</sup> Meaning to say: "Based upon the language and terminology of the Greek, pagan, idol-worshipping disbelievers, and the necessities arising from that - which we (the Mutakallimūn) have made admissible in our speech about Allāh, speaking with the language of Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) necessitates that Allāh is *maḥdūd* (bound, limited). And thus, our language (that of the Mutakallimūn) is *aḥkam* (more precise) and *a'lam* (more erudite) and *aslam* (more sound and safe) than that of Allāh and His Messenger, because the truth is in the language and rationalities of the Greek, pagan, idol-worshipping

Rushd did not have the audacity to claim that Allāh, the Exalted, is limited.<sup>1479</sup> On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyya grasped the inherent link between direction and limit [ḥadd], and so admitting to the implication of affirming a limit if a direction is affirmed, he affirmed limit and direction...<sup>1480</sup>

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disbelievers, which we have employed, not in the language of Allāh and His Messenger. To us (the Mutakallimūn), if it can be said about created things that if they are in direction (jihah), they must be in place (makān) and hence they must be bodies (ajsām), then the same can be said about Allāh, for He, in these rationalities and necessities, resembles His creation, what can be said of them, can be said of Him." This is the reality of what Foudah is saying, and it is he and his likes who are the Mushabbihah in truth, because in the very foundation of their speech about Allāh, they are operating upon the principle that the rules and necessities applying to created bodies (ajsām) also apply to Allāh. As for Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah, the followers of the revealed Books and the sent Messengers, then they believe that Allāh is unlike His creation, and thus if it is said about Allāh, that He is above, or that He hears and sees, or that He has a face and hand, then since the rules, necessities and rationalities pertaining to created things do not apply to Him, there is absolutely no caution in affirming these affairs for Allāh, since there is no tamthīl and no tashbīh in anything Allāh has ascribed to Himself. This has been stated by the Imāms of the religion such as Ishaq bin Rāhūyah (d. 238H), Nu'aym bin Ḥammād (d. 228H) and Imām al-Tirmidhī (d. 274H) amongst others.

<sup>1479</sup> This is because Ibn Rushd, just like the Kullābī Ash'arīs, did not consider this necessity to be admissible for Allāh in the first place, and thus it is from intellectual and academic fraud to impose upon your disputant the very necessity he is denying and rendering inadmissible, since his whole argument is that such a necessity is not applicable to Allāh because there is nothing beyond the universe that would constitute what the Philosophers and Mutakallimūn consider to be place (makān) in the first place.

<sup>1480</sup> This is a misrepresentation of Ibn Taymiyyah's speech regarding this matter. Ibn Taymiyyah discussed the statements of Ibn al-Mubārak, Ishaq bin Rāhūyah and Imām Aḥmad in their affirmation of a ḥadd between Allāh and His creation, in refutation of the Jahmiyyah who said He was in all places. And Ibn Taymiyyah defines ḥadd as that which distinguishes between two things in terms of existent reality (qadr) and description (ṣifah), and since Allāh has an existent reality and attributes that are unique to Him, and the creation has its own existent reality and attributes, then Allāh is separate and distinct from His creation. From this, ḥadd is not an attribute that is said of Allāh, like hearing, seeing, face, and the likes, rather it is simply that which distinguishes one entity from another in its existent reality and attributes. Refer to the section dealing with the affirmation and negation of *al-ḥadd* in the speech of the Salaf.

...As for Ibn Rushd, he avoided mentioning a boundary for Allāh, the Exalted, and he fled from its consequences, sufficing with the affirmation of direction alone; but this is a mere fallacy.<sup>1481</sup> His intent behind the affirmation of direction for Allāh, the Exalted, is to merely oppose and object to his adversaries among the Ash'arīs,<sup>1482</sup> that he may pave the way for bringing the philosophical thought of Aristotle into Islamic thought.<sup>1483</sup>

Pay attention to the last sentence of al-Foudah regarding the philosophical thought of Aristotle, and then note what he says next, which reveals either his ignorance, or his crippled, defunct intellect, or his hypocrisy. He continued:

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<sup>1481</sup> Meaning, that what is in the Book of Allāh, and in the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) that Allāh is above His creation, above His Throne, and not like any of His creation at the same time is a fallacy. And what the Companions believed and transmitted to the Tābī'īn, and what was subsequently transmitted to the Ummah in the first three centuries, right until al-Ash'arī (d. 324H) came along and following Ibn Kullāb, also held that Allāh is above His Throne, but without being a jism (body), and likewise his direct students, until the likes of Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī (d. 380H) and al-Bāqillānī (d. 403H) all of them are upon a fallacy of claiming Allāh is above the Throne and at the same time unlike all created bodies. And the only ones who knew the truth were the Jahmiyyah and Philosophers like Ibn Sīnā who said Allāh his neither within the universe nor outside of it, neither above it, nor below it - basing all of that upon the language and terminology of Greek and Sabean pagan, idol and star-worshipping disbelievers.

<sup>1482</sup> Sa'īd Foudah is an intellectually feeble and academically dishonest lying ignoramus. For Ibn Rushd did not oppose the true Kullābī Ash'arīs, who can be said to represent the original and true post-Mu'tazilī Ash'ariyyah. Yes, he opposed the Ash'arites who adopted the saying of the Philosophers and Jahmites, this is certainly true.

<sup>1483</sup> It is dishonesty for Sa'īd Foudah to use this type of intellectual terrorism on his audience because Ibn Rushd, even if we accept that he was upon the views of the Greek Philosophers, never used the issue of al-'Uluww to bring the philosophical thought of Aristotle into "Islamic thought", as if Islam has "thought" to begin with, rather Islām is revelation and not "thought." Ibn Rushd opposed all the other Philosophers and opposed the necessities of that Greek philosophical thought which requires that if something is said to be in a direction, it must be a body (jism), since 'ayn (where) and wad' (position) and idāfah (relation) are three of Aristotle's categories that pertain to bodies. So Ibn Rushd opposed the Philosophers in this matter and agreed with Ahl al-Sunnah and the Kullābī Ash'arīs. But this is from the conniving of this deluded intellectually crippled Jahmite.

But when he admitted and accepted direction, he was obliged - according the views of all, including the philosophers - to affirm a limit for Allāh, the Exalted, in every direction.<sup>1484</sup> And to affirm a direction for Allāh, the Exalted, and to affirm a limit from all directions implies the affirmation of a position [waḍa']—that is, a position in relation to other bounded things.<sup>1485</sup> This implication is obvious and neither Ibn Rushd nor any other can escape it.<sup>1486</sup> So after all this, would it be possible for him to say that the affirmation of a direction for Allāh, the Exalted, does not imply

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<sup>1484</sup> In other words, al-Foudah wants Ibn Rushd to stick to the Greek philosophical thought and that of the Mutakallimīn in this matter, which Ibn Rushd has opposed because he does not believe that it is applicable to Allāh in this particular matter. And then bizarrely, al-Foudah claims that it is Ibn Rushd who wants to bring the thought of Aristotle into Islamic thought. So it is dishonesty to try and use this particular issue to attack Ibn Rushd for his Greek philosophy. Rather, Ibn Rushd should be commended for opposing Greek Sabean philosophy and agreeing with Ahl al-Sunnah and Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānisī, al-Ash'arī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī on this matter. However, al-Foudah is with those Greek Sabean philosophers in this matter in reality. So his angle is really a child-like scream, "Why are you opposing the Philosophers in this matter and agreeing with those Hashawites from Ahl al-Sunnah, why don't you agree with all of us, together, the Philosophers and Mutakallimīn, in the necessities of that Greek philosophical heritage whose language and terminology we have made the foundation for speech about Allāh."

<sup>1485</sup> This was the same reasoning al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān used to deny Allāh's 'Uluww, because he believed ascribing direction necessitated Allāh is *maḥdūd*, meaning bound in all directions. And what is taking place here is that al-Foudah and his likes from the misguided wandering strayers have taken the necessities that apply to bodies, and through *qiyās al-shumūl* (analogy by inclusion), applied them to Allāh, claiming that Allāh is bound by the same necessities, such that if it is said about Allāh that He is above, it means He must be confined in space, just like it is true of all created bodies. Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah affirm what Allāh affirmed from Himself, speak with it and proclaim it, and they deny any resemblance between Allāh and His creation and do not rely upon the language or necessities arising from the philosophy of Greek Sabean pagan, idol-worshipping disbelievers.

<sup>1486</sup> Meaning, that none of the Prophets sent by Allāh (ﷺ), from Ādam (ﷺ) to Muḥammad (ﷺ) all of whom affirmed Allāh is above His Throne, above the heavens, can escape the obvious implication based upon the philosophy and thought of the Greek Sabean pagan idol-worshipping disbelievers and their language and terminology regarding *ajsām* and *a'rāḍ*, that if Allāh is said to be above, this necessitates He is confined in space, bound in all directions in a waḍ' (position), and therefore a body (jism) like the rest of the bodies (ajsām).

corporeality for Him, the Exalted?<sup>1487</sup> To affirm a direction and simply run away from affirming corporeality and limit is an inane fallacy that can only come from absurd thought...<sup>1488</sup>

The rest of the speech of Foudah is simply a continuation of the type of diatribe found in his statements above in which he is trying to force necessities upon Ibn Rushd, which Ibn Rushd himself denies are applicable to Allāh in the first place as it relates to *al-ʿUluww*, and this is dishonesty in argument. This is besides the fact that Ibn Rushd is simply stating the view of the Kullābī Ash'arīs in his own way. Most of the polemics of the contemporary Jahmiyyah hiding under the label of Ash'ariyyah taken on this particular form.

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<sup>1487</sup> It was possible for Ibn Rushd to say that because it was also said by Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānisī, al-Ash'arī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī, who are the early Kullābī Ash'arīs.

<sup>1488</sup> This is a revilment by this specious, fallacious Jahmite upon the revealed texts and upon the ʿaqīdah of the Companions, the Tabiʿīn and whoever followed them, right until the early Kullābī Ash'arīs who affirmed Allāh is above His Throne and never knew anything of these innane fallacies that speech about Allāh must follow speech about the *ajsām* and *a'rāḍ* that Foudah and his likes have taken from the language of the Greek, pagan, idol-worshipping disbelievers.