

The Thirteen Attributes of Allah Every Accountable Person Must Know

Praise be to Allah, and may Allah raise the rank of Prophet Muhammad and his Al and Companions, and protect his nation from that which he fears for it. Thereafter:

Allah, the Exalted, said

﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا﴾

which means: *For those blasphemers who do not believe in Allah and His Messenger, We have prepared Hellfire .*

It is obligatory to believe in Allah and to know what is permissible to attribute to Him, what is necessary to be of His attributes, and what is impossible to be of His attributes. Also, it is obligatory to believe in the Messenger and to know what is befitting for him, what is permissible for him and the other prophets, what is necessary to be of their attributes, and what is impossible to be among their attributes. It is obligatory to declare these beliefs by the tongue by uttering The Testification of Faith (Two Shahadahs):

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

which means: **I know, believe and profess no one is God except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.**

The one who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger is a blasphemer and shall enter Hell eternally. Before proceeding with this treatise let it be known that the judgments of the mind are three kinds:

- **The intellectual necessity:** This refers to what the mind does not conceive its non-existence, i.e., non-existence does not apply to its self. Allah is the One Whose Existence is necessary, because the mind does not accept His non-existence, i.e., non-existence does not apply to the Self of Allah.
- **The intellectual impossibility:** This refers to what the mind does not conceive its existence, i.e., that to which existence does not apply. The existence of a partner with Allah is an intellectual impossibility, because existence does not apply to it, i.e., the mind does not conceive its existence.
- **The intellectual possibility:** This refers to what the mind conceives its existence at one time and its non-existence at another time. This universe and

its contents--among what we can see and what we cannot see--is an intellectual possibility. It is so because the mind conceives its existence after a state of non-existence. This is the state of the entire universe. For example, Allāh made the human being exist after having been non-existent, and then this human being shall be annihilated (Annihilation of humans is by complete death, which is defined as the soul completely departing the body. The souls do not annihilate and some bodies do not decay in the soil.) This is why the human being's existence is among the intellectual possibilities.

Allāh, ta[^]ala, said

﴿ وَ لِلّٰهِ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى ﴾

which means: *Allāh has attributes that do not resemble the attributes of others* .

It is obligatory to believe the attributes of Allāh are confirmed to Him. He who negates them is called an atheist. Hence, the one who does not believe in the Existence of Allāh, i.e., the one who negates Allāh's attribute of Existence is called an atheist.

The attributes of Allāh that are obligatory to believe in are confirmed to Him. They are not the Self of Allāh nor other than the Self of Allāh. Rather, we say they are attributes with which Allāh is attributed and they are religiously and intellectually obligatory for Him. Imam an-Nasafiyy said: "His attributes are not Him nor other than Him."

The attributes of Allāh that every pubescent and sane Muslim is obliged to know are called the attributes of the Self of Allāh and Allāh is not attributed with their opposites. They are thirteen attributes; the scholars established by consensus he who is ignorant of them is a committer of an enormous sin (fāsiq).

These thirteen (13) attributes are: Existence (al-Wujūd), Oneness (al-Wahdaniyyah), Eternity (al-Qidam), Everlastingness (al-Baqa'), Non-neediness of others (al-Qiyamu bin-Nafs), Non-resemblance to the creatures (al-mukhalafatu lil-hawadith), Power (al-Qudrah), Will (al-Iradah), Knowledge (al-[^]Ilm), Life (al-Hayah), Hearing (as-Sam[^]), Sight (al-Basar), and Speech (al-Kalam).

1- Existence (al-Wujūd): It is obligatory to believe in the Existence of Allāh. Allāh said:

﴿ اَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ ﴾

which means: [*There is no doubt in the Existence of Allah.*] Hence, it is obligatory to believe in the Existence of Allah. It is an eternal and everlasting attribute. Allah exists without a beginning, without an ending, and without a place.

2- Oneness (al-Wahdaniyyah): It is obligatory to believe Allah is One without a partner. Allah said:

﴿ فَاعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ﴾

which means: [*Know that no one is God except Allah.*] Allah is One in His Self, Attributes, and Doings--hence Allah has no equal. So we say, for example: "Allah is the Creator and no one is a creator except Allah". Allah is One but not as in numbers, because numbers are created. Rather, He is One in that there is no partner with Him.

3- Eternity (al-Qidam): It is obligatory to believe Allah is Eternal, i.e., there is no beginning to His Existence. His attributes are also eternal. Nothing is eternal except Allah and His attributes.

4- Everlastingness (al-Baqa'): It is obligatory to believe Allah is everlasting i.e., His Existence does not end. His Existence is everlasting and His attributes are everlasting. There is nothing everlasting in itself except Allah, because annihilation does not apply to His Self. However, Paradise and Hell are everlasting because Allah willed their everlastingness. Hence, they are everlasting--not in their selves--but because of other than their selves. This is why they are among the intellectual possibilities, and they are part of this universe. Allah said:

﴿ هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ ﴾

which means: [*Allah is the Eternal, without a beginning, and the Everlasting, without an ending.*]

5- Non-neediness of others (al-Qiyamu bin-Nafs): Allah said:

﴿ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴾

which means: [*Allah is the Master Who is resorted to in one's needs.*] Allah does not need anything. He does not need one to give Him existence because He exists without a beginning. Also, He does not need one to specify Him with Knowledge, instead of ignorance, or other than that among His Attributes, because His attributes exist without a beginning.

6- Non-Resemblance to the Creation (al-Mukhalafatu lil-hawadith): Allah does not resemble any of His creatures--neither in His Self nor in His Attributes nor in His Doings. Allah said:

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ﴾

which means: [*Absolutely there is nothing like Him.*] Imam Abu Hanifah said: "The Creator does not resemble His creatures."

7- Power (al-Qudrah): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Power, which is defined as an eternal and everlasting attribute of Allāh related to giving existence to and annihilating what is intellectually possible. Allāh said:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾

which means: [*Allāh has the Power over everything.*] That is, Allāh's Power relates to all things that are intellectually possible. Hence, the Power of Allāh is not related to the intellectually necessary neither in creating nor annihilating, because annihilation does not apply to it in the first place. The power of Allāh is not related to the intellectually impossible neither in creating nor annihilating because existence in the first place does not apply to that which is intellectually impossible. The fact that the power of Allāh is not related to the intellectually necessary and the intellectually impossible is not powerlessness, but rather indicates the perfection of Allāh. Also, this fact conforms to the judgment of the mind: the intellectually impossible does not turn into an intellectual possibility, and the intellectually necessary does not turn into an intellectual possibility. The Power of Allāh is related to the normal impossibilities. For example, although the existence of a sea of mercury is an intellectual possibility, it does not occur, and the Power of Allāh is related to it.

8- Will (al-‘Iradah): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Will. It is defined as an eternal and everlasting attribute by which Allāh specifies the creatures who are intellectual possibilities with some attributes among what is possible for them. An example is specifying a green colored board with green instead of other possible colors. There is no difference in that regard between good and evil, blasphemy and belief, winning and losing, and other opposites among what is intellectually possible.

9- Knowledge (al-‘Ilm): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Knowledge. This is an eternal and everlasting attribute of His Self. Allāh knows eternally about His Self, attributes, and what He creates. Nothing is absent from His Knowledge.

10- Life (al-Hayah): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Life. Allāh said:

﴿ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴾

which means: [*There is no God but Allāh, and He is attributed with Life, and His existence does not end.*] Life is an eternal and everlasting attribute of Allāh. The Life

of Allāh is not like our life, because our life needs a combination of body and soul; however, the Life of Allāh is His attribute.

11- Hearing (as-Sam[^]): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Hearing. This is an eternal and everlasting attribute of Allāh with which Allāh hears all things that are hearable. There is no difference between what is near to us and what is far from us because Allāh is not in a place. He hears without an ear, without means, and without instruments. His hearing is not subject to weakening nor change because weakness and change are non-befitting to Allāh. Allāh said:

﴿ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴾

which means: [*He is the One attributed with Hearing and Sight.*]

12- Sight (al-Baṣar): It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Sight. This is an eternal and everlasting attribute of Allāh with which He sees all things that are seeable, without an instrument and without means. He sees the things that are far away from us and those that are near to us without any difference because Allāh is not in a place. His attribute of Sight does not change or develop, because the One whose Self is eternal does not develop or change. Allāh's attributes are eternal and do not develop or change.

13- Speech (al-Kalam) : It is obligatory to believe Allāh is attributed with Speech (Kalam). This is an eternal and everlasting attribute with which Allāh orders, forbids, and informs. It is not a letter nor a sound nor a language. The Qur'an and the other revealed Books are expressions of the eternal Kalam of the Self of Allāh. When we write the word "Allāh" it is an expression of the Self of Allāh. Likewise, the words and sentences of the revealed Books are expressions of the Kalam of Allāh. The Qur'an is called the Kalam of Allāh because it is not authored by Prophet Muhammad or Angel Jibrīl. The Qur'an is also used to mean the eternal Kalam of the Self of Allāh. Allāh said:

﴿ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ﴾

which means: [*Allāh spoke to Mūsā with His eternal Kalam*] i.e., Allāh created in Prophet Mūsā the ability to hear the Kalam of the Self of Allāh, which is not a letter nor a sound.

and Allāh knows best