

Al-‘Aqidah Al-Sanusiyyah

By: Abu ‘Abdillah Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Sanusi al-Husayni (d. 795 Hijrah)

Translated by: Christopher ‘Khalil’ Moore

© 2005 C - K - M

** Unfinished Rough Draft **

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah and may prayers and soundness be upon the Messenger of Allah. Know that rational judgment is divided into three categories:

- That which is *necessary*,
- That which is *impossible* and
- That which is *conceivable*.

The *necessary* is that which the intellect cannot imagine its inexistence. The *impossible* is that which the intellect cannot imagine its existence. The *conceivable* is that which existence or inexistence is possible according to the intellect.

It is obligatory upon every sane adult (*mukallaf*), according to the sacred law (*shari’ah*), to know what is necessary, impossible and conceivable with regards to our Lord, exalted and powerful is He. Likewise, it is obligatory upon such a one to know the same with regards to the Prophets and Messengers, may blessings and peace be upon them all.

ALLAH

From that which is necessary for Allah there are twenty attributes, they are:

- **Existence** (*wujud*)
- **Beginningless Eternality** (*qidam*)
- **Endless Eternality** (*baqa*)
- **His absolute differentiation from that which is created,**
- **His upholding Himself** [i.e. He is neither in need of a place, nor that which would particularize Him]
- **Oneness** (*wahdaniyyah*) [i.e. there is no “second” (or other) for Him with regards to His essence, attributes, and actions]

That is six attributes. The first attribute, which is Existence, pertains to His essence and the following five are attributes that negate (from Him that which is not conceivable).

Seven other attributes are also necessary for Him, exalted is He. They are called the *sifat al-ma'ani*, they are:

- **Ability** (*qudrat*) and **Will** (*iradah*), which relate to those things which are conceivable
- **Knowledge** (*'ilm*), which relates to all that is necessary conceivable or impossible
- **Life** (*hayat*), which doesn't relate to anything
- **Hearing** (*sama'*) and **Seeing** (*basar*), which relate to all that exists
- **Speech** (*kalimat*) that is neither letter (*harf*), nor voice (*sawt*) and it relates to that which knowledge relates to (i.e. to all that is necessary conceivable or impossible).

Then there are seven more attributes that are referred to as *as-sifat alma'naviyyah* (they are the active participle form of the previous seven attributes). They are:

- His being **Powerful** (*qadir*)
- **Willing** (*murid*)
- **Knowledgeable** (*'alim*)
- **Alive** (*hayy*)
- **Hearing** (*sami'*)
- **Seeing** (*basir*)
- **Speaking** (*mutakallim*)

From that which is impossible with respect to Him, exalted is He, are also twenty attributes. They are the opposites of the first twenty. They are:

- **Non-existence** (*'adam*)
- **Emergence** (*huduth*) (from non-existence)
- **Evanescence** (*turnu al-'adam*, also know as *fana*)
- **Similarity to creation** (*mumathalah*), like Him being a body [i.e. that His lofty essence would take up a portion of space], or that He would be a condition that is established on that body, or that He be in a given direction with relation to that body, or that He Himself be in a given direction, or that He be confined to place or time, or that His lofty essence be described with that of created things, or that He be described with “smallness” or “bigness”, or that He be described as having motives (in order to protect Himself) in His actions and decrees.

Also impossible with regards to Him, exalted is He:

- **To not be upholding Himself**, like Him being an attribute that exists in a given place or Him needing that which would particularize Him.

It is also impossible with regards to Him, exalted is He:

- **That He not be One**, like His essence being composed of different parts, or that there be something similar to Him in His essence or attributes, or that there be in existence an entity which has an intrinsic effect in a given action (in the universe).

It is also impossible with regards to Him, exalted is He:

• **Incapacity** (*'ajz*) of doing a conceivable act or the creation of something in the universe while He dislikes its existence [i.e. that He, exalted is He, did not will it into existence] or while in a state of stupefaction or heedlessness, or for entertainment, or (that this thing came into existence) “naturally”.

It is also impossible with regards to Him, exalted is He:

- **ignorance** (*jahl*), and that which is similar to it, about any known thing,
- **death** (*mawt*),
- **deafness** (*samam*),
- **blindness** (*'ama*) and
- **speechlessness** (*bakam*).

The opposites of the *as-sifat al-ma'naviyyah* are clear from the aforementioned.

That which is conceivable with regards to Him, exalted is He, is doing every possible (*mumkin*) act or leaving it.

The evidence of His existence, exalted is He, is the occurrence (createdness) of the world. For if it had no Originator, rather it existed of itself, that would necessitate that one of two equivalent states (i.e. either existence or non-existence) be equivalent to the other while at the same time be prevalent over it without any (external) cause! Such a matter is impossible.

The evidence for the occurrence (createdness) of the world is its inseparability from those occurring (created) conditions such as, motion, stillness and so on. And that which is inseparable from a created entity is itself created. The evidence for the occurrence (createdness) of these conditions is the witnessing of their alteration from non-existence to existence and from existence to non-existence.

The evidence for the necessity of His Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*), exalted is He, is that if He wasn't Beginninglessly Eternal *qidam* then He would have been created, and hence, would be in need of that which would bring Him into existence, thereby necessitating continuous circularity (*dawr*) or an infinite regress of causes (*tasalsul*).

The evidence for the necessity of His Endless Eternality (*baqa*), exalted is He, is that if it was possible for non-existence to overtake Him then He would lack Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*), hence, His existence would (only) be *conceivable* and not *necessary*. And the existence of that which is conceivable must be created. How could that be so when it has just preceded that His Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*), exalted is He, and Endless Eternality (*baqa*) are necessary?

The evidence for the necessity of His, exalted is He, absolute differentiation from created things is that if He resembled anything from creation then He would have to have been created just like them. And that is impossible due to what you have known before of the necessity of His Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*) and Endless Eternality (*baqa*). The evidence for the necessity of His upholding Himself, exalted is He, is that if He was in need of a place then He would be an attribute and an attribute is neither described

with the *sifat al-ma'ni* nor with the *assifat al-ma'naviyyah* and it is necessary for our Lord, exalted and powerful is He, to be described by them, so He is not an attribute. And if He had been in need of that which would particularize Him then He would have been created. How could that be so when the evidence for His Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*) and Endless Eternality (*baqa*) has already been established?

The evidence for the necessity of His Oneness, exalted is He, is that if He was not One it would necessitate that nothing would exist in the world due to His inevitable incapability at that point (i.e. if there were two or more gods every god would be incapable of creating and destroying according to his will alone due to the presence of another rival god or gods. So, in reality, none of them would actually be *gods* in the first place due to their incapacity to enact what they will).

The evidence for the necessity of His, exalted is He, attributes of Power, Will, Knowledge and Life is that if one of these attributes were absent nothing would have been created. The evidence for the necessity of His, exalted is He, hearing, sight and speech is the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Consensus (*ijma*), as well as the fact that if He was not described by these attributes it would necessitate that He be described by their opposites, which are imperfections, and imperfection is impossible with regards to Him, exalted is He.

The evidence for the conceivability of Him, exalted is He, doing or leaving possible acts is that if any act (whether doing it or leaving it) was necessary for Him or impossible for Him then the possible would become necessary or impossible and that cannot be accepted intellectually.

THE MESSENGERS

As for the Messengers, may prayers and soundness be upon them, that which is necessary in their regards is:

- **Truthfulness** (*sidq*)
- **Trustworthiness** (*amanah*)
- **Conveying** (*tabligh*) to the creation that which they have been commanded

The opposites of these attributes are impossible for them, may prayers and soundness be upon them, they are:

- **Lying** (*kadhib*)
- **Betrayal** (*khiyanah* or treachery) by doing something that they had been prohibited from, whether it was *haram* or *makruh* (offensive)
- **Concealing** (*kitman*) something that they were commanded to convey to the creation

It is conceivable for them, may prayers and soundness be upon them, that which is from

the natural human conditions that do not lead to any lessening of their lofty rank and stature, such as sickness and the like.

The evidence of their truthfulness, may prayers and soundness be upon them, is that if they were not truthful it would necessitate that He, exalted is He, lied in His statement, because of His approval of them through the miracles (that He sent them with) which in essence say: “My servant has told the truth in all that he conveys on my behalf”.

The evidence for the necessity of their trustworthiness may prayers and soundness be upon them, is that if they had betrayed (their trust) by doing a *haram* or *makruh* (offensive) act, the *haram* or the *makruh* would have become an act of obedience in their regard. For Allah, exalted is He, has commanded us to follow them in their sayings and deeds and Allah, exalted is He, does not command a *haram* or *makruh* (offensive) act! This same reality is the proof for the necessity of the third characteristic (that of conveyance or *tabligh*).

The evidence for the conceivability of those natural human conditions befalling them is the witnessing of these conditions actually befalling them. (There are four reasons for this, they are:)

- for the magnification of their rewards, or
- for legislation (*tashri*), or
- to withdraw (their and our concerns) from this worldly life, or
- to warn against its (the *dunya*) despicable worth in the sight of Allah, exalted is He, and that He is not pleased with it as a place of final reward for His Prophets and Chosen Servants (*Amliya*), judging by their conditions in it, may prayers and soundness be upon them.

All of the meanings and realities of these beliefs are encompassed by the statement of: “There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” (*la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasulallah*). For the meaning of Godship (*ulubhiyyah*) is the independence of the god from everything else and the intrinsic need of everything for him. So the meaning of “there is no god but Allah” (*la ilaha illa Allah*) is that there is no one who is self-sufficient from everything else and whom everyone is in need of except Allah, exalted is He.

His Self-Sufficiency, exalted and powerful is He, from everything else necessitates for Him, exalted is He:

- Existence (*wujud*),
- Beginningless Eternality (*qidam*),
- Endless Eternality (*baqa*),
- absolute differentiation from created things,
- upholding of the self and
- being far removed from all imperfections.

Included in that is the necessity of hearing, seeing and speech for Him, exalted is He. For if these attributes were not necessary for Him, He would be in need of a creator, or a place, or someone to protect Him from imperfections. Derived from this is His removal from all motives in His

actions and judgments. If not, then He would be in need of that which could fulfill His goal. How could that be so when He, exalted and powerful is He, is the Self-Sufficient from all else?

Also derived from this is that neither any possible action nor the leaving of it is necessary upon Him, for if any of that was necessary upon Him, like giving reward, for example, He would be in need of that thing in order to complete His goal, for nothing is necessary for Him except that which is of His perfection. And how could that be so when He, exalted and powerful is He, is the Self-Sufficient from all else?

The need of everything for Him, exalted and powerful is He, necessitates for Him, exalted is He: Life, All-Encompassing Ability, Will and Knowledge. For if any of these attributes were absent it would not have been possible for anything of creation to be brought into existence, hence, nothing would be in need of Him. How could that be so when He is the One that all else are in need of?

This also necessitates for Him oneness (*wahdaniyyah*), exalted is He. Since if there was a rival in godship with Him then none would be in need of Him for both of their incapacity would be necessitated. How could that be so when He is the One that all else are in need of?

The occurrence (creation) of the entire world is also derived from this. For if there was anything in it that had no beginning (i.e. *qadim* like Allah, exalted is He) then that thing would be in no need of Him, exalted is He. How could that be so when He is the One that all else must necessarily be in need of?

(The reality that) nothing has an intrinsic effect in connection with a given object in existence can also be derived from this. If that were not so then it would necessitate the self-sufficiency of that effect from our Lord, exalted and powerful is He. How could that be so when He is the One that all else are in need of completely and in every situation?

This is if you have assumed that something in existence effects by its nature, though, if you assume that it has an effect because of a power that Allah has placed in, like many of the ignorant ones claim, then that is impossible. For in that case our Lord, exalted and powerful is He, would then be in need of a intermediary to bring into existence some actions.

And that is false due to what you have know of the necessity of His Self-Sufficiency, exalted and powerful is He, from everything else.

It has now become clear to you the inclusion of the saying: “there is no god but Allah” (*la ilaha illa Allah*) of the three categories which are obligatory upon every sane adult (*mukallaf*) to know concerning our Lord, exalted and powerful is He. And they are what is necessary, impossible and conceivable with regards to Him, exalted is He.

As for our statement: “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”, may Allah bless and grant him peace, it encompasses belief in the rest of the Prophets, the Angels, the Heavenly Books and the Last Day, for indeed he (the Prophet Muhammad, prayers and soundness be upon him,) came with the confirmation of all of those beliefs.

Derived from that (statement) is the truthfulness of the Messengers, prayers and soundness be upon them, and the impossibility of them lying. If this was not so then they would not have been trustworthy Messengers from our Lord—the Knowledgeable of the hidden secrets, exalted and powerful is He.

(Also derived from that statement) is the impossibility of doing any prohibited acts. For they were sent to teach humanity with their sayings, actions and silence. So it is necessary that all of those deeds not be in contradiction with the command of our Lord, exalted and powerful is He, the One who chose them above all of His creation and entrusted them over the secrets of His revelation.

(Also) derived from that (statement) is the conceivability of (normal) human conditions befalling them, since that neither lessens their Message nor their lofty rank with Allah, exalted is He, rather, it increases it. It has now become clear to you the encompassment of the two phrases of the testimony of faith (the *shahadah*), even though its letters are few, of all that is obligatory for the sane adult (*mukallaf*) to know from the beliefs of faith (*iman*) in Him, exalted is He, and His Messengers, may prayers and soundness be upon them. And it may be that because of its conciseness and its encompassing of what we have mentioned, the Law (*Shara'*) has made it a translator for what is in the heart. And faith (*iman*) is not accepted from anyone without it.

Therefore, it is upon the intelligent one to make much mention of it due to what it contains of the beliefs of faith (*iman*), so that he become intertwined with its meaning with his flesh and his blood. (At that point) he will see (some of) its many secrets and amazing (realities), if Allah wills, such that cannot be enumerated.

With Allah is all success, there is no Lord other than Him, there is none to be worshipped besides Him. We ask Him, glorified and exalted is He, to make us and our beloved ones mention the testimony of faith (*shahadah*) at death while in a state of knowledge concerning it.

May Allah bless our Master, Muhammad, every time the mentions mention him and the heedless are heedless of him.
May Allah be pleased with all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (may prayers and soundness be upon him) and those who follow them until the Day of Reckoning. May soundness be upon the Messengers and all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the sentient beings.

All praise belongs to Allah...

About the Translator:

Christopher 'Khalil' Moore was born in the United States into a practicing Christian family. He came to the path of Islam in the summer of 1994 at the age of 19. Since then he has studied Arabic and

Islamic knowledge in the blessed city of Madinah (1996-1999), the deserts of West Africa, the Atlas Mountains of southern Morocco, and the Hadramawt Valley of Yemen. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English, with a minor in Religious Studies (George Mason University), and hopes to complete his Master's and PhD in the fields of translation, interpretation, and Oriental Studies.

To send feedback or comments to the translator: feedback4moore@mac.com