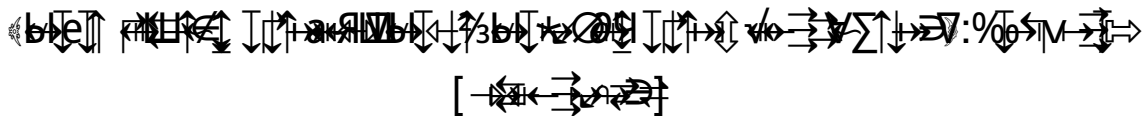


## The Ayahs of the Qur'an: The Muḥkam and the Mutashābih

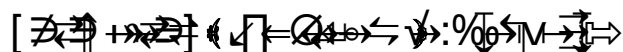
Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds, Who does not resemble the creation. To Allāh belong the endowments and the befitting perfections and commendations. We ask Allāh to raise the rank of Prophet Muḥammad, sallallāhu ^alayhi wa sallam, and to protect his nation from that which he feared for it. Thereafter:

Allāh said in the Qur'an:



Surat Al-^Imrān, ayah 7 means: [Allāh is the One Who has sent down to the Prophet the Book that contains muḥkam ayahs, which are the foundation of the Book, and other ayahs which are mutashābih.] So, know firmly that the Qur'an contains two types of ayahs:

1. Muḥkam Ayahs: These are the ayahs (verses) that, according to the rules of the Arabic language, have only one meaning or are those with a clear meaning. Examples of this type of , ayahs are: the saying of Allāh, ta^alā:



Surat ash-Shurā, ayah 11 means: [There is absolutely nothing like Allāh]

His saying:



Surat al-Ikhlās, ayah 4 means: [Nothing is equal to Him], and His saying:



Surat Maryam ayah 65 means: [Do you know of anything which is similar to Him? There is none.]

2. Mutashābih Ayahs: These are the , ayahs that, according to the rules of the Arabic language, can have many meanings. Assigning acceptable meanings to these ayahs requires proper Knowledge of the Arabic Language

and thorough thinking. Examples of this type of *ayahs* are: the saying of *Allah*, *ta^ala*, in *Surat Taha*, *ayah* 5:

[ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَعَاقَبْتُمْ أَرْسِلْ فِئْتَانًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِمْ ]

and His saying in *Surat Fatir*, *ayah* 10:

[ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَعَاقَبْتُمْ أَرْسِلْ فِئْتَانًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِمْ ]

According to the rules of the Arabic language, these *ayahs* are *mutashabih*; so they can have many meanings. Assigning meanings to them must be done in a manner which complies with the Arabic language and the Religion. The assigned meanings must not contradict the *ayahs* that are *muhkam*. Surely, the *ayahs* of the *Qur'an* do not contradict one another! Likewise, the *hadiths* (sayings of the Prophet, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*,) neither contradict one another, nor the *ayahs* of the *Qur'an*.

There are two methodologies for explaining the *mutashabih ayahs* of the *Qur'an*, and both of them are valid. They are:

1. The Methodology of the *Salaf*. The *Salaf* were the scholars who lived during the first three centuries after the *Hijrah* (Immigration) of the Prophet, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*. Most often, this methodology consisted of giving general explanations, since the scholars of the *Salaf* believed that these *ayahs* have meanings befitting to the perfection of *Allah*. Rather than saying what these meanings are, they referred these *mutashabih ayahs* to the *muhkam ayahs*. A good example is the saying of *Imam ash-Shafi'iy*:

لَا يُمْرَأُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يَخْفَى لَهُمْ : قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَعَاقَبْتُمْ أَرْسِلْ فِئْتَانًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِمْ  
 ." وَأَرْسِلْ فِئْتَانًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِمْ : قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَعَاقَبْتُمْ أَرْسِلْ فِئْتَانًا مِنْ أَمْثِلِمْ

which means: "I believe in what *Allah* revealed according to the meaning that *Allah* willed, and in what the Messenger of *Allah* conveyed according to the meaning that the Messenger of *Allah* willed." In other words, the proper befitting meanings are not according to the sensuous and physical meanings that delusions would lead to, such as places, shapes, limbs, movements, sitting, colors, directions, smiling, laughing, or any other meanings which are not permissible to be attributed to *Allah*.

Furthermore, the Arabs during the first three Hijriyy centuries spoke the Arabic language with a natural disposition and great eloquence. Their understanding of its meanings was so sharp that they did not need to attribute specific meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs*. Instead, they understood that these *ayahs* have meanings that befit *Allah*, and that it is impossible that they would have sensuous and physical meanings which do not befit *Allah*.

Nevertheless, it is well known that some of the scholars of the *Salaf* did attribute specific meanings to *mutashabih ayahs*. In his *Sahih*, in the chapter

*Tafsirul- Qur'an* (Explanation of the *Qur'an*,) *Imam al-Bukhariyy* attributed a specific meaning to the term "*illa wajhahu*" in *Surat al-Qasas*, *ayah* 88. He said: "*illa mulkahu*," i.e., he said that word "*wajh*", which is an attribute of *Allah*, means "*Mulk*" or "*Dominion*."

﴿لَا يَدْرِي وَاَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَدْعُوهُ إِذْ يَخْرُجُ﴾ : ﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾  
 ﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾ : ﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾

2. The Methodology of the *Khalaf*. The *Khalaf* were the scholars who lived after the first three centuries after the Hijrah. For the most part, this methodology consisted of giving specific meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs*. The scholars of the *Khalaf* lived at a time when the people started to lose their natural disposition for the Arabic language. Seeing that the people had become weaker in the language, the scholars of the *Khalaf* feared that those with perversity in their hearts would read meanings into the *mutashabih ayahs* which do not befit *Allah*. They feared what is mentioned in *Surat Al ^Imran*, *ayah* 7. *Allah* said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهَتِهِمْ كَارِهُونَ إِذْ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنْ آلِهَتِهِمْ قُلْ هِيَ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا يُدْعَوْنَ لَعَنُوا﴾ : ﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾  
 [﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾]

which means: [Those who have perversity in their hearts, follow the *mutashabih ayahs*, seeking discord and searching for unbecoming meanings based on their delusions.] In order to protect the creed of *Islam*, the scholars of the *Khalaf* followed the example of the scholars of the *Salaf* who gave specific meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs*. Referring them to the *muhkam ayahs*, they gave specific meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs* in compliance with the language and with the Religion. They gave correct, acceptable meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs*. *Allah* said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهَتِهِمْ كَارِهُونَ إِذْ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنْ آلِهَتِهِمْ قُلْ هِيَ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا يُدْعَوْنَ لَعَنُوا﴾ : ﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾  
 [﴿وَمَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَّا وَجْهًا﴾]

,*Ayah* 7 in *Surat Al ^Imran* means: [No one knows their true meanings except *Allah* and those who are firmly rooted in the knowledge of the Religion. The latter {i.e, those firmly rooted in the knowledge} say: "We believe in it, all of it is from our Lord" and none will understand the message, except the men of comprehension.] In relation to this *ayah*, *Ibn ^Abbas* said: (This is narated by *hafidh az-Zabidiyy* in "*Ithaf as-Sadah al-Muttaqin*") "I am one of those who are firmly rooted in the knowledge of the Religion." It is well known that *Ibn ^Abbas* is generally regarded as being foremost among the Companions in the explanation of the meanings of the *ayahs* of the *Qur'an*.

Among those who have perversity in their hearts are the *mushabbihah*, those who liken *Allah* to His creation. The followers of *Ibn Taymiyah* and *Muhammad Ibn ^Abdil-Wahhab* are among the group of the *mushabbihah*.

They falsely claim that it is prohibited to make *ta'wil*, i.e., to assign specific meanings to the *mutashabih ayahs* and especially to those that pertain to the attributes of *Allah*. Moreover, they innovated a devilish rule which states that assigning specific meanings to the *ayahs* would lead to cancelling these attributes of *Allah*. Their claim leads to interpretations of the , *ayahs* of the *Qur'an* that contradict one another. It leads to interpretations of the *hadiths* of the Prophet that contradict one another and contradict the *ayahs* of the *Qur'an*. Furthermore, their claim accuses the Islamic scholars of the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* of denying the attributes of *Allah*, which unjustly makes them blasphemers. Such scholars include: *Ibn ^Abbas*, *Sufyan ath-Thawriyy*, *Mujahid*, *Sa^id Ibn Jubayr*, *Malik*, *Ahmad*, *al-Bukhariyy*, *an-Nawawiyy*, *Ibn Rajab al-Hanbaliyy*, *Ibn-ul-Jawziyy*, *Ibn Hajar al-^Asqalaniyy*, *al-Bayhaqiyy*, *Abul-Fadl at-Tamimiyy*, *^Abdul-Qahir al-Baghdadiyy*, the linguist and scholar of *Hadith Murtada az-Zabidiyy*, and others.

Foremost, by their claim the *mushabbihah* are contradicting the Prophet, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*. *Al-Bukhariyy* related that the Prophet ﷺ made a *du^a'* (a supplication) for *Ibn ^Abbas*. The Prophet said:

"اللَّهُمَّ عَلِّمْنَا الْقُرْآنَ وَمَعْنَاهُ  
وَعَلِّمْنَا الْحَدِيثَ وَمَعْنَاهُ"

which means: <<O *Allah*, teach him the Knowledge of *Hadith* and the explanation of the *Qur'an*.>>

In the chapter, *Tafsirul-Qur'an*, (Explanation of the *Qur'an*), *Imam al-Bukhariyy* says that the term *wajhahu* in *Surat al-Qasas*, *ayah* 88, means "His Dominion." However, the *mushabbihah* who liken *Allah* to His creation say: "We do not interpret, but rather we go by the literal meaning," and hence (they say) *wajhahu* means "His face."

*Ibn Hajar al-^Asqalaniyy*, in his book, *Al-Fath* (an explanation of the meaning of *Sahih al-Bukhariyy*), Volume 6, page 39-40, said: "..... in reference to *al-Bukhariyy's* saying that the attribute of *Allah*, *ad-dahik*, means 'mercy,' it is closer to say that it means 'acceptance of deeds.' Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning, and they say that *Allah* smiles, or laughs.

In *Surat al-Qalam*, *ayah* 42, *Allah* said:

[لَا يَسْأَلُكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ]

The scholars of the *Salaf* explained the term *saq* to mean 'hardship,' and the *ayah* to mean 'a day of anguish and hardship.' This explanation is known to have been given by *Ibn ^Abbas*, *Mujahid*, *Ibrahim an-Nakh^iyy*, *Qatadah*, *Sa^id Ibn Jubayr*, and a multitude of scholars. Both *Imam al-Fakhr ar-Raziyy* in his Explanation of the *Qur'an*, Volume 30, page 94 and *Imam al-Bayhaqiyy* in his books, *Al-'Asma' was-Sifat*, (page 245) and *Fath-ul-Bari*, (Volume-13, page 428) related this explanation from *Ibn ^Abbas*. *Ibn Qulayb* also related the same about *Sa^id Ibn Jubayr* who took his knowledge from *^Abdullah Ibn*

^Abbas and Ibn ^Umar. Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning and attribute `the shin' to Allah, by saying saq literally means `shin.' Such a mistranslation is given in the so-called "The Noble Qur'an" by M.Khan and M. Al-Hilali. This English translation is full of misinterpretations which are blasphemous, as they amount to likening Allah to His creations.

In Surat -ul-Baqarah, ayah 115, Allah said:

[ ﴿لَمَّا خَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ أَرَادَ أَن يَبْتُلِيَهُمْ لَمَسَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ الْمَوْتُ الَّذِي أَخْبَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَن لَنْ يَحْمِلَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ﴾ ]

Imam Mujahid, the student of Ibn ^Abbas, said that the word wajh means `giblah,' i.e., the direction of praying during the voluntary prayers while travelling and riding an animal. Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning; they claim the term, wajh, means `face.'

Similarly, if ayah 12 in Surat at-Tahrim:

[ ﴿لَمَّا نَسَفْنَا لُجَّةَ الْيَمِّ لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِمْ لَوَّى لَحْيَاهُمُ الْعُتُورُ﴾ ]

were taken literally, it would mean that Allah blew part of His Soul into ^Isa (Jesus.) However, the scholars said this ayah means: [Allah ordered Jibriil to blow into ^Isa the soul which is honorable to Allah.]

Also, if ayah 75 in Surat Sad:

[ ﴿إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِمْيَرًا نَسَفَ اللَّهُ يَدَايَهُمْ وَالْعُقُبَةَ أُولَئِكَ يَدْعُونَ﴾ ]

were taken literally, it would mean: "What has stopped you from performing sujud to what I have created with My hands?" However, the scholars said that the word `yadayn' in the ayah means the `care' of Allah. Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist that yadayn means hands.

Likewise, if ayah 35 in Surat an-Nur:

[ ﴿لَا تَلْعَبُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ﴾ ]

were taken literally, it would mean: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the Earth." The scholars, such as al-Bayhaqiyy and at-Tabariyy related that ^Abdullah Ibn ^Abbas said that this ayah means: [Allah is the Creator of guidance in the occupants of the heavens and the occupants of the Earth.] However, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning and say that Allah is `light.'

Again, if ayah 22 in Surat al-Fajr were taken literally:



it would mean: "Your Lord comes." It was related that *Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal*, who is among the authorities of the *Salaf*, said that this *ayah* means: [An indication of the Power of *Allah* has come.] In his book, *Manaqib Ahmad, Hafidh Imam al-Bayhaqiyy*, established that the *sanad* (chain) of narrators is *sahih* (authentic). Also, *Ibn al-Jawziyy al-Hambaliyy*, one of the authorities of the school of *Imam Ahmad*, related that *Imam Ahmad* assigned specific, acceptable meanings to the *ayahs* which are *mutashabih*. He also said this was a proof that *Imam Ahmad* did not believe that the *maji'* (a noun for the verb *ja'a*) in the *ayah* refers to movement from one place to another. *Imam Ibn al-Jawziyy* also said: "It is not possible that *Allah* would be ascribed with motion. This is so, because *Allah* is not a body occupying a space." Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning and say that *ja'a Rabbuka* means "Your Lord comes" (i.e., from one place to another.)

The *hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ related by *al-Bukhariyy*:

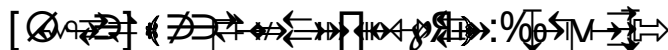


was affirmed and explained by *Imam Malik* as a descent of the mercy of *Allah* and not as a descent of *Allah* Himself. However, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning. They say the *nuzul* in the *hadith* means a descent of movement, i.e., going from one place to another.

Referencing *Imam al-'Ash'ariyy*, *Imam al-Bayhaqiyy*, in his book, *Al-Asma' was-Sifat*, page 488, said: " *Allah*, *ta'ala*, is not in a place. Motion, stillness, and sitting are among the attributes of bodies."

*Abul-Fadl al-Tamimiyy* reported that *Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal* said: "The linguists defined the term 'body' as something with width, dimensions, format, and parts. *Allah* is clear of all of that."

As for the word *istawa* in *Surat Taha*, *ayah* 5:



The famous linguist *Abu Bakr Ibn 'Arabiyy al-Malikiyy* reported that the word *istiwa'* has 15 meanings in the Arabic language.

*Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hambaliyy* explained the term *al-istiwa'*, as *al-istila'*, which means subjugating. When *al-istila'* is used to explain this *ayah*, it means that *Allah* subjugated the *'Arsh* with a subjugation that is without a beginning, like all the attributes of *Allah*. If the *ayah* is explained in this manner, it means that *Allah* was attributed with subjugating the *'Arsh* before the *'Arsh* was created in the same way that *Allah* was attributed with being the Creator before He created the world of creations. In this context, the scholars have used the term *al-azal*, which means the status of existing without a beginning. Thus it can be said that *Allah* subjugated the *'Arsh* in *al-azal*, meaning that

Allah subjugated the <sup>^</sup>Arsh with a subjugation that is without a beginning. Yet the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning, to say *istiwa'* means Allah `sits' on the throne and `firmly establishes' Himself on it.

In his book, *Al-Mu^tagad*, Imam al-Bayhaqiyy related, in a chain back to al-'Awza^iyy, Imam Malik, Sufyan ath-Thawriyy, and al-Layth Ibn Sa^d, that when they were asked about the *ayahs* and the *hadiths* which are *mutashabih*, they said:

"هم من انزلهم على ما ينزلون. قالوا: وما ينزلون؟ قالوا: ما ينزلونهم على ما ينزلونهم. قالوا: وما ينزلونهم؟ قالوا: ما ينزلونهم على ما ينزلونهم.

which means: "Accept them as they came without applying a 'how' to them." This is because if one asked the question 'how?' the answer would be, 'Like this or that.' Everything other than Allah is a creation. So to say 'like this or that' would mean 'like this or that created thing' and Allah is not like the creation. Anything a person can imagine, Allah is different from it. When the scholars said: "...without applying a 'how' to them," they meant that Allah is clear of being attributed with sitting, resting, moving, limbs, bodies, and parts. They did not mean that His *istiwa'* of the Throne (<sup>^</sup>Arsh) has a 'how' of which we are ignorant. On the contrary, the scholars completely negated that a 'how' could be applied to Allah. So the statement of those who say "Allah sits on the Throne but we do not know how," is rejected on the basis of what these scholars said.

Anyone with a sound mind knows that sitting, no matter how it is, is an attribute of bodies. Occupying places necessitates a 'how' and applies to bodies. Furthermore, color and touching are attributes of bodies and 'how' applies to them. All of that is impossible to apply to Allah.

Similarly, when the Prophet, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*, asked the slave woman the question: "Aynallah?", the scholars said this meant he was asking her about her belief in the status of Allah. She answered: "Fis-sama" which has the meaning that Allah has the highest status. Furthermore, Imam Malik related the same *hadith* with a different wording. In the narration of Malik, the Prophet asked the slave woman if she believed in both parts of the *shahadatayn* and she said: "yes" to both. So the Prophet said to set her free. Yet the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meaning saying that the Prophet asked her about the place of Allah, and that she said: "In the sky," meaning that the sky is a place for Allah.

Likewise, the *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*, related by At-Tirmidhiyy.

"...من احسنكم الى ربي انزلته عليه من ربي انزلته عليه... من احسنكم الى ربي انزلته عليه من ربي انزلته عليه... من احسنكم الى ربي انزلته عليه من ربي انزلته عليه...

means: <<If you are merciful to those on Earth, the angels, who occupy the heavens, will bring onto you the mercy of Allah.>> Yet, the *mushabbihah* insist

unjustifiably, on taking the literal meaning, saying the *ḥadīth* means: "Allah, Who occupies the heavens, will be merciful to you."

So, the *mushabbihah* insist on taking the literal meanings of the *mutashābih* *āyahs*. They reject assigning specific meanings to them, and refuse to ascribe acceptable meanings to them. By doing this, the *mushabbihah* render the *āyahs* of the *Qur'an* and the *ḥadīths* contradictory to one another. For example: the famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, related by *al-Bukhariyy* and *Muslim*:

"اللَّهُ بَيْنَ رِقَابِكُمْ وَبَيْنَ رِقَابِ بَنِي آدَمَ مَا تَرَى مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ شَهِيدٌ" .

if taken by the method of the *mushabbihah*, it would mean: "Allah is between the person and the neck of his animal." This is in direct contradiction with their claim that the *ḥadīth* of the slave woman means: "Allah has a place, which is the sky."

Likewise, if *ayah* 4 in *Surat al-Hadid*:

[اللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ]

is taken literally, it would mean: "Allah is with you, wherever you are." However, the scholars established that this *ayah* means: [Allah knows about you, wherever you are.] Similarly, if the saying of Allah in *Surat Fussilat*, *ayah* 54:

[اللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُ ۖ لَا يَمْلِكُ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ۗ أَلَمْ نَكُنِ عِنْدَ الْعَرْشِ الْغَنِيِّ ۗ وَيَسْأَلُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ۗ غَيْرَ الْمُنشِقِ ۗ]

is taken by its literal meaning, it would mean: "Allah surrounds everything." Furthermore, if the saying of Allah, that *Ibrahim* said in *Surat as-Saffat*, *ayah* 99:

[اللَّهُ فِي أَرْضِ شَامَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ ۗ مَا يَسِرُّوا وَلَا يَنْصُرُهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعِ الْغَالِبِينَ]

is taken by its literal meaning, it would mean: "Allah is in the countries of *ash-Sham*<sup>(1)</sup>," as this *ayah* talks about Prophet *Ibrahim* moving from Iraq to the countries of *ash-Sham*. If the saying of Allah in *Surat al-Baqarah*, *ayah* 125:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ash-Sham* refers to the area that includes Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.



[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ لَمَّا سَأَلَهُ أَإِنِّي لَمَكْرَمٌ بِٱلَّذِينَ سَأَلُوهُ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبَّحُوهُ وَكَبَّرُوهُ وَعَزَّوْاْ عَلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝١٢٨﴾ ]

is taken by its literal meaning, it would mean: "The *Ka'bah* is the residence of *Allah*." If *ayah* 128 in *Surat an-Nahl* is taken literally, it would mean: "*Allah* is physically with the pious."

It is clear that if these *ayahs* are interpreted based on the literal meanings, this will lead to numerous contradictions. The great scholars of Islam have ascribed proper and acceptable meanings to the *mutashabih ayah* and the *mutashabih hadiths* in accordance with the Religion, the language, and by referring them to the clear *muhkam ayahs*. They said *Surat al-Hadid*, *ayah* 4,

[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ يَتْلُو صُورٌ كَأَنَّهَا كَوَافِرٌ سُجَّدٌ لِّٱللَّهِ فَيَكْفُرُونَ بِهِ مِمَّا كَفَرُواْ ۚ لَبُوفٌ لَهُمْ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝٤﴾ ]

means: [*Allah* knows about you wherever you are.] *Surat Fussilat*, *ayah* 54,

[ ﴿لَا يَشَىءُ عِنْدَ ٱللَّهِ شَىءٌ سِوَىٰ ٱلَّذِى يَشَىءُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝١٢٥﴾ ]

means [*Allah* knows everything.] *Surat al-Baqarah*, *ayah* 125,

[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى ٱرْتَضَىٰ ٱلْبَيْتَ ٱلْحَرَامَ ٱلَّذِى ٱتَّخَذَ ٱلنَّبِيُّ ٱلصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝٦١﴾ ]

means: [The *Ka'bah* is a house of a great honor to *Allah*.] *Surat al-An'am*, *ayah* 61,

[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى ٱرْتَضَىٰ ٱلْبَيْتَ ٱلْحَرَامَ ٱلَّذِى ٱتَّخَذَ ٱلنَّبِيُّ ٱلصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝٦١﴾ ]

refers to the *fawqiyyah* (aboveness) of subjugation, meaning: [All are subjugated to *Allah*.] *Surat an-Nahl*, *ayah* 128,

[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى يَدْعُو ٱلَّذِينَ يَشَىءُونَ ٱلْحَيَاةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ لِيَكْفُرُواْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝٥﴾ ]

means: [*Allah* supports those who are pious.] *Surat Taha*, *ayah* 5,

[ ﴿ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى ٱرْتَضَىٰ ٱلْبَيْتَ ٱلْحَرَامَ ٱلَّذِى ٱتَّخَذَ ٱلنَّبِيُّ ٱلصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝٦١﴾ ]

means: [*Allah* subjugated the *Arsh* in *al-azal* with a subjugation that is without a beginning, as are all of the attributes of *Allah*.]

In taking the *mutashabih ayahs* by their literal meanings, the *mushabbihah* contradict the *muhkam ayahs*. An example is *Surat ash-Shura*, *ayah* 11,

[ ﴿لَا شَىءٌ مِّثْلُ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ۝١١﴾ ]

which means: [Nothing is like *Allah* in any way]. They try to escape the contradiction by camouflaging it, saying that *Allah* has a 'face' but without

countenance; and *Allah* has a 'direction' which is above, but we do not know 'how' it is; and *Allah* has a 'shin,' but we do not know 'how' His 'shin' is. Moreover, they say that *Allah* 'sits' but we do not know 'how' His 'sitting' is.

The great *Hanafiyy* linguist and scholar of *Hadith*, *Imam Murtada az-Zabidiyy*, in his book, *Ithafus-Sadatil-Muttaqin*, refuted those who reject the practice of assigning acceptable meanings (*ta'wil*) to the *mutashabih ayahs* and insist on taking them by their literal meanings. *Az-Zabidiyy* Quoting *Abu Nasr al-Qushayriyy* in his book <<*at-Tadhkirah ash-Sharqiyyah*>>, said: "In essence, they are slandering the office of Prophethood; they are claiming that the Prophet ﷺ did not know the meaning of the attributes of *Allah* revealed to him; and they are claiming he called the creation to believe in that of which he was ignorant." However, *Allah* says in the *Qur'an* in *Surat ash-Shu'ara'*, *ayah* 195:

[ ﴿لَا يَلْفُتُونَ فِيهَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَّمَا يَنظُرُونَ سُمُومًا﴾ ]

which means: [The *Qur'an* was revealed in clear, explicit Arabic.] *Az-Zabidiyy* proceeded to quote: "Those people who take a position against assigning acceptable meanings are basically likening *Allah* to the creation." However, they camouflage it by saying that *Allah* has a 'hand,' but not like the hands of the creation, a 'shin', but not like the shins of creation, and a physical *istiwa'* that we cannot comprehend. *Az-Zabidiyy* addressed them with: "Your saying 'we take it by its literal meaning and it is incomprehensible' is contradictory in itself. If you take by its literal meaning, then 'sag' in *Surat al-Qalam*, *ayah* 42, is a 'shin' which is a body part composed of bone, flesh, muscle, and nerves. If you take that literal meaning, then you have committed blasphemy. However, if you deny this literal meaning, then how can you claim to validate the literal meaning?"

If one were to interpret the *mutashabih ayahs* and *hadiths* literally, one would be claiming that *Allah* moves up and down through the skies while sitting on the *Arsh* and encircling the creations with His alleged smiling face that has humerous eyes, and smiles. This is clearly unbecoming of *Allah*, the One Who does not resemble the creations in any way and is not contained by directions or place .

Rest assured that the methodologies of both the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* are correct and neither attribute anything to *Allah* that does not befit Him. In simple terms, the first correct way of explaining the *mutashabih ayahs* in the *Qur'an* is to say that one believes in them according to the meaning that *Allah* willed without saying what that meaning is; and without a 'how,' i.e., without attributing to *Allah* sitting, standing, occupying places, sensuous attributes, or any of the meanings that apply to humans and other creations. Following this method, one would say: "*Allah* has an *istiwa'* which befits Him, which is not sitting, and *Allah* has a *yad* which befits Him, which is not a hand, and a *wajh* that befits Him, which is not a face." One cannot interpret the word *sag* as shin. Not one meaning for the word shin in the English language is appropriate to attribute to *Allah*. The second correct way of explaining the *mutashabih ayahs* in the *Qur'an* is to give to them specific meanings, which are in

accordance with the Religion and the language. Following this method, one would say: "*Allah's istiwa'* means 'He preserves the throne,' *Allah's yad* means '*Allah's Care*,' and *Allah's wajh* means '*Allah's Self*,' '*Allah's Dominion*,' or '*Allah's Qiblah*.'"

Also know that among the *mutashabih* are matters that only *Allah* knows about, such as the time when the Day of Judgment will occur, the exact day the sun will rise from its setting place, the exact time when the *Dajjal*<sup>(2)</sup> will appear, and the like. This falls under one of the meanings of *Surat Al-Imran*, *ayah* 7:

لَا يَأْتِيهِمْ سَاعَةٌ يَنْسَوْنَ وَعِندَ اللَّهِ الْمِيزَانُ  
 [لَا يَأْتِيهِمْ سَاعَةٌ يَنْسَوْنَ وَعِندَ اللَّهِ الْمِيزَانُ]

which means: [No one knows the meanings of this kind of *mutashabih* except *Allah*.]

May *Allah* protect us from falling into the trap of likening *Allah* to His creation. *Imam Abu Ja'far at-Tahawiyy*, in his book *Al-Aqidatut-Tahawiyyah*, said:

"مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِمِثْلِ خَلْقِهِ حَتَّى يُلَاقِيَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مِثْلَهُ  
 مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِمِثْلِ خَلْقِهِ حَتَّى يُلَاقِيَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مِثْلَهُ"

which means: "Whoever attributes to *Allah* a human characteristic commits blasphemy."

We ask *Allah* to keep us steadfast on the correct path and creed of the Islamic scholars of the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf*. We seek refuge with *Allah* from falling into the trap of apostasy, because the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, said in the *hadith* related by *at-Tirmidhiyy*:

"مَنْ قَالَ لَيْسَ بِي إِسْلَامٌ حَتَّى يُلَاقِيَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مِثْلَهُ  
 مَنْ قَالَ لَيْسَ بِي إِسْلَامٌ حَتَّى يُلَاقِيَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مِثْلَهُ"

This means: <<The slave may utter a word which he does not deem harmful, but that will cause him to fall into Hellfire for seventy autumns.>> This is a place that only the blasphemers will reach.

Be extremely observant of what you utter, for *Allah*, *ta'ala* said in *Surat Qaf*, *ayah* 18:

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<sup>2</sup> The *Dajjal* is a man with one eye who will be given extraordinary powers and will claim himself to be God. It is mentioned in the *sahih hadith* that Prophet *Isa* will descend and kill him.



which means: [Every word that a person utters will be written down by the two angels, *Raqib* and *^Atid*.] Also, beware of books that are claimed to be interpretations of the *Qur'an*, or translations of its meanings and in which *Allah*, the Exalted, is likened to His creation, by attributing to Him light, hands, eyes, shins, faces, sitting, directions, places, and the like. *Allah* is clear of all imperfection and of any resemblance to the creation.

Praise be to *Allah* the Lord of the Worlds, the One Who is clear of resembling the creation, all non\_befitting attributes, and all which the blasphemers unrightfully say about Him.

***Allah* knows best.**