



-LESSON SEVEN NOTES-

As we covered the thirteen Divine attributes that every Muslim must know and affirm for Allah, we touched on some of the basic rational and textual proofs for them. But tonight, we look directly at those proofs.

Because Allah commands us to 'know' these things, we are to know directly, for ourselves, with rational proofs. We cannot place a person on the level of evidence in *'aqida*. That is the state of the one who says, **'I don't have to know for myself; I'm going to follow that person in XYZ.'**

BLIND-CONFORMISM

This issue has been debated heavily in our history, and is known as 'the issue of the blind-conformist.' There are a number of opinions about this.

1. Blind-conformism is allowed and there is no blame if a) the beliefs are congruent with the truth, and b) the blind-conformist has conviction, such that if the one he or she blindly followed were to abandon the faith, the blind-conformist would not leave it.
2. Blind-conformism is unlawful (haram) for one who has the ability to reflect on the rational proofs, and is allowed for one without the ability to reflect.
3. The blind-conformist is a disbeliever (kafir) if he has the ability to reflect on the rational proofs.

4. There is no such thing as a blind-conformist in 'Aqida, because if challenged, the believer could provide answers, however simple they might be.
5. Unquestionably following the Quran and Sunna is not called blind-conformism.

The dominant position is that blind-conformism is unlawful for those who have the ability to reflect but neglect it.

WHY DO WE LEARN RATIONAL PROOFS?

To avoid circular reasoning.

A: A proof must be mentioned in the Quran to be valid.

B: If you can't know if a proof is valid or not unless it is stated in the Quran, then how do you prove that the Quran is true?

A: The proof is stated in the Quran.

B: Fine, but when you want to establish the Quran is correct, you will need to show a valid proof, and you are saying that valid proofs cannot be known except from the Quran. This means there is no way of knowing that the Quran is valid except by knowing that the Quran is valid.

GENERAL PROOFS

'Abd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Asma'i (d. 122 AH), one of the early master Arabists and one of the leading grammarians of his time, reported that he asked a Bedouin Arab, 'How have you come to know your Lord?' The Bedouin replied, 'Camel droppings point to a camel, and footprints point to a traveler—so does not the heavens filled with constellations and the earth with its valleys and passes not point to the Benevolent and All-Aware [Allah]?'

IMAM ABU HANIFA

An atheist challenged Imam Abu Hanifa to a debate. Abu Hanifa sent the atheist a message telling him he would be on his way.

A crowd had gathered at the appointed debate venue, eagerly waiting for Imam Abu Hanifa's arrival to debate the atheist. Hours had passed and Imam Abu Hanifa had not shown up. Sunset came and still there was no sign of him. The Muslims started to become tense and worried about his late arrival. They did not want the atheist to think that they were too scared to debate him, yet they did not want to take up the challenge themselves. Another hour passed, and the atheist started laughing and said, 'Your best debater is too scared! He knows he's wrong; he is too frightened to come and debate with me. I guarantee that he will not turn up today.'

Finally, in the latter part of the night, Imam Abu Hanifa arrived. He apologized for his lateness and explained what took him so long: 'Once the messenger delivered the message to me, I began to make my way to the Tigris River, and on reaching the river bank I realized there was no boat with which to cross the river. It was getting dark, and I looked around, and there was no boat anywhere, nor was there a navigator or a sailor in order for me to cross the river. I continued to look around for a boat, as I did not want the atheist to think I was running away and did not want to debate with him.

I was standing on the river bank looking for a navigator or a boat when something caught my attention in the middle of the river. I looked forward, and to my amazement I saw planks of wood rising to the surface from the river bed. I was shocked and couldn't believe what I was seeing. Ready-made planks of wood were rising up to the surface and joining together. They were all the same width and length.

I continued to look into the middle of the river, and then I saw nails coming up from the sea floor. They positioned themselves onto the boat and held the planks together, without them being banged. I stood in amazement and thought to myself, 'How can this happen, planks of wood rising to the surface by themselves and then nails positioning themselves onto the boat without being hammered?' I could not understand what was happening.'

The atheist meanwhile was listening with a smile on his face. Imam Abu Hanifa continued, 'I was still standing on the river bank watching these planks of wood join together with nails. I could see water seeping through the gaps in the wood, and suddenly I saw a sealant appear from the river and it began sealing the gaps without someone having poured it, again I thought, 'How is this possible? How can sealant appear and seal the gaps without someone having poured it, and nails appear without someone having hammered them?' I looked closer and I could see a boat forming before my eyes; I stood in amazement and was filled with shock. All of a sudden, a sail appeared and I thought to myself, 'How is this happening, a boat has appeared before my eyes by itself, planks of wood, nails, sealant and now a sail, but how can I use this boat in order to cross the river?' I stood staring in wonderment and suddenly the boat began to move. It came towards me against the current. It stood floating beside me while I was on the river bank, as if telling me to embark onto it. I went on the boat and yet again it began to move. There was no navigator or sailor on the boat, and the boat began to travel towards the direction of the royal palaces, without anyone having programmed it as to where to go. I could not understand what was happening, and how this boat had formed and was taking me to my destination against the flow of water. The boat eventually reached the other side of the river and I disembarked. I turned around and the boat had disappeared, and that is why I am late.'

At this moment, the atheist burst out laughing and remarked, 'Oh Abu Hanifa, I heard that you were the best debater from amongst the

Muslims, I heard that you were the wisest, the most knowledgeable from amongst your people. From seeing you today, I can say that you show none of these qualities. You speak of a boat appearing from nowhere, without someone having built it. Nails positioning themselves without someone having hammered them, sealant being poured without someone having poured it, and the boat taking you to your destination without a navigator against the tide. What you say is childish and ridiculous, and I swear I do not believe a word of it!

Imam Abu Hanifa turned to the atheist and replied, 'You don't believe a word of it? You don't believe that nails can appear by themselves? You don't believe sealant can be poured by itself? You don't believe that a boat can move without a navigator, hence you don't believe that a boat can appear without a boat maker?'

The atheist remarked defiantly, 'Correct. I don't believe a word of it!'

Imam Abu Hanifa replied, 'If you cannot believe that a boat came into being without a boat-maker, how can you believe that the whole world, the universe, the stars, the oceans, and the planets came into being without a creator?'

The atheist was flustered. Unable to reply, he fled the debate, defeated.

IBRAHIM'S PROOF

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِيْنَ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ الَّيْلُ رآ كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا اِحْبُ الْكٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رآ الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لِيْن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِيْ رَبِّيْ لَأَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضّٰلِّيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رآ الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ هٰذَا اَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُقُوْمُ اِيْنِيْ بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اِيْنِيْ وَجْهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلدِّي لِيْفْطَرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ حَنِيْفًا وَمَا اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

‘And thus We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might become one of those endowed with certitude. Then, when the night outspread over him, he beheld a star, and said: “Is this my Lord?” But when it set, he said: “I do not love that which sets.” Then, when he beheld the moon rising, he said: “Is this my Lord?” But when it set, he said: “Were that my Lord did not guide me, I surely would have become among the people who have gone astray.” Then when he beheld the sun rising, he said: “Is this is my Lord? This is the largest.” Then, when it set, he said: “O my people! Most certainly I disavow those whom you associate with Allah in His divinity. Behold, I have turned my face in exclusive devotion to the One Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am certainly not one of those who associate others with Allah in His divinity.”’

COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT (PROOF FROM CONTINGENCY)

Premise 1: The universe is made up of things whose existence is not necessary.

Premise 2: These things are merely possible.

Premise 3: From premise 1 and premise 2 it follows that the universe is a *possible existence*.

Conclusion: It follows that the universe requires an agent to bring it into existence.

Premise 4: If that agent (that we will call “A”) is also possible (like the universe), then it will require another agent (that we will call “B”) to bring it into existence. If agent “B” is also possible, it will require another agent (that we will call “C”) to bring it into existence—this will go on and on into infinity, which we call infinite regress.

Premise 5: Infinite regress is rationally impossible.

Conclusion: Therefore, there must be an agent whose existence is necessary, and we call that agent Allah .

The One who originates the world must be “other” than the world. And since the world is contingently possible, it is a must that Allah is One Whose existence is necessary. If He too was contingent, He would be in need of someone to originate Him.

BREAKDOWN

- 1) Things that undergo change must have a starting point in time.
- 2) The universe is constantly undergoing change (e.g., expansion, supernovas, celestial body motions, etc.)
- 3) Therefore, the universe must have had a starting point in time.
- 4) Things that have a starting point in time need a preceding cause to bring them into existence.
- 5) Therefore, the universe must have had a preceding cause.
- 6) If Allah had a beginning in time, He would need a preceding cause to bring Him into existence (as all things that start in time need preceding causes).