

## The Permanent Committee of Scholars on Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahl al-Kalām and Tasalsul (Endless Chain of Events)

**Question:** “What is the meaning of *tasalsul al-ḥawādith* (endless chain of events) and did Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad bin Taymiyyah speak with it? I have heard that from some of the students of knowledge and I know with certainty that he (رحمته الله) says that the first of what Allāh created was the Throne. He responded with this when he was asked as to which of the Throne and Pen came first.” **Answer:** “The [term] *tasalsul al-ḥawādith* is a newly-invented term devised by the scholars of kalām (philosophical rhetoric) and what they intend by it is [to assert that it is impossible and that] Allāh’s actions must have an [absolute] beginning and are not eternal [without a beginning] so that multiple eternal entities [are not necessitated by this] and that there is no eternal [entity] except Allāh [alone]. This speech is futile and innovated into Islām because [the existence] of multiple eternal entities is not necessitated by the eternity of Allāh’s actions and His attributes. For Allāh the Exalted is eternal with His actions and attributes, there is no beginning to His actions, just as there is no end to his actions. And with Allāh lies success and may Allāh make good mention of His Prophet, his Family and Companions in the highest company and grant them safety.”<sup>1</sup> **The Permanent Committee for Research and Verdicts:** *Head:* ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Bāz. *Members:* Sāliḥ al-Fawzān, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl al-Shaykh, Bakr Abū Zayd.

### Notes

The innovation of the **Jahmiyyah** and all their offshoots (Mu‘tazilah, Kullābiyyah, Ash‘ariyyah, Māturīdiyyah) relies upon a particular proof called *ḥudūth al-aḥsām* (origination of bodies) to demonstrate the universe is originated and this proof rests upon an assertion which is *the impossibility of an endless chain of events in the past*. They need **an**

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<sup>1</sup> *Majmū‘ Fatāwā al-Lajnah al-Dā‘imah* (no. 17749, 2/408).

**absolute beginning** and a very first creation absolutely in order for this proof to appear valid. However, this would mean that for an indefinite period in eternity prior to that Allāh was unable to speak, act, create, show mercy, forgive and so on. In other words though He had attributes, there were no effects (athār) of those attributes because He was unable to exercise them through His will and power for an indefinite period in eternity. This clashes with the texts of the Book and the Sunnah and the refutations of the Salaf against the Jahmiyyah that Allāh is eternally one who speaks and acts according to His will, choice and power. And it is not necessitated by this view that there is anything eternal alongside Allāh at all, since everything besides Allāh came to be after its non-existence.

**Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah** (رحمته الله) said, “And they [Ahl al-Sunnah] respond to [the issue of] an endless chain with two answers... they said: An endless chain in the future is permitted (jā'iz) in the view of the majority of the Muslims from the people of various sects and other than them [from those of other religions]. For the bliss of Paradise and punishment of the Hellfire are permanent, alongside the recurrence of events therein.<sup>2</sup> This was only rejected by al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān who claimed that Paradise and Hellfire will expire [and perish] and Abū Hudhayl al-'Allāf claimed that the movements of the people of Paradise and Hellfire will terminate and they will remain static forever [thereafter]. This is because they believed that an endless chain of events in the past and future are impossible, they made this statement on account of which the leading scholars of Islām declared them astray. As for an endless chain of events in the past, there are two views amongst the people of Islām, amongst the people of ḥadīth and kalām and others. So the one who says:<sup>3</sup> He, the Exalted, has never ceased to speak when He wills and has never ceased to act when He wills with

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<sup>2</sup> Thus, an endless chain of events in the future is established through the renewal and recurrence of reward and punishment brought about through Allāh's actions.

<sup>3</sup> This view is the view of Ahl al-Ḥadīth wal-Athar.

actions that are established with His self - through His power (*qudrah*) and will (*mashī'ah*) - which follow one another. Such a one says, 'He never ceases to speak through His will and act through His will in a sequential manner' alongside his saying that 'Everything besides Allāh is originated, created, coming to be after it did not exist and that there is nothing in the universe which is eternal alongside Allāh' as is asserted by the Philosophers who speak with the eternity of the celestial orbits and that they are eternally co-existent with Allāh in His existence, for this is not the from the sayings of the Muslims. And we have explained the corruption of the saying of these ones in other than this place... They [Ahl al-Sunnah] say: Allāh has informed us that He created the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them in six days then He ascended over His Throne and informed that He is the Creator of everything and that there is no created entity but is preceded by [its own] non-existence. For the Qur'ān indicates that everything besides Allāh is created, made, originated. Thus, there is no existing thing which co-exists with Allāh the Exalted [in eternity] as is asserted by the Atheist Philosophers."<sup>4</sup>

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For more details on this subject refer to <http://asharis.com>

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to *Minhāj al-Sunnah* (1/146-149). The atheists of the past were more intelligent than the dumb, cheap atheists of today because the earlier ones affirmed a cause for the universe but tried to claim that the universe, celestial orbits and matter were also eternal, co-existing with that originating cause. Today's philosophers choose not to identify what brought the universe about and instead, in their delusion and madness, claim that the universe created itself from nothing. That is the sum of their knowledge. Because madness has gone mainstream in today's society, this claim is glorified as scientific knowledge and advancement. If it was possible to put these people in the company of those age-old more rational philosophers, they would have soon ended up in an asylum and fed chemicals and potions for cure.