

MATTERS CHARACTERISTICS ACCORDING TO CREATOR-CREATIONS COMPARATIVE APPROACH IN DESCRIBING THE IMPOSSIBLE ATTRIBUTE OF ALLAH SWT 'MUMĀTHALAH LI AL-ḤAWĀDITH' IN 'AQĪDAH AL-NĀJĪN

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Abstract

One of the core challenges in Islamic theology is articulating the absolute distinction between the Creator and the creation, particularly in relation to the divine attributes of Allah SWT. While the Qur'an and Hadith affirm that Allah SWT "is unlike anything" (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay'*), theological disputes persist, especially from anthropomorphic sects such as the Mujassimah and Mushabbihah, who assert resemblances between God and His creation. This article critically examines the concept of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* (the impossibility of Allah SWT resembling created entities) by employing a creator-creation comparative framework found in the classical Malay text 'Aqīdah al-Nājīn' by Sheikh Zayn al-'Abidin al-Fatani. The central research problem

addressed is to explicate how rational theological arguments can effectively negate any resemblance between Allah SWT and contingent beings, particularly matter. Methodologically, this qualitative study adopts a textual analysis approach, using the documentation method to extract and interpret key passages in '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*. The analysis is guided by tools of Islamic theological reasoning such as *dalīl 'aqlī* (rational argumentation), comparative ontology, and linguistic analysis of theological terminology. Several textual examples are examined, including the classification of *jisim* (bodies), '*araḍ* (accidents), and *jawhar* (substances), which are used to highlight the essential weaknesses of created entities in contrast to the necessary perfection of the Divine. The findings demonstrate that '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn* provides a structured theological rebuttal to anthropomorphism by showcasing the epistemological and ontological gaps between the Creator and the creation. Its use of comparative reasoning not only strengthens the argument against *mumāthalatuh li al-ḥawādith* but also reaffirms the principle of *tanzīh*, the transcendence and incomparability of Allah SWT. The study concludes that this approach, rooted in Malay theological heritage, offers a compelling model for contemporary discourse in Islamic theology.

Keywords: '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*; anthropomorphism; Attribute of Allah; Islamic theology; Sheikh Zayn al-‘Abidin al-Fatani.

Khulasah

Salah satu cabaran teras dalam teologi Islam ialah menjelaskan perbezaan mutlak antara Pencipta dan makhluk, khususnya berkaitan sifat-sifat ketuhanan Allah SWT. Walaupun al-Quran dan Hadis menegaskan bahawa Allah SWT "tidak menyerupai sesuatu pun" (*laysa kamithlihi shay'*), pertikaian teologi masih berterusan, terutamanya daripada

golongan antropomorfis seperti Mujassimah dan Musyabbihah yang mendakwa wujud persamaan antara Tuhan dengan ciptaanNya. Artikel ini meneliti secara kritis konsep *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* (kemustahilan Allah SWT menyerupai makhluk yang baharu) dengan menggunakan kerangka perbandingan Pencipta-makhluk dalam teks klasik Melayu '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*' karya Sheikh Zain al-'Abidin al-Fatani. Permasalahan utama kajian ini ialah menjelaskan bagaimana hujah teologi rasional dapat menafikan sebarang bentuk persamaan antara Allah SWT dengan makhluk bersifat mungkin, khususnya jirim. Dari sudut metodologi, kajian kualitatif ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis teks melalui kaedah dokumentasi untuk mengekstrak dan mentafsir petikan utama dalam '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*'. Analisis dipandu oleh instrumen penaakulan teologi Islam seperti dalil '*aqlī*' (hujah rasional), ontologi perbandingan, dan analisis linguistik terhadap istilah-istilah teologi. Beberapa contoh teks dianalisis, termasuk pengelasan jisim (badan), '*araḍ*' (sifat mendatang), dan jawhar (substans), yang digunakan untuk menonjolkan kelemahan hakiki makhluk berbanding kesempurnaan wajib bagi Zat Ilahi. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*' menyediakan sanggahan teologi yang tersusun terhadap fahaman antropomorfisme dengan menampilkan jurang epistemologi dan ontologi antara Pencipta dan makhluk. Penggunaan penaakulan perbandingan ini bukan sahaja mengukuhkan hujah terhadap *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, malah turut menegaskan kembali prinsip *tanzīh*, iaitu kesucian, transendensi, dan ketidakserupaan Allah SWT daripada segala sesuatu. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa pendekatan yang berakar daripada warisan teologi Melayu ini menawarkan satu model yang kukuh dan relevan untuk wacana teologi Islam kontemporari.

Kata kunci: '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*; antropomorfisme; Sifat Allah; teologi Islam; Sheikh Zayn al-‘Abidin al-Fatani.

Introduction

The study of divine attributes has long been central to Islamic theology, particularly in affirming the absolute transcendence (*tanzīh*) of Allah SWT. Among the most debated theological issues is the principle that Allah SWT bears no resemblance to His creation, a doctrine grounded in the Qur’anic verse, “There is nothing like unto Him.”¹ Despite its clear textual basis, various historical sects such as the Mujassimah and Musyabbihah have challenged this tenet by attributing human-like characteristics to God.² This raises a critical theological question about how classical Islamic scholars rationally affirm the impossibility of resemblance between Allah SWT and created beings, especially in relation to material existence (*jirim*). This paper addresses this question by focusing on the theological exposition of *mumāthalatuh li al-ḥawādith* (the impossibility of Allah resembling contingent beings) as articulated in '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*, a classical Malay text by Sheikh Zain al-‘Abidin al-Fatani. This work adopts a distinctive creator-creation comparative approach (*manhaj al-taqrīb al-taqābulī*) to illustrate the essential dissimilarity between the perfection of the Creator and the limitations of His creation. By leveraging the faculty of reason (*al-‘aql*) alongside textual sources, the author presents accessible analogies grounded in the physical reality of matter (*jirim*) to prove that resemblance (*mumāthalah*) is not only theologically invalid but logically impossible.

¹ Surah al-Shura 42:11.

² Ahmad Atabik, “Corak Tafsir Aqīdah (Kajian Komparatif Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Aqīdah),” *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17(2) (2016), 209-223.

This study investigates how *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* constructs rational arguments to negate any resemblance between Allah SWT and material creation, and what this reveal about the epistemological role of reason in the Malay theological tradition. Despite the rich theological heritage in Southeast Asia, there remains a scholarly gap in the study of how rational methods and local epistemologies are deployed in Jawi theological texts to address doctrinal issues such as divine transcendence. By analyzing specific sections of *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* that focus on the nature of matter and its contrast with divine attributes, this study contributes to contemporary Islamic theological discourse in two ways. First, it offers an academic reevaluation of an underexplored Malay text within the broader context of rational kalam. Second, it highlights the relevance of such comparative theological reasoning in strengthening Muslim faith and clarifying misconceptions in both traditional and modern contexts, including emerging scientific discussions about the nature of matter and creation. This dual academic-religious contribution affirms the enduring relevance of classical theological reasoning for addressing both doctrinal deviation and intellectual inquiry.

Contemporary scholarship has revisited classical discussions concerning divine attributes, anthropomorphism and transcendence from different theological traditions. Gallien³ analyzes al-Yūsī's understanding of *tawḥīd* as the organizing principle of Islamic knowledge, while Polinsky⁴ examines Abu al-Yusr al-Bazdawī's critique of anthropomorphic interpretations.

³ Claire Gallien "Al-Yūsī, Tawḥīd & the Theological Structure of Islamic Knowledge," *Islamic Studies Journal* (2024), 1–22.

⁴ Sheridan Polinsky. "The Problem of Anthropomorphism in Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī," *Arabica* 69(3) (2022), 248–276.

Mansouri.⁵ further discuss descriptive divine attributes and the theological rejection of corporealism within early Islamic thought. However, none of these studies specifically analyze the characteristics of matter as employed in '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn* to explain *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, which constitutes the focus of the present study.

History of Matters Philosophically and Theologically in Islam

The concept of matter has intrigued scholars across civilizations from the rational inquiries of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers to the theological interpretations of Islamic thinkers.⁶ This intellectual journey reflects how theological and physical perspectives on matter evolved, deeply intertwined with philosophical traditions and scientific advances. Greek philosophy laid the groundwork for discussions on matter with thinkers such as Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes proposing the idea that a fundamental substance underlies all existence. Thales, for instance, suggested that water is the primal element, while Anaximenes leaned toward air. By the 5th century BC, Empedocles introduced the concept of four fundamental

⁵ Mabrouk Chibani Mansouri, Abdullah Salim Al Hinai & Shareefah Salim Aal Said. "The Descriptive Attributes in Early Islamic Theological Thought and the Problem of Anthropomorphism and Corporealism," *al-Qanatir: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 34(5) (2025), 60-71.

⁶ Islamic thinkers, often referred to as Islamic philosophers, scholars or theologians, are individuals who have contributed to the intellectual and spiritual discourse within the framework of Islamic teachings. They engage in areas such as theology (*'aqīdah*), philosophy (*falsafah*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), mysticism/sufism (*taṣawwuf*) and science. Relevant sources that support this overview of Islamic intellectual contributions such as in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2001), 15-33; Oliver Leaman, *A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 1-17.

elements, earth, water, air, and fire, arguing that these elements combined and separated under the influence of forces such as love and strife.⁷ Plato (427–347 BC) added a metaphysical layer distinguishing between the ideal forms and their imperfect material manifestations. He posited that matter lacked intrinsic reality and was merely the “receptacle” for the forms. His student, Aristotle (384–322 BC), countered this abstraction with a more empirical view, suggesting that matter (*hyle*) combined with form (*morphe*) to create substances. For Aristotle, matter was potentiality awaiting form to realize its actuality.⁸ Roman thinkers like Lucretius (99–55 BC), influenced by Epicurus, further explored materialism, emphasizing atomism, the idea that all matter is composed of indivisible particles. In his epic poem *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), Lucretius argued that understanding matter could demystify nature and reduce fear of divine wrath.⁹

The Islamic Golden Age (700–1300 CE) marked a transformative period in which Greek and Roman philosophies were preserved, critiqued and expanded upon. Key Islamic scholars translated works of Plato, Aristotle, and others into Arabic, integrating their ideas with Islamic theology, the *'ilm al-kalām*.¹⁰ Al-Kindi (801–873 CE),

⁷ G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven & M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 88–95, 143–145, 287–291.

⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), Book VII (Zeta), 1029a20–1032a20.

⁹ Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (*De Rerum Natura*), trans. M. F. Smith (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007), I: 146–264; III: 830–1094.

¹⁰ According to Murtadha Mutahhari, the definition of *'ilm al-kalām* can be briefly understood as “the science that examines the fundamental doctrines of Islamic faith (*uṣūl al-dīn*). It identifies these foundational doctrines, seeks to establish their validity, and responds to any doubts (*shubuhāt*) raised against them Murtadha Mutahhari, “An Introduction to ‘Ilm al-Kalam,” trans. Ali Quli Qara’i, *Al-*

often called as the 'Philosopher of the Arabs,' was instrumental in reconciling Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought with Islamic theology. He viewed matter as subordinate to God's creative will, emphasizing divine unity (*al-tawhīd*). Al-Farabi (872–950 CE) expanded on Aristotle's metaphysics, exploring the interaction between form and matter within the context of creation. His cosmology introduced the idea of emanation, where all existence flows from the divine intellect.¹¹ One of the most significant contributions came from Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980–1037 CE), whose metaphysics in *The Book of Healing* offered a detailed theory of matter. Ibn Sina argued that matter existed as a necessary substrate for form but lacked independent existence without it. His integration of Aristotelian ideas with Islamic theology profoundly influenced medieval Scholasticism in Europe.¹²

In ancient Greek thought, matter (*hylē ὕλη*) was a foundational concept. Aristotle famously held that every physical substance is a compound of matter and form, a doctrine known as hylomorphism. Atomist philosophers (e.g. Leucippus, Democritus) posited that matter consists of indivisible particles (*atomos*, ἄτομος, literally "uncuttable") that persist through change. These Greek ideas formed the backdrop for early Islamic engagement with matter.¹³

Tawhid: A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture 2(3) (1985), 7.

- ¹¹ Majid Fakhry, *al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism: His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 53–78.
- ¹² Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92–115.
- ¹³ Daniel W. Graham, *Explaining the Cosmos: The Ionian Tradition of Scientific Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 497–525.

With the translation movement (8th–10th centuries CE), Greek works entered the Islamic world.¹⁴ Philosophers like al-Farabi and Ibn Sina adopted Aristotle's framework of prime matter (*hayūlā* in Arabic) as a pure potentiality.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*) introduced their own ontology: *jirim* (Malay transliteration of Arabic *jirm*) for a physical body or corpus, *jawhar* (جوهر) for substance, and 'arād (عرض) for an accident or property.¹⁶ They maintained that matter could exist only within the created world, in contrast to the eternal backdrop of certain Greek theories. For example, Islamic atomism defined atoms as the smallest matter that "occupies space and excludes other bodies," able to carry 'arād (accidents) and perceptible by the senses. Notably, many Islamic thinkers (e.g., Farabi, Ibn Sina) accepted the Aristotelian view that prime matter is pure potential. Discussions also addressed *ma'nā* (meaning) versus *lafz* (expression), and rejected asking *kayfiyyah* (the "how") of divine attributes, emphasizing that Allah SWT is *wājib* (necessary) and utterly unlike the *mumkin* (contingent) material world.

Classical Malay theological literature reflects these notions. In 'Aqīdah al-Nājīn, Sheikh Zain al-'Abidin al-Fatani elaborates the doctrine *mumāthalatuh li al-ḥawādith* ("God's dissimilarity to created [things]") by stating that Allah is not *jirim* or *jism* and has no 'arād or

¹⁴ Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1–29.

¹⁵ Majid Fakhry, *al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism*, 53–78.

¹⁶ Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalam: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu'tazili Cosmology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 55–97.

composite parts. The same text defines *jirim* as any entity with spatial existence. It lists the characteristics that distinguish created matter (*baru, bersusun, mengambil lapang, menerima ‘arād*). Thus, Islamic theology reframed Greek categories: what the Greeks saw as an inert substratum (*hylē*) became *hayūlā*, interpreted within a created, atomistic schema; *jawhar* and *‘arād* preserved the substance-accident distinction; and the Malay texts emphasize that matter “occupies space” as a proof of createdness. This comparative perspective shows a shift from Greek materialism to an Islamic ontology that consistently upholds *tanzīh* (divine transcendence) and insists on linguistic precision in theology.

Comparison of Key Terms:

Greek term	Arabic term	Malay term	Gloss
ὑλη (<i>hylē</i>)	<i>hayūlā</i> (هَيُولَة)	<i>jirim</i>	Primordial matter (prime matter)
ἄτομος (<i>atomos</i>)	<i>jawhar</i> <i>aṣghar</i> (جوهر أصغر)	<i>zarah/atom</i>	Indivisible atomic particle
οὐσία (<i>ousía</i>)	<i>jawhar</i> (جوهر)	<i>jawhar</i> (“ <i>zat</i> ”)	Substance or essence
σῶμα (<i>sōma</i>)	<i>jism</i> (جسم)	<i>jisim</i>	Corporeal body (physical body)

Sources: Aristotle (physics, metaphysics) was used via the *Stanford Encyclopedia* as a proxy for his original texts, and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (*SEP*) entry on ancient atomism.

Islamic philosophers al-Farabi and Ibn Sina are referenced via secondary sources. Malay scholar Sheikh Zain al-'Abidin al-Fatani's *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* (Malay text) was available through an academic source. Other specific classical texts (Persian, Greek) are acknowledged by name.

Theological and Scientific Approaches to Matter in Classical Islamic Thought

Islamic scholars not only engaged with philosophical abstractions of matter but also advanced physical theories that foreshadowed modern science. Al-Razi¹⁷ (865–925 CE) proposed atomic theory, suggesting that matter consisted of tiny, indivisible particles. While rooted in earlier atomism, his ideas reflected an Islamic context of emphasizing God's role as the ultimate creator of matter.¹⁸ Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, 965–1040 CE), known for his work in optics, emphasized empirical observation in studying physical phenomena. Although not directly addressing matter, his scientific methodology laid the groundwork for later Islamic and European investigations into material properties.¹⁹ In the 11th century, al-Ghazali (1058–1111 CE) challenged the Aristotelian framework, asserting that God's will governs every aspect of creation, including the behavior of matter. His critique paved the way for the development of occasionalism, which viewed physical causality as an illusion, with God as the sole agent

¹⁷ Sami S. Amr & Abdelghani Tbakhi, "Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al Razi (Rhazes): Philosopher, Physician and Alchemist," *Annals of Saudi Medicine* 27(4) (2007), 305–307.

¹⁸ Adi Setia, "Fakhr al-Din al-Razi on Physics and the Nature of the Physical World: A Preliminary Survey," *Islam & Science* 2(2) (2004), 161–181.

¹⁹ Roshdi Rashed, "Ibn Al-Haytham (Alhazen)," in *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 1090–1093.

of change.²⁰ Conversely, Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126–1198 CE) defended Aristotelian natural philosophy against al-Ghazali's theological critiques. His works on matter emphasized the compatibility of reason and faith, influencing both Islamic and Christian intellectual traditions.²¹

The Islamic engagement with matter bridged ancient philosophy and modern science. By synthesizing Greek and Roman ideas with Islamic theology, scholars cultivated a dynamic intellectual tradition that recognized both the metaphysical and physical dimensions of matter. This legacy carried forward into Europe, where thinkers like Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) and Roger Bacon (1220-1292 CE) built upon Islamic interpretations of Aristotle. The eventual rise of experimental science in the West owes much to this rich interplay of philosophy, theology, and empirical inquiry that began with Greek thinkers and matured in the Islamic world. From the speculative musings of ancient Greeks to the meticulous analyses of Islamic scholars, the theological and physical exploration of matter reveals a profound continuity in human thought. This intellectual journey not only bridged civilizations but also laid the foundation for our modern understanding of the material world.

The Concept of Matter (*Jawhar*) and Accidents (*'arad*) in Islamic Creed Manuscripts

The Islamic theological tradition, especially within the domain of *kalām* (Islamic scholastic theology), was engaged deeply with the nature of existence. Two central

²⁰ Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-Falāsifa)*, trans. Michael E. Marmura, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 17:166–175.

²¹ Majid Fakhry, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd): His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 69–96.

concepts in these discussions were *jawhar* (substance or matter) and *'araḍ* (accidents or attributes). These ideas, heavily influenced by Greek philosophical thought and tailored to the Islamic worldview, served as tools for analyzing divine attributes, creation, and the relationship between the material and immaterial. The early Islamic theologians, particularly the *Muttakallimūn* (practitioners of *kalām*), adopted and adapted the philosophical lexicon of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* from Hellenistic traditions.²² These terms were used to articulate complex theological ideas while addressing challenges posed by rationalist movements and non-Islamic philosophies.

A *jawhar* refers to the indivisible unit of substance that constitutes physical reality. Theologians like al-Ash'ari (874–936 CE) and al-Maturidi (853–944 CE) argued that these substances are created by God and form the foundation of the physical world. On the other hand, *'araḍ* represents the transient properties or accidents that subsist in substances, such as color, motion, or taste. These are impermanent and dependent on *jawhar* for their existence.²³

The doctrine of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* was instrumental in affirming Allah SWT's omnipotence. Islamic

²² In particular, the two distinct phases of the appropriation of Hellenistic doctrines into kalam physical theory, namely the appropriation of Hellenistic doctrines during the late second and early third/late eighth and early ninth centuries when kalam physical theory was in its nascent stage, and the appropriation of Hellenistic doctrines during the late third and early fourth/late ninth and early tenth centuries will be contrasted. Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu'tazilite Cosmology*, 182–194.

²³ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 1990), 101; R. K. Adygamov, "Epistemology of Sunni Kalam through the Prism of *Kitab al-Tawhid* by al-Maturidi," *Minbar Islamic Studies* 15(1) (2022), 101.

theologians emphasized that the creation and annihilation of *jawāhir* and their accompanying *'araḍ* occur solely by Allah's will. For instance, the *Mutakallimūn* argued that the continuous renewal of *'araḍ* in every moment (a doctrine known as atomistic occasionalism) demonstrates Allah SWT's role in sustaining the universe. Early Islamic creeds rejected the Greek philosophical idea of the eternal pre-existence of matter. The Ash'arite theologians, for example, asserted that *jawhar* are finite, created entities that cannot exist without God. This stance was a direct challenge to Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions that viewed matter as co-eternal with God.²⁴

The framework of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* allowed theologians to explain natural occurrences within a religious context. For example, motion, considered an *'araḍ*, was described as contingent and dependent on divine will. Al-Ghazali, in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, critiqued philosophers who attributed causality to natural forces, emphasizing instead that God directly creates accidents in substances.²⁵

The theological concepts of *jawhar* (substance) and *'araḍ* (accident) played a significant role in classical Islamic thought, with key scholars employing them to address theological and philosophical challenges. Al-Ash'ari used these concepts to counter Mu'tazilite rationalism, emphasizing divine control over creation. Al-Maturidi argued for God's unity and agency, demonstrating how the transient nature of *'araḍ* points to the necessity of a Creator. Al-Ghazali critiqued Aristotelian causality in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, reinforcing God's direct intervention in all phenomena. Finally, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149–

²⁴ Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 471–498.

²⁵ Al-Ghazali, "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," 166 – 170.

1209 CE) expanded these discussions into a cosmological framework, exploring their relation to God's attributes and the soul in works like *al-Maṭālib al-'Aliya*. These scholars collectively integrated *jawhar* and *'araḍ* into Islamic theology, solidifying their importance.

The adoption of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* was not without contention. Philosophers like Ibn Rushd (Averroes) critiqued the atomistic interpretations of *kalām* theologians, arguing that they undermined natural causality and scientific inquiry.²⁶ Despite these critiques, the concepts were instrumental in shaping the theological discourse of Islamic orthodoxy. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites, while accepting *jawhar* and *'araḍ* to some extent, emphasized human free will and rational causality, diverging from the Ash'arite and Maturidi positions. The integration of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* into Islamic creeds not only helped articulate core theological principles but also bridged metaphysical and physical discussions. These concepts influenced later Islamic philosophers and theologians, ensuring their enduring relevance in Islamic intellectual history. The concepts of *jawhar* and *'araḍ* were central to the development of Islamic theology, providing a framework to address metaphysical questions and defend Islamic beliefs against external philosophical influences. Their incorporation into the creeds of major theological schools reflects the depth and adaptability of Islamic thought in engaging with diverse intellectual traditions.

Tuan Minal's *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn*: A Nusantara Contribution to Ash'arī Theology and Islamic Creed Formation

²⁶ Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, trans. Simon Van Den Bergh (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 316–319.

'Aqīdah al-Nājīn fī 'Ilm Usūl al-Dīn is considered an authoritative text in the field of *tawḥīd*, particularly in the Nusantara region. Its importance and standing are closely tied to the reputation of its primary source, the book of *Umm al-Barāhin*.²⁷ The author, Sheikh Zainal 'Abidin bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Dahhan bin Syeikh Wan Syamsuddin bin Syeikh Ja'afar (1820-1915) or famously known as Tuan Minal, is also the author of some other well-known manuscripts such as *Kashf al-Ghaybiyyāt* (1883), *Kashf al-Lithām an As'ilah al-'Anām* (1890), (*Faedah*) *Pada Menyatakan Fidyah Sembahyang dan Puasa atas Mazhab Abi Hanīfah* (1904), *Miftāḥ al-Murīd fī 'Ilm al-Tawḥīd* (1912), *Irshād al-'Ibād 'ilā Sabīl al-Rashād* (1927) and *Tabassum al-Shāribīn*. *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* is written in Jawi in 1308H/1890CE by Tuan Minal to disseminate the teachings of Sheikh Sanusi on Islamic creed, *'aqīdah*. It is widely taught at the intermediate level in traditional *pondok* schools in Malaysia, alongside other notable theological texts such as *Farīdat al-Farā'id*. Recognized as one of the most comprehensive Malay-language works on *'aqīdah* after *Ward al-Zawāhir* by Sheikh Daud al-Fatani, it remains a key reference in mosques and religious schools across the Malay world. Ranked seventh among 26 popular Jawi texts in Malaysia, the book is part of a rich tradition of *'aqīdah* scholarship that includes prominent scholars like Sheikh Daud al-Fatani and Sheikh Wan Ahmad al-Fatani.²⁸

²⁷ Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, "Beberapa Aspek Epistemologi al-Shaykh Zayn al-'Abidin B. Muhammad al-Fatani: Suatu Penelitian Awal Terhadap Karyanya *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn fī 'Ilm Uṣūl al-Dīn*,'" *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 2(1) (2001), 112.

²⁸ Pauzi Yusoff, Mohd Fauzi Hamat & Mohamad Azrien Mohamed Adnan, "Pemikiran Tuan Minal dalam Membahaskan Aspek Mabadi 'Ilm Tawhid dan Ilah dalam Kitab *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* (Tuan Minal's Thinking in Debating Aspects of Mabadi 'Ilm Tawhid and Ilah in *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* Book)," *Jurnal Usuluddin* 50(2) (2022), 72.

Tuan Minal translated his book *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn fī 'Ilm Uṣūl al-Dīn* as *The Belief of Those Saved from Misguidance and Heresy in Discussing Uṣūl al-Dīn*, and it was written to address and combat theological deviations and heretical innovations (*bid'ah*) that were threatening the Muslim community in the late 19th century. He aimed to eliminate dangerous beliefs, including those held by philosophers, heretics (*zindīq*), and others who deviated from Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. The book underscores the importance of preserving correct Islamic faith by tackling these theological diseases that could harm individuals' *īmān* (faith).²⁹

'Aqīdah al-Nājīn begins by laying out the fundamental principle of *tawḥīd* (monotheism), emphasizing the oneness of Allah SWT. Tuan Minal categorizes Allah's attributes into essential (*nafsiyyah*), negative (*salbiyyah*), and affirmative (*ma'ānī*), ensuring clarity in understanding divine qualities. A key focus is the absolute transcendence of Allah SWT, rejecting any anthropomorphic representations, as in Islam, God is not patterned after human ideas and materials perceptions.³⁰ Verses in the Qur'an, such as which means: "There is nothing like unto Him" (Surah al-Shura 42:11), and arguments from classical works like *al-Ibānah* by al-Ash'ari support these assertions.

This foundational discussion establishes Allah SWT's eternal existence and supreme independence, aligning with the Ash'ari tradition. Later in the next

²⁹ Faizuri Abdul Latif & Ahmad Faisal Abdul Hamid., "Tradisi Penulisan Hadith dalam Karya Ulama' Melayu: Kajian Terhadap Kitab *Aqīdah al-Nājīn*," *Jurnal Usuluddin* (30) (2009), 91-110.

³⁰ Ahmad Israr Khan, "Identifying Entity and Attributes of God: An Islamic Perspective Mengenal Pasti Entiti dan Sifat-Sifat Allah: Satu Perspektif Islam," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 13(1) (2016), 248-264.

chapter, the book proceeds to elaborate on the necessity and role of prophethood in guiding humanity. Prophets are described as possessing unique qualities such as infallibility (*ma'ṣūm*), truthfulness, and intelligence, ensuring their credibility in conveying divine messages. A significant emphasis is placed on the finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last prophet (*Khatam al-Nabiyyīn*), supported by Qur'anic verses, which means: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men but is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets" (Surah al-Ahzab 33:40). This section underscores the centrality of prophethood in connecting the divine will to human understanding, reinforced by references to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

A significant portion of *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* is dedicated to eschatological beliefs, detailing the stages of life after death. The book describes the intermediate stage (*barzakh*), the trials of the grave, and the eventual resurrection. The Day of Judgment is vividly presented, highlighting key events such as the weighing of deeds (*mīzān*), the crossing of the bridge (*ṣirāṭ*), and the intercession of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The eternal destinations of paradise and hell are also discussed, portraying the rewards and punishments that await based on one's faith and deeds. This is supported by the Qur'anic verses, such as which means: "And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection"³¹ and classical exegeses like *Tafsīr al-Jalalayn*. Tuan Minal employs a rational approach in explaining theological principles while remaining firmly rooted in revelation. The text discusses rational proofs for Allah SWT's existence, such as the contingency of the universe (*dalīl al-imbkān*), and systematically refutes theological errors of groups such as the Mu'tazilites and

³¹ Surah al-Anbiya' 21:47

anthropomorphists. The concept of divine decree (*qada' wa qadar*) is addressed, reconciling human free will with Allah SWT's omniscience and omnipotence. Drawing on classical works such as *Sharh al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah* by Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* by Al-Ghazali, this section demonstrates the compatibility of reason and faith in understanding divine truths.

The concluding part of *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* bridges theological understanding with practical applications. It highlights the interconnectedness of faith (*īmān*) and righteous action (*'amal*), emphasizing that true belief manifests in moral and devotional practices such as prayer, fasting, and remembrance of Allah. Hadiths such as "Actions are but by intentions" in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* prove to reinforce this relationship. The text encourages believers to embody their faith through good character and consistent worship, ensuring that theology is not merely theoretical but actively influences daily life.

Creator-Creation Comparative Approach in Understanding God's Attributes in Islam

Islamic theology emphasizes a profound understanding of Allah's SWT attributes through a balanced integration of revelation and reason.³² The relationship between the Creator (Allah SWT) and His creation (in this study, matters) serves as a cornerstone for exploring and articulating divine attributes, as described in the Qur'an and Sunnah. This relationship highlights the transcendence and

³² The problem of the relationship between revelation and reason is indeed one of the most famous and profound topics in the history of human thought. It is a topic which, though debated without intermission now for some two thousand years, appears not to lose anything of its fascination and freshness, for all the dust overspreading the countless volumes of dead, or seemingly dead metaphysics and theology. A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam* (London: Routledge, 2003), 7.

immanence³³ of Allah SWT, showcasing His unmatched power, wisdom, and mercy while maintaining His absolute uniqueness.

This study employs a qualitative (interpretive) documentary method, which is appropriate for theological inquiry and the analysis of classical Islamic texts. This methodology enables a deep engagement with heritage works that articulate metaphysical and epistemological insights grounded in Islamic theology. The primary source examined in this study is the classical Jawi manuscript '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*' by Sheikh Zain al-'Abidin al-Fatani, a significant theological treatise within the Malay-Muslim intellectual tradition. The study is guided by a creator-creation comparative framework, where the attributes of Allah SWT are reflected upon through the lens of observable characteristics of creation (in this case, matters or *jisim* - plural form of *jirim*). This comparative approach emphasizes both the transcendence (*tanzih*) and immanence (*tashbīh*) of Allah SWT by showcasing how finite, contingent realities point toward the absolute, infinite perfection of the Creator, without equating them.³⁴ To systematically explore this framework, thematic content analysis is used as the primary analytical tool. This involves identifying and coding recurring themes, concepts, and theological arguments within the '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn*' text.

³³ The words transcendent and immanent often are seen together in theological language. The transcendence of God means that God is outside of humanity's full experience, perception or grasp. The immanence of God means that he is knowable, perceivable or graspable. S. R. Holmes, "God," in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, ed. Martin Davie et al., (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 1.

³⁴ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 68–75.

Key concepts such as *jawhar* (substance), *'araḍ* (accident), and *mumāthalah* (resemblance) are analyzed and categorized to draw out their implications for understanding divine attributes. The process includes: (i) Textual Segmentation: Dividing the manuscript into relevant theological sections. (ii) Conceptual Categorization: Grouping related concepts (for instance, material characteristics versus divine attributes) and (iii) Comparative Mapping: Juxtaposing the limitations of created entities with the perfection of Allah SWT's attributes.

The choice of *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* as the central text is deliberate. Unlike other theological works, it offers a unique synthesis of Ash'arite reasoning, Sufi metaphysics, and Malay intellectual heritage. Its emphasis on rational argumentation (*al-'aql*) alongside scriptural evidence makes it particularly suitable for a study that aims to bridge reason and revelation in the articulation of divine attributes. Moreover, the text directly addresses the impossibility of resemblance (*mumāthalah*) between Allah SWT and creation, aligning closely with the core research question. This methodological approach allows the study to investigate how the characteristics of creation reflect divine perfection while maintaining ontological distinction. The creator-creation paradigm, as drawn from *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn*, becomes a critical tool for rationally affirming God's attributes in Islamic theology without compromising His absolute uniqueness. Thus, the methodology directly supports the central aim of the research: to demonstrate the effectiveness of a comparative approach in enriching our understanding of God's attributes in Islam.

Matters Characteristics in Defining Impossible Attributes of Allah 'Mumatsalatu Lil Hawadith' According to 'Aqīdah al-Nājīn

The concept of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* (مُمَاثَلَةٌ لِلْحَوَادِثِ) is a foundational principle in Islamic theology ('*aqīdah*), affirming that Allah SWT does not resemble His creation in any way. It upholds the doctrine of divine transcendence (*tanzīh*), ensuring that Allah SWT's essence, attributes, and actions are free from any likeness to contingent beings (*ḥawādith*). *Mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* means 'resemblance to contingent beings'. This notion is categorically rejected in Islamic theology to preserve the uniqueness of Allah. The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes this concept, which means: "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing"³⁵ and "And there is none comparable unto Him"³⁶. These verses affirm Allah's absolute dissimilarity to creation, establishing a clear demarcation between the Creator and the created.³⁷

Islamic theology identifies all created beings as *ḥawādith* (contingent), meaning they came into existence after non-existence. Allah SWT, being eternal (*qadīm*), is fundamentally distinct and uncreated. This distinction is pivotal in preserving the integrity of monotheism (*tawḥīd*), as associating any likeness between Allah SWT and creation would lead to anthropomorphism³⁸ (*tamthīl* or *tashbīh*) or even *shirk*. The principle also warns against

³⁵ Surah al-Shura 42:11.

³⁶ Surah al-Ikhlās 112:4.

³⁷ Mohd Zulfahmi Mohamad and Mohd Nizam Sahad. "Reassessing The Translation of Anthropomorphic Verses in the Quran by N. J. Dawood: A Critical and Comparative Analysis." *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 27(1) (2025), 298-304.

³⁸ Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human traits, feelings, and behaviors to inanimate objects, nonhuman animals, or nature. Anthropomorphism can occur consciously or unconsciously and is a common way people perceive the world. K. Nikolopoulou, "What Is Anthropomorphism? Definition & Examples," Scribbr, October 16, 2023, <https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/anthropomorphism/>.

ta'īl (negation), the denial of Allah SWT's attributes to avoid anthropomorphism, which contradicts Islamic orthodoxy. Instead, a balance is maintained by affirming Allah SWT's attributes while negating any resemblance to creation.

The rejection of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* safeguards the purity of *tawḥīd* and ensures that Allah's essence and attributes remain beyond human comprehension. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised against delving into Allah's essence, saying: "Reflect upon the creation of Allah, and do not reflect upon His essence, for you will never comprehend it."³⁹ This teaching underscores the limits of human understanding and the necessity of submission to divine revelation. *Mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* is a cornerstone of Islamic theology that protects the uniqueness and transcendence of Allah SWT. It maintains a balanced approach by affirming divine attributes while negating any resemblance to creation. Rooted in Qur'anic injunctions and prophetic teachings, this principle is vital for upholding the purity of *tawḥīd* and safeguarding against theological deviations.

In 'Aqīdah al-Nājīn, the concept of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* was explained in the third chapter of the book (according to the classification made in the main source of this study⁴⁰), *Sifat-Sifat Yang Mustahil bagi Allah Ta'ala*

³⁹ Abu Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Reflect upon the creation of Allah and do not reflect upon Allah (His Essence)." Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Ḥayyān al-Anṣārī, known as Abū al-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-'Azamah*, ed. Riḍā' Allāh ibn Muḥammad Idrīs al-Mubārakfūrī (Riyadh: Dār al-'Āṣimah, 1408 AH/1988), 1:216, no. 5.

⁴⁰ Sheikh Zainal Abidin bin Muhammad al-Fatani, *Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin fi Ilmi Usuluddin*, trans. Noraine Abu (Batu Caves: Al-Hidayah Publications, 2011), 103–104.

dan Huraiannya (*The Impossible Attributes of Allah SWT and its Description*) by listing all 20 antonyms of the 20 attributes of Allah SWT described previously in the previous chapter of the book. The concept of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* is the opposite of *mukhālafah li al-ḥawādith* (non-resemblance to the Creation). The elaboration was taken by listing down ten characteristics of matters (the creation) as a comparison to what is impossible for Allah SWT (the Creator). This was written in Jawi in the book as follows:

Dan kata muşannif:

وَالْمِثَالَةُ لِلْحَوَادِثِ، بِأَنْ يَكُونَ جِزْمًا، أَيْ تَأْخُذَ ذَاتُهُ الْعَلِيَّةُ قَدْرًا مِّنَ
الْفِرَاقِ، أَوْ يَكُونَ عَرْضًا يَفُومُ بِالْجِزْمِ، أَوْ يَكُونَ فِي جِهَةِ الْجِزْمِ، أَوْ لَهُ هُوَ
جِهَةٌ، أَوْ يَتَّفِقِدَ مِمَّا كَانَ أَوْ زَمَانٍ، أَوْ تَتَّصِفَ ذَاتُهُ الْعَلِيَّةُ بِالْحَوَادِثِ، أَوْ
تَتَّصِفَ بِالصَّغَرِ أَوْ الْكِبَرِ، أَوْ يَتَّصِفَ بِالْأَعْرَاضِ فِي الْأَفْعَالِ وَالْأَحْكَامِ

Yang keempat daripada yang mustahil atas Allah Ta'ala bersamaan dengan segala yang baharu dan iaitu lawan bagi mukhālafatuh li al-ḥawādith. Bermula berlawanan antaranya dan antara mukhālafatuh li al-ḥawādith itu daripada tuqābil antara suatu dan yang bersamaan bagi نَقِيضٌ nya atas aturan barang yang dahulu jua kerana نَقِيضٌ mukhālafatuh li al-ḥawādith itu tiada mukhālafah bagi ḥawādith dan iaitu 'ayn mumāthalah bagi ḥawādith.

Ketahuiilah olehmu, bahawa segala bagi yang bersamaan yang disebut oleh muşannif itu sepuluh perkara:

Yang pertama: Bahawa adalah Ia jirim

Yang kedua: Bahawa ada Ia 'arad yang berdiri dengan jirim.

Yang ketiga: Bahawa ada Ia pada pihak bagi jirim.
Yang keempat: Bahawa ada Ia bagiNya pihak.
Yang kelima: Bahawa ada Ia pada tempat.
Yang keenam: Bahawa ada Ia pada zaman.
Yang ketujuh: Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan segala sifat yang baharu.
Yang delapan: Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan kecil.
Dan yang kesembilan: Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan besar.
*Dan yang kesepuluh: Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan mengambil faedah pada segala perbuatan atau hukum.*⁴¹

In the excerpt above, Tuan Minal lists the impossible attributes of Allah under the category of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* (resemblance to contingent beings), which refutes any similarity between Allah's attributes and the ten characteristics of created beings mentioned. Indirectly, these impossible attributes of Allah SWT relate to the characteristics of matter (*jirim*). From this point, we will use *jirim* as the word for 'matter' to follow the Jawi terminology used in the quoted text and to avoid repeating both words.

Based on the excerpt, the features of *jirim* can be summarized as follows:

a) *Jirim* occupies space

Regarding the first impossible attribute of Allah SWT under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, "*Bahawa adalah Ia jirim* (that He is a material entity)," Tuan Minal explains that *jirim* refers to anything that occupies space, such as stones, wood, and other objects that may exist either as a collection or singularly.

⁴¹ Al-Fathani, "*Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin*," 103 -104.

According to his description in the book,

Dan sesungguhnya telah akan dia oleh musannif oleh musannif atas ini tertib dengan katanya:

بَأَنَّ يَكُونَ جَرْمًا: أَي تَأْخُذَ ذَاتُهُ الْعَيْبَةَ قَدْرًا مِنَ الْفَرَاغِ

Ertinya: Dengan bahawa ada Ia jirim, ertinya bahawa mengambil oleh zatNya yang Maha Tinggi kadar daripada lapang.

Dan makna jirim itu tiap-tiap yang memenuhi lapang seperti batu dan kayu dan jasad sekalian binatang dan matahari dan bulan dan lainnya, sama ada jirim itu murakkab (tersusun) atau mufrad (bersendirian tidak tersusun).

Dan yang murakkab itu dinamakan jisim dan yang mufrad itu dinamakan jawhar. Dan erti jisim itu yang menerima bahagi kerana bersusun ia daripada dua jauhah atau lebih. Dan makna jawhar itu yang tiada menerima bahagian akan dia seperti roh umpamanya.

Dan 'جرم' itu kadar daripada lapang dan erti lapang itu iaitu barang yang antara langit dan bumi dan dinamakan dia lapang hanya sanya ia dengan sekira waham dan kerana demikian itulah dinamakan lapang mawhūm, yakni disangka akan dia lapang bukan lapang sebenar-benarnya kerana antara langit dan bumi itu penuh ia dengan hawā' ghāyah pekerjaannya bahawa 'hawā' itu jisim yang latif dan bermasuk-masuk setengah di dalam setengahnya apabila turun oleh jisim yang lain pada tempatnya.⁴²

The definition of occupying space literally refers to the physical ability of the *jirim* to exist, according to its sub-matter arrangement, either multiple (collection, *murakkab*)

⁴² Al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin," 104.

or single (*mufrad*). Space is defined as *lapang mawhūm*⁴³ (illusional void) which gathers all creations '*antara langit dan bumi*,' between the earth and the sky, the universe, which is actually a compression and collection of *jirim* without any so-called 'empty' space. Therefore, matter would not be able to be described without its physical existence in space, where their 'main' physicalities are based on their internal '*susunan*', an arrangement that produces the shape (form) of the *jirim*.

b) *Jirim* subsists with '*araḍ*'

Based on Tuan Minal's explanation of the second impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, "*Bahawa ada Ia 'araḍ' yang berdiri dengan jirim* (that He is '*araḍ* subsisting with *jirim*)", Allah SWT neither possesses a physical body nor any accidental attributes ('*araḍ*), such as colors like white, red, or black, which are attributes of *jirim*. This was mentioned in the book as follows;

أَوْيَكُونُ عَرَضًا يُشْمُومُ بِالْجِرِيمِ

Ertinya: Atau ada Ia 'araḍ yang berdiri dengan jirim.

Bermula 'araḍ itu barang yang berdiri dengan yang lainnya daripada segala sifat yang baharu. Maka iaitu terlebih أَحْصُ daripada mutlak sifat kerana

⁴³ As mentioned in the quoted text, "*lapang mawhum, yakni disangka akan dia lapang bukan lapang sebenar-benarnya kerana antara langit dan bumi itu penuh ia dengan hawa' ghayah pekerjaannya bahawa 'hawa' itu jisim yang latif dan bermasuk-masuk setengah di dalam setengahnya apabila turun oleh jisim yang lain pada tempatnya*" which literally means the imaginary space, that is, it is thought to be empty (void) space but is not as between the sky and the earth it is filled with 'air', and "air" is a subtle mass that enters and exits half inside the other when another mass descends in its place.

*tertunggal sifat itu pada sifat yang Qadīm. Maka adalah 'araḍ itu tertentu dengan yang baharu seperti putih dan merah dan hitam dan sekalian warna. Dan 'araḍ itu satu bahagi daripada alam kerana alam itu tersimpan pada sekalian jirim dan sekalian 'araḍ dan alam dengan segala juzu'nya itu baharu.*⁴⁴

According to the text, 'araḍ is the overall resemblance characteristics of creations, the 'baharu'⁴⁵ (new) objects created by God. While describing this feature of *jirim*, one of the physically obvious examples of 'araḍ for *jirim* is the color, including dark or 'black' color.

c) *Jirim* has a position

Referring to the third impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, "Bahawa ada Ia pada pihak bagi *jirim* (that He exists in a position relative to *jirim*)," Tuan Minal clarifies that Allah SWT does not have positional relations, such as left, right, front, back, above, or below. For example, Allah SWT's position concerning His Throne ('*Arash*) cannot be understood as being 'above' it, as the Throne itself is a *jirim*. Tuan Minal explained this in the book as follows:

Dan katanya:

أَوْ يَكُونُ فِي جِهَةِ الْجِزْمِ

Atau ada Ia pada pihak bagi jirim.

Dan sekalian bagi jihat itu enam iaitu kanan dan kiri dan hadapan dan belakang dan di atas dan bawah. Dan sekalian itu masuk pada kalam musannif, maka tiada Allah Ta'ala pada kanan 'Arash dan tiada di bawahnya dan tiada di atasnya

⁴⁴ Al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama *Aqidatun Najin*," 105.

⁴⁵ Literally means 'new' or 'created'.

kerana 'Arash itu jirim. Maka hendak takut akan sebagai takut daripada orang yang mengi'tiqadkan dia oleh orang yang awam daripada bahawa Allah Ta'ala di atas alam. Tetapi qawl yang shahih bahawa orang yang mengi'tiqadkan jihat itu tiada kufur seperti dikatanya Allah Ta'ala itu pada langit seperti barang yang berkata akan dia oleh Ibn 'Abd al-Salam dan dikait akan dia oleh Nawawi dengan bahawa adalah ia daripada orang yang awam. Dan adalah murād dengan jirim itu bulat alam ini dengan sekalian atau barang mana jirim ada ia. Dan yang kedua itu iaitu yang bersegera pada faham kerana melengkapi.

Dan demikian lagi, tiada harus dikatakan Allah Ta'ala itu di dalam atau di luar alam kerana memberi waham dan jahat adab serta Allah Ta'ala. Dan jika sah maknanya sekalipun, kerana bahawa kerana di dalam alam itu ilmuNya atau disembah akan Dia di dalam alam. Dan erti di luar alam itu iaitu tiada Ia daripada jenis alam dan lagi pula sebab syubhah. Dikatakan luar dan di dalam itu kerana keduanya itu daripada sifat yang baharu. Dan Allah Ta'ala Maha Suci daripada segala yang baharu. Maka haram dikatakan keduanya dan tiada jadi kufur.

Dan adapun firman Allah Ta'ala:

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ﴿٥﴾

Ertinya: Dan Ialah Allah, Tuhan di dalam tujuh petala langit dan di dalam bumi.⁴⁶

Dan maknaNya yang disembah di dalam langit dan di dalam bumi. Demikian lagi firmanNya:

⁴⁶ Surah Taha 20:5

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ

*Ertinya: Bermula Tuhan yang bernama Rahman itu di atas 'Arasy bersama Ia.*⁴⁷

*Ertinya: Di atas mengerasi dan memerintahkan.*⁴⁸

The concept of position (*jihah*) for *jirim*, according to the text above, is divided into two contexts. First, the ability to coordinate the location of the *jirim*, either left, right, up or down as the sole observer or secondly, the ability to locate the *jirim* either it is inside or outside of other entities solely or as the third party observer.

d) *Jirim* has parts

Regarding the fourth impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, "*Bahawa ada Ia bagiNya pihak* (that He possesses spatial dimensions)," Allah SWT does not have physical components, such as right or left, front or back, or top or bottom. Tuan Minal sternly warns against the belief that creation exists 'beneath' Allah SWT, as mentioned in the book;

Dan katanya:

أُولَهُ هُوَ جِهَةٌ

Ertinya: Atau bagiNya Ia pihak seperti ada bagiNya jihah, seperti kanan atau kiri atau atas atau bawah dan hadapan dan belakang. Maka sekalian itu mustahil yakni tiada bagi Allah anggota kanan atau anggota kiri dan hadapan dan belakang dan atas dan tiada di bawah. Maka hendak takut ia akan tiap-tiap takut daripada barang yang mengi'tiqad akan dia oleh orang yang awam daripada bahawasanya alam ini di bawah Allah Ta'ala. Tetapi qaul yang shahih bahawa orang yang mengi'tiqadkan jihah itu

⁴⁷ Surah al-An'am 6: 3

⁴⁸ Al-Fathani, "*Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin*," 105-106.

*tiada kufur seperti barang yang telah engkau ketahui.*⁴⁹

According to the text above, a *jirim* consists of parts or bodies that characterize its existence, such as the left part, the right part, the upper part, or the lower part. The body parts of *jirim* contextually describe its physical existence.

e) *Jirim* Occupies a Place

The fifth impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* is "*Bahawa ada Ia pada tempat* (that He exists in a place)." According to Tuan Minal, Allah SWT is not confined to or associated with any specific location, as discussed in the first attribute regarding occupying space, quoted in 'Aqīdah al-Nājīn as follows:

Dan katanya pula:

أَوْ يَتَّعَبِدُ مَكَانٍ

Ertinya: Atau terkait Ia dengan suatu tempat.

Bermula murad daripada تَتَّعَبِدُ dengan tempat itu hululnya pada tempat tiada muradnya itu tertentu dengan suatu tempat, tiada tempat yang lainnya. Dan jika adalah ia yang bersegera faham daripada lafaz تَتَّعَبِدُ sekalipun.

Bermula مَكَانٌ pada ahli al-Sunnah iaitu lapang yang mauhum ini dan pada ketika itu adalah katanya: أَوْ يَتَّعَبِدُ مَكَانٍ hingga akhirnya itu terkaya daripadanya dengan katanya: بَأَنْ يَكُونَ جِزْمًا ertinya mengambil oleh zatNya yang Maha Tinggi itu kadar daripada lapang. Dan daripada Jumah Falasifah: Bermula مَكَانٌ itu suthuh yang batin daripada yang meliputi yang

⁴⁹ Al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin," 106-107.

menyentuh bagi suthuh yang zahir daripada yang diliputi seperti batin buyung yang bersentuh bagi zahir air. Dan atas kata tiada ada katanya أَوْ يَتَّقِيْدُ
*hingga akhir itu terkaya dengan yang tersebut itu.*⁵⁰

f) Jirim is Temporal

The sixth impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* is "Bahawa ada Ia pada zaman (that He exists within time)." For example, as illustrated by the alternation of day and night in astronomy, Allah SWT is not bound by time or eras. It was explained in the book as follows;

Dan katanya pula:

أَوْ زَمَانٍ

Ertinya: Atau terkait Ia dengan zaman, seperti beredar atasnya segala falak atau mendatangi atasnya malam dan siang. Bermula yang masyhur bahawa zaman itu harakah (gerakan) falak.

*Dan kata qīl: Bermula zaman itu menyerta mutajaddid yang mauhum bagi mutajaddid yang maklum kerana menghilangkan bagi ibham seperti barang yang tsabit pada kata engkau: "Aku datang akan dikau pada waktu naik matahari", maka naik matahari itu mutajaddid yang maklum. Dan kata qīl lain daripada yang demikian itu. Dan telah memilih setengah daripada muhaqqiqin bahawasanya daripada barang yang terhenti oleh akal dan iaitu yang sebenarnya.*⁵¹

g) Jirim is Created

Regarding the seventh impossible attribute under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith*, "Bahawa ada Ia bersifat

⁵⁰ Al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin," 107.

⁵¹ Al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin," 108.

dengan segala sifat yang baharu (that He possesses newly emergent attributes)," Tuan Minal states that Allah is free from new attributes, such as newly acquired power (*Qudrah*), will (*Irādah*), knowledge (*ʿIlm*), or life (*Ḥayat*), and from the new attributes of *jirim*, such as color and motion as described in the book:

Dan katanya pula:

أَوْ تَتَّصِفَ ذَاتُهُ الْعَلِيَّةُ بِالْحَوَادِثِ

*Ertinya: Atau bersifat zatNya yang Maha Tinggi itu dengan sifat yang baharu, seperti bersifat Ia dengan Qudrat yang baharu atau Iradat yang baharu atau Ilmu yang baharu atau Ḥayat yang baharu. Katalah hingga akhirnya atau bergerak atau diam atau putih dan hitam dan suka dan duka.*⁵²

h) *Jirim* has Size and Age

The eighth and ninth impossible attributes under *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* are "*Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan kecil* (that He is small in size)" and "*Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan besar* (that He is large in size)." It is impossible for Allah SWT to have dimensions, whether small or large, or to be subject to the concept of age, whether short or long. Qur'anic verses that describe Allah's greatness, such as in Surah al-Ra'd (13:9): "*Indeed, Allah is the Most Great, the Most Exalted*," refer to His divine majesty and rank, not physical attributes. The explanation in the book was quoted as follows:

Dan katanya pula:

أَوْ يَتَّصِفَ بِالصَّغَرِ

Atau bersifat Ia dengan kecil.

أَوِ الْكِبَرِ

⁵² Al-Fathani, "*Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin*," 108.

Atau bersifat dengan besar.

Dan makna kecil itu barang yang sedikit daging anggotanya. Dan makna besar itu barang yang banyak daging anggotanya. Kata setengah 'ulama' makna kecil itu singkat umurnya dan makna besar itu panjang umurnya. Maka sekalian itu mustahil atas Allah Ta'ala kerana sekalian itu sifat bagi jirim kerana tiada sunyi jirim itu daripada sekalian perkara itu.⁵³

i) Jirim Derives Benefit from Actions or Rulings

The tenth impossible attribute of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* is "*Bahawa ada Ia bersifat dengan mengambil faedah pada segala perbuatan atau hukum* (that He derives benefit from actions or rulings)." Examples of actions include creating or causing effects, such as increase (*zayd*) or prosperity (*amrū*), which occur in *jirim* (created entities). Examples of rulings include acts of worship, such as prayer, zakat, or fasting. Allah SWT is free from deriving benefit from both.

Dan katanya pula:

أَوْتَيْتَصِفَ بِالْأَعْرَاضِ فِي الْأَفْعَالِ وَالْأَحْكَامِ

Ertinya: Atau bersifat Ia dengan mengambil faedah pada segala perbuatan dan segala hukum.

Dan misal perbuatan itu seperti mengadakan zayd dan amrū. Dan misal hukum itu seperti mewajibkan sembahyang lima waktu dan zakāt dan puasa. Maka segala perbuatan Allah Ta'ala dan segala hukumNya itu, Maha Suci daripada mengambil faedah. Dan makna عَرَضٌ itu iaitu 'illat yang membangkitkan dengan tergagah atas memperbuat akan sesuatu atau menghukumkan dia kerana

⁵³ Al-Fathani, "*Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama Aqidatun Najin*," 108-109.

hendak mengelakan masalah yang kembali kepada dirinya atau kepada makhlukNya atau menolakan daripada kebinasaan. Maha Suci Allah Ta'ala daripada عَرَضٌ. dan tiada jadi i'tiraḍ atas yang demikian itu firman Allah Ta'ala:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Ertinya: Dan tiada Aku jadikan jin dan manusia melainkan jadilah oleh mereka itu menyembah akan Daku.⁵⁴

Conclusion

This study has examined the concept of *mumāthalah li al-ḥawādith* in *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn*, emphasizing how the impossible attributes of Allah SWT negate any form of likeness or similarity to the contingent qualities of His creation. By adopting the creator-creation comparative approach, the study demonstrates how Islamic theology upholds the principle of *tanzīh*, Allah's absolute transcendence and uniqueness, while using creation as a reflective means to deepen rational understanding of His attributes. In practical terms, the analysis of *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* reveals how this method is embedded within the text itself. The author, Sheikh Zain al-'Abidin al-Fatani, systematically contrasts the finite and dependent nature of *jirim* with the eternal and self-sufficient essence of Allah SWT. For instance, *jirim* is described in the text as occupying space, existing in time, and being composed of parts and accidental qualities (*'araḍ*), such as color, movement, or position. These characteristics, which are subject to change, division, and interaction, clearly illustrate the imperfection and dependency of all created

⁵⁴ Surah al-Dharyyat 51:56; al-Fathani, "Terjemahan: Kitab Ini Yang Bernama *Aqidatun Najin*," 109.

things. By highlighting such properties, *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* utilizes rational reflection (*al-'aql*) to lead readers to a theological affirmation: since created entities are defined by change, temporality, and limitation, the Creator must be entirely free of these attributes. Therefore, Allah SWT is necessarily eternal, indivisible, beyond space and time, and unbound by physical composition or motion. This approach not only affirms the impossibility of resemblance (*mumāthalah*) between the Creator and the created but also provides a framework accessible to all levels of Islamic society, including non-Muslims, by beginning with observable realities. Using the nature of creation as a point of departure, the method fosters an inclusive and rational pathway to comprehend divine perfection without compromising the principle of transcendence. Ultimately, the creator-creation comparison in *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn* proves to be a powerful theological tool. It integrates scriptural insight with reasoned analysis, offering a method of understanding Allah SWT's attributes that is both intellectually grounded and faithful to classical Islamic theology.

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