



**Response to Opponents of the School  
of Imām Abū Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī<sup>1</sup>  
-The Claim of An Orphan-Like Proof-  
Shaykh Ghayth bin ‘Abdullāh al-Ghālī  
Translated by ‘Abd Allah Khidr**

The claim that Ahlul Sunnah do not know but of an “orphan-like proof”.  
The opponent said:

**Affirming the Existence of Allāh**

It is well known that the way of the Salaf was that His ﷻ existence, is a matter of *Fitra* that is necessarily known, and that the proofs for that in the universe, the persons self, the signs (in the creation), and the horizon, and revelation are too great to be enumerate, for [as the poet said]:

*In everything there is a sign (pointing) to Him and a proof for Him*

As for the Ash‘arīs, they have an orphan-like proof and that is the proof of: emergence and pre-eternity (*Ḥudūth wal-Qidam*).

**Response**

The opponent said: **“It is well known that the way of the Salaf was that His existence ﷻ, is a matter of *Fitra*.”**

This is the way of all of Ahlul Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah. Imām al-Ghunaymī al-Ash‘arī said in his explanation of the creed of al-Ṭahāwī:

The existence of al-Ḥaqq (Allāh) is established in the *Fitra* of the creation as stated by the Exalted:

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<sup>1</sup> A series of articles that respond to some of the claims made against the school of Abū Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī. The source of these responses are taken from the work; *Durar al-Alfāz al-‘Awālī* of Shaykh Ghayth b. ‘Abdullāh al-Ghālī.

***“The Fītra of the people that He (Allāh) created them upon.”<sup>2</sup>***

The opponent said: “...in the universe, the persons self, the signs (in the creation), and the horizon, ...”

In order for these things to be properly used as evidence, they are in need of a tool. That tool is the intellect. So, from these things, the intellect infers the existence of the Creator. Based upon this, these proofs are only beneficial for the one who processes them with his intellect, which refutes your claim in this book!

The opponent said: “As for the Ash'arīs, they have an orphan-like proof and that is the proof of emergence and pre-eternity [Ar. *Ḥudūth wal-Qidam*].”

This is incorrect. There are three matters that should be mentioned here:

1. The evidence from emergence and pre-eternity is without doubt a valid argument, in fact, it is one of the strongest arguments. Allāh said:

***“If there were deities other than Allāh in them (the heavens and the earth) then they would have fallen to ruin.”***

2. As for the opponent's claim that this proof is the only one in the arsenal of the Ash'arīs, this is also incorrect. There are many other proofs used as well. The Ash'arī Imām, al-Baqqilānī said:

If, by your statement “What is it?”, you mean: ‘What is the evidence of His existence?’, [we say]: the proof of His existence is everything that we see and witness of His precise action and amazing management.<sup>3</sup>

Imām al-Mutawallī said:

Another proof for the existence of a Creator is that the intellect can not conceive of a built up structure without a builder, or a book without an author. [If this is the case], then how is it conceivable that there could be creation without a Creator? This is clear from the verses from the Book of Allāh the Exalted, [such as]:

***“Do they not look at the camel and how it was created?”***

***“And Allāh created you and that which you do.”***

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<sup>2</sup> *Sūrat Rūm*, 30. *Sharh al-Ṭahawīya*, pg 49.

<sup>3</sup> *al-Insāf*, pg 192

And other similar verses.<sup>4</sup>

Imām Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī says after explaining some of the theological arguments for the existence of the Creator:

As for the evidence of the horizons (*Dalā'il al-Āfāq*), some of them are from the lower species. In general, it is using as evidence, the states of the animals, plants, and minerals. Some of them are of the higher astronomical type. In general, it is using the states of the astronomical bodies and stars as evidence. The scrutiny of this type evidence is mentioned in the Mighty Qur'ān and explained in our book called: *Asrār al-Tanzīl wa-Anwār al-Ta'wīl* [The Secrets of Revelation and the Lights of Interpretation].<sup>5</sup>

In this short passage of Imam al-Rāzī, he indicates that the proofs for Allāh's existence are two; the rational proofs based on theological rhetoric, and the proofs of the horizons (*Dalīl al-Āfāq*). The Ash'arīs mention the rational theological arguments in their books of theology in order to silence the philosophers and atheists who only submit and understand that type of argument—thus, in essence, fighting them with their own weapon. The Ash'arīs do not deny what is called the 'proof of the horizons' (*Dalīl al-Āfāq*), for indeed, it is mentioned in their books of Qur'ānic exegesis.

Imām al-Rāzī said:

The people have affirmed the Necessary existence (Allāh) [*Wājib al-Wujūd*] in different ways... some people have relied upon the precision and perfection [as a proof] that are both witnessed in the heavens and the earths, and especially in the makeup and arrangement of the human body and the wonderful benefits and strange wonders—wherein the *Fītra* of every one who possesses intellect bears witness that it does not originate save from the management of the One who is All Wise and Knowing. This method proves the (existence of the Divine) Essence and [His Divine] Knowledge. Whoever contemplates this method, and refuses to internalize the false doctrines, will find himself obliged—after witnessing the animal kingdom—to admit and affirm One that is a Disposer over the affairs.<sup>6</sup>

3. It is admitted that this form of evidence is not suitable for every single person. For this reason, Imām al-Ghunaymī quotes al-Ghazālī:

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<sup>4</sup> *al-Mughnī*, pg 9

<sup>5</sup> *al-Arba'īn fī Usūl al-Dīn*, pg 92

<sup>6</sup> *al-Mabāhith al-Mashriqīyah fī 'Ilm al-Ilāhiyāt wal-Ṭabī'iyāt* 2/448-451

The proofs for the existence of the Creator and His Oneness takes the form of medicines that treat the heart....in this case, it is necessary that the method of guidance not be the same for every individual. The believer who believes after having heard the Revelation, or thru servile conformism (*Taqīd*) should not have his belief shaken by delving into the [rational] proofs, for the Messenger ﷺ did not seek from the Arabs anything more than belief and assent and did not distinguish between that being achieved through servile conformism or certainty arrived at by evidence. The rough and course weak minded one who is a servile conformist, one who persists in falsehood is not benefited by proofs and evidence, rather he is only benefited by the sword and spear! Those who are in doubt that possess a certain degree of intelligence, but whose minds do not arrive at understanding the rational proofs that bring one to certainty and definitiveness should be dealt with gentleness by healing them with convincing words that may be accepted by them and not proofs of certainty and evidence, due to their weakness in intellect in comprehending that. This is because most of the creation have weakness and ignorance. Due to their weakness, they do not comprehend the intellectual evidence just as the light of the sun does not reach the eyes of the underground insects. Indeed, on the contrary, the rational evidence harms them just as the fragrance of a rose harms the dung beetle. And in this spirit, it was said in poetry:

*Whoever confers knowledge to the ignorant has wasted it  
and whoever prevents those who deserve it have oppressed*

And as for the erudite one that is not convinced by eloquent speech, then it is necessary to deal with him using the clear-cut rational proof.”<sup>7</sup>



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<sup>7</sup> al-Ghunaymī; *Sharh al-Ṭahawīya*, pg 49