



إِسْبَاتُ نِسْبَةِ اللَّهِ

ESTABLISHING ALLAH'S  
*Transcendence*

First Edition

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## PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The aim of this piece of research is to demonstrate that both the Qur’ān and the Arabic language itself support a figurative interpretation of many words and expressions that have been misinterpreted by some to assert literal attributes for Allah ﷻ. This grave error that some Muslims have fallen into is proven wrong via *tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi-l Qur’ān* (i.e. interpreting the Qur’ān using the Qur’ān itself) as well as reference to pre-Islāmic and early poetry. This work also shows how such interpretations can be traced back to the earliest generations of Muslims (i.e. the Salaf). These interpretations are cited within this text from a number of early authorities, in particular early descendants of the Prophet ﷺ such as Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī ؓ (d. 122 AH), Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī ؓ (d. 246 AH), and Imām Yahyā al-Hādī ؓ (d. 298 AH). This work also

heavily relies on interpretations from authorities relied on by the Generality (العامّة) of Muslims such as Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), al-Māwardī (d. 450 AH), and al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), who in many instances either utilised *ta'wīl* themselves or cited numerous early authorities who did so.

Indeed, there are numerous verses of the Qur'ān which categorically prove that Allāh ﷻ cannot possess literal body parts or be likened to the creation in any way. For instance, one verse says, 'He is Allāh – One and Indivisible (أحد)' (Qur'ān 112:1). According to the linguist Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (d. 395 AH), the word *aḥad* in the Arabic language refers to that which cannot be divided into parts and is indivisible (لا يتجزأ and لا يقبل الانقسام).<sup>1</sup> That is to say, this verse proves that Allah cannot have any limbs, which are by definition parts of a body and divisible. Moreover, Allāh ﷻ cannot be compared to His creation. This is made clear in this verse in which the following rhetorical question is posed: 'Do you know of anything like Him?' (Qur'ān 19:65). Allāh ﷻ also revealed the verse, 'there is absolutely nothing like unto Him' (Qur'ān 42:11). This verse

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<sup>1</sup> Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdillāh b. Sahl al-'Askarī, *al-Furūq al-Lughawiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-'Ilm, 1991), 140.

makes it clear there can be no likening of Allāh ﷻ to His creation. Interestingly, the verse in its Arabic reads ‘ليس كمثله شيء’. The ‘ك’, a prefixative particle that carries the meaning of ‘like’, is of particular significance here. Were the letter ‘ك’ to be removed, it would *still* mean that nothing is like Him. However, as it is followed by the word ‘مثله’, which also means ‘like’, the denial of Allāh’s ﷻ likeness to anything whatsoever is made all the more emphatic. This type of formulation is called ‘توكيد’ in Arabic rhetoric (بلاغة).

# وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

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## ALLĀH’S ﷻ SPEECH TO MŪSĀ ﷺ

Some literalists have falsely alleged that the verse ‘... and Allāh spoke to Mūsā with speech (تَكْلِيمًا) ...’ (Qur’ān 4:164) means that Allāh ﷻ spoke to Mūsā ﷺ directly, i.e. without any created intermediary. However, this verse was interpreted by Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī ﷺ (d. 298 AH) to mean that ‘... Allāh created speech, through the tree, that Mūsā ﷺ could hear and understand’.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this view of the literalists is proven false by Allāh’s ﷻ saying, ‘it is not fitting for any human being that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration, from

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<sup>2</sup> Imām al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Tafsīr al-Imām al-Hādī* (Saadah: Dār Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī, 2012), 1:179.

behind a veil, or that He sends a messenger [i.e. an angel] to inspire by His permission that which He wills' (Qur'an 42:51).

The beginning of the above verse clearly indicates that the issuance of speech directly from Allāh ﷻ is impossible: 'it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him' except via the three options listed at the end of the verse. Moreover, Allāh ﷻ makes it clear that He spoke to Mūsā ؑ via the medium of created speech when He says, 'but when [Mūsā] was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed place, from the tree: "O Mūsā! Verily, I am Allāh, the Lord of the worlds"' (Qur'an 28:30). This address to Mūsā ؑ must have been a creation itself – how could something uncreated come from a place ('called from the right side of the valley'), emanate from a created object ('from the tree'), and consist of letters and words ('O Mūsā')?

It has also been argued by some of the literalists that the structure of the sentence and its use of the emphatic verbal root imply that Allāh ﷻ spoke directly to Mūsā ؑ without the use of a created intermediary. The reply to this is that the use of 'تَكْلِيْمًا' as an emphatic verbal root does not mean that Allāh ﷻ spoke without the intermediary of created speech. Similar uses of emphatic verbal roots are used elsewhere in the Qur'an. For example, the Exalted says, 'Verily, it is We who have revealed

the Qur'ān to you in stages (تَنْزِيلًا)' (Qur'ān 76:23). In this verse, Allāh ﷻ uses the emphatic verbal root 'in stages' (تَنْزِيلًا) to indicate the revelation, yet none would deny that said revelation took place through the medium of the created archangel, Jibrīl ﷺ. All of this is to say, to argue that the use of the emphatic verbal noun precludes a created intermediary is simply invalid.

# السميع

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## ALL - HEARING

The meaning of this concept with regard to Allāh ﷻ was explained by Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī ؑ, who commented the following:

**If someone asks:** ‘It is mentioned in the Qur’ān that **وهو السميع العليم** - “He is the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing” (Qur’ān 6:13). What does “All-Hearing” (السميع) mean according to your belief?’

**We answer them with:** It has four meanings that are known to, and understood by, all Arabs.

**The first meaning:** ‘All-Hearing’ (سميع) means ‘All-Knowing’ (عليم). The proof for that is His saying, **أَمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ** - ‘Or do they think that We hear not their secret thoughts (سرهم) and

their private conversations? Yes, [We do], and Our messengers [i.e. angels] are with them recording' (Qur'an 43:80). A secret thought is something that is concealed within one's mind and is not known to others, and a private conversation is held amongst a group of people. A secret that is [kept] in one's heart cannot be heard, as it is concealed; it was not disclosed, explained, or heard. We only hear what is uttered by another's tongue and is revealed by someone. Thus, this *āyah* has reprimanded and disgraced [its addressees] for imagining that anything is hidden from Allāh ﷻ, whether it be a secret or otherwise. As He said: 'do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations?' And He confirms: 'We do know, and We are aware of the secrets they conceal and hide inside their minds'.

**The second meaning:** His name, 'the All-Hearing' (السميع), means that He is the One who hears and responds to the supplications (prayers) of His faithful servants. The proof for that lies in that He informed us that His prophet Zakariyyā ﷺ said, رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ – 'My Lord! Grant me, by your grace, righteous offspring; You are certainly the Hearer of all supplications' (Qur'an 3:38) and that His friend Ibrāhīm ﷺ said, إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

– ‘Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication’ (Qur’ān 14:39). He, peace be upon him, meant that ‘my Lord responds to whom He wills’. This is like when the Arabs say to someone, ‘Allāh has heard your supplication’ to mean that He has responded to your request/plea.

**The third meaning:** The meaning of All-Hearing (السميع) also relates to when we are praying and resume the standing posture after bowing (*rukū*), at which point we say, سمع الله لمن حمده – ‘Allāh hears those who praise Him’. What we mean by that is that Allāh ﷻ accepts those who praise Him, and He rewards those who thank Him.

These are the three meanings with which we are permitted to describe Allāh, the Most Merciful. They are clear to those who know Arabic.

**The fourth meaning** – with which describing Allāh the Glorious in any way is impermissible, as it applies only to creatures – pertains to hearing with ears and listening to voices and sounds. Exalted be He, the One, above that! How could one possibly say such a thing about the Glorious One after hearing, لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ – ‘There is nothing like Him, for He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing’ (Qur’ān 42:11) and وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ – ‘Nor is

there to Him any equivalent' (Qur'ān 112:4). The 'equivalent' is the like, and it is a rival – whether it be in greatness or smallness. Therefore, if He had limbs and organs, then He would undoubtedly have had a body. If He had a body, then incidents and time would affect it, and He would be exceedingly similar to the humans that He created. And were that the case, he would have been a creature rather than the Creator, because every body must have a creator, just as every object must have a maker and every deed must have a doer. Glory be to the One who resembles none of that! We cannot describe Him except with what He described Himself, as in verses 22–24 of Sūrah al-Ḥashr.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Imām al-Hādī, *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Imām al-Hādī* (Saadah: Markaz Ahl al-Bayt lil-Dirāsah al-Islāmiyyah, 2001), 140–142.

## البصير

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### ALL - SEEING

Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī has also explained the meaning of this. He wrote the following as a response to those who were so bold as to claim that Allāh ﷻ sees with eyes like those of His servants in his *tafsīr* of **وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ** – ‘Allāh is the All-Seeing of His servants’ (Qur’ān 3:20):

If someone were to ask about this due to ignorance or misguidance, we would respond that ‘all-seeing’ (بصير) has two clear meanings according to the scholars.

**The first:** He is knowledgeable regarding things. For example, when the Arabs say, ‘so-and-so is all-seeing (بصير) in *fiqh*, grammar, and arithmetic’ or ‘. . . all-seeing (بصير) in poetry and speech in all causes’, they mean that one possesses great knowledge of the thing and its details. This

applies to the saying of the Most Merciful, **وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ** – ‘**Allāh is All-Seeing of His servants**’, in which case it means ‘knowledgeable regarding them and aware of all their affairs and hidden secrets’.

**The other meaning:** Sight and seeing with a physical eye, above which Allāh ﷻ is exalted because it leads to similitude with creatures. It is not permitted to describe the Lord of the Worlds with such a thing, as He said, **لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ** – ‘There is nothing like Him, for He alone is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing’ (Qur’ān 42:11).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Imām al-Hādī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 143.

# يد الله

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## THE ‘HAND’ OF ALLĀH ﷻ

One verse that some have used to falsely assert that Allāh ﷻ has *literal* hands is: ‘the Jews say, “the hand of Allāh is tied up”. [Rather], their own hands are tied up, and they are cursed for what they have said! But *His* hands are outspread, and He distributes [His bounty] as He wills’ (Qur’ān 5:64). However, a number of early authorities have pointed that the Jews’ assertion was not in the literal sense. For instance, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH) presents this as the position of Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68 AH).<sup>5</sup> Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH) also reports this as the view of Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104 AH), ‘Ikrimah (d. 13 AH),

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<sup>5</sup> Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 2001), 8:553.

Qatādah (d. 118 AH), al-Suddī (d. 127 AH), and al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 105 AH).<sup>6</sup>

As al-Ṭabarī points out, this is an expression in the Arabic language that refers to greed (البخل).<sup>7</sup> He also points out that ‘his hands are outspread’, in Arabic, is an idiomatic expression of generosity (العطاء).<sup>8</sup> In support of his claim, al-Ṭabarī cites the following line of poetry said by al-A‘shā (d. 7 AH):

يداك يدا مجد فكف مفيدة وكف إذا ما ضن بالزاد تنفق

*Your hands are hands of glory – a beneficial hand, a hand that spends more than enough!*<sup>9</sup>

Another verse that is misused as evidence of Allāh’s ﷻ purported possession of physical limbs is: ‘He said, “O Iblis, what prevented you prostrating to what I created with My own hands? Were you overcome by arrogance, or are you one of the exalted?”’ (Qur’ān 38:75). ‘Hands’, in the phrase ‘with my own

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<sup>6</sup> Abū al-Fiḍā’ Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar b. Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm* (Riyadh: Dār Ṭaybah, 1997), 3:146.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 8:552

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 553.

hands', was interpreted by Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī رحمته (d. 246 AH) to mean 'with my knowledge (علم) and ability (قدرة), and without any partner (بنفسي)'.<sup>10</sup>

Another verse adduced in support of the literalist view is: 'Behold, all who pledge their allegiance to you indeed pledge their allegiance to Allāh; the hand of Allāh is over their hands' (Qur'ān 48:10). However, the word 'hand' in the phrase 'hand of Allāh' was interpreted by Imām Zayd رحمته to mean 'power' (قدرة).<sup>11</sup> This same interpretation was also offered by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, who remarked, 'Allāh's power is above theirs' (قوة الله فوق قوتهم).<sup>12</sup>

Yet another verse is: 'blessed is the One in Whose hands rests all authority, and He is Most Able [to do] all things' (Qur'ān 67:1). The word 'hands' in this verse was interpreted by Imām al-Qāsim al-Rassī رحمته to mean 'dominion' (ملك).<sup>13</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī, *Majmū' Kutub wa Rasā'il al-Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī* (Sana'a: Dār al-Ḥikmah al-Yamaniyyah, 2001), 1:589.

<sup>11</sup> Imām Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ālamiyyah, 1992), 296.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 21:254.

<sup>13</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Majmū' Kutub*, 589.

interpretation was also given by al-Qurṭubī, who attributes this view to Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 151 AH).<sup>14</sup>

The following verse has also been used: ‘on the Day of Resurrection, the whole Earth will be within His grasp. The heavens will be rolled up in His right hand – Glory be to Him! He is far above the partners they ascribe to Him!’ (Qur’ān 39:67). However, the phrase that includes ‘right hand’ in this verse has been interpreted by al-Māwardī (d. 450 AH) to mean ‘subjugated to his power (قوة) and dominion (ملك)’.<sup>15</sup> Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī رحمته الله also interpreted the phrase as ‘dominion’ (ملك).<sup>16</sup>

Another verse they bring says, ‘We have made the heavens with Our own hands, and We are expanding it’ (Qur’ān 51:47). However, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī cites the opinions of Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid b. Jabr, Qatādah, Ibn Zādhān al-Thaqafi (d. 131 AH),

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<sup>14</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Kalām* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 2006), 21:109.

<sup>15</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa al-Uyūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1993), 5:134.

<sup>16</sup> Imām al-Hādī, *Tafsīr*, 1:451.

and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161 AH), all of whom stated that ‘hands’ in this verse refers to ‘power’ (قوة).<sup>17</sup>

Some have tried to escape this point by arguing that the word ‘أيدٍ’ is not used in the Qur’ān or the Arabic language as the plural of ‘hand’. However, this claim is invalidated by the following verse: ‘have they feet upon which to walk? Or have they hands (أيدٍ) with which to grasp? Or have they eyes with which to see? Or have they ears with which to hear?’ (Qur’ān 7:195). The word ‘أيدٍ’ being used as the plural of ‘hand’ (يدٍ) is also supported by such authoritative dictionaries as *al-Muḥīṭ* by al-Fayrūzābādī (d. 817 AH),<sup>18</sup> *Tāj al-‘Arūs* by al-Zabīdī (d. 1205 AH),<sup>19</sup> *Lisān al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711 AH),<sup>20</sup> and others.

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<sup>17</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 21:545.

<sup>18</sup> Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb b. Muḥammad al-Fayrūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 2005), 1347.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Murtaḍā Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs* (Kuwait: Mu’assasah al-Kuwayt lil-Taḳaddum al-‘Ilm, 2001), 40:339.

<sup>20</sup> Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Manẓūr al-Khazrajī, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Riyadh: Wizārah al-Shu‘ūn al-Islāmiyyah wa al-Da‘wah wa al-Irshād, 1882), 20:302.

The Qur'ān also uses other figures of speech that include the word 'hands'. For example, we see in one verse that 'falsehood cannot approach it from between its hands (بين يديه) or from behind it; it is a revelation from the Wise, Worthy of All Praise' (Qur'ān 41:42). The Qur'ān itself obviously does not have literal hands. Similarly, describing a village that had been destroyed, Allāh ﷻ says, 'so We made it an example to those between its hands (بين يديها) and those who came after it, and a lesson to those who fear Allāh' (Qur'ān 2:66). Again, a village clearly does not have literal hands.

Moreover, those who insist on a literal meaning of 'اليد', asserting that the word refers to a 'hand', need to account for why it does not refer to another literal meaning, such as 'arm', which is also possible in the Arabic language. For example, the believers are commanded to ' . . . wash your face and arms (أيديكم) up to the elbow. . . ' (Qur'ān 5:6) when they stand to perform their ritual prayers.

# عين الله

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## THE ‘EYE’ OF ALLĀH ﷻ

One verse that is manipulated into supporting the otherwise baseless assertion that Allāh ﷻ has *literal* eyes is the following: ‘So patiently await the decision of your Lord, for you are before Our eyes; and proclaim the praises of your Lord when you arise’ (Qur’ān 52:48). However, the phrase that features ‘eyes’ in this verse was interpreted by Imām Zayd ﷺ as an idiom that means to be under Allāh’s ﷻ protection (‘حفظه’).<sup>21</sup> Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī also interpreted this figuratively, again, to mean under Allāh’s ﷻ protection (‘مُحْفَظُكَ’).<sup>22</sup> Indeed, this understanding is well

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<sup>21</sup> Imām Zayd, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 308.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 21:605.

established in the Arabic language, and it is included the *Lisān al-ʿArab*.<sup>23</sup>

Another verse that has been used in a similar fashion is, ‘build the Ark under Our eyes and in accordance with Our revelation’ (Qurʾān 11:37). At this juncture, al-Qurṭubī cites al-Ḍaḥḥāk and Sufyān al-Thawrī, who both interpreted the phrase including ‘eyes’ in this verse to mean ‘under the command’ (بأمر) of Allāh ﷻ.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 17:175.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Kalām*, 11:109.

## وجه الله

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### THE ‘FACE’ OF ALLĀH ﷻ

The phrase ‘وجه الله’ appears in several verses of the Qur’ān. For instance, one verse says, ‘**invoke no god other than Allāh, for there is no god but Him. All things are bound to perish except His face. His is the judgement, and to Him you shall be returned**’ (Qur’ān 28:88). In this instance, ‘face’ was interpreted by Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī ﷺ to mean Allāh ﷻ Himself (هُوَ رَبُّكَ), as well as His essence (ذَاتٌ).<sup>25</sup> Al-Qurṭubī also cites this same interpretation as the opinion of Mujāhid b. Jabr.<sup>26</sup> Another, similar verse says, ‘**and there will remain the face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour**’ (Qur’ān 55:27). Al-Qurṭubī states that Ibn ‘Abbās also interpreted this to mean Allāh ﷻ

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<sup>25</sup> Imām al-Hādī, *Tafsīr*, 2:131.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Kalām*, 16:331.

Himself.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation is supported by the verse that precedes it, which says, ‘all that is upon the Earth shall perish’ (Qur’ān 55:26). In other words, although we will all perish, Allāh ﷻ *Himself* will remain.

Similarly, the Qur’ān says, ‘they give food, despite their love of it, to the poor, orphans, and captives [saying], “we feed you only for the face of Allāh; we do not desire any recompense or thanks from you”’ (Qur’ān 76:8–9). Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī provides an idiomatic interpretation of this verse, stating that the ‘face of Allāh’ in this context refers to one seeking nearness to Allāh ﷻ (القربة إليه).<sup>28</sup>

Other figurative usages of the word ‘face’ (وجه) also appear elsewhere in the Qur’ān; for example: ‘so direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. Adhere to the *fiṭrah* of Allāh upon which He has created all people. No change should there be in the creation of Allāh. That is the correct religion, but most people do not know’ (Qur’ān 30:30). In this verse, ‘directing one’s face toward the religion’ clearly means to direct oneself towards it. Figurative usage of the phrase also appears in this verse, ‘the east and the west belong to Allāh; whichever

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Kalām*, 20:132.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:546.

way you turn, there is the Face of Allāh' (Qur'ān 2:115). Indeed, those who have asserted that Allāh ﷻ is *literally* above the throne cannot at the same time assert that Allāh ﷻ has a literal face that can be found in every direction.

Moreover, commenting on the verses that make mention of the 'face of Allāh', Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī رحمه الله stated that these verses cannot possibly be interpreted literally. The *imām* argues that literalists who have ascribed parts to Allāh ﷻ would have to concede that all the other literal anatomical attributes that they have ascribed to Him will cease to exist at some point in time – all except His face, that is.<sup>29</sup>

This idiomatic usage of 'وجه' (face) is heavily attested in the Arabic language, and the dictionary *Lisān al-'Arab* includes the following expression as an example: 'this is the *face* of the opinion' (هذا وجه الرأي), i.e. this is the opinion *itself*.<sup>30</sup> The same dictionary also cites the grammarian Abū Ishāq al-Zajjāj (d. 311 AH), who used the verse '**everything will be destroyed except His face**' (Qur'ān 28:88) to highlight this meaning.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Majmū' Kutub*, 1:473.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 17:454.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

# جنب الله

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## THE ‘SIDE’ OF ALLĀH ﷻ

The phrase ‘جنب الله’ appears in the verse, ‘. . . lest one should say, “oh, for my regret in that I indeed neglected my duty towards (literally, ‘in the side of’) Allāh, and decidedly I was one of the scoffers”’ (Qur’ān 39:56). This was interpreted by Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, who said that ‘جنب الله’ refers to ‘أمر الله’ (the command of Allāh).<sup>32</sup> This usage is attested in the Arabic language and can be found in al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī’s (d. 502 AH) dictionary.<sup>33</sup> This is also the interpretation given by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, who said that it refers to ‘not performing the duties that Allāh ordered’. Al-Ṭabarī further cites this as the

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<sup>32</sup> Imām Zayd, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 274.

<sup>33</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Maktabah Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997), 129.

view of Mujāhid b. Jabr and Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 20:234.

# الساق

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## THE ‘SHIN’

Some literalists have alleged that Allāh ﷻ has a *literal* shin. The verse of the Qur’ān that is manipulated into justifying this claim is, ‘on the Day when the shin will be exposed, and they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, they will be unable to do so . . .’ (Qur’ān 68:42). But their treatment of this verse is inappropriate for several reasons.

First, the verse does not mention in the first place whose shin it is that will be exposed. Therefore, to assert that it is Allāh’s ﷻ has neither rational nor textual basis.

Second, the interpretation given by Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī ﷺ is that shin in this verse is a figurative reference to ‘intensity’ (شدة).<sup>35</sup> The *imām* references the following line of early poetry,

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<sup>35</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Majmū‘ Kutub*, 1:482.

which features the same usage and is also cited by Ibn ‘Abbās:  
وقامت الحرب بنا على ساق – ‘*The war has become intensified for us*,’<sup>36</sup>

In fact, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī says that a number of the Ṣaḥābah referred to this interpretation, and he cites a report with a chain of transmission from Ibn ‘Abbās, who said that ‘shin’ in the above verse refers to ‘a day of war and direness (حرب وشدة)’.<sup>37</sup> This report was classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by *muḥaddithīn* al-Ḥākim (d. 405 AH) and al-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH).<sup>38</sup> Indeed, this meaning originates from the custom amongst Arab warriors of the time to hike up the hems of their garments, exposing their shins, as they prepared for the most dire conditions of battle.

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<sup>36</sup> Abū Ishāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Tha‘labī, *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2002), 10:19.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:186.

<sup>38</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad al-Ḥākim al-Naysāpūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), 2:542.

# الكرسي

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## THE CELESTIAL CHAIR

The word كرسي, which literally means ‘chair’, only appears twice in the Qur’ān. In one instance, it refers to the throne of Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ in the 34<sup>th</sup> āyah of Sūrah Ṣād. In another verse, it is associated with Allāh ﷻ Himself: ‘... He knows what is before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His *kursī* extends over the heavens and the Earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great’ (Qur’ān 2:255).

Some have misunderstood كرسي in the latter instance as referring to a literal chair or footstool for Allāh ﷻ. However, the interpretation given by Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī ؑ is that ‘كرسي’,

in the context of this verse, means ‘knowledge’ (علم).<sup>39</sup> This interpretation can also be found in al-Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr* in a report with a chain of transmission from Ibn ‘Abbās.<sup>40</sup> This report was classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by the *muḥaddith* Ḥasan al-Saqqāf al-Shāfi‘ī (b. 1380 AH).<sup>41</sup>

The aforementioned connotation of the word is also attested in the Arabic language; it can be found in the authoritative dictionaries, such as *Lisān al-‘Arab*,<sup>42</sup> and Abu al-Qāsim al-Zamakhsharī even includes it in his thesaurus and dictionary of figurative speech.<sup>43</sup>

In his *tafsīr*, Abū Ḥayyan al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745 AH) – well known as the foremost linguist of his time – also includes the following note regarding the figurative usage (and its etymology) of the word in question: ‘it was also said that the كرسي means ‘knowledge’ because the scholar sits on the chair. Here, the object was given the name of the place where it is

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<sup>39</sup> Imām Zayd, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 4:537.

<sup>41</sup> Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Saqqāf, *Ṣaḥīḥ Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah* (Amman: Dār al-Imām al-Nawawī, 1995), 439.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 8:78.

<sup>43</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2009), 540.

[situated] figuratively. That is why scholars are called كراسي – they are the ones upon whom we rely’.<sup>44</sup>

This meaning is also found in early poetry. For example, Abū Dhu’ayb al-Hudhalī (d. 27 AH) composed the following line of poetry: ‘you do not establish (تكرس) knowledge of the unseen on creation’.<sup>45</sup> In this poem, the word كرسى is used as a verb to connote that ‘you do not know’.

Moreover, the full context of Qur’ān 2:255 clearly supports this interpretation, as prior to the mention of ‘كرسى’, Allāh ﷻ says (emphasis added), ‘He *knows* what is before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His *knowledge* except for what He wills’.

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<sup>44</sup> Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ‘Alī al-Gharnāṭī al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2010), 2:290.

<sup>45</sup> Nashwān b. Sa‘īd al-Ḥimyarī, *Shams al-‘Ulūm* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1999), 5798.

# العرش

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## THE THRONE OF ALLĀH ﷻ

Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī was asked regarding the following verse of Allāh, glorified be He: ‘His throne was over the waters’ (Qur’ān 11:7). This was interpreted by the *imām* to mean that Allāh’s ﷻ dominion (الملك) was over the waters. As the *imām* explains, nothing other than water had been created by Allāh ﷻ at the time in question, and His dominion was thus over that. In the same way, Allāh’s ﷻ dominion (الملك) is now over the heavens and the Earth.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, while commenting on the verse, ‘on that Day, eight mighty angels will bear the throne of your Lord above

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<sup>46</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Kitāb fī Masā’il ‘an al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm* (Sana’a: Mu’assasah al-Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī al-Thaqafiyyah), 52.

them' (Qur'ān 69:17),<sup>47</sup> Imāms Yaḥyā al-Hādī and al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān (d. 566 AH) ﷺ remarked that this verse indicates that eight angels will be responsible for Allāh's ﷻ dominion (ملك) on the Day of Judgment.<sup>48</sup>

This meaning of 'العرش' is well established, as evinced by the most authoritative Arabic lexicons. For instance, one meaning of the word given by Ibn Manẓūr in his *Lisān al-'Arab* is 'dominion' (الملك).<sup>49</sup> The early scholar and descendant of the Prophet ﷺ, Sayyid Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Ṭabarī (d. 240 AH), also cites the figurative use of the word in question from a line of poetry that Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā (d. 13 BH) composed regarding how the 'Abs clan's loss of their dominion: 'تداركتما' عبساً وقد سل عرشها – 'You have seen 'Abs; their throne has tumbled!'<sup>50</sup> This demonstrates that such a usage was known amongst the Arabs of the time.

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<sup>47</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Majmū' Kutub*, 1:667.

<sup>48</sup> Imām al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, *Ḥaqā'iq al-Ma'rifah fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* (Sana'a: Mu'assasah al-Imām Zayd b. 'Alī al-Thaqafiyyah, 2003), 412.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 8:203.

<sup>50</sup> Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Ṭabarī, *al-Munīr* (Saadah: Markaz Ahl al-Bayt lil-Dirāsah al-Islāmiyyah, 2000), 75.

## الاستواء

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### ALLAH'S ﷻ 'RISING OVER THE THRONE'

Commenting on the verse of Allāh, 'The Most Compassionate rose over the throne' (Qur'ān 20:5), al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī ﷺ offers a figurative interpretation. According to the *imām*, this refers to Allāh ﷻ 'establishing His dominion' (ملك). The *imām* then produces the example of how the early Arabs would say 'استوى عليها' (he has established himself over it) when someone took control of a country.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Imām al-Rassī, *Kitāb fī Masā'il*, 52.

This usage of the word is highlighted by Abū Naṣr al-Jawharī (d. 393 AH), who cites the following line of poetry by al-Akhṭal al-Taghlibī (d. 92 AH):

قد استوى بشر على العراق من غير سيف وذن مهراق

*Bishr established mastery over Iraq with neither sword nor bloodshed.*<sup>52</sup>

Likewise, in his commentary on the verse, ‘then He rose towards the heavens’ (Qur’ān 2:29), al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī راسي interprets the phrase to mean that Allāh ﷻ has ‘absolute control over it’ (نفذ أمره فيه).<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī also cites the interpretation of the *Tābiʿ* al-Rabīʿ b. Anas (d. 139 AH) of the verse, ‘it is He who created everything on the Earth for you; then He then turned (ثم استوى) towards heaven and fashioned it into the seven heavens. He has knowledge of all things’ (Qur’ān 2:29). Al-Rabīʿ b. Anas

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<sup>52</sup> Abū Naṣr Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2009), 569.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

interpreted ‘استوى’ in this verse to mean ‘علو’ (exaltedness or greatness), and al-Ṭabarī commented on this interpretation, insisting that what he meant was that Allāh ﷻ is highly elevated over the heavens in ملك (dominion), not in place or direction.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the Ash‘arī theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH), when commenting on Qur’ān 20:5, rather astutely points out that ‘استوى’ cannot be interpreted literally because the Earth is spherical. That is to say, what is in the ‘upward’ direction for some on the planet is ‘downward’ for others.<sup>55</sup>

The aforementioned interpretations given by Imām al-Rassī رحمه الله and al-Rabī‘ b. Anas are supported by other verses of the Qur’ān, such as ‘truly, your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the Earth in six days, then rose above the throne (استوى على العرش), directing the affair (يدبر الأمر) . . .’ (Qur’ān 10:3). Similarly, Allāh ﷻ says in Qur’ān 7:54:

Indeed, your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the Earth in six days, then rose above the throne. He makes the day and night overlap in rapid succession. He created the Sun, the Moon, and the stars – all subject to His

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<sup>54</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:454.

<sup>55</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. al-Ḥusayn al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 22:6.

command (مسخرات بأمره). The creation and the command (أمر) belong to Him. Blessed is Allāh – Lord of all worlds!

## فوق

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### ALLĀH ﷻ IS ‘ABOVE’ CREATION

There are a number of Qur’ānic verses which say that Allāh ﷻ is ‘above’ (فوق) His creation. But some have, incorrectly, interpreted these verses literally. One such verse is, ‘He reigns supreme above His creation, and He alone is the Wise, the Aware’ (Qur’ān 6:18). Allāh’s ﷻ being referred to as ‘فوق’ (above) in this verse was interpreted by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī to mean that Allāh ﷻ is above the creation in the sense of His authority (قهر).<sup>56</sup> This connotation of ‘فوق’ has its basis in the Arabic idiom, which al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī confirms in his dictionary.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 9:180.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 501.

This usage of the word can also be found elsewhere in the Qur'an itself. For instance, in one verse, regarding Mūsā عليه السلام and his people, Fir'aun arrogantly says, '... indeed, we are subjugators above them (وإنا فوقهم قاهرون)' (Qur'an 7:127). The context of this verse clearly shows that Fir'aun was asserting his dominion over Mūsā عليه السلام and his people, not that he was literally above them.

The Mu'tazilī theologian al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415 AH) offered a similar interpretation in his commentary of the verse, 'do you feel secure that He who is in the heaven will not cause the earth to sink beneath you and then begin to quake?' (Qur'an 67:16). According to the Qāḍī, this is an indication of Allāh's عليه السلام dominion over the heavens, not His literal location therein.<sup>58</sup>

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī comments on the verse, 'they fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded' (Qur'an 16:50), presenting the interpretation that Allāh عليه السلام is 'above in power (قدرة) and establishing dominion (قهر)'.<sup>59</sup> This interpretation of Qur'an 16:50 is also supported by the fact the

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<sup>58</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī, *Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'an al-Maṭā'īn* (Giza: al-Nāfidhah, 2006), 437.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, 20:47.

verse ends with the words, ‘. . . and they do what they are commanded (يؤمرن)’, which places it squarely in the context mentioned by al-Rāzī.

Al-Rāzī also points out, in response to the literalists, that Allāh ﷻ being above (فوق) in the literal sense would not lead to people experiencing fear, as the verse indicates. He then gives the example of a soldier standing guard atop the tower of his king’s palace – this soldier may be the lowliest of servants in the entire compound despite his location above his king. This is in addition to al-Rāzī’s other argument raised in the previous section, which is that the Earth is spherical, so such verses cannot be taken literally in any case.

Moreover, it would behove those who insist on interpreting the above verses literally to recall other, similar verses. For example, Allāh ﷻ says, ‘and He is Allāh, in the heavens and the Earth’ (Qur’ān 6:3). We also see that Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, in one verse, says before travelling the earth, ‘indeed, I will go to my Lord; He will guide me’ (Qur’ān 37:99). These verses certainly do not mean that Allāh ﷻ is literally *on* the Earth, and not even the opponents of the aforementioned interpretations would make such an assertion.

Additionally, the scholars of the Ahl al-Bayt عليه السلام remarked that Allāh ﷻ is not located within a place. For example, Amīr

al-Mu'minin Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ؑ (d. 40 AH) says, 'Allāh existed eternally, and there was no place; He is now as He was (i.e. without a place)'.<sup>60</sup> And his grandson, Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn ؑ (d. 95 AH), made a similar statement: 'O Allāh! You are clear of all imperfection. You are Allāh, the One Whom no place contains'.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-Fīraq* (Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Sīnā, 1988), 287.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn fī Sharḥ Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī, 1994), 4:380; Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A'lamī lil-Maṭbu'āt, 2001), 209.

# رؤية الله

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## THE VISION OF ALLĀH ﷻ

Some have falsely asserted that it will be possible to see Allāh ﷻ in the afterlife as a reward for believers (i.e. the so-called ‘Beatific Vision’ doctrine). However, this misunderstanding is incompatible with a number of Qur’ānic verses, Allāh’s ﷻ absolute transcendence, and the understanding of the scholars of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ and others from the Salaf.

The main verse that is adduced in support of those who favour a literal رؤية (vision) is, ‘**faces, on that Day, will be radiant, looking to their Lord**’ (Qur’ān 75:22–23). As for the part of the verse that says, ‘**looking to their Lord**’, the assertion that has been levelled by some proponents of the aforementioned doctrine is that the verse in question must be interpreted literally because the verb ‘looking’ (ناظرة) is followed with the particle ‘to’ (إلى). But this argument lacks any

real basis, as a simple matter of fact, because the phrase ‘looking to’ (ناظرة إلى) was used figuratively by the Arabs at the time to connote such concepts as ‘expectation’ and ‘anticipation’. The classical dictionary, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, states that one can say to someone from whom they expect something, ‘I only look to Allāh (ننظر الله), and then to you’.<sup>62</sup>

Similar usages can also be found in lines of classical poetry. For instance, Ḥasan b. Thābit, a poet and Companion of the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘some faces at Badr were looking at (ناظرات إلى) the Most Gracious, waiting for success’.<sup>63</sup> Another poet, al-Nābighah al-Dhubiyānī (d. 48 BH), once said, ‘I looked at you (نظرت إليك) for a favour that you never performed’.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the poet Jamīl b. Ma‘mar (d. 82 AH) said, ‘verily, I look to you (إليك لناظر) for what you promised as the impoverished looks to the rich and prosperous’.<sup>65</sup> This same figurative interpretation of the verse is also attributed to Mujāhid b. Jabr (from the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 7:73.

<sup>63</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd al-Awā’il wa Talkhīṣ al-Dalā’il* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah, 1987), 312.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Nābighah al-Dhubiyānī, *Dīwān al-Nābighah al-Dhubiyānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1996), 108.

<sup>65</sup> Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A’yān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1972), 1:367.

Salaf), as reported in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, via numerous chains of transmission.<sup>66</sup>

One verse that can be used as evidence to prove that Allāh ﷻ *cannot* be seen is, 'vision does not reach Him; rather, He reaches all vision. He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware' (Qur'ān 6:103). This proves categorically that Allāh ﷻ cannot be seen or perceived with our eyes, as the use of the specific Arabic words used, i.e. 'vision' (أَبْصَار) and 'reach' (يَدْرِك), have no metaphorical or allegorical alternatives in this case. This is in contrast to the verse in Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, which contains the word 'looking' (نَاطِرَة) and is thus open to both literal and figurative interpretation. Proponents of the Beatific Vision doctrine, though, have asserted that Qur'ān 6:103 only applies to the vision we possess in this world. However, as such a specification is absent from the verse itself, it is therefore rejected.

A second verse that proves the impossibility of the Vision involves Allāh ﷻ saying to Mūsā ؑ, 'you shall never (لَنْ) see Me' (Qur'ān 7:143). This verse serves as explicit proof that Allāh ﷻ will be seen in neither this world nor the hereafter, as

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<sup>66</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23:508.

the negative particle ‘never’ (لَنْ) is used, which indicates a negation in the future tense.

Now, proponents of this doctrine raise the objection that, if it were truly impossible for Allāh ﷻ to be seen, then Mūsā ﷺ would never have asked. But the response to this is that Mūsā ﷺ was merely asking on behalf of his people, the proof for which is in the verse, ‘**verily, they asked Mūsā for something greater than that! They said, “show us Allāh clearly!” So, the thunderbolt seized them**’ (Qur’ān 4:153). Consequently, Mūsā ﷺ was not seized by the bolt, which shows that he did not ask on his own behalf.

In summary, a figurative interpretation of this verse is preferred over a literal reading for several reasons. First, this interpretation remains in accordance with the Arabic language while also precluding any contradictions with other verses of the Qur’ān that prohibit seeing Allāh ﷻ. Second, it maintains the transcendence of Allāh ﷻ insofar as He is not confined to created space and does not consist of an image, body, or form. Third, all of the verses that are used by those in support of the Beatific Vision doctrine have been interpreted figuratively by at least some of the Salaf. Lastly, this approach is narrated as having been that of the Imāms of the Prophetic Household, upon them be peace.

## فلما تجلى ربه للجبل

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### ALLĀH ﷻ ‘MANIFESTED HIS GLORY’ TO THE MOUNTAIN

Some literalists have also asserted that Allāh ﷻ literally descended to a mountain. They derive this notion from the part of the verse, ‘. . . when the Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He turned it into dust and Mūsā fell down upon his face, senseless . . .’ (Qur’ān 7:143). However, early scholars such as Imām Yaḥyā al-Hādī رحمه الله made it clear that the words ‘manifested His glory’ (تجلى ربه) is an idiomatic indication that Allāh ﷻ manifested ‘His signs’ (آياته) and ‘ability’ (قدرته).<sup>67</sup> The verse does not mean that Allah literally descended, or travelled

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<sup>67</sup> Imām al-Hādī, *Tafsīr*, 1:211.

from a place He previously occupied, to the mountain. Moreover, al-Qurṭubī cites a similar opinion as the position of Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr (d. 206 AH), who said that the phrase in question refers to His ‘command’ (أمره) and ‘ability’ (قدرته).<sup>68</sup>

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اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد

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<sup>68</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Kalām*, 9:324.