

known. Imam Mālik (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the verse:

﴿The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty]﴾. ﴿*Tā Hâ* 20: 5)

The questioner said: How did He rise over it? Imam Mālik said: The rising over is known (in linguistic terms), how (with regard to Allah) is not known, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about its nature is an innovation (bid'ah).

Something similar may be said concerning all the divine attributes to one who asks how they are; he should be told something similar to what Imam Mālik said: that the attribute is known, but how it is, is not known; believing in it is obligatory and asking about its nature is an innovation. Allah has told us of it but He has not told us how it is. So we must be content with the limit that He has set for us. But those who have devious inclinations seek out these ambiguous and unclear matters and seek to discuss that which does not concern them; they put effort into trying to understand that which we cannot comprehend, because no one knows it except Allah. Those who are firmly grounded in knowledge believe in it, but they leave the meaning to Allah; they leave it to Him and thus are safe. However, if what is meant by interpretation is explanation and clarification, then the correct view is to connect ﴿those who are firmly grounded in knowledge﴾ to ﴿Allah﴾. Thus we may understand that interpreting that which is ambiguous in the light of that which is definitive, and removing the ambiguity, is a process that no one knows except Allah and those who are well grounded in knowledge. Hence they believe in it and refer it to the definitive texts and say: ﴿all of it﴾, both the definitive and ambiguous texts ﴿is from our Lord﴾, and there can be no contradiction in that which is from Him; rather it is harmonious, and some parts of it confirm and support one another. This points to an important major principle, which is that if they know that all of it is from Allah, and they are not sure about the exact meaning of