

الله

God Or No God

Islamic Viewpoint vs.
Atheist Viewpoint

God's Attributes

part 2

By Haya Muhammad Eid



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والله اعلم

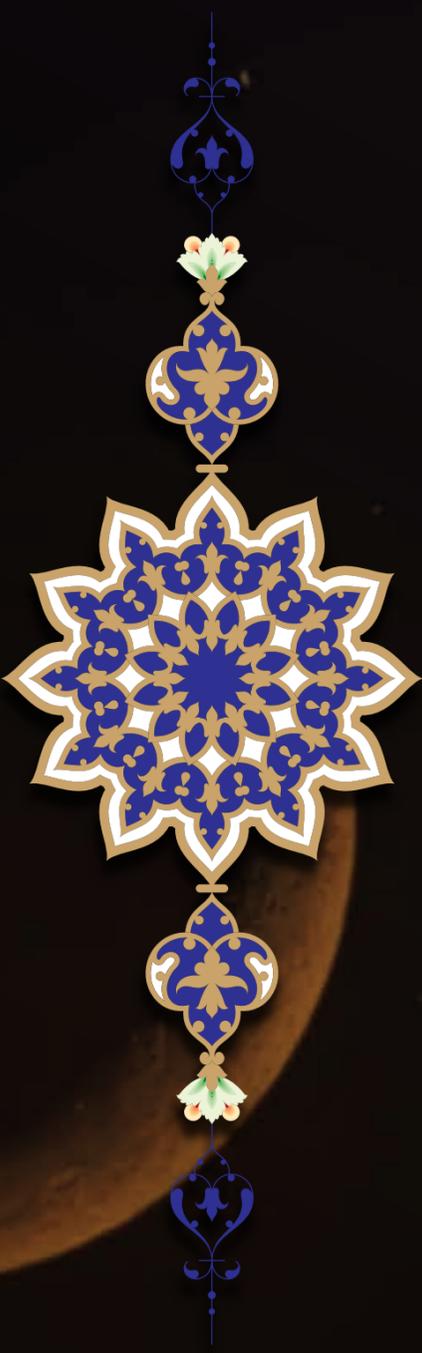


God's Attributes



God's Names and Attributes are those qualities that give correct understanding of what God truly is. The Qur'an, Islam's holy book, believed to be God's final word, tells humanity what God is like and what He is not like. The Noble Qur'an warns against ascribing additional qualities to God that He did not describe Himself as having, or qualities that are incompatible with His Majesty and Perfection (by attributing to Him human qualities such as getting tired after creating the universe or needing a son).

Without the authority of the Qur'an or Sunnah (teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), any attempt to explain God's Attributes would be no better than an assumption. The Qur'an emphasizes this point, saying: "Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe. And peace be on the Messengers." (Qur'an 37:180-181)



WHAT GOD IS LIKE



TO EXPLAIN WHAT GOD IS LIKE, THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN SAYS IN THE CHAPTER OF AL-HASHR 59:22-24:

- **He is God; there is no god but He, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.**
- **He is God; there is no god but He, the Sovereign, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the Mighty, the Compeller (of tyrants), the Supreme. Exalted is God above whatever they associate as partners with Him.**
- **He is God; the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him. He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.**
- **He is God (the only God) in the heavens and on the earth. He knows what you conceal and what you reveal, and He knows what you earn (good or bad). (Qur'an 6:3)**
- **Say: "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "God." Say: "Then will you not fear Him?" (Qur'an 10:31)**



WHAT GOD IS NOT LIKE



To explain what God is not like, the Glorious Qur'an negates any attribute that is contradictory to or incompatible with God's Glory and Perfection, for example:

- **Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him. (Qur'an 2:225)**
- **It is He Who feeds but is not fed. (Qur'an 6:14)**
- **Nothing in the heavens or the earth is hidden from God. (Qur'an 3:5)**
- **Never think that God is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. (Qur'an 14:42)**
- **God does not commit an atom's weight of injustice; and if there is a good deed, He multiplies it. (Qur'an 4:40)**
- **"Did you think that We* (God) created you aimlessly and that you shall not be brought back to Us?" (Qur'an 23:115)**
- **He (God) created seven heavens in layers. You see no flaw in the creation of the Most Beneficent. Look again! Do you see any rifts? (Qur'an 67:3)**
- **They say, "God has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. (2:116)**

* Royal We used by God in the Qur'an to denote majesty and power.



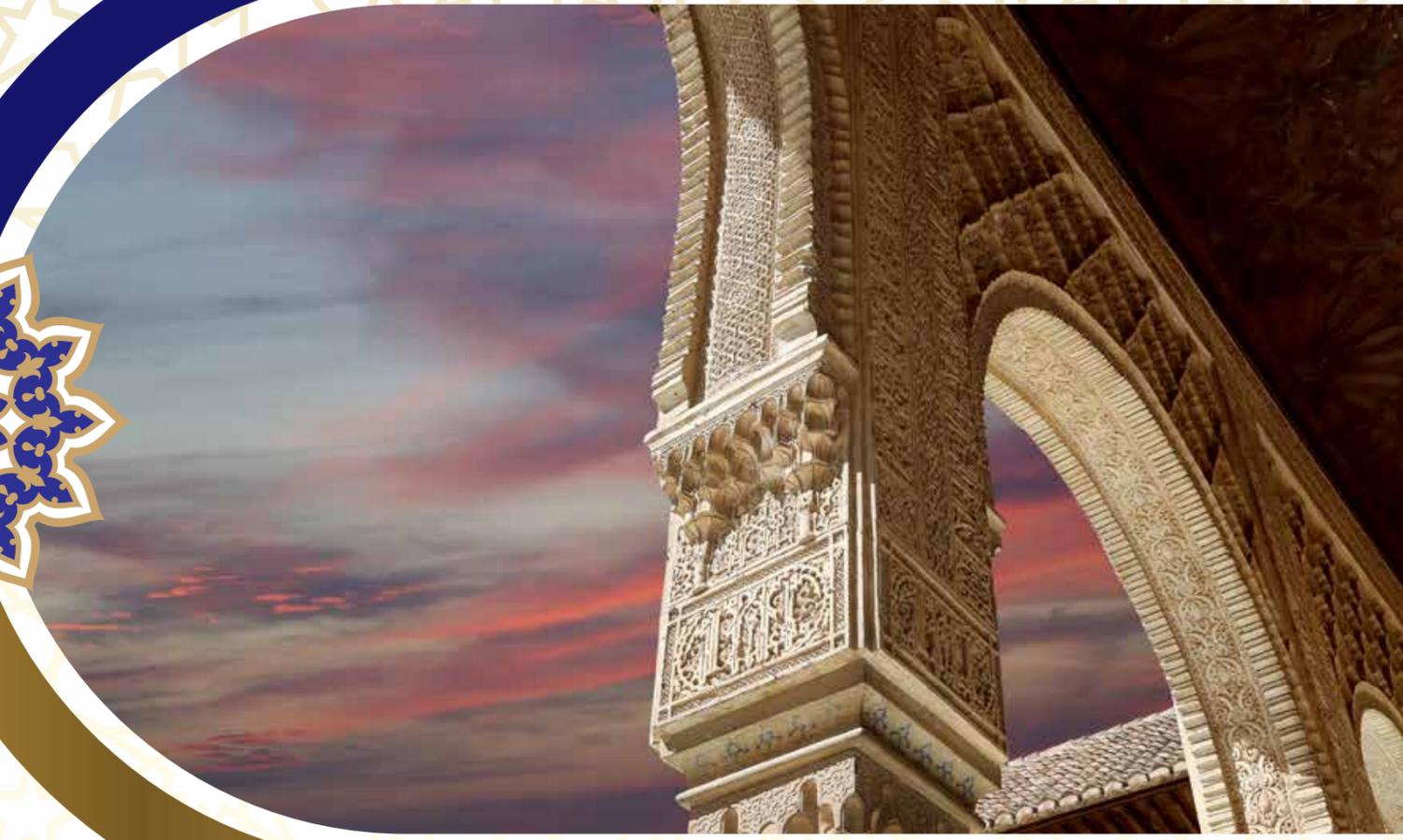
Impossibility of God's Attributes



The belief in a supreme, unfathomable, invisible, or infinite being who is beyond man's grasp constitutes atheism's main argument against God's existence.

Having faith in the unseen and the unknown is what faith is all about. God is an entity absolutely distinct from and sovereign over all of creation, both living and non-living. He is essentially above and beyond nature and its laws of physics. He is the One Who created them from nothing. He is the cause behind their functioning and continuation, and He is the One Who controls and manages them alone, without a partner or a helper. He is above and beyond any comparison that the human mind can make.

It would be impossible for the human mind, which is limited by the constraints of time, space, and ability, to attain any knowledge of God's Being and Essence (and basically this is something not required of humans at all). Therefore, God, His Essence, and His Attributes are, in principle, inaccessible to direct human observation and scientific investigation.



Atheism is grounded

in the physical and observable world. Physical reality is the extent of reality. Only that which can be perceived by human senses and explained scientifically is real. Anything short of this is unreal. There can be no levels of reality higher than human thought or greater dimensions beyond the limits of the material world.

Atheism attributes

the creation of humans and the order of the universe to nature and chance rather than to a Creator God. Humans are nature's peak products and most complex handiwork. As nothing can exist beyond the natural world and its laws, nothing in existence is higher than humans.



Atheism argues

that if God is beyond nature – supernatural – and His attributes are transcendent, He remains forever undetectable and unverifiable by humans. If something exists, it must be natural and must have a visible presence, supported by measurable, observable, and repeatable empirical evidence (data). Otherwise, it does not exist.



What makes the notion of God even more improbable for atheists are God's attributes. They argue that since everything of which humans are aware has limits, God's infinite attributes, which express His eternal and infinite essence, would be forever beyond human limits.

Or they believe that attributes would impose limits and limits would restrict the capacities of a supreme being. Or they see the attributes employed to define God's Nature as self-contradictory, inconsistent in themselves, or yield inconsistencies when combined with His other qualities.



A QUESTION OF LOGIC

**A SIMPLE BEDOUIN WAS ASKED: HOW DO
YOU KNOW YOUR LORD EXISTS?**

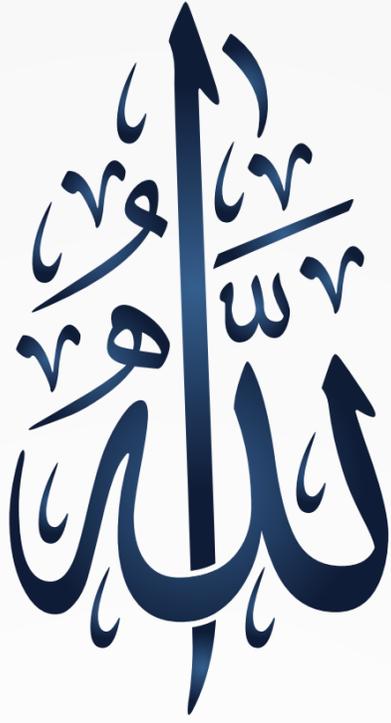
He replied: Footprints indicate the existence of walkers. Camel's dung indicates the existence of camels. A sky filled with constellations (patterns of stars); an earth provided with wide paths; and seas filled with waves – do they not all point to the existence of the One Who is Hearer and Seer of all?

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