

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



شرح المرشد المعين على الضروري من علوم الدين

THE HELPFUL GUIDE OF SIDI IBN ASHIR
Introduction to Islamic Creed

Abdullah bin Hamid Ali

With the name of Allah, All-Merciful, All-Compassionate

*All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, and may peace and blessing be upon
Muhammad, master of the Messengers*

Author's Preface

With the Name of Allah, All-Merciful, All-Compassionate

This booklet is the first in a series of booklets and projects intended to heighten reader awareness of Islam and in particular the legal school of Imam Malik b. Anas (179 a.h.). Very little information on the school of Imam Malik exists in the English language. This project is termed "The Ibn 'Ashir Project" is hoped to inspire, educate, and provide English speakers with a valuable resource on Maliki Law.

I first became acquainted with the text of Sidi Abdul-Wahid b. 'Ashir while I was a student at the Qarawiyyin University of Fez, Morocco between the years of 1997 and 2001. I immediately came to know the value of this work, and begun my initial efforts to memorize and understand it.

Unfortunately, after memorizing much of it and then returning to America to the high work demands of Western society, I started to forget much of it, so I recorded the text on a cassette, and would listen to it to and from work in my car on the way to the SCI Chester State Correctional Facility in Chester, Pennsylvania.

After a time and after observing the poor sound quality of the cassette, one day I was inspired to visit the recording studio of a life-long friend of mine, Said Al-Khatib of DVS Productions, in order to record my recitation of the text onto cd.

Alhamdulillah, the recording went very well much beyond my initial expectations. It was shortly after that I got the idea to market the cd for sale. To date, a number of the cds have been sold in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas, and much praise has been given for the cadence, style of the recitation, and clearly spoken English translation.

Since some of the words of the translation are unclear and require more detail, I deemed it appropriate to provide people with a short commentary on the text. The commentary is based on the most popular commentaries and super-commentaries found, like those of Sidi Hamdun Ibn Al-Hajj and Muhammad Ahmad Mayyara—may Allah show them both mercy.

Sidi Abdul-Wahid b. Ahmad b. 'Ashir died in the year 1040 AH. His text has been memorized and taught for the past 400 years by Malikis. The text possesses a wealth of knowledge and other benefits that the common Muslim cannot dispense with.

The first section of the poem deals with matters of creed. The second portion covers the pillars of Islam. The last portion deals with the science of spiritual development and behavioral refinement which was traditionally known as Sufism (Tasawwuf).

This first cd only covers the fundamental matters of creed, and a general introduction to the spiritual divisions of the Islamic religion (Creed, Praxis, Spiritual and Behavioral Refinement). My original hope was to complete the recitation and commentary on the entire poem in 5 cds and books, and that is still my hope.

May Allah grant Lamppost Productions with His grace and guidance, and give us the endurance and forbearance required to properly bear the message of His humble servants. Amin.

Best regards,
Abdullah bin Hamid Ali
Lamppost Productions

المرشد المعين على الضروري من علوم الدين
The Helpful Guide to what is Essential to Know of the Sciences of the Religion

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I. ‘Abdul-Wahid Ibn ‘Ashir

يقول عبد الواحد ابن عاشر مبتدئنا بسم الإله القادر
الحمد لله الذي علمنا من العلوم ما به كلفنا
صلى و سلم على محمد و آله و صحبه و المقتدي

‘Abdul-Wāhid ibn ‘Āshir says while beginning in the name of the All-Powerful God:

All praise is due to Allah who has acquainted us with those sciences that He has obliged us to know.

May blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family, his companions, and the one who follows (them).

Explanation:

Abdul-Wāhid ibn ‘Āshir is Abdul-Wāhid ibn ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Āshir. His lineage can be traced back to the Anṣār tribe of Medina. His family was from Islamic Spain (Andalusia), and he was raised in the ancient city of Fez, Morocco. He was a versatile and devout religious scholar of the Islamic disciplines. He died in the year 1040 after the Hijrah, the third day of the month of Dhū al-Hijjah.

II. The Unsophisticated (Ummi)

و بعد فالعون من الله المجيد في نظم أبيات للأمي تفيد

Indeed, help comes from Allah, The Glorious, in composing poetic verses that are of benefit to the unsophisticated.

Explanation:

The unsophisticated or ‘ummī’ applies to anyone who lacks knowledge of something particular regardless of the scope of that person’s education. ‘Ummī’ is usually translated as ‘illiterate or unlettered.’ A more literal translation of ‘ummī’ would be ‘likened to one’s mother’ or ‘likened to the state upon which one’s mother gave birth to him.’ In one view, the origin of the term is taken from the illiterate slave woman who lives according to the custom of her foremothers and has learned neither writing nor reading.

So others were referred to as ‘ummī’ due to their likeness to her in that respect. What is actually intended by the ‘ummī’ in the above verse is ‘anyone who lacks knowledge of those matters discussed in the verses of this poem.’ So even a doctor, engineer, grammarian, or other person who takes on a particular art or profession is ‘ummī’ if he/she doesn’t have knowledge of what these verses contain. For that reason, I translated it as ‘unsophisticated.’ That is, these verses are of benefit to those who lack sophistication in the areas of creed (‘aqidah), law (fiqh), and the methods of attaining moral excellence (tasawwuf).

III. Islam's Three Pivotal Topics

في عقد الأشعري و فقه مالك في طريقة الجنيد السالك

They relate to the Doctrine of Imam Ash'arī, the Jurisprudence of Imam Mālik, and the Inner Path of Imam Junayd, The Traveler.

Explanation:

Abū Al-Hasan Al-Ash'arī: His name is Alī ibn Ismā'īl ibn Abī Bishr Ishāq ibn Sālim, Abū al-Hasan al-Ash'arī al-Yamanī al-Baṣrī al-Baḡhdādī (260-324). He was a descendent of the Yemeni Companion Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arī. He was the stepson and pupil of the Mu'tazilī teacher Abū `Alī al-Jubbā'ī at the outset of his studies. But once he reached the age of 40 he abandoned the Mu'tazili doctrines when Al-Jubbā'ī failed to resolve for him an issue concerning the supposed obligation of Allah to do what is most fitting and in the best interest of His creation, which was one of the pivotal tenets of the Mu'tazili creed.

Afterwards he announced his repentance from the Mu'tazili doctrines and aligned himself with the mainstream Sunni scholars of Islam in his time. Upon leaving Basra, he relocated in Baghdad and became the pupil of Abū Ishāq al-Marwazī (d. 340) from whom he took fiqh (law). He then dedicated most of his life to the refutation of the Mu'tazila, the Shi'a, and other deviant sects that appeared in Islam. He was given credit for codifying the creed of the mainstream Sunni Muslims, and was declared to be the Imam of Ahl Al-Sunnah wa Al-Jama'a of his time by the later Sunni authorities.

Mālik ibn Anas ibn Mālik ibn `Amr, al-Imam, Abū `Abd Allah al-Humyarī al-Aṣḡabāhī al-Madanī (93-179). He was known as the Imam of the Abode of Migration, and the Scholar of Medina whose coming was foretold by the Prophet Muhammad – may Allah bless and grant him peace. His school of law spread throughout much of the Islamic world, and he is given credit for being one of the first scholars to gather the hadith literature and classify them under the different chapters of law (fiqh). He is most prominent for his authorship of his book al-Muwatta' ("The Approved"), which has many versions, and was once counted among the six most reliable hadith canons. The version of Yahya bin Yahya Al-Andalusi has been declared by scholars to be the most authoritative version, since Yahya took it from him during the last year of Malik's life – may Allah show him mercy. The hadiths of the Muwatta are almost all indisputably considered to be sound. And before

Imam Bukhari composed his Sahih, it was hailed by Imam Al-Shafi'i as being the soundest book on the face of the Earth after the Book of Allah.

Imam Junayd was one of the chief personalities in the discipline of behavioral science, otherwise known as Sufism in the early period of Islam. He was the most popular of the disciples of Imam Al-Hārith ibn Asad Al-Muhāsibī – may Allah be pleased with him. Ibn 'Āshir states that his poem includes mention of the principles of Sufism and outlines an inner path or spiritual approach (ṭarīqa) as espoused by the Shaykh of the Sufis, Imam Junayd – may Allah have mercy upon him. Junayd was known as a Sālik, which I have translated as 'traveler.' A Sālik – in the jargon of behavior experts (Sufis) – is one who follows a path with a defined objective. The objective in the case of the person seeking to discipline and purify his/her soul is to reach Allah in life before death. Reaching Allah simply means reaching his satisfaction and good pleasure. The opposite of the Sālik is the Majdhūb, who is one who - metaphorically speaking - is dragged or pulled to Allah. The Sālik has to exert energy and effort to reach Allah. But the Majdhūb who has traversed the paths of the Sālik, due to achieving closeness to the Divine Presence, is now tugged and pulled by the Creator to His good pleasure. So he/she no longer needs to exert effort to reach Him. Imam Junayd's full name is Al-Junayd ibn Muhammad ibn al-Junayd, Abu al-Qasim al-Qawariri al-Khazzaz al-Nahawandi al-Baghdadi al-Shafi'i (d. 298). The distinct character of his spiritual approach is that it doesn't require that one have a shaykh or make bay'a (pledge) to him.

The concept of taking a shaykh and a bay'a was something that didn't start until the 12th and 13th centuries of the Christian era. It is reported that as a boy al-Junayd heard his uncle being asked about thankfulness, whereupon he said: "It is to not use His favors in order to disobey Him." In his shop in his market place he would pray approximately 400 rak'ats per day. Like the Sunni imams of his generation, al-Junayd hated theological disputations about Allah and His Attributes. He said: "The least [peril] that lies within kalam (speculative theology) is the elimination of Allah's awe from the heart. And when the heart is left devoid of Allah's awe, it becomes devoid of belief."

IV. The Judgment Passed by the Intellect

مقدمة لكتاب الإعتقاد معينة لقارئها على المراد
و حكمنا العقلي قضية بلا وقف عادة أو وضع جلا

First: is an introduction to the Book of Creed that helps the one who reads it to reach the objective:

The judgment passed by the intellect is a proposition that depends neither upon what is inferred through custom nor upon any clear judgment inferred through the sacred law.

Explanation:

The objective in this case is to learn the fundamental principles and rules of Islamic Doctrine.

A *rational judgment* or the judgment passed by the intellect is one that depends solely upon what the mind deems to be possible, impossible, or necessary. An example of that is $1 + 1 = 2$ or $2 - 1 = 1$. If a proposition or judgment results from what one experiences or witnesses repeatedly from his surroundings, it is called an *empirical judgment* or judgment based on custom. That is like the judgment that *fire burns* or that *food satiates*.

These judgments or conclusions are based on what we experience and witness everyday.

And if the proposition or judgment results from revelation or scripture it is deemed a *judgment of the sacred law*. This is like the judgment passed that prayer is compulsory.

Its sole basis is revelation or the interpretation thereof.

V. Necessary, Impossible, and Possible

أقسام مقتضاه بالحصص تماز هي الوجوب الاستحالة الجواز

The divisions of what reason requires are distinctly defined. They are: 1) the judgment that something is a necessity, 2) the judgment that something is an impossibility, and 3) the judgment that something is a possibility.

Explanation:

In other words, the judgments or rulings passed by the intellect fall into three categories.

The mind judges that something is either necessary, impossible, or possible.

فواجب لا يقبل النفي بحال و ما أبى الثبوت عقلا المحال

A necessary matter doesn't accept to be negated by any means. And what refuses to be confirmed rationally is the impossible.

Explanation:

The definition of a necessary matter or existence is 'whatever the mind rules that its existence or presence *must be*', like the fact that there must be a beginning for the universe.

An impossible thing is one that 'the mind rules that its existence cannot be', like the impossibility of the universe existing without a beginning.

و جائز ما قبل الأمرين سم للضروري و النظر كل قسم

As for something that is possible, describe it as what is susceptible to both judgments.

Each judgment is divided into what is immediate and what is reflective.

Explanation:

That is, a possible thing is one that 'the mind equally accepts that it can exist or not exist.' An example of this is the fact that the existence of life is not an impossibility. Contrarily, it is not something that necessarily must be.

The three rational judgments of necessary, impossible, and possible each divide into two subcategories: 1 - *immediate* (i.e. understood without deep reflection), and 2 - *reflective* (i.e. resulting after reflection). So, an *immediate rational judgment* is one that doesn't depend upon study and reflection. And a *reflective rational judgment* is the opposite of that.

A *necessary rational judgment that is immediate* is like the fact that 2 is more than 1. It is necessary because the mind doesn't consider it impossible for 2 to divide into a smaller number. It is also immediate because it doesn't require reflection, since everyone knows the obvious fact that 1 is less than 2.

A *necessary but reflective rational judgment* is like the fact that 1 is one-fortieth of 40.

Again, it is necessary because the mind doesn't deem it impossible for 40 to be divided into fortieths.

And it is reflective, since deducing that 1 is one-fortieth of 40 requires reflection.

An *impossible judgment that is immediate* is the judgment that a body cannot be both stagnant and moving at the same time.

And an *impossible reflective judgment* is the judgment that Allah cannot be an indivisible or a composite body.

A *possible immediate judgment* is like the judgment that an object can be defined by motion.

And a *possible reflective rational judgment* is that Allah might punish the person who has obeyed his commandments, even though the judgment of scripture deems this to be an immediate impossibility.

VI. The First Duty Upon the Legally Responsible

أول واجب على من كلفا	ممکن من نظر أن يعرفا
الله و الرسل بالصفات	مما عليه نصب الآيات
و كل تكليف بشرط العقل	مع البلوغ بدم أو حمل
أو بمنى أو بإنبات الشعر	أو بثمان عشرة حولا ظهر

The first duty upon the legally responsible person furnished with the capacity to reflect is to know Allah and His messengers with the attributes by which He erected the signs to point to.

The compulsory nature of a religious burden rests upon the condition of sanity coupled with maturity, which can be determined by menstrual blood or pregnancy.

Other signs are the emission of ejaculatory fluid, the growth of pubic hair, or the completion of 18 lunar years of age.

Explanation:

In the words of Ibn ‘Āshir, the first duty upon the sane person who has reached the age of legal responsibility in Islam – (despite being a subject of discrepancy amongst Islamic scholars) – is to know Allah, His attributes, and the rational proofs leading to those matters.

The signs of legal responsibility and maturity in Islam are sanity, and puberty. Puberty

is determined for the female by her first menstruation, impregnation (even before witnessing first menstruation), the emission of sexual fluid, or the growth of pubic hair.

As for the male it is determined by the emission of sperm, or the growth of pubic hair. In the absence of any of these indicators, one is considered to be legally responsible once he/she reaches 18 lunar years of age.

VII. Introduction to Divinity and Prophecy

كتاب أم القواعد و ما انطوت عليه من العقائد

Next: is The Mother of all Foundations and the Doctrines contained therein.

Explanation:

That is to say that this next section is the foundation of everything in Islam: Tawhīd, or the Unity of God. So, he referred to it as the Mother of all Foundations, since without first acknowledging the existence and oneness of Allah, no act of worship can be given any credit in the world or weight on the Day of Judgment. So in this next section he will discuss the Mother of all Foundations and the different doctrines contained therein.

VIII. Allah's Necessary Attributes (Sifat Wajiba)

يجب الله الوجود و القدم كذاالبقاء والغنى المطلق عم
و خلفه لخالقه بلا مثال و وحدة الذات و وصف والفعال

It is necessary for Allah to have existence, permanence without beginning, endurance without end, and absolute independence.

He must also have dissimilarity to His creation without an equal, and oneness in essence, characteristic, and actions.

Explanation:

Rationally and according to scripture, it is a must that we as Muslims acknowledge the following attributes for Allah: Existence, Permanence

without beginning, Endurance without end, absolute independence, dissimilarity to creation, and absolute oneness.

Existence is deemed to be an essential attribute (şifa nafsiyya), since Allah could not be described by anything if He did not first exist. The other five are known as the canceling/negating/ or exonerating attributes (şifāt salbiyya), since they negate from Allah their respective opposites, which will later be mentioned under what is deemed impossible for Allah to be characterized by.

و قدرة إرادة علم حياة سمع كلام بصر ذي واجبات

Power, will, knowledge, life, hearing, sight, and speech are also attributes that are necessary.

Explanation:

Add the following to the attributes determined by both scripture and logic to be rationally necessary characteristics of the Creator: power, will, knowledge, life, hearing, sight, and speech.

These seven attributes are known as the abstract attributes (şifāt al-ma'ānī). The reason they are given this designation is that they are abstract realities. The mind cannot conjure up anything to make analogous with them as to delineate their true forms of existence.

Imam Abū Al-Hasan Al-Ash'arī considered these seven attributes, as well as the first six already mentioned, as being the extent that the mind and scripture have arrived at as far

as those characteristics by which Allah *must* be characterized. That is, these attributes are

- according to revelation and logic - things that must be. Meaning that, they are essential
- aspects of His existence (şifāt dhātiyya). Consequently, they are eternal without beginning like His essence.

They differed about one other attribute. That is the attribute of 'perception' (idrāk) by which Allah is able to feel, touch, smell, and taste. Others have argued that his knowledge encompasses all of that. So there is no need to affirm an additional attribute called 'perception.'

The difference between Allah's names (asmā) and His attributes (ṣifāt) is that His names are adjectives. They denote about the One being described the possession of a particular attribute (e.g. power, will, or knowledge), a state of being (e.g. highness, or ownership), or that the One being described does a certain action (e.g. creating, giving life, granting provision).

His attributes are those characteristics indicated by His names. A clear example of this is that one of Allah's names is 'The Creator' (Al-Ḳhāliq). And creating is an action or as some say an attribute of action (ṣifah fi'liyya). Another of Allah's names is 'The All-Powerful' (Al-Qadīr). And the name 'The All-Powerful' means 'The One with Absolute Power' or 'The One who possesses the attribute of Power.' So 'power' is the attribute.

And 'powerful' is the name.

IX. Attributes Impossible for Allah (Sifat Mustahila)

و يستحيل ضد هذه الصفات	العدم الحدوث ذا للحادثات
كذا الفنا والافتقار عده	وأن يماثل و نفي الوحده
عجز كراهة و جهل و ممات	و صمم و بكم عمى صمات

And the opposite of all of these attributes are impossible: They are non-existence, and the emergence from non-existence, which are attributes specific to ephemeral beings.

And considered amongst these impossibilities are annihilation, dependency, to be given a likeness to others, and the negation of oneness.

Equally impossible are incapacity, compulsion, ignorance, death, deafness, dumbness, and blindness.

Explanation:

The opposite of all of Allah's necessary attributes are impossible: Non-existence is the opposite of existence. The emergence from non-existence is the opposite of permanence without beginning. Annihilation is the opposite

of endurance without end. Dependency is the opposite of absolute independence. To be given a likeness to others is the opposite of the dissimilarity to creation. The negation of oneness is the opposite of oneness.

Incapacity is the opposite of power. Compulsion is the opposite of will. Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge. Death is the opposite of life. Deafness is the opposite of hearing.

Dumbness is the opposite of speech. And Blindness is the opposite of sight.

X. Attributes Possible for Allah (Sifat Ja'iza)

يجوز في حقه فعل الممكنات بأسرها وتركها في العدميات

It is possible in His regard to do all things that are possible as well as to leave them in the realm of non-existent matters.

Explanation:

Before, Ibn 'Ashir spoke about characteristics necessary and impossible for Allah to be characterized by. Now, he makes mention of characteristics that fall within the realm of the possible. That is, these are things that are not necessary. Similarly, they are not impossible. All of Allah's actions are described as being possible. They are things that occur outside of his divine essence (dhāt). Consequently, they are created, since everything other than Allah is created.

Allah's attributes are of two types: Attributes of the Divine Essence, and Attributes of Action. Attributes of action are technically not attributes¹. They are merely actions. They are called attributes since they are The Creator's doing. As a result, they are attributed to Him.

His names, as mentioned before, point to the existence of either an attribute of the essence or an attribute of action.

¹ In the view of Ash'aris, Allah's actions are created. The Maturidi view is that His actions are not created. But in reality, this is just a difference of semantics, since each faction is looking at Allah's power from two different regards. As pertains to Allah's fitness to create or to act, His power is eternal, uncreated. But as pertains to Allah's actual enforcement of His power and will when He chooses to enforce them, His actions are created. So the Ash'aris looked at His actions from this regard, while Maturidis looked at them from the former regard.

Based on what has already passed, one might assume that the Ash'arīs limit the number of Allah's attributes. However, the truth is that they look at His attributes in terms of what is necessary, impossible, or possible for Him to be characterized by. And when one understands the difference between a name and an attribute, one should eventually be able to understand that as long as Allah has the power to do what He pleases then His names are endless, since nothing can be done without the power to do it.

To better understand this, all one has to do is consider acts such as creating, giving life, giving death, providing, showing mercy, punishing, etc. Allah could not do any of these things without first having the power to do so. So it becomes clear that the true eternal attribute of His essence is His power. And as long as He eternally has the power to do them, He can eternally take on the designations/names of 'The Creator', 'Giver of Life', 'Giver of Death', 'The Provider', 'The All-Merciful', and all the other names that He possesses that point to the existence of a particular attribute, or action. One can only create, give life, bring death, provide, or show mercy, after one has the power to do so.

And since the possibilities are limitless, Allah's names are also limitless.

So this shows that Ash'arīs don't limit the number of Allah's attributes as many claim and as many might assume.

X. Rational Proofs of Allah's Attributes

حاجة كل محدث للصانع

وجوده له دليل قاطع

His existence has a decisive proof: it is the need of every thing brought into being to have a maker.

Explanation:

Now, Ibn 'Ashir discusses the rational proofs of Allah's existence and oneness. The first argument for Allah's existence is that: Everything is in need of a maker. If this is so, then the universe must have a maker also. So, a maker must exist.

If things came into existence on their own accord that would necessitate the joining together of equivalence and preponderance on the scale for weighing existence against non-existence.

Explanation:

If we weigh existence and non-existence against one another on an imaginary scale, there is no doubt that the scale would be equally balanced, since the existence of the world and non-existence of the world are equal in as far as them being rational possibilities.

The only way for one side of the scale to outweigh the other side is for something to apply pressure or weight to one side over the other. This is the parable of the universe.

The fact that we see the existence of the universe, we accept that something must have given more weight to the side of the scale containing existence to the point that it outweighed the side of non-existence.

But when we say that the universe came into existence on its own, we in all actuality say that the existence and the non-existence of the universe are equally possible. But at the same time, the existence of the universe is more probable than its non-existence as a rational proposition. This is a contradiction since a horizontal line isn't the same as one that is diagonal. Whereas, this type of reasoning necessitates that they are in fact equal.

But this is impossible, as Ibn 'Ashir says later on.

This is different from the reality of things. Things either exist or they don't exist. So the scale is never in reality of equal balance. Preponderance on the scale is a constant in the reality of things.

But this is impossible...and the created nature of the universe can be determined through the occurrence of accidents and non-essential properties in objects and the fact that they are inseparable.

Explanation:

'Accident' in the above passage is a technical term used in the discussion of cosmology to denote the thing that can only exist by residing in something else. Webster defines it as 'a nonessential occurrence or attribute' [Webster's II New College Dictionary 1995].

Examples of accidents are things like motion, stagnation, joining, dispersing, color, etc.

Only an object can be characterized by these accidents/or attributes. And an object only exists while being adapted to one of these states. So when Ibn 'Ashir states that the created nature of the universe can be determined through the occurrence of accidents and non-essential properties in objects and the fact that they are inseparable, it means:

- 1- That objects possess additional characteristics beyond their essential qualities
- 2- Those additional characteristics are emergent (i.e. created)
- 3- Those objects are never lacking in those added characteristics, and
- 4- It is impossible for their to exist an emergent thing that lacks a beginning

So the proof of the created nature of the universe is that the matter that makes up the universe cannot be separated from the accidents that reside in them, which are created.

And anything that cannot be separated from emergent accidents is also an emergent. So the matter that makes up the universe is emergent.

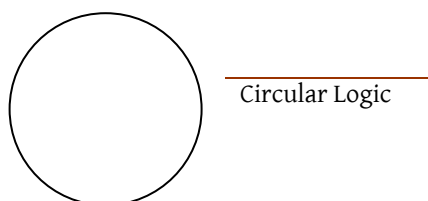
And the proof that accidents are created is that they are seen changing from existence to non-existence, and from non-existence to existence. And whatever is subject to change is emergent. So accidents are emergent.

لو لم يك القدم وصفه لزم حدوثه دور تسلسل حتم

If permanence without beginning had not been an attribute of His it would necessitate His coming into existence after not existing. And that would imply the validity of circular or chain logic.

Explanation:

Circular Logic in this regard necessitates that we imagine the creation and subsistence of the universe as a circle. We are to imagine that one point on the line of the circle indicates the origin of the universe. That one point is believed to be the cause of all subsequent life, also indicated by points drawn on the circle's line. Each subsequent point is the creator of the next proceeding point all around the line of the circle until the final point reaches the first point designated to be the origin of all other points, except that the final point is now considered to be the origin of the first point that was the origin of all other points. This means that the universe is the creator of itself and everything else. But this type of logic is faulty.



In Chain Logic, we imagine the start of creation as a sequence of events as links in a continuous chain with an end without a beginning. The thing proposed here is that the last link in the chain created the link before it. And this link created the link before it, and it before it, and it before it... This logic is also faulty since we'd never reach an end or establish the first original entity.

The end of both circular and chain logic is one: The universe brought itself into being.

For this reason, Ibn 'Ashir says, "If permanence without beginning had not been an attribute of His it would necessitate His coming into existence after not existing. And that would imply the validity of circular or chain logic."

لو أمكن الفناء لانتفى القدم لو مائل الخلق حدوثه انحتم

If annihilation were possible, permanence without beginning would be negated. If He was similar to creation, His coming into being after not existing would be inevitable.

Explanation:

If Allah was similar to creation, He would also be created, because one created thing is no different from another created thing with respect to its created nature.

لو لم يجب وصف الغنى له افتقر لو لم يكن بواحد لما قدر

If the attribute of independence had not been a necessity for Him, He would have been in need. If He had not been One, He would have not had power (to do things on His own).

Explanation:

If Allah had not been one, He would have needed the help of others to create the universe. But since we know that He did not need help in creating, we know that He is One and Unique. And His unique and consistent design let's us know that there can only be one Creator, because a multiplicity of gods would mean a multiplicity of designs.

لو لم يكن حيا مريدا عالما و قادرا لما رأيت عالما

If He had not been Living, Willful, Knowing, and Powerful, you would have not seen a world.

Explanation:

If Allah had not been Living, He couldn't have given life to anyone, since the one who lacks a thing cannot give it to another. If He did not have the will to create when He pleases, He could have not willfully created what He wanted. If He did not know what He was creating before He created, He couldn't have achieved His objective. And if He did not have the power and strength to create, the universe would have never come into existence.

والتال في الست القضايا باطل قطعا مقدم إذا مماثل

And since the consequents of the six propositions are unequivocally false, then the antecedents are equally the same.

Explanation:

The six propositions are:

- 1 - If permanence without beginning had not been an attribute of His it would necessitate His coming into existence after not existing.
- 2 - If annihilation were possible, permanence without beginning would be negated.
- 3 - If He was similar to creation, His coming into being after not existing would be inevitable.
- 4 - If the attribute of independence had not been a necessity for Him, He would have been in need.
- 5 - If He had not been One, He would have not had power (to do things on His own).
- 6 - If He had not been Living, Willful, Knowing, and Powerful, you would have not seen a world.

The necessary consequents of each proposition – despite being false - are:

- 1 - He came into existence after not existing
- 2 - He is not permanent without beginning
- 3 - It is inevitable that He came into being after not existing
- 4 - He is in need of others due to His lack of independence
- 5 - He has no power to do things on His own due to being a multiplicity

6 - Nothing would exist if He lacked life, will, knowledge, and power

Each one of these consequents is false. Consequently, their respective antecedents are also false. Their antecedents are:

- 1- Permanence without beginning is not an attribute of His
- 2- It is possible for Him to suffer annihilation
- 3- He is similar to creation
- 4- Independence is not one of His necessary attributes
- 5- He is not One
- 6- He is not Living, Willful, Knowing, and Powerful

XI. The Source of Knowing Allah's Hearing, Seeing, and Speech

و السمع و البصر و الكلام بالنقل مع كماله ترام

And the attributes of Hearing, Seeing, and Speech are determined by revelation along with its perfecting constituent which is logic.

Explanation:

Both scripture and reason have established all of the attributes mentioned this far. Merely scripture - on the other hand - has determined the attributes of hearing, sight, and speech.

That is, the mind cannot independently arrive at the conclusion that Allah must be characterized by these attributes. Whereas, one can conclude on the basis of reason that the other attributes exist.

This means that both scripture and reason can determine Allah's attributes. Some are determined by both means. And scripture alone determines others. But no attribute is affirmed by mere reason without the support of scripture.

Only scripture on the other hand determines the divine names of Allah. Reason has no place in the determination of a name of the Creator. These are the arguments championed by Imam Abū Al-Ĥasan Al-Ash'arī.

لو استحال ممكن أو وجبا قلب الحقائق لزوما أو وجبا

And if a possible thing were impossible or necessary, it would mean by necessity the overturning of realities.

Explanation:

We've already stated the definitions of each of the aforementioned realities. Were one to be confused with another or used to refer to its opposite, it would mean that reality as we know it has taken on a new form.

XII. Attributes Necessary for the Messengers (Sifat Wajiba)

يجب للرسول الكرام الصدق أمانة تبليغهم يحق

Of what is necessary for the Messengers is truthfulness and trustworthiness, just as conveying the message is an obligation.

Explanation:

After explaining what every legally responsible person must know with regard to Allah, Ibn 'Ashir now begins to explain what a person must know with regard to the Messengers of Allah. First, he speaks about some of their essential characteristics. They are things whose non-existence the mind doesn't accept. Of those things necessary for the Messengers are three:

- 1- Truthfulness: That is, the Messengers must be truthful in all that they convey from their Lord. And what it means for them to be truthful is that everything they give news of is

in agreement with the way they are in actuality. They never lie about anything intentionally or mistakenly.

- 2- Trustworthiness: Trustworthiness or honesty means for the messenger to protect each of his limbs externally and internally from falling into anything forbidden or condemned.
- 3- Conveyance: This means that it is an essential characteristic of the messenger to convey all that he has been ordered to without omitting one iota forgetfully or intentionally.

A fourth essential characteristic of messengers but not mentioned by Ibn 'Āshir is the characteristic of 'brilliance' (fatāna) that ensures that the messengers aren't duped or taken advantage of. Otherwise, Satan would be able to beguile him into believing that he is the angel speaking to him who has come to him to deliver the verses of the Qur'ān.

Contrary to this attribute are 'stupidity', 'heedlessness' and 'absentmindedness.'

XIII. Attributes Impossible for the Messengers (Sifat Mustahila)

محال الكذب و المنهي كعدم التبليغ يا ذكي

Of what is impossible are lying and doing what is forbidden like not conveying the message.

Explanation:

Now, he comments on what is impossible for the messengers of Allah to be characterized by. That is, reason doesn't accept that such things issue from them. Amongst the impossible things are the opposite of every necessary characteristic mentioned above.

They are:

- 1- Lying: Lying is the opposite of truthfulness. It is to speak of something contrary to the way it is in actuality.
- 2- Treachery: Treachery or dishonesty is the opposite of trustworthiness. It is impossible for the messengers sent by Allah to act dishonestly by committing a forbidden or blameworthy act.
- 3- Concealing the Message: It is also considered an impossible characteristic for the messenger to not convey the message or any part thereof that he was commissioned with by Allah.

XIV. Attributes Possible for the Messengers (Sifat Ja'iza)

يجوز في حقهم كل عرض ليس مؤديا لنقص كالمرض

Every condition that doesn't translate into an imperfection such as sickness is possible with respect to them.

Explanation:

Here, he discusses characteristics that are possible for the messengers. Among those things that the messengers can be described as having are: sickness, hunger, pain, eating, drinking, marriage, forgetfulness (after conveyance of Allah's message only or in what they haven't been ordered to convey), and any other characteristic that doesn't give the impression of being an imperfection like temporary insanity and the like.

لم يكونوا صادقين للزم أن يكذب الإله في تصديقهم
إذ معجزاتهم كقوله وبر صدق هذا العبد في كل خير

If they had not been truthful it would necessitate that God is telling a lie in declaring them to be truthful.

Since their miracles are as if He said: "This servant tells the truth in every report."

Explanation:

Now, Ibn 'Ashir explains the reasons that the messengers must be characterized as being truthful, trustworthy, and one who fulfills his Lord's commands.

Each miracle given to one of Allah's messengers is the Creator's way of telling us who are not messengers that He is indeed the one who sent the messenger with His message.

It's His way of saying, "If you believe that he is lying when he says that I have sent him, then why don't you do what he just did. If you can't, then bear witness that I have sent him. So obey him in all that he says."

To accept the possibility that a messenger can tell a lie is to accept that Allah has also lied in implicitly saying through His miracles that the messenger speaks the truth in all that he says. And since we know that Allah doesn't lie and has no reason to lie, then it cannot be possible for any of his messengers to lie.

لوانتفى التبليغ أو خانوا حتم أن يقلب المنهي طاعة لهم

If conveying the message was something neglected or if they had betrayed, it would result that what is forbidden has been made an act of obedience for them.

Explanation:

Were any of Allah's messengers to disobey him by committing an infraction whether big or small like not conveying the message, then that infraction would be considered an act of obedience, because we are ordered to emulate them. So it would also mean that we are to conceal the message and to act dishonestly. So we know that it is a must that the messengers convey the message and to uphold fidelity.

جواز الأعراض عليهم حجته وقوعها بهم تسل حكمته

His proof of the possibility of them being afflicted by human conditions and accidents is the very fact that they occur to them. Its wisdom is to be consoled by comfort after affliction.

Explanation:

One of the wisdoms we learn from the ordainment of afflictions in life is that they have opposites. What meaning would mercy have if we didn't know chastisement? And what meaning would pleasure have if there was no pain?

XV. The Hallmark of True Faith

و قول لا إله إلا الله
محمد أرسله الإله
يجمع كل هذه المعاني
كانت لذا علامة الإيمان

And the saying: “There is no God but Allah. And Muhammad, God sent him” contains all of these meanings. For that reason it is the hallmark of true faith.

Explanation:

The statement: “There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” encompasses all of what has already been discussed from the beginning of this poem to this point.

وهي أفضل وجوه الذكر
فاشغل بها العمر تفر بالذخر

And it is the best form of remembrance. So busy your life with it, and you'll find the treasure.

Explanation:

The best form of remembrance as stated by the Messenger of Allah in one tradition is the saying, “Lā ilāha illā Allah” (There is no God but Allah). The treasure in this case is Paradise. Since it is a thing hidden from mortal eyes it has been made analogous to a treasure buried beneath the sands.

XVI. Islam, Iman, and Ihsan

فصل و طاعة الجوارح الجميع قولاً و فعلاً هو الإسلام الرفيع

And compliance with all the limbs in both word and action is the exalted Islam.

قواعد الإسلام خمس واجبات وهي الشهادتان شرط الباقيات

The pillars of Islam are 5 obligations. The first of them is the testimony of faith, which is a condition for the rest.

Explanation:

The shahāda or testimony of faith is a requisite for all religious actions that require an intention before being deemed valid and acceptable. This means that things that don't require an intention like giving charity or keeping one's family ties are accepted even for the one who hasn't taken his/her shahāda as stated by many scholars of Islam. That is, an unbeliever will come on the Day of Judgment, and his/her charity and keeping ties of kinship will be given weight on the scale of good deeds. However, unbelief will outweigh all of that regardless of how much good a person may have done in this world.

ثم الصلاة والزكاة في القطاع ولصوم والحج على من استطاع

And included in the list are prayer, the obligatory poor tax, fasting, and the pilgrimage for whoever is capable.

الإيمان جزم بالإله والكتب و الرسل والأملاك مع بعث قرب

Īmān is firm conviction about God, the Books, the Messengers, the Angels, the Resurrection that has drawn near,

و قدر كذا صراط ميزان حوض النبي جنة و نيران

God's foreknowledge of all things, the Bridge over Hell, the Scale for weighing deeds, the Prophet's Basin, Paradise, and Hell.

و أما الإحسان فقال من دراه أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه

As for Iḥsān, he who knows has said that it is: "To worship Allah as if you see Him."

إن لم تكن تراه إنه يراك الدين ذي الثلاث خذ أقوى عراك

"And if you don't see him. Then surely He sees you." And the Islamic way of life is summed up into these three things. So take hold of the strongest handle.

Explanation:

The Islamic way of life or dīn comprises the three aforementioned categories:

- 1- Islām: Law
- 2- Īmān: Doctrine or Creed
- 3- Iḥsān: Moral Excellence

This is based on the famous tradition known as the ḥadīth of the Angel Gabriel wherein the angel questioned Muhammad – may Allah bless and grant him peace - about the meanings of these three terms.

XVII. Introduction to Legal Theory and Five Judgments of Scripture

مقدمة من الأصول معينة في فروعها على الوصول

Next: is an introduction to the Juridical Bases of Islam that will help in understanding what branches out from them.

Explanation:

The Muslim believes that every action done has a distinct ruling given to it. The ruling that a person's action takes is one of five rulings, which will be discussed later. Those rulings can be determined by either being explicitly stated in one of the Islamic sources or by the process of deduction and study determined in the discipline of Usūl al-Fiqh i.e. Islamic Legal Theory. This section introduces us to that discipline. It also lists for us the names and definitions of each particular ruling given to a person's action.

الحكم في الشرع خطاب ربنا لمقتضي فعل المكلف افطنا

The definition of the judgment passed according to the Sacred Law is: the address made by our Lord that requires action from the legally responsible person.

Explanation:

A judgment is the ascribing of a particular characteristic to a thing or the negation of a particular characteristic from a thing. Up to this point, all references to judgments/rulings were references to the rational judgment, which is ascribing the possibility, impossibility, or necessity of a thing's existence to it or negating the possibility, impossibility, or necessity of a particular characteristic from a thing.

In this section, references to judgments particularly pertain to the judgments deduced from scripture or judgments passed according to the Sacred Law.

The judgment of scripture is defined in the circles of the scholars of Usūl al-Fiqh as ‘the address made by Allah that demands action from the legally responsible person.’

Amongst the scholars of fiqh it is defined as the resulting affect of the Divine Lawgiver’s address. This means that when it is asked, what is the proof for the obligation of prayer, the Usūlī (Legal Theorist) will reply that it is the address itself, like Allah’s saying:

((And establish prayer)). For the faqīh, the ruling would be the understanding that results from Allah’s saying. In this case, it would be the obligation of prayer.

This discrepancy between these two classes of scholars is the natural result of their respective aims and objectives. The Usūlī’s job is to determine what constitutes a valid proof and to explicate the rules of textual interpretation, while the Faqīh takes the rules outlined by the Usūlī in order to assign a practical ruling to each action individually.

بطلب أو إذن أو بوضع لسبب أو شرط أو ذي منع

That address may take the form of a request, an authorization, or by placing a cause, condition, or the removal of a barrier as a factor in determining the legality of a particular action.

Explanation:

An example of Allah’s address that takes on the form of a request is ((And pay charity)).

This could indicate both an order requiring compliance, or a recommendation.

An example of an address indicative of an authorization is his statement to those who have been released from the consecrated state of the Hajj ((And once you become dissolved (from the Hajj) go hunt!)). This doesn’t mean that it’s compulsory to hunt after Hajj. It means that once one completes the Hajj that it is now permitted to do those things that are usually permitted when

one is not making Hajj. One of those things happens to be hunting, which is forbidden to do during the Hajj.

An example of a cause being made a factor in determining the legality of an action is

‘The entrance of the prayer’s time’ in determining the obligation of prayer on the legally responsible person. The technical definition of a cause is ‘the thing whose existence necessitates the existence of a particular matter, but whose non-existence necessitates the non-existence of that thing.’ So in this case, the existence of the time of prayer necessitates the existence of the obligation to perform the prayer. And the non-existence of the time of prayer necessitates the non-existence of the obligation of prayer.

An example of a condition being made a factor in determining the legality of something is the condition of having ablution (wudū) for the validity of prayer. The definition of a condition is ‘the thing whose non-existence necessitates the non-existence of a thing, but whose existence doesn’t necessitate the existence or non-existence of that thing.’ In other words, with the absence of wudū results the absence of the validity of prayer. So the non-existence of wudū necessitates the non-existence of the validity of the prayer. But the existence of wudū doesn’t necessitate the existence of the validity of prayer, since it’s possible that one of the other conditions may be lacking.

An example of the removal of a barrier being made a factor in determining the legality of something is menstruation in the part that it plays in preventing a woman from being able to pray or fast. A barrier is defined as ‘the thing whose existence necessitates the non-existence of a thing, but whose non-existence doesn’t necessitate the existence or non-existence of that thing.’ In other words, the existence of menstruation necessitates the non-existence of the validity of prayer or fasting. But the absence of menstruation does not necessarily mean that the prayer or fast is valid since a condition could be lacking, or another barrier could exist such as post-natal bleeding. So this is what it means when Sīdī Ibn ‘Āshir says, “That address may take the form of a request, an authorization, or by placing a cause, condition, or the removal of a barrier as a factor in determining the legality of a particular action.”

أقسام حكم الشرع خمسة تراام فرض و ندب و كراهة حرام

ثم إباحة فمأمور جزم فرض و دون الجزم مندوب وسم

The divisions of the judgments of the sacred law are five. An action is given the ruling of being 1) an obligation, 2) a recommendation, 3) an offense, 4) a prohibition,

And 5) An indifferent matter. So if one is given a decisive order the action is obligatory.

And if the order is lesser than decisive it is considered recommended.

Explanation:

As mentioned before, actions are classified under one of five categories:

- 1- Obligatory (farḍ): This ruling is given to the thing whose performance is rewarded and whose abandonment is punishable like prayer, for instance.
- 2- Recommended (mandūb): This ruling is assigned to the act whose performance is rewarded and whose abandonment is not punishable, like 'Umrah.
- 3- Offensive (makrūh): This ruling applies to the act whose abandonment is rewarded but whose performance is not punishable, like sleeping after Maghrib.
- 4- Prohibited (ḥarām): This ruling is assigned to the act whose performance is punishable but whose abandonment is rewarded, like fornication.
- 5- Indifferent (mubāḥ): This ruling is given to the act whose performance and abandonment are equal in that one is neither rewarded nor punished for doing or not doing it, like exercise for no particular reason.

ذوالنهي مكروه و مع حتم حرام مأذون وجهيه مباح ذا تمام

An action resulting from a general prohibition is disapproved of. And if the prohibition is decisive it is forbidden. When the injunction permits an action from the two opposing aspects it is considered indifferent. And this is the completion of the five judgments.

Explanation:

What is intended by the two opposing aspects is from the aspect of prohibition and from the aspect of recommendation. So the ruling of indifference applied to an action is the ruling that permits an action from the aspect of prohibition thus there is no punishment for its performance, and from the aspect of recommendation, so there is no reward for doing it.

والفرض قسمان كفاية وعين ويشمل المندوب سنة بذين

And the obligatory act is of two divisions: they are the communal obligation and the individual obligation. And what is recommended includes Sunnah with these same two divisions.

Explanation:

Obligations are of two types:

- 1- The communal obligation such as the Funeral Prayer (Janāzah). A communal obligation is that obligation whose sin falls on the entire community if some do not stand up to fulfill it.
- 2- The individual obligation such as the Five Daily Prayers. The individual obligation is that obligation that can only be fulfilled by the individual person that the order is addressed to.

Recommendations are also of two types:

- 1- The communal recommendation such as the Adhān, the Iqāmah, or for one person from a group to return the salām to one who offers it to the group. This means that by one or more people fulfilling these

- recommended acts everyone else receive the reward along with them.
- 2- The individual recommendation such as the Witr Prayer. That is, only those who perform the witr prayer receive its reward.

متن المرشد المعين على الضروري من علوم الدين

لعبد الواحد بن عاشر

يقول عبد الواحد ابن عاشر

مبتدئا بسم الإله القادر

الحمد لله الذي علمنا

من العلوم ما به كلفنا

صلى و سلم على محمد

وآله و صحبه و المقدي

* * *

و بعد فالعون من الله المجيد

في نظم أبيات للآمي تفيد

في عقد الأشعري و فقه مالك

وفي طريقة الجنيد السالك

* * *

مقدمة لكتاب الإعتقاد

معينة لقارئها على المراد

و حكمنا العقلي قضية

وقف على عادة أو وضع جلا

أقسام مقتضاه بالحصر تماز و هي الوجوب الاستحالة الجواز

فواجب لا يقبل النفي بحال

و ما أبى الثبوت عقلا المحال

و جائز ما قبل الأمرين سم للضروري والنظر كل قسم

أول واجب على من كلفا
الله و الرسل بالصفات
و كل تكليف بشرط العقل
أو بمني أو بإنبات الشعر
ممكن من نظر أن يعرفا
مما عليه نصب الآيات
مع البلوغ بدم أو حمل
أو بثمان عشرة حولا ظهر

* * *

كتاب أم القواعد
يجب الله الوجود و القدم
و خلفه لخلقه بلا مثال
و قدرة إرادة علم حياة
و يستحيل ضد الصفات
كذا الفنا والافتقار عده
عجز كراهة و جهل وممات
و ما انطوت عليه من العقائد
كذاالبقاء والغنى المطلق عم
و وحدة الذات و وصف والفعال
سمع كلام بصر ذي واجبات
العدم الحدوث ذا للحادثات
وأن يماثل و نفي الوحده
صمم و بكم عمى صمات

بأسرها و تركها في العدمات
وجوده له دليل قاطع
لوحدهت بنفسها الأكوان
وذا محال و حدوث العالم
يجوز في حقه فعل الممكنات
حاجة كل محدث للصانع
لاجتمعت التساوي و الرجحان
من حدث الأعراض مع تلازم

لو لم يك القدم وصفه لزم حدوثه دور تسلسل حتم
لو أمكن الفناء لانتفى القدم و مائل الخلق حدوثه انحتم
لو لم يجب وصف الغنى له افتقر لو لم يكن بواحد لما قدر
لو لم يكن حيا مريدا عالما و قادرا لما رأيت عالما
والتال في الست القضايا باطل قطعا مقدما إذا مماثل
والسمع و البصر و الكلام بالنقل مع كماله ترام
لو استحال ممكن أو وجبا قلب الحقائق لزوما أو جبا

* * *

يجب للرسل الكرام الصدق أمانة التبليغهم يحق
محال الكذب و المنهي كعدم التبليغ يا ذكي
يجوز في حقهم كل عرض ليس مؤديا لنقص كالمرض
لو لم يكونوا صادقين للزم أن يكذب الإله في تصديقهم
إذ معجزاتهم كقوله وبر صدق هذا العبد في كل خبر
لو انتفى التبليغ أو خانوا حتم أن يقلب المنهي طاعة لهم
جواز الأعراض عليهم حجته وقوعها بهم تسلسل حكمته
و قول لا إله إلا الله محمد أرسله الإله
يجمع كل هذه المعاني كانت لذا علامة الإيمان
وهي أفضل وجوه الذكر فاشغل بها العمر تفر بالذخر

* * *

فصل و طاعة جوارح الجميع قولاً و فعلاً هو الإسلام الرفيع
قواعد الإسلام خمس واجبات وهي الشهادتان شرط الباقيات
ثم الصلاة والزكاة في القطاع الصوم والحج على من استطاع
الإيمان جزم بالإله والكتب والرسول والأحكام مع بعث قرب
و قدر كذا صراط ميزان حوض النبي جنة نيران
و أما الإحسان فقال من دراه أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه
إن لم تكن تراه إنه يراك ا لدين ذي الثلاث خذ أقوى عراك

* * *

مقدمة من الأصول معينة في فروعها على الوصول
الحكم في الشرع خطاب ربنا المقتضي فعل المكلف افطنا
بطلب أو إذن أو بوضع لسبب أو شرط أو ذي منع
أقسام حكم الشرع خمسة ترام فرض و ندب و كراهة حرام
ثم إباحة فأمور جزم فرض و دون الجزم مندوب و سم
ذوالنهي مكروه و مع حتم حرام مأذون وجهيه مباح ذا تمام
والفرض قسمان كفاية وعين يشمل المندوب سنة بذين

About the Author

Ustadh Abdullah bin Hamid Ali took his post as resident scholar at Zaytuna Institute in 2007 to instruct students of Zaytuna's pilot program in some of the rational sciences (theology, legal theory, and hadith science). Although born in Philadelphia, Ustadh Abdullah spent most of his childhood in Chicago and at eleven returned to the town of his birth. Prior to coming to Zaytuna, he served as assistant head chaplain for 5 years at the Chester State Correctional Institution. He is the translator and annotator of the Attributes of God (Amalpress), a work by the great Hanbali polymath, 'Abd Al-Rahman b. al-Jawzi, and the translator of A Return to Purity in Creed (Lamppost Productions), the last work of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali's originally entitled *Iljam al-'Awamm 'an 'Ilm al-Kalam* (Steering Commoners Away from the Study of Dialectical Theology). Ustadh Abdullah is the only Western graduate of the Shariah Faculty of the University of al-Qarawiyyin located in Fes, Morocco.

He specializes in Islamic legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*), dialectical theology (*'ilm al-kalam/tawhid*), and Maliki jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*). He regularly delivers the Friday sermon in the Bay Area, and occasionally conducts and takes part in workshops and seminars in the US and Canada. Ustadh Abdullah also serves as a member of the Academic Affairs committee of Zaytuna College. He is currently completing an MA in the study of Ethics & Social Theory at the Graduate Theological Union, and he teaches regularly online via his website: www.lamppostproductions.com, where he also posts a number of his articles and legal responsa related to current affairs and Maliki jurisprudence.

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