

The Prophet's (saws) Seating on the Throne (IQ'ÂD AL-NABÎ (S) 'ALÂ AL-'ARSH)

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“Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (S) will be seated
by His Lord on the Throne next to Him.”
– Ibn Taymiyya.[1]

“Whoever imagines that our Lord sits on the Throne and leaves space at His side for His Prophet to sit, has followed the Christians who hold that ‘Isa was raised to heaven and sat next to his Father – Allah (swt) is clear of the partnership they ascribe to Him!”
– Al-Kawthari.[2]

Allah Most High said, as rendered in the translations of His meanings in the Qur'an (17:79):

**And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for thee.
It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate. [Pickthall]**

**And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an
additional prayer (or spiritual profit) for thee : soon will thy Lord raise
thee to a station of praise and Glory. [Yusuf Ali]**

It is known that the meaning of the Exalted Station (*al-maqâm al-mahmûd*) mentioned in the above verse is the granting of the Major Intercession (*al-shafâ'a al-kubrâ*) to the Prophet (s) on the Day of Judgment, at which time “people shall surge like the waves of the sea,” each community begging its Prophet for intercession but only the Prophet (s) shall accept to undertake it,[3] as expressed in al-Busiri's poetry:

*yâ akrama al-khalqi mâ lî man alûdhu bihi
siwâka 'inda hulûli al-hâdithi al-'amami*

O noblest of creatures! I have none with whom to seek refuge
other than you when the Universal Event befalls.[4]

Furthermore, Ibn ‘Abbas explained that the formula of likelihood *'asâ* – “It may be” – when attributed to Allah (swt), denotes certainty, as related by al-Bayhaqi and reiterated by the commentators.[5]

However, several narrations are also adduced whereby the Exalted Station is the seating of the Prophet (s) by Allah (swt) on the Throne. The school of Imam Ahmad gave precedence to the latter view as the definitive explanation of the verse, despite the overall weakness of the narrations supporting it.

"the scholars of hadith agree that none of the narrations that mention the groaning is authentic."

1. The "Groaning of the Throne"

Ibn Mas'ud (r) related that the Prophet (s) said: "Verily I shall occupy the Exalted Station." It was asked: "What is the Exalted Station?" He said: "It is on the day you will be brought barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised; the first to be given a garment will be Ibrahim, when Allah says: 'Cover my Close Friend.' He will be presented with two soft, fine garments which he shall wear, and he will be seated opposite the Throne. Then I will be given a garment which I shall wear, after which I shall stand at the right of the Throne. Mine will be station which no one else will share. It will be the ardent desire of the first and the last to share it with me. Then a river will be caused to flow from the Kawthar to my Pond."

It is narrated with weak chains by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, al-Tabari in his *Tafsir*, al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak*, al-Darimi in his *Sunan* (book of *Riqaq*), Abu al-Shaykh in *al-'Azama*, and Ibn al-Mundhir. Ahmad and al-Hakim's narrations begin with the words: *Ummukuma fi al-nar* – "Your mother [speaking to two brothers] is in the Fire" – while al-Darimi's narration begins with the words: *Dhâka yawmun yanzilu Allâhu ta'âlâ 'alâ kursiyyihi ya'itu kama ya'itu al-rahlu al-jadîdu min tadâyuqihi bih* – "On that day, Allah shall descend on His Throne which shall groan the way a new saddle does, due to the pressure it will feel from Him."[6]

Al-Darimi's narration is highly questionable from another perspective, namely the anthropomorphism of the explicit attribution of the Throne's groaning to the pressure of Allah (swt) on it. It is known that all the narrations that mention this "groaning of the Throne" are also weak. They are narrated from five Companions:

- Abu Umama;[7]
- Abu Musa al-Ash'ari;[8]

- ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab;[9]
- Ibn Mas‘ud, as narrated by the hadith masters already mentioned;
- Jubayr ibn Mut‘am from his father from his grandfather.[10]

All the above are narrated with weak or highly problematic chains as shown by Ibn al-Jawzi,[11] al-Dhahabi, and the editors of al-Bayhaqi’s and Ibn Abi ‘Asim’s books although Ibn Taymiyya typically tries to defend the authenticity of the narration of ‘Umar which contains an explicit ascription of sitting to the Creator (swt).[12] The hadith master Ibn ‘Asakir wrote an entire monograph entitled *Bayan al-Wahm wa al-Takhlit fi Hadith al-Atit* (“The Exposition of Error and Confusion in the Narration of the [Throne’s] Groaning”) as indicated by Ibn Kathir.[13]

The narration of Abu Umama states that the Prophet (s) said: “Ask Allah for al-Firdaws for it is the center of Paradise, and in it is heard the groaning of the Throne (*atit al-‘arsh*).” Al-Hakim did not claim that it was sound (*sahih*) and al-Dhahabi further stated that one of its sub-narrators, Ja‘far ibn al-Zubayr, was “destroyed” (*hâlik*) as a narrator; al-Tabarani’s chain also contains him as stated by al-Haythami in *Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id*, who called him “fatally weak” (*matrûk*).

The narration of Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari states: “The *kursi* is the footstool and it groans like a new saddle.”[14] Its chain is weak (*da‘if*) as stated by the editor of al-Bayhaqi’s *al-Asma‘ wa al-Sifat*. Even if it were sound, is not traced back to the Prophet (s) but would be a *mawqûf* narration halted at Abu Musa (r) furthermore it is cut up (*munqati‘*), as the *Tâbi‘î* who relates it, ‘Umara ibn ‘Umayr, did not meet Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari. Finally, the scholars of hadith agree that none of the narrations that mention the groaning is authentic.

The narration of ‘Umar states that a woman came to the Prophet (s) and said: “Supplicate Allah so that He cause me to enter Paradise.” The Prophet (s) then glorified Allah and said: “Verily, His Seat of Authority (*kursi*) encompasses the heavens and the earth, and it groans like the sound of the new saddle when one mounts it, due to the weight pressing down on it.” Al-Haythami’s claim that its sub-narrators are all trustworthy is incorrect, as the sub-narrator ‘Abd Allah ibn Khalifa is merely “acceptable” (*maqbul*) according to Ibn Hajar, and Ma‘ruf and al-Arna‘ut consider him *majhûl al-hâl*, which further weakens the narration.[15] This means that his narration is not retained except for the purpose of confirming an identical narration with a stronger

chain. Furthermore, Ibn Kathir stated there is doubt whether he actually narrated from ‘Umar and the hadith would then be narrated with a “cut-up” (*munqati‘*) chain.[16]

As for the text of the hadith itself (*matn*), it is considered by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir* (1:31, 2:14) as a “strange” or one-chained (*gharīb*) narration. Ibn Kathir also states that Abu Dawud’s narration from Jabir ibn Mut‘am is “stranger yet.”

The narration of Abu Dawud from Jubayr ibn Mut‘am, from his father, from his grandfather, states:

An Arab came to the Messenger of Allah (s) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, people are in distress, the children are hungry, the crops are withered, and the animals are perishing, so Ask Allah to grant us rain, for we seek you as our intercessor with Allah, and Allah as our intercessor with you.” The Prophet (s) said: “Woe to you! Do you know what you are saying?” Then the Prophet (s) glorified Allah and he went on until the effect of his speech showed on the faces of his Companions. He then said: “Woe to you! Allah is not to be sought as intercessor with anyone. His state is greater than that. Woe to you![17] Do you know the greatness of Allah? Truly, His Throne (*‘arsh*) is on His Heavens like this” – and he formed with his fingers something like a dome over him – “and it groans on account of Him like a saddle groans because of its rider.” Ibn Bashshar added in his version: “Allah (swt) is above His Throne, and His Throne is above His Heavens.”[18]

The hadith is graded weak by the author of *‘Awn al-Ma‘bud*. Al-Dhahabi terms it an “extremely strange” one-chained narration (*gharīb jiddan*) and says: “Allah knows best if the Prophet (s) ever said such a thing or not; Allah – **(there is nothing whatsoever like unto Him)** (42:11)!”[19] We have already mentioned Ibn Kathir’s similar opinion of the hadith. As for its chain of narration, it is de-clared weak by the editors of Ibn Abi ‘Asim’s *al-Sunna* and al-Ajurri’s *al-Shari‘a*. This is due to the concealment (*tadlīs*) of the mode of transmission through *‘an‘ana* or undecisive transmission terminology by one of its narrators, Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar al-Muttalibi while another narrator, Jubayr ibn Muhammad ibn Jubayr ibn Mut‘am, is merely “acceptable” (*maqbul*),[20] which makes him unreliable in a narration that is not independently verifiable. There are other problems with the chain and the text, which Ibn ‘Asakir addresses in *Bayan al-Wahm*. Ibn al-Qayyim alone claimed that the least grading of this narration was *hasan*.

“The import of the hadith 'and it groans... like a saddle' ...consists in a metaphor to give an idea of the greatness of Allah and make understandable to the questioner...”

Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi

The hadith master Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi (d. 386) states in his commentary on Abu Dawud:

If this discourse is taken in its outward sense, then it suggests modality (*kayfiyya*), which does not apply to Allah and His Attributes. It is therefore understood that the import of the hadith is not to attribute modality to Him or suggest boundaries to Him in this manner. Rather, it consists in a metaphor (*kalâm taqrîb*) to give an idea of the greatness of Allah and make understandable to the questioner what is beyond his level of understanding, for he was an uneducated Bedouin unversed in the minutiae of language and the subtleties of speech which elude the mind. In this discourse, we find ellipsis and allusiveness. Thus the meaning of his saying: “Do you know what Allah is?” means: Do you know the greatness of Allah? and his saying: “It groans under him” means that it is unable to carry His Majesty and Greatness. Thus it groans under him for it is known that the reason a camel saddle groans under the rider is because of the weight of what is on it and its inability to carry it. By drawing this kind of similitude he illustrates the meaning of the Greatness and Might of Allah and the height of His Throne in order for it to be known that the holder of lofty rank, mighty status, and exalted name, is not to be made an intercessor with one who is lesser in position and below Him in degree.[21]

“The meaning of the groaning of the kursî is its impotence before the majesty and greatness of Allah” Ibn Jawzi

A similar mode of interpretation was adopted by later scholars. Ibn al-Athir (d. 630) in his *Nihaya fî Gharîb al-Hadith* under the entry “*a-t-t*” said: “There is no actual groaning, it is only a metaphorical expression in order to confirm Divine magnificence” (*wa in lam yakun thamma atît wa innamâ huwa kalâmu taqrîb urîda bihi taqrîru ‘azamat Allâh ta‘âlâ*). Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597) stated something identical in his *Daf‘ Shubah al-Tashbih*:

The meaning of the groaning of the *kursî* is its impotence before the majesty and greatness of Allah, as it is known that the groaning of the camel saddle under its rider is a indication of the power of what sits on top of it, or its impotence to bear it. The Prophet (s) drew this kind

of simile for Divine greatness and majesty in order to teach the Arab who had sought the intercession of Allah (swt) with the Prophet (s) that the One whose great-ness is overwhelming is not to be sought as an intercessor with those under His station. As for al-Qadi Abu Ya‘la’s words: “The groaning is because of the pressure of the Essence of Allah on it” – this is overt anthropomorphism.[22]

Al-Dhahabi eludes the issue by stating that the groaning of the Throne is unrelated to the Divine Names and Attributes but would be similar to the shaking of the Throne at the death of Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh (as narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim) and the cleaving of the heaven on the Day of Resurrection.[23]

Al-Suyuti mentioned Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari’s narration in *al-Durr al-Manthur* and said: “This is a metaphor (*hâdha ‘alâ sabîl al-isti‘âra*). This [metaphorical] meaning is made clear by Ibn Jarir’s narration from al-Dahhak whereby ‘The *kursî* is placed below the Throne and is where the angels stand.’”

Al-Suyuti’s elucidation is confirmed by what al-Qurtubi quoted from Ibn ‘Atiyya in his *Tafsir* of the Verse of the Throne whereby the meaning was that the *kursî* was placed in front of the ‘*arsh* “just like” the footstool is placed in front of a high chair, indicating that it did not necessitate reference to an actual footstool but referred, for example, to a seat or station. Al-Bayhaqi states the same.[24]

“As for al-Qadi Abu Ya‘la’s words: ‘The groaning is because of the pressure of the Essence of Allah on it’ – this is overt anthropomorphism” Ibn Jawzi

It is evident that the authorities considered the narrations of the groaning of the Throne as weak and their texts as “strange” and one-chained in their transmission. They held that even if such narrations were to be accepted, nevertheless their meaning would be understood as metaphorical in order to preclude anthropomorphism. The meaning of the Throne’s groaning would then be its impotence before Divine Majesty and Greatness or its submission to its Creator.

A further problem of some of these narrations, such as those cited in *al-‘Ilal al-Mutanahiya* by Ibn al-Jawzi from his shaykh Ibn al-Zaghuni, is their mention that Allah (swt) “sits on the *kursî* so that only four spans of it remain vacant” (*ma yafdalû minhu illâ qadaru arba ‘i asâbi*‘). This is a commonplace of anthropomorphism.[25] The earliest compiler of Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s

jurisprudence, al-Khallal, in his book *al-Sunna*, after stating that Allah (swt) sits on the *kursî* and there remains only four spans vacant, goes on to narrate over a hundred pages of weak and forged reports to that effect, finally claiming that whoever denies Mujahid's report is a follower of Jahm ibn Safwan! This is an extremely grave charge in view of the status of Jahmis as apostates in the eyes of Imam Ahmad and his school.[26]

2. An Unverified Narration From Ibn 'Umar

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet (s) recited: "It may be that your Lord shall raise you to an Exalted Station" and that [it meant] Allah would seat him on the dais (*yujlisuhu 'alâ al-sarîr*).[27]

It is narrated by Ibn Marduyah in his *Tafsir* as stated by al-Suyuti in his commentary on the verse in *al-Durr al-Manthur*. The authenticity of this narration is not known and its wording departs from all the other narrations, though not its meaning.

3. Another Unverified Narration From Ibn 'Umar

The same as above is also narrated from Ibn 'Umar, but with the wording: "Allah shall seat me with Him on the Throne (*al-sarîr*)."

Al-Suyuti cited it in *al-Durr al-Manthur* and said: "Narrated by al-Daylami." The authenticity of this narration is not known, and Daylami (d. 509) did not give his chain when citing the hadith.[28] In such cases the rule is to consider the narration weak, as stated by al-Suyuti in his introduction to *Jam' al-Jawami'*, also known as *al-Jami' al-Kabir*, as quoted by Muttaqi al-Hindi at the opening of *Kanz al-'Ummal*:

Everything that I reference to these four [al-'Uqayli in *al-Du'afa'*, Ibn 'Adi in *al-Kamil fi al-Du'afa'*, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and Ibn 'Asakir], or to al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi in *Nawadir al-Usul*, or to al-Hakim in his *Tarikh*, or to al-Daylami in *Musnad al-Firdaws*: all that is weak (*fa huwa da'if*), and it is therefore unnecessary, when referencing a narration back to one of them, to state explicitly that that narration is weak.

4. A Narration From Ibn ‘Abbas

From Ibn ‘Abbas: “[The meaning of] the verse [of the Exalted Station] is that Allah shall seat the Prophet (s) between Him and Gibrîl (as), and he will intercede for his Community. That is the Praiseworthy Station.”

Al-Suyuti cited it in *al-Durr al-Manthur* and said: “Narrated by al-Tabarani.” Al-Haythami said in *Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id* (book of *Tafsir* on Surat al-Isra’): “Al-Tabarani narrated it with a chain containing Ibn Lahi‘a who is weak if no-one else narrated the same hadith at his level of the chain (*idhâ lam yutâba‘*). As for [one of its sub-narrators, the *Tâbi‘î*] ‘Ata’ ibn Dinar (d. 126), it is said he did not actually hear narrations from [the next link in the chain, the *Tâbi‘î*] Sa‘id ibn Jubayr (d. 94).” Ibn Hajar specifies that ‘Ata’s narrations from Sa‘id are from reading rather than hearing.[29] The chain of this hadith would then be weak and cut-up (*da‘îf munqati‘*) as confirmed by Ma‘ruf and al-Arna‘ut’s comments.[30]

“One of the most reprehensible matters that came from Mujahid . . . [is]: ‘He will seat the Prophet (s) with Him on the Throne’” Al-Dhahabi

5. Mujahid’s Controverted Narration

From Mujahid:[31] “The saying of Allah: [**It may be that your Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station**] (17:79) means: He will seat the Prophet (s) with Him on His Throne (*yujlisuhu ma‘ahu ‘alâ ‘arshihi*).”

Al-Dhahabi cited the above in his notice on Mujahid with dismay: “One of the most reprehensible matters that came from Mujahid in his commentary of the Qur’an is what he said concerning the verse [**It may be that thy Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station**] – he said: ‘He will seat the Prophet (s) with Him on the Throne’ (*wa min ankari mâ jâ‘a ‘an mujâhidin fî al-tafsîri fî qawlihi ‘asâ an yab‘athaka rabbuka maqâman mahmûdan – qâla: yujlisuhu ma‘ahu ‘alâ al-‘arsh!*).”[32]

Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. 287) narrated Mujahid’s hadith in his book *al-Sunna*, edited by M. Nasir al-Albani who said: “Its chain is weak and severed (*maqtû‘*).”[33] This chain is as follows: Ibn Abi ‘Asim said: < Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us: < Ibn Fudayl narrated to us, < From Layth, < From Mujahid.

Al-Suyuti also cited Mujahid's report in *al-Durr al-Manthur* and said that it was narrated by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari. We cite al-Tabari's narration and his commentary further below.

“This [groaning of the Throne] is a metaphor” Al-Suyuti

6. A Narration From 'A'isha

Ibn al-Jawzi in the thirty-ninth hadith of his *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbih* mentions that 'A'isha asked the Prophet (s) about the Exalted Station and he replied: “My Lord promised to seat me on the Throne.” Ibn al-Jawzi said: “This narration is not authentic from the Prophet (s).”

7. A Narration From 'Abd Allahbn Salam

Ibn Abi 'Asim said:[34]

Muhammad ibn Abi Safwan al-Thaqafi narrated to us:

Yahya ibn Kathir Abu Ghassan al-'Anbari narrated to us:

Salm ibn Ja'far narrated to us:

From [Abu Mas'ud] Sa'id al-Jariri who said:

Sayf al-Sadusi[35] narrated to us:

From 'Abd Allah ibn Salam who said: “On the Day of Resurrection your Prophet shall be brought and he shall be made to sit in front of Allah the Almighty, on His Throne” (*yuq'adu bayna yaday Allâhi 'alâ kursiyyihi*). One of the sub-narrators, Salm ibn Ja'far, said to the one previous to him in the chain of transmission, Abu Mas'ud al-Jariri: “If he is on His *kursî*, then, surely, he is with Him [rather than in front of Him]?” (*idhâ kâna 'alâ kursiyyihi fa huwa ma'ahu?*). Abu Mas'ud replied: “Woe to you all! This is the dearest of all hadiths in my sight.”[36]

The narration reports Salm ibn Ja'far's distinction between the terms “in front of Allah” and “on His Throne” which seems to presuppose that Allah (swt) is on the Throne in the anthropomorphist sense. To Salm, the Prophet (s) is either “in front of Allah” or “on His Throne,” but he cannot be both at the same time. Abu Mas'ud's curt reply shows that Salm was not alone in observing this. However, there is no discrepancy, as the Prophet (s) can be both on the Throne of Allah (swt) and in front of Him at one and the same time; Salm ibn Ja'far's premise is far from necessary, hence Abu Mas'ud's displeasure. The apparent confusion is lifted even further if one remembers that *kursî* in the

narrations either means the Throne, or another throne next to it, or the Footstool or Station which is in front of the Throne. An example of the first meaning is al-Darimi's narration mentioned in Section 1; an example of the second, al-Hakim's authentic narration in Section 7; an example of the third, the narration of Ibn 'Abbas: "The *kursî* is the footstool."[\[37\]](#)

8. Another Narration From 'Abd Allah ibn Salam

From 'Abd Allah ibn Salam, in a long hadith on the Day of Judgment: "A seat (*kursî*) will be placed for the Prophet (s) on the right of Allah (swt)."[\[38\]](#) This narration from the same Companion as the previous one is therefore clearer with respect to meaning and more reliable with respect to transmission. Both this and the previous narration, although stopped at a Companion (*mawqûf*), would normally have the status of narrations traced back to the Prophet (s) (*marfû'*) since they give depictions of the unseen which are not subject to a Companion's opinion but necessarily come from him as a transmitted report. Yet the hadith scholars have drawn attention to 'Abd Allah ibn Salam as one of the Companions who frequently report narrations from the People of the Book (*isrâ'iliyyât*). Because of this, they have refrained from giving his *mawqûf* reports – and those of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As – the status of *marfû'* unless independently confirmed. Similar caution applies to the Successors Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahb ibn Munabbih.[\[39\]](#)

These narrations bring to three the reported positions of the Prophet (s) in the different versions of the hadith of the seating: On the Throne, in front of the Throne, and to the right of the Throne. The first is itself divided into two versions: alone, or "with Allah." The latter is obviously the most controverted version.[\[40\]](#)

9. Al-Tabari's Defense of Mujahid's Narration

Imam al-Tabari said in his *Tafsir*:

Others said [concerning the verse of the Exalted Station]: "Rather [than meaning Intercession], that Praiseworthy Station to which Allah has promised to raise His Prophet is the fact that He shall seat him with Him on His Throne!"

Following is the mention of those who said this:

‘Abbad ibn Ya‘qub al-Asadi[41] said to us:

Ibn Fudayl[42] said to us:

From Layth:[43]

From Mujahid:

“Concerning the saying of Allah: **[It may be that you Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station]** – He shall make him sit with Him on His Throne (*yujlisuhu ma‘ahu ‘alâ ‘arshihi*).”

But of the two explanations concerning this question the likelier to be correct is that supported by the authentic report from the Prophet (s) such as the following from Abu Hurayra:

Abu Kurayb[44] said to us:

Waki‘[45] said to us:

From Dawud ibn Yazid:[46]

From his father [Yazid ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman]:[47]

From Abu Hurayra:

The Prophet (s) was asked about the verse: “It may be that thy Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station” and he said: “That is intercession” (*hiya al-shafâ‘a*).[48]

Al-Tabari then goes on to mention nine more narrations supporting the latter interpretation of the verse. However, far from rejecting Mujahid’s narration, he returns to discuss it and defends its authenticity:

Even if [the meaning of Intercession] is the sound position (*al-sahîh min al-qawl*) in the interpretation [of the Exalted Station] due to what we mentioned from the Prophet (s), the Companions, and the Successors – nevertheless, what Mujahid said to the effect that Allah shall seat Muhammad (s) on His Throne is a position that is by no means unsound whether from the perspective of narration or from that of reason. For there is no report from the Prophet (s) nor from any of the Companions nor Successors precluding it. As for the perspective of reason, those who profess (*yantahil*) Islam differ on its meaning in only three ways:

- One group said: “Allah (swt) is separate (*bâ’in*) from His creation. He was before He created things; then He created them without entering into contact with them; and He is exactly as He ever was. However, with regard to the things He created, since He is not in contact (*mumâss*) with them, it is obligatory that He be separate

from them. For there is no effecter (*fa'âl*) upon things but he is either in contact with them or separate from them.”[49]

According to that group, since Allah (swt)s the effecter of things, and since they say that it is impermissible to describe Him as being in contact with them, it is therefore incumbent – so they claim – that He be separate from them. According to their school, it follows that it is the same whether He seats Muhammad (s) on His Throne or on the ground. For it results from their position that His “separateness” (*baynûna*) from His Throne and “separateness” from the ground are one and the same in meaning: He is equally separate from both, equally in contact with neither.

- Another group said: “Allah Almighty was, before He created things, in contact with nothing and separate from nothing. Then He created things and brought them into existence through His power, remaining exactly as He ever was before He created things, in contact with nothing, separate (*bâ'in*) from nothing.”[50]

According to that group’s position also, it is equally the same whether He seats Muhammad (s) on His Throne or on His ground.[51] For, according to them, it is the same regarding His Throne or His ground in that He is in contact with neither, and He is separate from neither (*la mumâss wa la mubâyin*).

- A third group[52] said: “Allah Almighty was, before He created things, in contact with nothing and separate from nothing. Then He brought things into being and created them. At that time He created for Himself a Throne over which He established Himself by sitting (*istawâ 'alayhi jâlisân*), and He entered into contact with it (*sâra lahu mumâssan*). This is just as, before He created things, there was nothing to which He granted sustenance and nothing of which He deprived it; then He created things and gave this one sustenance and deprived that one of it, giving to this one and withholding from that one. Similarly He was, before creating things, in contact with nothing and separate from nothing, then He created things and became in contact with the Throne by sitting on it as opposed to the remainder of creation.[53] Therefore, He is in contact with whatever He wishes from His creation, and He is separate from whatever He wishes from His creation.”

According to the school of that group also, it is the same whether He seats Muhammad (s) on His Throne or on a pulpit of light, for they also say that “the Lord’s sitting on the Throne does not occupy the entirety of the Throne;”[54] and [they say], similarly, that the seating of Muhammad (s) does not necessitate for him the attribute of lordship, nor does it bring him out of that of servanthood; just as the separateness of Muhammad (s) from whatever is separate from him, neither necessitates lordship for him nor brings him out of servanthood on the sole grounds that he is separate from it.[55] According to that line of thinking, just as Allah (swt) is described as separate from things, similarly, the Prophet (s) is described as separate from the Throne. They arrive at the conclusion that since the meaning of “being separate” does not necessarily preclude from the Prophet (s) the attribute of servanthood nor impose lordship upon him, similarly, his seating on the Throne of the Merciful does not necessitate either of the above for him.

In conclusion, it is clear that, as we said before, what Mujahid said is not impossible, according to all those who profess Islam, namely: that Allah (swt) shall seat the Prophet (s) on His Throne.

Now if someone should say: “We do not deny the seating of the Prophet (s) by Allah (swt) on His Throne [since it is related]... from ‘Abd Allah ibn Salam: ‘Verily, on the Day of Resurrection, Muhammad (s) shall be on the Lord’s Throne (*kursî al-Rabb*), in front of the Lord (*bayna yaday al-Rabb*).’[56] All that we deny is that He seat him *with Him*.” We can reply to him: “Do you allow that He seats him on it but not with Him?” If he allows that, then he also concurs that either he is with Him [on the Throne], or that He seats him while being separate from [the Throne], or not in contact with it, or neither in contact nor separate. Whichever of these alternatives he concedes he will have accepted part of what he previously denied.[57] But if he disallows it then he will be diverging from all the different groups whose positions we mentioned, and that is a divergence from all those that profess Islam; for there is no other position than the three we have cited[58] – none of them considering what Mujahid said to be impossible.[59]

Al-Tabari’s view that both interpretations stand is confirmed by Mujahid himself, from whom is also reported the exegesis narrated by Abu Hurayra, as found in *Tafsir Mujahid*:

‘Abd al-Rahman [ibn al-Hasan al-Hamadhani][60] told us:
Ibrahim [ibn al-Husayn al-Hamadhani][61] narrated to us:

Adam [ibn Abi Iyas][62] narrated to us:
Warqa' [ibn 'Umar][63] narrated to us,
From ['Abd Allah] Ibn Abi Najih,
From Mujahid:
[Concerning the verse] "It may be that your Lord shall raise you
to an Exalted Station" Mujahid said: "The Exalted Station is the
intercession of Muhammad (s)."[64]

9a. Another Position Related from al-Tabari

An incident was related to have taken place between al-Tabari and some Hanbalis in Baghdad over the explanation of the verse of the Exalted Station whereby al-Tabari reportedly recited:

subhana man laysa lahu anisun wa ma lahu fi 'arshihi jalisu
Glory to Him Who has no comrade
nor companion sitting with Him on His Throne!

Hearing this, the account goes, the irate Hanbalis pelted al-Tabari with their inkwells and he sought shelter in his house.[65] The report seems dubious in light of the above-cited defense by al-Tabari, in his *Tafsir*, of Mujahid's narration. Furthermore, al-Suyuti's report is not found anywhere else. What is well-established is that the Hanbalis persecuted al-Tabari for failing to mention Imam Ahmad in his book *Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha'*. Another reason mentioned by al-Dhahabi, was the antagonism between al-Tabari and the Hanbali Abu Bakr ibn Abi Dawud, who falsely accused him of being a *Râfidî*. [66]

10. Al-Qurtubi's Commentary

As for the term "with Him" used in Mujahid's [first] report,[67] it is in the same category as the saying of Allah: (Verily, those that are with your Lord) (7:206), or: (O my Lord! Build for me with You a house in Paradise) (66:11) and similar statements. All of these signify rank, status, pre-eminence, and an exalted station – not a location'
Imam al-Qurtubi

Imam al-Qurtubi commented thus on the verse of the Exalted Station in his *Tafsir*:

The third explanation of this verse is what al-Tabari reported from a party of scholars – among them Mujahid – whereby “the Exalted Station is the seating by Allah (swt) of the Prophet (s) with Him on His Throne (*kursiyyih*).” They narrated a hadith to that effect, and al-Tabari backed up the possibility (*jawâz*) of such a thing with some extravagant statements (*shatatin min al-qawl*). However, what he said cannot be inferred [from the verse] except with over-subtlety as to meaning (*al-talattuf bi al-ma‘nâ*), and it is far-fetched (*fîhi bu‘d*). This is not to say that there is no such narration; only that [one endowed with] knowledge interprets it figuratively (*al-‘ilmu yata‘awwaluhu*).

Abu Sa‘id al-Naqqash[68] mentioned from Abu Dawud al-Sijistani:[69] “Whoever denies this hadith, we strongly condemn him. The scholars of knowledge never stopped narrating this hadith. Who among them ever denied its possibility, even as he interpreted it?”

Abu ‘Umar [Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr] said: “Concerning Mujahid – although he is one of the major scholars, nevertheless he interprets away the Qur’an. There are two sayings of his which the people of knowledge have strongly rejected: one of them is this saying; the other is his interpretation of the verses: **(On that day will faces be resplendent, looking towards their Lord)** (75:22-23) as meaning: waiting for their reward, not actually looking.”[70] He [Abu ‘Umar] mentioned that in his chapter on Ibn Shihab in the discussion of the hadith of “descent” (*nuzûl*).[71]

Also narrated from Mujahid in explanation of the verse [of the Exalted Station] is his saying: “Allah will seat him on the Throne” (*yujlisuhu ‘alâ al-‘arsh*). This is not an impossible interpretation.[72] For Allah (swt) existed and was Self-Sufficient (*qâ‘im bi dhâtihî*) before He created any object, including the Throne. Then He created objects, not out of need for them, but to show His power and wisdom, and in order that His existence be known as well as His Oneness, absolute might, and all-encompassing knowledge in all the acts He decrees. [Among these objects] He created for Himself a Throne over which He elevated Himself in the way that He wished, without contact with the Throne (*min ghayri an sâra lahu mumâssan*) and without the Throne becoming a place (*makân*) for Him. In this respect it is also said: “He is now exactly as He was before He created place and time.”[73]

On that basis it is the same, with respect to possibility, whether Allah seats the Prophet (s) on the Throne or on the ground.[74] For His elevation over the Throne is not in the sense of displacement (*intiqâl*), removal (*zawâl*), nor change of position from standing to sitting, nor any state or condition to which the Throne itself is subject. Rather, He is elevated over the Throne in the way He has stated concerning Himself, without saying how. Nor does His seating of the Prophet (s) on the Throne impose upon the Prophet (s) the attribute of Lordship or move him out of that of servanthood. Rather, it consists in an elevation because of his status, and an honor bestowed upon him because of his sublime character.

As for the term “with Him” used in Mujahid’s [first] report,[75] it is in the same category as the saying of Allah: **(Verily, those that are with your Lord)** (7:206), or: **(O my Lord! Build for me with You a house in Paradise)** (66:11) and similar statements. All of these signify rank, status, pre-eminence, and an exalted station – not a location.[76]

11. Al-Ash‘ari’s Dismissal

Imam Al-Ash‘ari stated the following in the chapter on anthropomorphists (*al-Mujassima*) in his book *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*: “Some of those who profess (*yantahil*) the science of hadith said: ‘The Throne is not filled by Allah, because He makes His Prophet sit with him on the Throne.’”[77]

The word “profess” constitutes a tacit dismissal of those who used Mujahid’s narration to support the concept of the physical togetherness (*ma‘iyya*) of the Prophet (s) with Allah (swt) on the Throne, particularly those in the Hanbali school, where some scholars have turned this position into a litmus-test of belief, as shown by al-Khallal’s *al-Sunna* and in the following sections.

12. Ibn al-Qayyim’s List of Supporters

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya[78] said in his *Bada’i‘ al-Fawa’id*:

Al-Qadi [Ibn Abi Ya‘la][79] said: “Al-Marwazi[80] compiled a book on the superlative merits of the Prophet (s) in which he mentioned his seating (*iq‘âduhu*) on the Throne (*al-‘arsh*).”

Al-Qadi further said: “This is the position of Abu Dawud, Ahmad ibn Asram,[81] Yahya ibn Abi Talib,[82] Abu Bakr ibn Hammad,[83] Abu Ja‘far al-Dimashqi,[84] ‘Abbas al-Duri,[85] Ishaq ibn Rahuyah (or Rahawayh),[86] ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Warraaq,[87] Ibrahim al-Asbahani,[88] Ibrahim al-Harbi,[89] Harun ibn Ma‘ruf,[90] Muhammad ibn Isma‘il al-Sulami,[91] Muhammad ibn Mus‘ab al-‘Abid,[92] Abu Bakr ibn Sadaqa,[93] Muhammad ibn Bishr ibn Sharik,[94] Abu Qilaba,[95] ‘Ali ibn Sahl,[96] Abu ‘Abd Allahbn ‘Abd al-Nur,[97] Abu ‘Ubayd,[98] al-Husayn ibn Fadl,[99] Harun ibn al-‘Abbas al-Hashimi,[100] Isma‘il ibn Ibrahim al-Hashimi,[101] Muham-mad ibn ‘Imran al-Farisi al-Zahid,[102] Muhammad ibn Yunus al-Basri,[103] ‘Abd Allahbn Ahmad ibn Hanbal,[104] al-Marwazi, and Bishr al-Hafi.”[105]

I say: It is also the position of Ibn Jarir al-Tabari,[106] and the leader of all the above in this is Mujahid, the imam of Qur’anic commentary. It is also Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqutni’s[107] who said:

*The hadith of Intercession narrated by Ahmad
Is traced back to the Elect, Ahmad.
Also known to us is the hadith of his seating
On the Throne, therefore do not deny it.
Let the hadith pass exactly as narrated,
And do not enter into false notions.
Neither deny that the Prophet sits on the Throne,
Nor deny that Allah makes him sit there!*[108]

The book of al-Marwazi mentioned by Ibn Abi Ya‘la gave rise to serious confrontations in Baghdad around the question of the Prophet’s (s) seating on the Throne. Ibn al-Athir relates:

That year, a terrible dissension took place in Baghdad between the followers of the Hanbali Abu Bakr al-Marwazi and others of the common folk, and the police had to intervene in large numbers. The reason was that al-Marwazi’s followers said, in explanation of the verse: “It may be that thy Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station,” that it meant Allah would seat the Prophet (s) with Him on the Throne. The other group said that it only meant the Intercession. Dissension ensued and they fell upon one another, and there were many dead.[109]

Ibn al-Qayyim’s report that this was the position of al-Tabari suggests that he and al-Qurtubi’s were looking at a common source and that al-Tabari

held two opinions on the question, one in support of Mujahid’s narration, as mentioned by Qurtubi, Ibn al-Qayyim, and Ibn Taymiyya, the other opposing it, as mentioned by al-Birzali and al-Suyuti.

It is evident that Ibn al-Qayyim collects as many Hanbali authorities as he can find in support of the narration of the seating. Yet he omits to mention Abu Muhammad al-Barbahari,[110] Abu Bakr al-Najjad,[111] Ibn Batta[112] – although Ibn Abi Ya‘la mentions all three supported it in his *Tabaqat* – and his own teacher Ibn Taymiyya.[113]

Ibn al-Qayyim also avoids the distinction between Mujahid’s version mentioning “sitting with Allah” and other versions mentioning simply “sitting.” He merely wishes to show that all these authorities supported the latter, and cautiously sidesteps the thorny issue raised by al-Qurtubi in his discussion of the verse of the Exalted Station.

13. Al-Barbahari’s *Idée Fixe*

Ibn Abi Ya‘la relates in his *Tabaqat* that the Hanbali shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Barbahari never sat to teach except he mentioned that the Prophet (s) sits next to Allah on the Throne.[114]

14. Al-Najjad’s Attack on “Anyone That Contradicts Us”

Ibn Abi Ya‘la wrote the following in his chapter on Abu Bakr al-Najjad in *Tabaqat al-Hanabila*:

‘Ali[115] narrated to me from Ibn Batta:

Abu Bakr al-Najjad told us:

(1) Harun ibn al-‘Abbas[116] told us:

Muhammad ibn Bishr[117] told us:

‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Sharik[118] told us:

My father[119] told me:

Abu Yahya al-Qattat[120] told us,

From Mujahid:

– Also –

(2) Mu‘adh ibn al-Muthanna[121] told us:

Khallad ibn Aslam[122] said:

Muhammad ibn Fadl[123] told us,

From Layth,

From Mujahid:

Concerning the verse: “It may be that thy Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station”: “He will seat him with Him on the Throne” (*yujlisuhu ma‘ahu ‘alâ al-‘arsh*).[124]

Al-Najjad said: “I also asked [about it] Abu Yahya al-Naqid, [125] Ya‘qub al-Mutawwa‘i,[126] ‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and a group of our shaykhs, and they narrated to me the hadith of Muham-mad ibn Fudayl from Layth from Mujahid.

“I also asked Abu al-Hasan al-‘Attar[127] about it, and he narrated to me the hadith of Mujahid. Then he said: ‘I heard Muhammad ibn Mus‘ab al-‘Abid say: “[The Prophet’s (s) seating on the Throne will take place] in order for all creation to see his station before his Lord, and his Lord’s generosity towards him. Then the Prophet (s) shall retire to his apartments and gardens and wives, and alone shall remain Allah in His Lordship (*yanfaridu ‘azza wa jalla bi rubûbiyyatihi*).”’

“I also looked into the book of Ahmad ibn al-Hajjaj al-Marwazi, who is our imam and guide and proof in this. In that book I found what he mentioned concerning the rejection of the hadiths of ‘Abd Allah ibn Salam[128] and Mujahid, and he listed the names of the shaykhs who criticized those who rejected these hadiths or objected to them.

“Therefore, what we declare and believe before Allah Almighty is what we have just described and made clear concerning the meanings of the hadiths quoted from the Prophet (s) with an uninterrupted chain (*al-ahadith al-musnada ‘an rasul Allah*),[129] and what was said by ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas[130] and the scholars after him, which was handed down from elder to elder and from age to age until our shaykhs’ time concerning the saying of Allah: **[It may be that your Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station]: the Exalted Station consists in the seating of the Prophet (s) with his Lord on the Throne.** Whoever denies this or contradicts it is only attempting to promote the sayings of the Jahmis. He should be avoided, exposed, and warned against.[131]

“Similarly, I was told by Abu Bakr the writer,[132] from Abu Dawud al-Sijistani, that the latter said: ‘Whoever rejects the hadith of Mujahid is a Jahmi.’ [133]

“Furthermore, Muhammad ibn Suhayb[134] and a group of our shaykhs narrated to us from Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Daqiqi[135] that he said: ‘I first heard this hadith fifty years ago, and I never heard anyone deny it. Only Jahmi heretics reject it.’

“Abu Isma‘il al-Sulami[136] mentioned to us the case of al-Tirmidhi who rejected the pre-eminence of the Prophet (s) and belittled him.[137] Of such a man he said: ‘He does not believe in the Day of Judgment.’ I have seen our shaykhs among the friends of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal give the same verdict. They condemned whoever rejected such pre-eminence. Allah has made this condemnation clear in the words of the scholars as far back as one can see. The people have all met this with approval, and no-one denies this nor disputes it.

“Such is also my position. And should one swear a triple divorce by the seating by Allah (swt) of the Prophet (s) on the Throne with Him, then consult me on the validity of his oath, I would say: Your words are true, your oath binding, and the divorce stands.

“That is our doctrine, our religion, our belief upon which we were raised and upon which we shall die if Allah wills. We categorically condemn whoever rejects this pre-eminence to which the scholars referred and which they met with acceptance. Whoever rejects it is from the sects that are bound for destruction.”[138]

15. Ibn Batta’s Doctrine

Ibn Batta stated in his book *al-Sharh wa al-Ibana ‘ala Usul al-Sunna wa al-Diyana* (“Elaboration of the Principles of Sunni Doctrine”):

The Prophet (s) shall be seated on the Throne with his Lord (*yujlas ma‘a rabbihi ‘alâ al-‘arsh*), and this privilege belongs to no-one else. Thus did Nafi‘ narrate it from Ibn ‘Umar[139] from the Prophet (s) concerning the verse: “It may be that thy Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station” – he said that He shall seat him with Him on the Throne. Thus also did Mujahid explain it, as narrated by Muhammad ibn Fudayl, from al-Layth, from Mujahid.[140]

16. Ibn Taymiyya’s Inheritance

Ibn Taymiyya wrote:

The scholars recognized by Allah and His accepted Friends have narrated that Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (s) will be seated by His Lord on the Throne next to Him.

Muhammad ibn Fudayl narrated this from Layth from Mujahid in the commentary of the verse: “It may be that your Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station.” This was also mentioned through other chains, some traced back to the Prophet (s) and some not.

Ibn Jarir [al-Tabari] said: “This does not contradict the nearly-mass-narrated narrations (*ma istafâdat bihi al-ahâdith*) whereby the Exalted Station is the Intercession as agreed upon by the Imams of all Muslims.” He does not say that the Prophet’s (s) seating on the Throne is denounced as false; only some Jahmis held it so. Nor is it objectionable to mention it in the context of a commentary on the verse. [141]

As we have mentioned before, Ibn Taymiyya’s student al-Dhahabi dismissed the report as “condemned” (*munkar*). It is also remarkable that Ibn Taymiyya, like his Hanbali predecessors, refuses to acknowledge the inauthenticity of the chains of the narrations he refers to, especially those he says are traced back to the Prophet (s).

Hajji Khalifa said: “Ibn Taymiyya authored a book entitled *al-‘Arsh* in which he stated that Allah sits on the *kursî* and leaves some space vacant for the Prophet (s) to sit next to him. Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi mentioned it in [his Qur’anic commentary entitled] *al-Nahr* and said that he read it in Ibn Taymiyya’s own handwriting.” [142]

And Allah Most High knows best.

Blessings and greetings of Allah on the Prophet, his Family and Companions.

[1] Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu‘ al-Fatawa (Mufasssal al-I‘tiqad* - “Specifics of Belief” - 4:374).

[2] Al-Kawthari, *Maqalat* (p. 358).

[3] Hadith of the Prophet (s) narrated from Anas by al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, book of *Tawhîd*: “On the Day of Resurrection the people will surge one group after another like waves, and they will come to Adam and say: ‘Please intercede for us with your Lord!’ He will say: ‘I am not

fit for this. You should go to Ibrahim as he is the Intimate Friend (*khalīl*) of the Beneficent.’ They will go to Ibrahim and he will say: ‘I am not fit for this, but you should go to Musa as he is the one to whom Allah ﷻ spoke directly.’ So they will go to Musa and he will say: ‘I am not fit for this, but you should go to ‘Isa as he is a soul created [directly] by Allah, and His Word [Be!].’ They will go to ‘Isa and he will say: ‘I am not fit for this, but you should go to Muhammad.’ They will come to me and I will say: ‘I shall do it!’ Then I will ask for my Lord’s permission and it shall be given...”

[4]Al-Busiri, line 155 of *Qasidat al-Burda*.

[5]Suyuti said in *al-Durr al-Manthur* for verse 2:216: “Narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas by Ibn al-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunan*.” Cf. Qurtubi’s *Tafsir* for verse 7:129: “‘*Asâ min Allâhi: wâjib.*” Cf. Ibn Kathir in *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* (5:33) and al-Suyuti in *al-Durr al-Manthur*, both on verse 9:102: “‘*Asâ min Allâhi: wâjib.*” Qurtubi also said for verse 4:84: “‘*Al-itmâ‘u min Allâhi: wâjib.*” Notable exceptions to this rule are verses 2:216, 17:8, and 67:5, which, as al-Suyuti showed, do not denote certainty.

[6]The chains of this hadith are all weak (*da‘if*) as they contain ‘Uthman ibn ‘Umayr who was variously declared as weak (*da‘if*) or condemned as a narrator (*munkar al-hadith*). See the comments of Shaykh Ahmad Shakir in his edition of the *Musnad* (4:31-32 #3787), al-Haythami (10:361-362), and al-Dhahabi’s rejection of al-Hakim’s grading of authentic in the marginalia on the *Mustadrak* (2:365). This is not to say that the hadith itself is not authentic in its parts through other chains, such as what is narrated from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, and Ahmad whereby the Prophet (s) said: “Ask Allah for the Means to Him (*al-wasila*) for me, it is a station in Paradise for one of His servants alone, and I hope to be that one.”

[7]Narrated by al-Tabarani in *al-Kabir*, Ibn Marduyah in his *Tafsir*, and al-Hakim (2:371).

[8]Narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir with a sound chain according to Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bari* (1959 ed. 8:199 but this appears to be a slip, see below, p. 5), al-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (3:9), Abu al-Shaykh in *al-‘Azama* (2:627-628), ‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad in *al-Sunna* (#588), Ibn Abi Shayba in *Kitab al-‘Arsh* (1:78 #60), and al-Bayhaqi in *al-Asma’ wa al-Sifat* (ASH 2:296-297 #859).

[9]Narrated by Ibn Abi ‘Asim in *al-Sunna* (p. 252 #574), al-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (3:10-11), and Ibn al-Jawzi in *al-‘Ilal al-Mutanahya* (1:20 #2-3). Al-Tabari’s version has the following “condemned” (*munkar*) wording: “The Prophet (s) glorified Allah and said: ‘Verily, His Seat of Authority (*kursi*) encompasses the heavens and the earth, and verily He sits on it (*innahu layaqa‘adu ‘alayh*) and there does not remain of it [but] a space of four fingers.’ Then he signalled with his fingers, holding them to-gether. ‘And verily it groans like the sound of the new saddle when one mounts it, due to His weight pressing down on it.”

[10]Narrated by Abu Dawud’s *Sunan*, *Kitab al-Sunna*, ch. 19 (4:232 #4726), Abu Ya‘la, Tabarani in *al-Kabir* (2:132-133), al-Bazzar in his *Musnad* (1:29 #39), ‘Abd ibn Humayd in his *Musnad*, Ibn Abi ‘Asim in *al-Sunna* (#575-576), Ibn Abi Shayba in *Kitab al-‘Arsh* (#11), al-Ajurri in *al-Shari‘a* (p. 293), Ibn Abi Hatim in his *Tafsir* of Surat al-Baqara (#224), al-Daraqutni in *al-Sifat* (#38-39), al-Lalika’i in his *Sunna* (#656), al-Baghawi in *Sharh al-Sunna* (1:175), Abu al-Shaykh in *al-‘Azama* (2:554-555), al-Diya’ al-Maqdisi, and Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhid* (1:239). In addition, there is a statement by Ka‘b al-Ahbar – not a Prophetic report – narrated by Abu al-Shaykh in *al-‘Azama* (p. 91 #236) and al-Dhahabi in *al-‘Uluw* (p. 366-367 #281), the latter declar-ing its chain “neat” but condemning its

wording (“a groaning like the groaning of the saddles when first ridden, due to the weight of the Almighty on top of them”).

[11] In *al-'Ilal al-Mutanahiya* (1:20-21 #2-3).

[12] In his commentary on Surat al-'Alaq, cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu'a Rasa'il* (16:435): “A group of the masters of hadith have rejected it [as inauthentic] due to its confusion [in its chains and wordings], but most of Ahl al-Sunna accept it”! This is an example of his unreliability in hadith authentication in any matter related to his doctrine.

[13] In *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* (Turath ed. 1:11-12).

[14] On this *tafsir* see n. 37 below. The preferred explanation of the *kursi* according to many of the *Salaf* is Ibn 'Abbas's report: “It means His knowledge.” Narrated *marfū'* from the Prophet (s) by Sufyan al-Thawri with a sound chain according to Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bari* (1959 ed. 8:199) and al-Tabarani in *al-Sunna*; and *mawqūf* from Ibn 'Abbas by al-Tabari with three sound chains in his *Tafsir* (3:9-11), al-Mawardi in his *Tafsir* (1:908), al-Suyuti in *al-Durr al-Manthur* (1:327), al-Shawkani in *Fath al-Qadir* (1:245), and others. Al-Tabari chooses it as the most correct explanation: “The external wording of the Qur'an indicates the correctness of the report from Ibn 'Abbas that it [the *kursi*] is His 'ilm... and the original sense of *al-kursi* is *al-'ilm*.” Also narrated in “suspended” form (*mu'allaq*) by al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* from Sa'id ibn Jubayr (Book of *Tafsir*, chapter on the saying of Allah (swt): [**And if you go in fear, then (pray) standing or on horseback**] (2:239). Its chains are documented by Ibn Hajar in *Taghliq al-Ta'liq* (2/4:185-186) where he shows that Sufyan al-Thawri, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi, and Waki' narrated it *marfū'* from the Prophet (s), although in the *Fath* he declares the *mawqūf* version from Ibn 'Abbas more likely.

An example of anthropomorphism is in the footnote to the verse of the Throne for the word *kursiyyuhu*, translated as “His Throne”: “Throne: seat” in the work entitled *The Holy Qur-an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, Revised and Edited by The Presidency of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance (Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-an Printing Complex, 1410 [1990]). Sura 2:255, footnote #298. In the 1997 edition (p. 57 n. 1) the word is left untranslated, giving “His *Kursi*,” with a footnote stating: “*Kursi*: literally a footstool or chair, and sometimes wrongly translated as Throne. Ibn Taimiyah said: a) To believe in the *Kursi*. b) To believe in the 'Arsh (Throne) [*sic*]. It is narrated from Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh and from other religious scholars that the *Kursi* is in front of the 'Arsh (Throne) and it is at the level of the Feet. (*Fatawa Ibn Taimiyah*, Vol. 5, Pages 54, 55).” None of these explanations is authentic as related from the Prophet (s) (cf. n. 37), nor is the translation of *kursi* as “Throne” wrong when called for in certain cases (cf. p. 355f.), especially since some among the *Salaf*, among them al-Hasan al-Basri, said that the *kursi* is the 'arsh (al-Tabari, *Tafsir* 3:10). Furthermore, it is authentically related from Ibn 'Abbas that he said: “His *kursi* is His knowledge (*kursiyyuhu 'ilmuhu*),” and this is the explanation preferred by Sufyan al-Thawri, al-Bukhari, al-Tabari, and others. Cf. n. 14. As for Imam al-Qushayri, he said in *Lata'if al-Isharat* (1:209) in his commentary on [**His *kursi* encompasses the heaven and the earth**] (2:255): “He is addressing them according to the capacity of their minds. Otherwise, what part can the created universes possibly have before His Attributes? Exalted and glorified is His Might from deriving any gain from a throne or a seat, or from beautifying Himself with a jinn or a human being.”

[15]In *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (p. 301 #3294) and *Tahrir Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (2:205 #3294) respectively. See also al-Haythami (10:159).

[16]Cf. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir* (2:14). Ibn Hajar in *Zawa'id al-Bazzar* (p. 16) further specifies that Sufyan al-Thawri stopped the chain of this hadith at 'Umar, thus making it *mawqûf munqati'* or *mursal munqati'* as stated by Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhid* (p. 71). Hence Albani in his edition of Ibn Abi 'Asim (p. 252) declared the chain weak.

[17]At this point al-Ajurri's version adds: "Verily, He is above His heavens, and He is over His Throne!"

[18]Narrated by Abu Dawud, *Sunan, Kitab al-Sunna*, ch. 19 (4:232 #4726), al-Bazzar, *Musnad* (1:29 #39), al-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (3:10), Abu Ya'la in his *Musnad*, as mentioned by al-Haythami (10:159), Ibn Abi 'Asim in *al-Sunna* (p. 252-253 #575-576), al-Ajurri in *al-Shari'a* (p. 298 #678), and Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhid* (p. 69).

[19]In *al-'Uluw* (p. 37-39). Al-Dhahabi also says: "There is not a single established text [*i.e.* sound] that has the word "groaning" (*atîf*) in it." *Mukhtasar al-'Uluw* (p. 124). Al-Albani reiterates this statement in his *Silsila Da'ifa* (2:307 #906).

[20]As stated by Ibn Hajar in his *Taqrib* (p. 138 #902) and confirmed by Ma'ruf and al-Arna'ut in *Tahrir Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (1:210 #902).

[21]Al-Khattabi, *Ma'alim al-sunan* (4:302).

[22]Ibn al-Jawzi, *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbih* (p. 268).

[23]Al-Dhahabi, *al-'Uluw* (p. 84).

[24]In *al-Asma' wa al-Sifat* (2:197, 2:297).

[25]Cf. n. 9 above.

[26] See Introduction, section on the *Jahmiyya*.

[27]Ibn Taymiyya said in his *Radd 'Ala Asas al-Taqdis* (1:101): "*Al-'arsh* lexically means *al-sarir* – elevated seat or couch – with respect to what is on top of it."

[28]In his book *Firdaws al-Akhbar* (3:85 #3978).

[29]In *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (p. 391 #4589).

[30]In *Tahrir Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (3:13 #4589).

[31]Mujahid ibn Jabr, Abu al-Hajjaj al-Makhzumi (d. 102), one of the major commentators of the Qur'an among the *Tâbi'in* and of the highest rank in reliability among hadith narrators (*thiqa*). It is related by Ibn Sa'd in the *Tabaqat* (6:9) and elsewhere that he went over the explanation of the Holy Qur'an together with Ibn 'Abbas thirty times. Al-A'mash said: "Mujahid was like someone who carried a treasure: whenever he spoke, pearls came out of his mouth." After praising him in similar terms al-Dhahabi said: "Mujahid has certain strange sayings pertaining to knowledge and commentary of Qur'an which are rejected and condemned. A report has reached us whereby he went to Babel and asked its governor to show him [the angels] Harut and Marut. Mujahid said: 'The governor sent a Jew to go with me until we arrived at a grotto under the earth and he showed them to me. They were suspended upside down. I said: "I believe in the One Who created the two of you." At that time they shuddered, and both I and the Jew fainted. We came to after a while, and the Jew said to me: You nearly caused our death!" Al-Dhahabi also quotes al-A'mash's judgment of Mujahid's *Tafsir* whereby Mujahid was among those who narrate from the books of *Ahl al-Kitab*. Al-Dhahabi then proceeds to mention Mujahid's commentary on the verse of the Exalted Station as one of the most objectionable statements he made: "The saying of Allah: **[It may be that your Lord will raise you to an Exalted Station]** (17:79) means: He will

seat the Prophet (s) with Him on His Throne (*yu-jlisuhu ma'ahu 'alâ 'arshihi*)." Among Mujahid's famous sayings: "There is no creature of Allah (swt) except you can take or leave what they said except the Prophet (s)." Narrated from Mujahid and also from al-Hakam ibn 'Utayba by Ibn Hazm in *al-Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam* (6:291, 6:293) and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *al-Jami' fi Bayan al-'Ilm* (2:925-926 #1761-1765). Of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Mujahid relates: "People would uncover the space above his grave and it would rain." Sources: Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya al-Awliya'* (3:280); al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (3:439 #7072) and *Siyar* (5:379-381 #542); Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifa al-Safwa* (1:243).

[32]Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-I'tidal* (3:439 #7072).

[33]Ibn Abi 'Asim, *al-Sunna* (p. 305 #695).

[34]In *al-Sunna* (p. 351 #786).

[35]This is Sayf al-Sa'di, whose reliability is unknown. There is no Sayf al-Sadusi. Al-Tabari also narrates it (8:100) with a chain containing "Sayf al-Sadusi." The rest of the sub-narrators are all trustworthy (*thiqât*).

[36]This may mean: "I know it well enough to be certain of its wording."

[37]A *mawqûf* statement of Ibn 'Abbas narrated with a sound chain by al-Tabarani in *al-Kabir* (12:39 #12404) as stated by al-Haythami (6:323), al-Bayhaqi in *al-Asma' wa al-Sifat* (2:196 #758), Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhid* (p. 108), al-Hakim (2:282), who declared it *sahih* while al-Dhahabi concurred, al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (9:251), Ibn Abi Shayba in *al-'Arsh* (p. 79 #61), Abu al-Shaykh in *al-'Azama* (2:552-553 #196, 2:582 #216); and *marfû'* – erroneously – by al-Daraqutni in *al-Sifat* (p. 49-50 #36) and Ibn Mandah in *al-Radd 'ala al-Jahmiyya* (p. 44-45). Ibn al-Jawzi in *al-'Ilal* (1:22) declared that it should not be considered a *marfû'* Prophetic report. This verdict is confirmed by al-Dhahabi in his *Mizan* (2:265), Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir* (1:317), and Ibn Hajar in *al-Tahdhib* (4:274), cf. al-Ahdab, *Zawa'id* (7:37-39 #1383). Al-Bayhaqi said: "He did not attribute the feet [to Allah], nor did Abu Musa al-Ash'ari in his own identical statement [*al-Asma'* (2:296-297 #859) with a weak chain], and this [non-attributive form] seems the sound-est version. Its interpretation among the authorities is that the *kursî* in relation to the Throne is as the footstool is in relation to the couch under which a foot-stool is placed for the person reclining on it... At any rate this is a halted report which is not narrated from the Prophet (s). As for our early companions they did not explain such cases nor did they preoccupy them-selves with interpreting them believing, at the same time, that Allah **I** is One without parts nor limbs." Al-Qurtubi in his *Tafsir* (3:278) cites a similar explanation from Ibn 'Atiyya. Elsewhere (2:272) al-Bayhaqi, like al-Bukhari and al-Tabari before him, gives precedence to Ibn 'Abbas's authentic explanation of the *kursî* as "His '*ilm*'" (see n. 14) while Ibn Kathir states his preference for the narra-tion of the footstool in the introduction of his history entitled *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*.

[38]Al-Hakim narrated it in his *Mustadrak* (4:568-569) and declared its chain sound (*sahih*), as confirmed by al-Dhahabi.

[39]Cf. Ibn Hajar, *al-Nukat 'ala Kitab Ibn al-Salah* (2:532); Ibn Kathir (on Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahb ibn Munabbih) in his *Tafsir* (3:379 on 27:41-44); al-Qari's commentary on Ibn Hajar's *Sharh al-Nukhba* entitled *Sharh Sharh Nukhba al-Fikar fi Mustalahat Ahl al-Athar* ("Commentary on Ibn Hajar's Commentary on his own book 'Chosen Thoughts on the Terminology of Hadith Scholars'" p. 548-549); al-Sakhawi's *Fath al-Mughith*, ed. 'Ali

Husayn ‘Ali (Beirut: Dar al-Imam al-Tabari, 1992 1:150-151); Nur al-Din ‘Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqd fi ‘Ulum al-Hadith* (p. 328).

[40]Of note also is the interchange of names for the Throne in the different narrations: *kursi* in most, then *‘arsh*, then *sarîr*.

[41]‘Abbad ibn Ya‘qub, Abu Sa‘id al-Asadi al-Rawajini al-Kufi (d. 250). “One of the ‘extremists’ (*ghulât*) of the Shi‘a and one of the heads of innovation – however, he is truthful (*sâdiq*) in hadith” according to al-Dhahabi while Ibn Hajar describes him as *sadûq Râfidî*. Ibn Hibban said of him: “He deserves to be abandoned [as a narrator].” Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (2:379 #4149); Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib* (p. 291 #3153).

[42]Muhammad ibn Fudayl ibn Ghazwan ibn Jarir al-Dibbi (d. 295). A trustworthy (*thiqa*) Shi‘i narrator retained as an authority by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their *Sahihs*. His narration from Layth from Mujahid from Ibn ‘Abbas was retained by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* for the hadith: “The Prophet (s) used to prostrate in [Sura] *Sâd*” [i.e. for 38:24]. Ma‘ruf, *Tahrir al-Taqrib* (3:306-307 #6227).

[43]Al-Layth ibn Abi Sulaym ibn Zunaym al-Qurashi (d. 148). Ibn Hajar said that he was abandoned as a hadith narrator due to the excessiveness of his mistakes. He is declared weak (*da‘îf*) and a concealer of his sources (*mudallis*) by al-Haythami in *Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id*. Al-Bukhari and Muslim did narrate three hadiths from him, but only as corroborations (*mutâba‘ât*) of established chains. Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib* (p. 464 #5685); al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (3:422 #6997).

[44]Muhammad ibn al-‘Ala’ ibn Kurayb, Abu Kurayb al-Hamdani (d. 248). A hadith master considered trustworthy (*thiqa*) by the scholars.

[45]Waki‘ ibn al-Jarrah, Abu Sufyan al-Ru‘asi (d. 196). One of the major, trustworthy hadith masters.

[46]Dawud ibn Yazid, Abu Yazid al-A‘raj al-Awdi al-Za‘afiri al-Kufi (d. 151). Declared weak (*da‘îf*) by Ahmad, Ibn Ma‘in, Ibn al-Madini, and Abu Dawud, although al-Bukhari narrated from him in his *Adab al-Mufrad* as well as al-Tirmidhi (five hadiths in the *Sunan*), Ibn Majah (also five hadiths), Ahmad (eighteen hadiths in the *Musnad*), and al-Darimi (one hadith in the *Sunan*). Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib* (p. 200 #1818); al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (2:21-22 #2655).

[47]Yazid ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, Abu Dawud al-Za‘afiri al-Awdi (d. ?). One of the narrators of the *Tâbi‘în* who is acceptable for corroborating narrations (*maqbul*) according to Ibn Hajar in *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (p. 603 #7746), but al-Arna‘ut and Ma‘ruf said in *Tahrir al-Taqrib* (4:114 #7746): “Rather, he is truthful and of fair narrations (*sadûq hasanu al-hadîth*).”

[48]Al-Tabari, *Jami‘ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur‘an* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘arif, 1980, 8:98). The hadith of Abu Hurayra is narrated by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi with the same chain, and the latter declared it fair (*hasan*). The chain is weak because of Dawud ibn Yazid but the hadith itself is sound (*sahîh*). This is stated by Hamza Ahmad al-Zayn in his edition of Ahmad’s *Musnad* (9:296 #9696, 9:415 #10152(m)) and by Nasir al-Albani in his edition of Ibn Abi ‘Asim’s *al-Sunna* (p. 350 #784). The narration is confirmed by the hadith of Ibn ‘Umar in al-Bukhari’s *Sahih* (book of *Tafsir*) whereby “Intercession shall be given over to the Prophet (s), and that is the day when Allah shall raise him to the Exalted Station.” Another confirmation is in the long hadith of the Prophet’s ﷺ intercession from Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri in the last book of al-Bukhari’s *Sahih*. There is also the hadith from Ka‘b ibn Malik whereby the Prophet (s) said: “People will be raised on the Day of Resurrection and I shall

be, I and my Community, on top of a hill; there, my Lord shall dress me with a green garment and grant me His permission, whereupon I shall say whatever it pleases Allah that I say: that is the Exalted Station.” Narrated by Ahmad with a sound chain as stated by the editor of the *Musnad* (12:309-310 #15723) as well as by al-Tabarani in his *Kabir* (19:72 #142) with a sound chain as indicated by al-Haythami (7:51, 10:377), and by Ibn Hibban (14:399 #6479).

[49]Cf. Sulayman ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s words in his *al-Tawdih ‘an Tawhid al-Khallaq fi Jawab Ahl al-‘Iraq* (1319/1901, p. 34, and new ed. al-Riyad: Dar Tibah, 1984): “It is obligatory to declare that Allah is separate (*bâ’in*) from creation, established over His Throne without modality or likeness or exemplariness. Allah was and there was no place, then He created place and He is exalted as He was before He created place.” See also our posting titled “Allah is Now as He Ever Was.”

[50]Abu Nu‘aym narrates with his chain from ‘Ali in *Hilya al-Awliya’* (1997 ed. 1:114 #227) in the chapter on ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib the latter’s saying to the forty Jews who asked Him about Allah’s nature and description: “How can even the most eloquent tongues describe Him Who did not exist among things so that He could be said to be ‘separate from them’ (*bâ’in*)? Rather, He is described without modality, and He is **(nearer to [man] than his jugular vein)** (50:16).” The report is also found in *Kanz al-Ummal*. See, on the meaning of *bâ’in*, the explanation of “The Far” (*al-Ba‘id*) in Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Aqida* §163 (full text was posted on MSA-EC and SRI).

[51]An inappropriate phrasing to say the least, and who claims that the Lord of Glory and Munificence would seat His Most Beloved on the ground? The wording should have been, “it is equally the same whether He seats him on His Throne or any-where else.” And Allah knows best.

[52]These are the *Hashwiyya* or gross anthropomorphists, as indicated by their statements.

[53]This analogy is of course false both in its premises and its conclusions.

[54]See the discussion of this belief in Section 1 (“The Groaning of the Throne”).

[55]The argument is based on the presupposition that there is nothing created above the Throne, as Ibn Hazm stated in his *al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa’ wa al-Nihal* (2:125) when he defined *istiwâ’* as “an act pertaining to the Throne, and that is the termination of His creation at the Throne, for there is nothing beyond it.” According to this axiom, the Throne is the separator between Creator and created, or Lordship and servanthood.

[56]This is similar to Ibn Abi ‘Asim’s narration quoted in Section 6.

[57]The weakness of this reasoning is readily apparent to the reader.

[58]Once again a false premise and conclusion. Al-Tabari throughout does not address the fundamental error that consists in attributing location and other contingent attributes of the created to the Creator.

[59]Al-Tabari, *Tafsir* (8:97-100).

[60]‘Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Hasan ibn ‘Ubayd, al-Qadi, Abu al-Qasim al-Asadi al-Hamadhani (d. 352). A weak narrator. His narration from Ibn Dizil was declared in-authentic by Salih ibn Ahmad al-Hamadhani, and he was accused of lying by al-Qasim ibn Abi Salih, but al-Daraqutni narrated from him, as did al-Hakim, Ibn Mandah, Ibn Marduyah, and Abu ‘Ali ibn Shadhan. Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (2:556-557 #4852); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (12:194-195 #3201); Ibn Hajar, *Lisan* (3:411-412).

[61] Ibrahim ibn al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali al-Hamadhani al-Kisa’i, known as Ibn Dizil or Dayzil (d. 281), a trustworthy hadith master.

[62] Adam ibn Abi Iyas, Abu al-Hasan al-‘Asqalani al-Khurasani (d. 220), a trustworthy hadith master and one of al-Bukhari’s narrators.

[63] Warqa’ ibn ‘Umar, Abu Bishr al-Yashkari (d. ?), one of al-Bukhari’s narrators.

[64] Mujahid, *Tafsir*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Suwarti (Doha, Qatar: s.n., 1976), p. 369. Al-Bayhaqi in *al-Asma’ wa al-Sifat* (2:209 #772) narrates from his shaykh al-Hakim with the same chain from Mujahid the explanation of the verse (**Lest any soul should say: Alas for that I squandered of Allah’s flank!**) (39:56) as: “What I wasted of His commands.” Al-Bayhaqi in *al-Asma’ wa al-Sifat* (2:209 #772) narrates from Mujahid the explanation of this verse as: “What I wasted of His commands.” Al-Bukhari cited this explanation in his *Sahih* in the book of *Jana’iz*, chapter on the merit of following a funeral. It is also the explanation given for *janb* (“flank” or “side”) by al-Raghib al-Asfahani in his *Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur’an*. Al-Dhahabi in the *Siyar* (13:368-369 #3988) criticized the anthropomorphic understanding of the Maliki Abu ‘Umar al-Talamanki (d. 429), who mentioned the verse in a chapter named “The Side of Allah” in his book on doctrine: “I saw a book of his on the Sunna in two volumes, most of which is good, but in some of which chapters is found what none would ever agree with, for example: ‘Chapter on the Side of Allah’ in which he mentioned: (**Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of the side of Allah**). This is a scholar’s slip.” The latter phrase alludes to a hadith narrated from Abu al-Darda’ whereby the Prophet (s) said: “I fear three things for my Community most of all: the slip of the scholar, the disputation of a hypocrite about the Qur’an, and those who deny Allah’s Foreordained Destiny.” Al-Haythami said in *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*: “Al-Tabarani narrates it in *al-Kabir* but its chain contains Mu‘awiya ibn Yahya al-Sadafi, who is weak.” There are several other weak narra-tions for this hadith.

[65] Related by al-Suyuti in *Tahdhir al-Khawass min Akadhib al-Qussas*. Frederik Kern cites this ac-count in his introduction to his edition of al-Tabari’s *Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha’* (Cairo, 1902).

[66] Cf. al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (11:291-301 #2696).

[67] Here al-Qurtubi proceeds to interpret as he had alluded that it should be done when he said: “This is not to say that there is no such narration; only that knowledge demands that it be interpreted figuratively.”

[68] Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn ‘Amr ibn Mahdi, Abu Sa‘id al-Asbahani al-Hanbali al-Naqqash (d. 414). One of the major, trustworthy hadith masters of the Hanbali school, he authored a book entitled *Tabaqat al-Sufiyya* (“Biographical Layers of the Sufis”). *Siyar* (13:193-194 #3801).

[69] Sulayman ibn al-Ash‘ath, Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (d. 275). One of the major Imams of hadith, the author of the *Sunan* and a student of Imam Ahmad.

[70] This verse is the first proof cited by Imam al-Ash‘ari in his *Ibana* for the vision of Allah in the hereafter. Al-Bukhari devoted a chapter to the verse in the book of doctrine (*tawhid*) at the end of his *Sahih* in which he narrates from Jabr ibn ‘Abd Allah the hadith whereby the Prophet (s) said: “You shall see Allah with your very eyes” (*innakum satarawna rabbakum ‘iyānan*). It is a tenet of the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunna* around which there is agreement, as stated by Ibn Hajar in his commentary on the chapter (#24) on the vision of Allah in the

Hereafter in *Fath al-Bari*. Hence Imam Ahmad's statement: "Whoever denies the vision of Allah in the hereafter is a disbeliever," narrated respectively from Abu Bakr al-Marwazi, Abu Dawud, and Abu Muhammad al-Barbahari by Ibn Abi Ya'la in *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:59, 1:161, 2:27). Mujahid's interpretation of the verse of the Vision is also cited by al-Suyuti in his *Durr al-Manthur*.

[71] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhid* (7:157-158).

[72] Al-Qurtubi thus only sees impossibility in the addition of the terms "with Him" to the phrase "Allah will seat him on the Throne," because such an addition presupposes two aberrations: (1) that Allah **I** sits on the Throne; (2) that Allah **I** has a sitting-partner. Imam al-Ash'ari said in the first words of his chapter on *istiwâ'* in his *Ibana* (Sabbagh 1994 ed. p. 89; cf. 'Uyun 1996 ed. p. 97): "Allah is elevated over His Throne with an elevation that befits Him, without indwelling (*hulûl*) nor settlement (*istiqrâr*)" and again in the same chapter (Sabbagh p. 95; 'Uyun p. 102): "He is elevated over His Throne without modality (*kayfiyya*) nor settlement (*istiqrâr*)."

[73] See our posting, "Allah is now as He ever was."

[74] See above, n. 51.

[75] Here al-Qurtubi proceeds to interpret as he had alluded that it should be done when he said: "This is not to say that there is no such narration; only that knowledge demands that it be interpreted figuratively."

[76] Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (verse 17:79).

[77] Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* (1:284=p. 211).

[78] Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Sa'd, Shams al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah al-Zur'i al-Dimashqi al-Hanbali, known as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751). A specialist in Qur'anic commentary, hadith, *fiqh* and its principles, Arabic philology and grammar, and the foremost disciple of Ibn Taymiyya whose anthropomorphic and anti-*madhhab* teachings he helped perpetuate. Ibn al-Qayyim's "Book of the Soul" (*Kitab al-Ruh*) ranks among the best books on the subject of the Islamic understanding of life after death according to the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the doctrine of the *Salaf* and the Four Imams, establishing without doubt that the dead hear the living and know of them. Mumbblings are sometimes heard about the authenticity of his authorship of the book among the "Salafis." However, the book is undoubtedly by Ibn al-Qayyim and is attributed to him by over two dozen scholars both in his time and after, such as al-Dhahabi, al-Safadi, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Rajab, Ibn Nasir al-Din, Ibn Hajar, al-Biqâ'i etc. It also contains internal proofs of his authorship, such as his mention of his own book – now lost – entitled *Ma'rifa al-Ruh wa al-Nafs* and his identifying two of his direct teachers as Abu al-Hajjaj (al-Mizzi), and Ibn Taymiyya. Another internal proof is Ibn al-Qayyim's lapsing into excessive criticism of Ash'aris and misattributions of spurious positions to them as is typical of his school. Ibn al-Qayyim violently attacked imitation (*taqlîd*) of the four schools of Law among traditional Sunni Muslims and voiced his anti-*madhhab* stance in a two-volume work on the principles of the Law entitled *I'lam al-Muwaq-qî'in*. The Indian jurist and hadith scholar Habib Ahmad al-Kiranawi blasted his theses in a 100-page epistle entitled *al-Din al-Qayyim*, included in full in his *Fawa'id fi 'Ulum al-Fiqh* in the second volume of the general introduction to al-Tahanawi's *I'la' al-Sunan* (2:1-99). (This epistle is probably the most comprehensive rebuttal of "Salafi" anti-*madhhabism*). Ibn al-Qayyim also wrote extensively on *tasawwuf* with which he evidently felt strong affinities. He wrote an extensive commentary on al-

Harawi al-Ansari's slim Sufi manual entitled *Manazil al-Sa'irin ila al-Haqq* which he named *Madarij al-Salikin* and in which he says (2:307): "Religion is all moral character (*khuluq*), and whoever bests you in moral character, bests you in Religion. It is the same with *tasawwuf*. *Tasawwuf* is one of the cornerstones (*zawâyâ*) of true wayfaring (*al-sulûk al-haqîqî*) and the purification and disciplining of the self (*tazkiya al-nafs wa tahdhîbuhâ*) so that it may prepare itself for its journey to the company of the Highest Assembly and for being together with its beloved." His complete biographical notice was posted on SRI and MSA-EC.

[79] This is Muhammad ibn al-Qadi Muhammad Abi Ya'la ibn al-Husayn, Al-Qadi Abu al-Husayn al-Farra', known as Ibn Abi Ya'la (d. 526), the author of *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* ("Biographical Layers of the Hanbalis"). Al-Dhahabi said of him: "He exaggerated concerning the Sunna and harped upon the Attributes.... Al-Silafi said: 'He showed fanaticism for his school and criticized Ash'aris a lot without fearing any reproach; he composed books pertaining to his school; he was devout, trustworthy, and well-established as a narrator and we took hadith from him.'" Ibn Abi Ya'la's father, al-Qadi Abu Ya'la ibn al-Farra' – Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn Khalaf – (d. 458) was one of the major jurisprudent scholars of the Hanbali school and also the author of attacks on Ash'aris such as his book *Ibtal al-Ta'wil* ("The Invalidation of Figurative Interpretation") in which, al-Dhahabi in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluw* (p. 271) says, "he spoke at length citing worthless narrations which are inappropriate for use to assert any divine Attribute whatsoever." Abu Ya'la is himself dismissed as an anthropomorphist (*mujassim*) by the Maliki scholar Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi in *al-Qawasim wa al-'Awasim* (2:283), the Shafi'i Ibn al-Athir, and his own Hanbali colleagues such as Abu Muhammad al-Tamimi (d. 488) and Ibn al-Jawzi, throughout the latter's book *Radd Shubah al-Tashbih*. Main sources: *Siyar* 14:481 #4749; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* 10:52 [year 458].

[80] Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hallaj, Abu Bakr al-Marrudhi or Marruzi or Marwazi (d. 275). A trustworthy hadith master and the closest companion of Imam Ahmad whom he washed and laid in his grave. He was celebrated for his piety. Ibn Abi Ya'la relates that al-Marwazi said: "I asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal about the hadiths which the Jahmis reject concerning the Attributes, the vision of Allah [in the hereafter], the Prophet's ascension [body and soul], and the story of the Throne; he declared them sound and said: 'The Community accepted them, and these reports are taken exactly as they come' [*i.e.* without one seeking to explain them]." This all-too-vague reference to "the story of the Throne" is the nearest thing to a reported position on Imam Ahmad's part concerning the Prophet's seating next to Allah on the Throne. Ibn Abi Ya'la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:56).

[81] Ahmad ibn Asram al-Muzani (d. 285). He took hadith from Imam Ahmad and others of the same biographical layer and is unanimously described as trustworthy. He should not be confused with the great *mujtahid* imam and student of al-Shafi'i, Yahya ibn Isma'il al-Muzani (d. 264).

[82] Yahya ibn Abi Talib Ja'far ibn al-Zabarqan al-Baghdadi (d. 275). Al-Dhahabi related that al-Daraqutni declared him trustworthy (*thiqa*), although Musa ibn Harun declared him a liar and Abu Dawud crossed out his narrations. Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-I'tidal* (4:387) and *al-Mughni fi al-Du'afa'* (3:732).

[83] Abu Bakr ibn Hammad is unidentified. This may be the trustworthy hadith master Abu Bakr al-Naysaburi, Muhammad ibn Hamdun ibn Khalid (d. 320). One of Ibn Khuzayma's

shaykhs, he took hadith from the Hanbali scholars Abu Zur‘a, ‘Abbas al-Duri, Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Duhli, and their layer. Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (11:525 #2876).

[84] Abu Ja‘far al-Dimashqi is unidentified. This may be Abu Ja‘far al-Wasiti, Ahmad ibn Sinan ibn Asad (d. 259?), author of the *Musnad*, from whom narrated al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Kuzayma, and others. Among his sayings: “There is not in the world a person of innovation except they hate the people of the hadith; and if a man innovates, the sweet-ness of the hadith is removed from his heart.” Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (10:185 #2053).

[85] ‘Abbas ibn Muhammad ibn Hatim al-Duri (d. 271), one of the hadith masters, he transmitted narrations to “the Four” – al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa‘i, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Majah. The hadith master al-Sakhawi, in the introduction to his biography of his teacher Ibn Hajar entitled *al-Jawahir wa al-Durar*, narrates that Imam Ahmad wrote a letter of recommendation for al-Duri in which he refused to call him a scholar of hadith, but called him a student of hadith instead. Al-Dhahabi avers that this took place in his youth, at the beginning of his career. *Siyar* (10:358 #2164).

[86] Ishaq ibn Ibrahim ibn Makhlad, known as Ishaq ibn Rahuyah or Rahawayh, Abu Ya‘qub al-Tamimi al-Marwazi al-Hanzali (d. 238), one of the major hadith masters. Abu Qudama considered him greater than Imam Ahmad in memorization of hadith, a remarkable assessment considering Ahmad’s knowledge of 700,000 to a million narrations according to his son ‘Abd Allah’s and Abu Zur‘a al-Razi’s estimations. He once said of himself: “I never wrote anything except I memorized it, and I can now see before me more than 70,000 hadiths in my book”; “I know the place of 100,000 hadiths as if I were looking at them, and I memorize 70,000 of them by heart – all sound (*sahîha*) – and 4,000 falsified ones.” [Narrated by al-Khatib in *al-Jami‘ li Akhlaq al-Rawi* (2:380-381 #1832-1833).] He did not reach the same stature in *fiqh*. Al-Bayhaqi and others narrate that he unsuccessfully debated al-Shafi‘i on a legal question, as a result of which the latter disapproved of his title as the “jurisprudent of Khurasan.” To a *Jahmi* scholar who said: “I disbelieve in a Lord that descends from one heaven to another heaven,” Ibn Rahuyah replied: “I believe in a Lord that does what He wishes.” [Narrated by al-Dhahabi who identifies the scholar as Ibrahim ibn (Hisham) Abi Salih in *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (p. 191 #234).] Al-Bayhaqi comments: “Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Hanzali made it clear, in this report, that he considers the Descent (*al-nuzûl*) one of the Attributes of Action (*min sifât al-fi‘l*). Secondly, he spoke of a descent without ‘how’. This proves he did not hold displacement (*al-intiqâl*) and movement from one place to another (*al-zawâl*) concerning it.” [See our posting, “The ‘Descent’ of Allah I.”] Sources: Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:6, 1:184); al-Bayhaqi, *Manaqib al-Shafi‘i* (1:213) and *al-Asma’ wa al-Sifat* (2:375-376 #951); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (9:558 #1877); Ibn al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafi‘iyya al-Kubra* (2:89-90, 9:81).

[87] ‘Abd al-Wahhab ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam al-Warraq (d. 251), a devoted follower of Imam Ahmad who considered him his successor. Abu Bakr al-Marwazi narrated in his book *al-Wara‘* [(p. 10) published under the name of Imam Ahmad] that Ahmad was asked on his deathbed who would succeed him as the imam of the school. He said: “Put all your questions to ‘Abd al-Wahhab.” One of the students present, Fath ibn Abi al-Fath, said: “But he does not have much learning!” Ahmad replied: “He is a saintly man (*rajul sâlih*): one such as him is granted success in speaking the truth.” [This is also narrated by Ibn Abi Ya‘la in his chapter on al-Warraq in *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:210-212).] Among the statements

reported from al-Warraaq by Ibn Abi Ya‘la: “Abu ‘Abd Allah [Imam Ahmad] is our Imam. He is one of **(those who are firmly grounded in knowledge)** (3:7, 4:162). If I were to stand tomorrow before Allah and He asked me: ‘Who did you follow?’ I would say: ‘Ahmad ibn Hanbal.’” “When the Prophet (s) said: ‘Defer the question [about the Qur’an] to the one who has knowledge of it’, we deferred it to Ahmad ibn Hanbal.” This is a reference to the hadith: “The Qur’an was revealed in seven dialects, and speculative wrangling (*al-mira’*) about it is disbelief” – he said it three times – “therefore whatever you understand of it, put it into practice, and whatever you do not understand, defer it to the one who has knowledge of it.” Narrated from Abu Hurayra by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* with a sound chain, as stated by al-Haythami (7:151) and by Ahmad Shakir in the *Musnad* (8:107 #7976).

[88] Ibrahim ibn Awrama al-Asbahani (d. 266), a contemporary of ‘Abbas al-Duri and Abu Dawud. Al-Dhahabi said: “His narrations are not wide-spread because he died before the age in which one narrates. He lived fifty-five years.” By the words “the age in which one narrates” al-Dhahabi means “the age in which one achieves renown as a narrator.” Ibn Hajar in *Sharh al-Nukhba* (p. 143) sets at fifty years the age at which one normally begins to narrate, and forty as the minimum. Note that Imam Malik was an exception, since he started his narrating career at age twenty. *Siyar* (10:525 #2295).

[89] Ibrahim ibn Ishaq al-Harbi (d. 285), a prominent companion and student of Imam Ahmad. He authored a *Gharib al-Hadith* among other books. Al-Hakim relates that he was pre-eminent in Baghdad for four traits: his superlative manners, his knowledge of the Law, his knowledge of hadith, and his asceticism (*zuhd*). Al-Daraqutni said that in all these respects he compared to Imam Ahmad himself. Among his sayings: “Not every separation is estrangement, nor is every reunion love; only the nearness of the hearts is love.” “The stranger is the one who once lived among saintly people who helped him when he ordered good and forbade evil, and supplied him when he had some worldly need, then they died and left him alone.” “I never wasted anything, nor ate twice in the same day.” He disapproved of ‘Ali ibn al-Madini because he once saw him going to pray behind the Jahmi judge and grand inquisitor of *Ahl al-Sunna*, Ahmad ibn Abi Du‘ad (d. 240). The latter was principally responsible for the 28-month-long jailing and flogging of Imam Ahmad who had declared him a disbeliever (*kâfir*) for holding that the Qur’an was created. This is related by al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (4:142-153 #1825), al-Dhahabi in the chapter on Imam Ahmad in the *Siyar*, Ibn al-Subki in *Tabaqat al-Shafi‘iyya al-Kubra* (2:37-51), and others. Al-Dhahabi relates that al-Harbi’s grave in Baghdad is a place one visits for its blessings. Ibn al-Jawzi included himself in the number of those who performed this visitation and relates that al-Harbi himself used to say: “Ma‘ruf al-Karkhi’s grave is proven medicine.” This is also related by al-Dhahabi who comments: “The supplication of those in need is answered at every blessed site.” Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifa al-Safwa* (2:410, 2:214); Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (10:668-674 #2391 and 8:219 #1425).

[90] Harun ibn Ma‘ruf al-Marwazi al-Baghdadi al-Khazzaz (d. 231), one of the shaykhs of Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Abu Hatim al-Razi, Abu Zur‘a, al-Dhuhli, and others. He took narrations from Hushaym next to whose house he lived, al-Darawardi, Ibn al-Mubarak, Ibn ‘Uyayna, Ibn Wahb, and others. He is related to have said: “Whoever claims that the Qur’an is created, it is as if he worships al-Lat and al-‘Uzza. And whoever claims that Allah does not speak, he is an idol-worshipper.” *Siyar* (9:400 #1844).

[91] Muhammad ibn Isma‘il ibn Yusuf Abu Isma‘il al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi (d. 280), a student of Imam Ahmad and trustworthy narrator of hadith, which he took from Abu Nu‘aym among others, and from him narrated al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa‘i, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, and al-Najjad. Al-Dhahabi called him *al-imâm*, *al-hâfiz*, *al-thiqa* while al-Khatib relates that he was famous for his defense of the belief of *Ahl al-Sunna*. *Tarikh Baghdad* (2:42); *Siyar* (10:592 #2341).

[92] Muhammad ibn Mus‘ab, Abu Ja‘far al-Da‘‘a’ (d. 228), a student of Ibn al-Mubarak, he is reported to have visited Imam Ahmad who said of him: “He was a saintly man (*rajulan sâlihan*), and he used to tell stories (*yaqussu*) and supplicate Allah (swt) standing up in the mosque... Among his supplications he said: ‘O Allah, hide me under Your Throne!’” Al-Daraqutni mentioned that he was trustworthy. Abu Bakr al-Marrudhi narrated that he recited the verse **(It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate)** (17:79) and said: “Indeed, He shall seat him with Him on the Throne!” Al-Dhahabi mentions this report then says: “There is no authentic text to that effect other than a discarded narration” meaning Mujahid’s report. Al-Da‘‘a’ should not be confused with Muhammad ibn Mus‘ab al-Qarqasani (d. 208), a companion of Imam al-Awza‘i whose narrations he is said to have reported mostly with mistakes, as a result of which he was declared weak by al-Nasa‘i and others. There is also Muhammad ibn Mansur Abu Ja‘far al-‘Abid al-Tusi (d. 254), a student of Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna and Imam Ahmad and a companion of Ma‘ruf al-Karkhi, who gave him food after he found him fasting uninterruptedly on the fourth consecutive day. He could see the pilgrims on ‘Arafa through *kashf*. Sources: Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:320-321 #449), al-Dhahabi, *Mukhtasar al-‘Uluw* (p. 183) [al-Da‘‘a’]; *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:318 #448) [al-‘Abid]; al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-I‘tidal* (4:42 #8180) [al-Qarqasani].

[93] Abu Bakr ibn Sadaqa is unidentified other than as one of al-Tabarani’s narrators and a contemporary of Abu Zur‘a al-Razi (d. 264 or 268), Ibrahim ibn Awrama (d. 266) and Abu Dawud (d. 275). He is mentioned in Abu Dawud’s chapter in al-Dhahabi’s *Siyar*. Al-Qari in *al-Asrar al-Marfu‘a* (p. 209-210) and al-‘Ajuni in *Kashf al-Khafa* under the hadith *ra’aytu rabbî yawma al-nafr* mention the forged narration: “I saw my Lord in the image of a long-haired / beardless young man” and then cite Ibn Sadaqa’s narration of Abu Zur‘a’s statement whereby the latter said: “None but a Mu‘tazili denies this sound (*sahîh*) hadith.” However, al-Suyuti in *al-La‘ali’ al-Masnu‘a* (1:27-31) showed that Abu Zur‘a’s statement actually referred to the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas whereby the Prophet (s) said: “I saw my Lord,” which most scholars agreed is sound (*sahîh*). On this hadith see our posting, “The Vision of Allah.”

[94] Muhammad ibn Bishr ibn Sharik al-Nakha‘i al-Kufi, “One of the shaykhs of Ibn ‘Uqda (d. 332). He is unreliable.” Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (3:491 #7273).

[95] Abu Qilaba is ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad al-Raqashi al-Basri (d. 276), one of the shaykhs of Ibn Majah. He used to pray four hundred *rak‘a* in every twenty-four hours. He could narrate 60,000 hadiths from memory as a result of which he committed many mistakes according to al-Daraqutni. However, others praised him for his utmost reliability, such as al-Tabari, Abu Dawud, Ibn Hibban, and others. He narrated from Ahmad the hadith whereby the Prophet (s) said: “The worst two tribes among the Arabs are Najran and Banu Taghlib.” Ahmad and al-Tabarani narrate it with sound chains as indicated by al-Haythami in *Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id*. Ibn al-Athir in *al-Nihaya fi Gharîb al-Hadith* said: “Najran is a well-

known place between the Hijaz, *al-Shâm*, and Yemen.” Sources: Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:216 #283); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (10:549 #2322). The practice of narrating solely from memory was not current except as a test of someone’s memorization. Hadith scholars narrated only from their written records, as demonstrated by M.M. Azami and others. ‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: “I never saw my father narrate except from a book, save less than a hundred hadiths.” In the *Siyar* (9:457). The best sources on the proof-texts for writing among the Companions and early generations are Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s chapter *Dhikr al-Rukhsa fi Kitab al-‘Ilm* in his *Jami‘ Bayan al-‘Ilm* (1:298-338) and especially al-Khatib al-Baghdadi’s book *Taqyid al-‘Ilm* (“The Fettering of Knowledge”). This title is taken from Anas’s saying: “Fetter knowledge with writing” (*qayyidû al-‘ilma bi al-kitâb*). Anas also said: “We would not consider as knowledge the knowledge of those who did not write down their knowledge.” *Taqyid* (p. 96-97). This is similar to the *Tâbi‘î* Mu‘awiya ibn Qurra’s statement: “Whoever does not write down the Science, do not consider him knowledgeable.” Narrated by al-Darimi in his *Sunan*, al-Khatib in his *Taqyid* (p. 109), al-Ramahurmuzi in *al-Muhaddith al-Fasil* (p. 372), and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *Jami‘ Bayan al-‘Ilm* (1:321-322). See also al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi’s chapter entitled “Writing is the means to fetter knowledge and preserve it from oblivion” in his *Nawadir al-Usul* (p. 39-41). When all is said there remains al-Khalil ibn Ahmad’s injunction: “Faithfulness to what is in your breast takes priority over memorization of what is in your books.” Narrated by al-Khatib in *al-Jami‘ li Akhlaq al-Rawi* (1:670 #1048).

[96] ‘Ali ibn Sahl ibn al-Mughira, Abu al-Hasan al-Nasa’i al-Baghdadi al-Bazzaz (d. 270), a student of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He is truthful (*sadûq*) according to Ibn Abi Hatim in *al-Jarh wa al-Ta‘dil* (6:189). *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:225 #313).

[97] Unidentified.

[98] Al-Qasim ibn Sallam ibn ‘Abd Allah, Abu ‘Ubayd al-Harawi (d. 224), one of the great early hadith masters and philologists, author of *Gharîb al-Hadith*, *Fada’il al-Qur’an*, and many other works. A student of al-Shafi‘i, Hushaym, Ibn ‘Uyayna, Ghundar, Ibn al-Mubarak, Waki‘, Ibn Mahdi, and others. He was one of ‘Abbas al-Duri’s shaykhs. Ishaq ibn Rahuyah said: “As Allah loves the truth, Abu ‘Ubayd is better versed and more knowledgeable in the Law than I.” Ibrahim al-Harbi said: “Abu ‘Ubayd was like a mountain into which the Spirit was breathed. He excelled in everything, except that the hadith was the specialty of Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] and Yahya [ibn Ma‘in].” ‘Abbas al-Duri said: “I heard Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam mention the vision of Allah [in the hereafter], the *kursî* where the two Feet are placed, our Lord’s laughter, and where He was [before creation], then he said: ‘All these are sound (*sahîh*) narrations transmitted by the scholars of hadith and *fiqh* one from another; we consider them the truth and do not doubt them. But if it were asked: How does He laugh? or: How does He place His Foot? We reply: We do not explain this; nor did we ever hear anyone explain it.’” Among his sayings: “He who follows the Sunna is like one who is grasping a hot coal. Such a day is, to me, preferable to striking sword-blows in the way of Allah Almighty.” “I am puzzled by those who leave the principles and study the branches.” Narrated by al-Khatib in *al-Jami‘ li Akhlaq al-Rawi* (2:270 #1612). Shaykh Muhammad ‘Ajaj al-Khatib said: “He meant by ‘principles’ the foundational books (*al-kutub al-ummahât*).” Abu ‘Ubayd must not be confused with his contemporary and philologist namesake Abu ‘Ubayda who is Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthanna al-Taymi (d. ~210). He authored *Majaz al-Qur’an* [Published in Cairo in two volumes edited by Fuad Sezgin

(1955 and 1962)] and the lost *Gharib al-Hadith* as well as historical and lexicographical works. He is cited heavily in Qur'anic commentaries and al-Baghawi reports in his commentary *Ma'alim al-Tanzil* (al-Manar ed. 3:488) that he explained *istawâ* as "He mounted" (*sa'ida*) in the verse (**Then He established Himself over the Throne**) (32:4). Pickthall followed that sense in his translation of the verse as "Then He mounted the Throne." Sources: Ibn Abi Ya'la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:259-262 #369); Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (9:183-191 #1702, 8:287-289 #1482); Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Intiqa'* (p. 167).

[99]Al-Husayn ibn al-Fadl, Abu 'Ali al-Bajali (d. 282), a commentator of the Qur'an described by al-Hakim as the Imam of his time in *tafsir*. Al-Hakim narrated from Ibrahim ibn Mudarib: "I heard my father say: 'Al-Husayn ibn al-Fadl's knowledge of the meanings of the Qur'an was inspiration from Allah, for he had gone beyond the limits of learning.'" *Siyar* (10:707 #2420).

[100]Harun ibn al-'Abbas al-Hashimi is unidentified. This is possibly Harun ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Marwan, Abu Musa al-Bazzaz al-Baghdadi, known as Harun al-Hammal (d. 243), from whom Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i and others narrated hadiths, and who took hadith from Muhammad ibn Bishr. He is unanimously trustworthy (*thiqa*). If he is the same as the "Harun al-Hashimi" mentioned in *Tabaqat al-Hanabila*, then it is established that Abu Bakr al-Najjad narrated from him. *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2:7); *Siyar* (8:169).

[101]Unidentified.

[102]Muhammad ibn 'Imran al-Marzubani (d. 384), one of the rare Mu'tazili scholars from whom hadith scholars took narrations and whom they considered trustworthy in his transmission, though not unanimously. His mention by Ibn Abi Ya'la and Ibn al-Qayyim among those who support their view of the seating of the Prophet (s) on the Throne shows that they tried to collect as exhaustive a list of authorities as they could. Cf. Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (3:672).

[103]Muhammad ibn Yunus al-Basri al-Kudaymi (d. 286): a hadith master accused of forgery. Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (4:74).

[104]'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad (ibn Muhammad) ibn Hanbal (d. 290). A hadith master who compiled and transmitted the *Musnad* of his father Imam Ahmad who praised his knowledge of hadith. Ibn Abi Ya'la narrates from 'Abd Allah that Imam Ahmad said: "Musa remained for forty nights such that no-one could look at him without falling dead due to the light from the Lord of the worlds." Al-Suyuti cites it in *al-Durr al-Manthur* and says it is narrated by Abu al-Shaykh, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, and al-Hakim, while al-Dhahabi declared its chain "soft" (*layyin*). A foundational book of the Wahhabi creed entitled *Kitab al-Sunna* is attributed to 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad. Its first edition was sponsored by King 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud and a Jeddah businessman named Muhammad Nasif, who also financed the attack on Imam al-Kawthari and the Hanafi School by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'allimi al-Yamani (d. 1386) entitled *al-Tankil li Ma Warada fi Ta'nib al-Kawthari min al-Abatil*, in which al-Mu'allimi declared: "Allah has a body unlike bodies." *Kitab al-Sunna* was published in Cairo in 1349/1930 by al-Matba'a al-Salafiyya and received two recent editions: by Muhammad Basyuni Zaghlul who based his work on the 1930 edition; and by Muhammad al-Qahtani, an Umm al-Qura University graduate and author of *al-Wala' wa al-Bara'*, a book which counts relying on the Prophet's ﷺ intercession between oneself and Allah ﷻ among the "ten actions that negate Islam." Al-Kawthari lambasted *Kitab al-Sunna*

as a collection of anthropomorphist forgeries in his *Maqalat* (p. 355) and renamed it *Kitab al-Zaygh* (“The Book of Deviation”). This book actually attributes to Imam Ahmad the statement: “Allah spoke to Musa from His mouth (*min fihi*), and He handed him the Torah from His hand to his hand.” Al-Dhahabi categorically rejects the authenticity of this narration in the *Siyar* (9:503, 9:512) and exclaims: “By Allah! The Imam never said these things. May Allah destroy the one who forged them.... Look at the ignorance of the hadith scholars, who narrate such nonsense without a comment.” See also the comments of Shaykh Nuh Keller cited in his biographical notice in the *Reliance* and at the website <http://ds.dial.pipex.com/masud/ISLAM/nuh/masudq5.htm>. Sources: Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:29, 1:184-186); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (9:512).

[105] Bishr ibn al-Harith, Abu Nasr al-Khurasani al-Marwazi al-Baghdadi known as Bishr al-Hafi (151-227), a disciple of Fudayl ibn ‘Iyad (d. 187) and teacher of Sari al-Saqati whose grandfather was Zoroastrian, he took hadith from Imam Malik, Ibn al-Mubarak, Hammad ibn Zayd, Sharik, Hushaym, and others. Al-Daraqutni called him: *zâhid jabal thiqa* – “an ascetic who is a mountain of knowl-edge and trustworthiness.” Among his sayings: “I do not know anything better than the pursuit of hadith science for whoever fears Allah and keeps a good intention in this activ-ity; as for myself, I ask forgiveness from Allah from having ever pur-sued it, and from every single step I took in it.” Imam al-Sha‘rani in *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* (1:57) explained that the reason Bishr abandoned the study of hadith is because he consid-ered it a conjectural science in comparison with the certitude in belief im-parted by frequenting Fudayl ibn ‘Iyad. Sufyan al-Thawri similarly said: “Would that all my knowledge were erased from my breast! How can I face being asked, tomorrow, about each single hadith I ever narrated: ‘What was your purpose in narrating it?’” He also said: “Would that my hand had been cut off and I never sought after a single hadith!” Both reports cited by al-Dhahabi in the *Siyar* (al-Arna‘ut ed. 7:255, 7:274). Bishr also said: “If talking pleases you, keep silent; and if silence pleases you, then speak.” “O Allah! You know, above Your Throne, that lowliness is more beloved to me than nobility. O Allah! You know, above Your Throne, that poverty is more beloved to me than wealth. O Allah! You know, above Your Throne, that I do not put anything before Your love.” Also related from Bishr al-Hafi is the statement: “No-one criticizes Abu Hanifa except an envier or an ignoramus.” Sources: al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam* (6:142), *Manaqib Abi Hanifa* (p. 32), and *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’* (9:170-172 #1691).

[106] See our biographical notice on al-Tabari at <http://sunnah.org/history/Default.htm>.

[107] ‘Ali ibn ‘Umar ibn Ahmad ibn Mahdi, Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqutni al-Baghdadi al-Muqri’ al-Shafi‘i (306-385), *Amîr al-Mu‘minîn* in hadith – the highest level of a hadith master – a major, trustworthy hadith master named “the Imam, superexcellent hadith master, *Shaykh al-Islam*, emblem of the giants of knowl-edge, one of the oceans of the Science and the Imams of the world” by al-Dhahabi. He narrated and transmitted hadith from and to countless major scholars of the science. He excelled in the knowledge of the defects of narrators and hadith narra-tions, the canonical readings of the Qur’an, *fiqh* and the differences of opinion among the jurists, the Arabic language, and the historical disciplines. Raja’ ibn Muhammad al-Mu‘addil said to him: “Have you ever met anyone of your level?” He replied: **(Therefore justify not your-selves)** (53:32). I insisted, whereupon he said: “I never saw anyone who gathered together what I have gathered.” Abu al-Fath ibn Abi al-Fawaris asked him one day about a certain hadith and he answered him. Then he said to

him: “O Abu al-Fath, there is not, between the East and the West, anyone who knows this other than myself.” Al-Hakim said: “I bear witness that he left no successor.” He considered recommended the visitation to the graves of Prophets and the Friends of Allah for the sake of obtaining blessing and intercession. Ibn al-Jawzi relates that al-Daraqutni said: “We used to seek blessings from Abu al-Fath al-Qawasi’s grave.” He narrated in his *Sunan* the Prophet’s e hadith: “Who-ever visits my grave, my inter-cession will be guaranteed for him.” (a hasan narration = “fair”) Sources: al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (12:483-492 #3530); Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifa al-Safwa* (2:471).

[108]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Bada’i’ al-Fawa'id* (1900 ed. 4:39-40, 1994 ed. 2:328-329).

[109]Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (8:213), year 317.

[110]Al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Khalaf, Abu Muhammad al-Barbahari (d. 329), a hadith master. He accompanied Ahmad’s foremost companion Abu Bakr al-Marwazi, as well as the Sufi master of his time, Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Tustari. Ibn Abi Ya‘la reports that al-Barbahari composed a *Sharh Kitab al-Sunna* in which he said: “Whoever takes up arms against one of the Imams of the Muslims [*i.e.* one of the Caliphs] is a *Khâriji* who has split the unity [lit. ‘split the staff’] of Muslims and contravened the Prophetic reports, and his death is a death in Jahiliyya.” He also said: “Know that the Religion is nothing other than imitation (*i’lam anna al-dîna innamâ huwa al-taqlîd*), and I mean imitation of the Companions of the Prophet (s) (*wa al-taqlîdu li ashâbi rasûlil-lah sallallâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).” This book was published in Madina at Maktaba al-Ghuraba’ al-Athariyya (1993) and is popular among “Salafis.” Concerning the Jahmis, al-Barbahari declared: “Whoever says that his pro-nunciation of the Qur’an is created is a Jahmi, and whoever keeps un-committed, saying that it is neither created nor uncreated, is a Jahmi. This is what Ahmad ibn Hanbal said.” Note that al-Bukhari considered the pronun-ciation of the Qur’an created and was expelled from Bukhara by the Han-balis for it, as related in the Appendix entitled “The Controversy Over the Pronunciation of the Qur’an” in our translation of Ibn ‘Abd al-Salam’s *Belief of the People of Truth*. The group of Hanbalis led by Barbahari in Baghdad considered themselves reformers and often took to the streets to “correct” what they consid-ered unacceptable contraventions of the Religion, injuring or killing those they considered Jahmis, destroying taverns and musical in-struments, striking women singers, and so forth. In the year 320 in Baghdad Barbahari was de-clared wanted by the authorities and the houses of his followers were ran-sacked. He fled and remained in hiding until his death nine years later. The worst controversy attached to al-Barbahari and his group, how-ever, was their anthropomorphist teaching on the bases of weak narrations attributing limbs to Allah. Ibn al-Athir relates the Caliph al-Radi’s edict against the Hanbalis in the year 323, in which he said: “You mention the ‘hand’ and the ‘fingers’ and the ‘two feet’ and the ‘two gilded sandals’ and the ‘short and curly hair’ and the ‘climbing’ to heaven and the ‘de-scend-ing’ to the world – Exalted is Allah far above what the oppressors and rejecters say of Him! The Emir of the Believers swears an oath before Allah by which he binds himself, that unless you put an end to your vile belief and crooked way, to destroy you to the last man by sword and by fire inside your very houses.” Sources: Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2:18-29 #588); Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (8:307-309, 8:378); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (11:543-45 #2899).

[111]Ahmad ibn Salman ibn al-Hasan, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Hanbali al-Najjad (d. 348), eulogized by al-Dhahabi as “the imam, the hadith scholar, the hadith master, the

jurisprudent, the mufti, the shaykh of Iraq.” The shaykh of al-Daraqutni, al-Hakim, al-Khattabi, Ibn Mandah, al-Khiraqi, and others, he narrated from ‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal and was the last to narrate from Abu Dawud. He was reported to relate narrations which were not consigned in his own records, perhaps due to the loss of his sight. He used to fast every day of the year, and he would break his fast every night with a loaf of bread of which he left aside one mouthful. On the night of *Jum‘a* he would give away his loaf as charity and eat the mouthfuls he had put aside. Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2:7-8); al-Dhahabi, *Siyar* (12:137 #3132) and *Mizan* (1:101).

[112] ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Muhammad, Abu ‘Abd Allah al-‘Ukbari, known as Ibn Batta (d. 387), a student of al-Najjad and one of the main authorities in doctrine and law in the Hanbali school, he was a pious scholar who never left his house in forty years and fasted permanently, except on the two *‘Id*s. Al-Dhahabi declares him “an imam in the Sunna and an imam in *fiqh*,” although he cites Abu al-Qasim al-Azhari’s verdict that “Ibn Batta is extremely weak” (*da‘if da‘if*) while al-Khatib declares him a forger and narrates from Abu Dharr al-Harawi and others that al-Daraqutni questioned his truthfulness. Ibn Hajar states: “I discovered something in connection with Ibn Batta which I found scandalous and hideous.” He then shows that Ibn Batta may have added words to a hadith in order to give it an anthropomorphic slant. The hadith in question is Ibn Mas‘ud’s hadith of the Burning Tree narrated by al-Tirmidhi with a weak chain, whereby the Prophet (s) said: “When Allah spoke to Musa, the latter was wearing a robe of wool, a wool cloak, and a pair of sandals made of untanned ox leather.” The addition cited by Ibn Hajar and apparently forged by Ibn Batta reads: “He [Musa] said: ‘Who is that Hebrew (*al-‘ibrâni*) who is speaking from the tree?’ And Allah said: ‘I am Allah.’” The position of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that Musa heard Allah without direction, as narrated from Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i in al-Tha‘alibi’s *Tafsir* (4:117). al-Khatib, *Tarikh Baghdad* (10:371-374, 13:167); al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-‘Itidal* (3:15 #5394); Ibn Hajar, *Lisan al-Mizan* (4:113-114 #231).

[113] On Ibn Taymiyya see <http://sunnah.org/history/Default.htm>.

[114] Ibn Abi Ya‘la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2:43).

[115] An unidentified narrator. Possibly Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn ‘Amr al-Harrani (d. 488), the companion of Ibn Abi Ya‘la’s father. Between him and Ibn Batta there is a narrator whose name is omitted. Cf. Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:86 #34).

Or: The hadith master Ibn al-Banna’, Abu ‘Ali al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Baghdadi (d. 471) from whom it is established that Ibn Abi Ya‘la narrated. He lived eighty years and was known for his fanatic defense of the Hanbali school. Al-Qifti reported in his *Inbah al-Ruwat* (1:276) that he once said: “Would that al-Khatib had mentioned me in *Tarikh Baghdad*, even among the liars.” Al-Qifti comments: “He [Ibn al-Banna’] was a reference in the canonical readings (*al-qirâ‘ât*), philology (*al-lughâ*), and hadith, except that he was Hanbali in his belief (*Hanbaliyyu al-mu‘taqad*).” Al-Dhahabi cites it in the *Siyar* (13:653-654 #4258) and comments: “He is truthful in himself (*sadûq fi nafsih*), and it is not a blemish to be Hanbali, by Allah! However, the Mandah family and others did say of him: ‘except that he was inclined to deprecate others’ (*fihî tamash‘ur*).” Al-Dhahabi seems to have missed al-Qifti’s point that Ibn al-Banna’ was Hanbali in his doctrine, not merely his school of law. There is some irony in this as al-Dhahabi himself is Shafi‘i in his legal school and “Hanbali” in his school of doctrine, meaning anti-Ash‘ari.

Or: Ibn al-Busri, Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi al-Bundar (d. 474), a trustworthy hadith master who received a permission to narrate from Ibn Batta as stated by al-Dhahabi in the *Siyar* (13:668 #4273).

[116] Abu al-‘Abbas Harun ibn al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Isa al-Hashimi (d. 275), a trustworthy (*thiqa*) narrator according to al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (14:27).

[117] Muhammad ibn Bishr ibn al-Farafisa, Abu ‘Abd Allah al-‘Abdi al-Kufi (d. 203), an established hadith master and one of al-Bukhari and Muslim’s narrators.

[118] ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha‘i al-Kufi (d. 227), graded by Ibn Hajar in *al-Taqrīb* (p. 342 #3893) as “a truthful but sometimes mistaken narrator” (*sadûq yukhti*) but al-Arna‘ut and Ma‘ruf in *Tahrir al-Taqrīb* (2:325 #3893) said: “Rather, he is weak (*da‘îf*).” Abu Hatim al-Razi classed him “flimsy in his narrations” (*wâhi al-hadith*) but al-Bukhari narrated from him in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*. Cf. also al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (2:569 #4887).

[119] This is Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Abi Sharik al-Nakh‘i (d. 177), a truthful narrator (*sadûq*) whose narrations are accepted in the Four books of *Sunan* but Muslim used him only for narrations unrelated to legal rulings (*ahkâm*). Al-Daraqutni said: “Sharik is not strong in the narrations which he alone reports.” Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (2:271 #3697); Ibn Hajar, *Taqrīb* (p. 266 #2787); Ma‘ruf, *Tahrir* (2:113-114 #2787).

[120] Abu Yahya al-Qattat al-Kinani al-Kufi (d. ~130), known as Zadhan, declared weak by Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah according to Ahmad ibn Hanbal. However, his narrations from Mujahid are found in al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, and Ahmad as indicated by al-Mizzi in *Tahdhib al-Kamal* (34:402), al-Dhahabi in *al-Kashif* (2:471) and Ibn Hajar in *al-Taqrīb* (p. 684) and *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (12:303). The latter graded Zadhan “soft” (*layyin*), as confirmed by al-Arna‘ut and Ma‘ruf in *al-Tahrir* (4:295 #8444). Muslim said in *al-Kunawâ al-Asma’* (1:905), under Abu Yahya Muslim al-Qattat: “Al-A‘mash, al-Thawri, and Isra‘il narrated from him.” [120] Ibn Ma‘in did say of Zadhan that he was *thiqa* according to ‘Uthman ibn Sa‘id al-Darimi, but according to ‘Abbas al-Duri he also said: “There is some weakness in his narration” (*fî hadîthihi du‘f*). Zadhan was also declared weak by al-Nasa‘i, Ahmad, Ibn Sa‘d, Ibn Hibban, and others. Shaykh Ahmad Shakir declares him trustworthy (*thiqa*) on the basis of Ibn Ma‘in’s declaration to that effect and al-Bukhari’s silence in his notice on Zadhan in *al-Tarikh al-Kabir* (2:1 #400=3:438 Nadwi ed.). Cf. Ahmad’s *Musnad* (3:133-134 #2493). He should not be confused with Abu ‘Umar al-Kindi al-Bazzaz, who is trustworthy (*thiqa*) and one of Muslim’s narrators in the latter’s *Sahih*. Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (4:586 #10729); Ibn Hajar, *Taqrīb* (p. 684 #8444).

[121] Mu‘adh ibn al-Muthanna (d. 288), declared trustworthy by al-Dhahabi. He was one of Imam Ahmad’s companions and related from him that he said: “Whoever abandons the *witr* prayer deliberately is an evil-doer who is abandoning a Sunna of the Prophet (s), and he is no longer considered an up-right person (*sâqitu al-‘adâla*).” *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:339 #489); *Siyar* (11:69 #2477). Cf. al-Shafi‘i: “Whoever leaves either the Sunna of *fajr* or *Salat al-Witr*, is in a worse state than if he had left all the supererogatory prayers.” Narrated from al-Rabi‘ in *al-Umm* (1:142).

[122] Khallad ibn Aslam, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (d. 249), one of al-Tirmidhi’s and al-Nasa‘i’s shaykhs, unanimously considered trustworthy as a narrator.

[123] This is actually Muhammad ibn Fudayl.

[124] This is the same as al-Tabari's and Ibn Abi 'Asim's narrations of Mujahid's hadith through their chains in Section 5 above. Both Ibn Abi Ya'la's chains cited here are weak due to Ibn Batta, in addition to the possibility of a missing link between 'Ali and Ibn Batta. The second chain is weak due to Layth ibn Abi Sulaym. Both chains contain undecisive transmission terminology (*'an'ana*), which makes them weaker, especially if al-Haythami's grading of Layth as a "concealer" (*mudallis*) is correct (see his note). Finally, even if these chains were considered good until Mujahid, the chain remains severed at his level (*maqtu'*), and the hadith itself remains "condemned" (*munkar*) as stated by al-Dhahabi.

[125] Abu Yahya al-Naqid is unidentified, possibly Ahmad ibn 'Isam ibn 'Abd al-Majid Abu Yahya al-Ansari (d. 272), who narrated hadith from Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi and from whom narrated Ibn Abi Dawud al-Sijistani. His rank as a narrator is trustworthy (*thiqa*) according to Ibn Hayyan in *Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin fi Asbahan* (3:43) and "truthful" (*sâdiq*) according to al-Dhahabi in the *Siyar* (10:452 #2243).

[126] Ya'qub ibn Yusuf ibn Ayyub, Abu Bakr al-Mutawwa'i al-Baghdadi (d. 287), one of Imam Ahmad's students. Ja'far al-Khaldi said: "I heard Abu Bakr al-Mutawwa'i say: 'My daily devotion (*wird*) in my youth consisted in reading *Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad* 31,000 or 41,000 times – Ja'far was unsure – in every twenty-four hours.'" Al-Daraqutni said he is trust-worthy. Ibn Abi Ya'la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (1:417 #545).

[127] Abu al-Hasan al-'Attar is unidentified.

[128] See Sections 6-7 above.

[129] In fact, there is not a single narration actually traced back up to the Prophet (s) himself mentioning his seating next to Allah on the Throne, whether with an interrupted or uninterrupted chain. Al-Najjad's claim seems based on his assumption that Mujahid's and 'Abd Allah ibn Salam's reports have the status of *marfû'*, which was never established.

[130] See Section 4 for the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas. Other than that, what al-Najjad attributes to Ibn 'Abbas was apparently never reported from him.

[131] Here al-Najjad moves from an apologetic and descriptive stance concerned primarily with the evidence at hand to an aggressive stance aiming at the persons of those who question it. Towards the end of the passage he once more modifies his attack so as to represent any disputation of Mujahid's narration as an attack on the Prophet (s) himself.

[132] This could be either Ibn Abi al-Dunya – 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd, Abu Bakr al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi (d. 281), or Abu Bakr al-Khallal. Both of them were prolific writers and narrated from Abu Dawud. It is, moreover, established that al-Najjad narrated from Ibn Abi al-Dunya but not that he narrated from al-Khallal. However, it is more likely that the latter is meant since in his book *al-Sunna* he insisted heavily on the statement that Allah literally sits on the Throne and that Jahmis alone deny it, whereas no such extremism is known from Ibn Abi al-Dunya. Furthermore, the accusation of Jahmism is typical of al-Khallal and of Hanbalis of his period to that of Ibn Abi Ya'la in general.

[133] Note that al-Qurtubi relates a different wording from Abu Dawud. Cf. Section 8.

[134] Unidentified.

[135] Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Abu Ja'far al-Daqiqi (d. 266), a truthful narrator (*sadûq*) from whom Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud took three hadiths in all. The latter said of him that "he had little insight". Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan* (3:632 #7893).

[136] This is Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Sulami.

[137] Here al-Najjad again rephrases his argument to read like a condemnation of those who deny the pre-eminence of the Prophet (s). His rhetoric is much enhanced by the fact that such a denial unanimously amounts to disbelief. However, al-Tirmidhi only rejected the authenticity of Mujahid's report! Cf. al-Khallal's *Sunna* (p. 232).

[138] Abu Bakr al-Najjad in Ibn Abi Ya'la's *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (2:9-12).

[139] See Sections 2 and 3 for the narrations of Ibn 'Umar.

[140] Ibn Batta, *al-Sharh wa al-Ibana* (p. 61).

[141] Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-Fatawa (Mufassal al-I'tiqad* - "Specifics of Belief" - 4:374).

[142] Hajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-Zunun* (2:1438). This has been removed from the printed edition of both Abu Hayyan's commentaries *al-Bahr al-Muhit* and *al-Nahr al-Madd min al-Bahr* [passage on *ayat al-Kursi*] by their Cairo publisher as the latter acknowledged it himself. See al-Kawthari's note in his commentary on Ibn al-Subki's *al-Sayf al-Saqil* (p. 96-97) and al-Ghumari's *Bida' al-Tafasir* (p. 156).