



Guide to Sound Creed

A Book on Muslim Creed and Faith

Dr. Sâlih Al-Fawzân

**Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence,
Member of the Board of Senior Ulema & Member
of the Permanent Committee for Fatwa and Research**

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الإرشاد إلى صحيح الاعتقاد

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**Al-Malman Publishing House
Saudi Arabia, P.O.Box 90020, Riyadh 11613**

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by Professor Ṣālih Al-Fawzān

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Second Edition 2009

Translated by Al-Arabia for Information Technology, Cairo.

49th Noobar St., Bab Al-Loq, 2nd Floor, City Mall Building.

Tel: +202 27949370

Fax: +202 27962730

Published by Al-Maiman Publishing House, Saudi Arabia, Riyadh.

P.O.B: 90020 Riyadh 11613

Riyadh: Tel: (009661) 4627336 – 4645594 – 4645581

Fax: (009661) 4612163

To arrange bulk purchase discounts or book distributors outside Saudi Arabia, please contact Al-Maiman Publishing House at the above address. For information on translated books, please contact Al-Arabia at the above address or info@arabia-it.com.

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This book was composed with Adobe InDesign CS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sheikh Sâlih Ibn Fawzân Ibn `Abdullah Al-Fawzân was born in 1935 A.D. His father died when he was young so he was brought up by his family. He learned the Noble Qur`ân and the basics of reading and writing then he later studied at the state school. When he completed his studies at the Fayṣaliyyah School in Buraydah, he was then appointed as a school teacher.

Sheikh Al-Fawzân then joined the Faculty of *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law) at the University of Imâm Muḥammad in Riyadh and graduated in 1381 A.H. (1960 A.D.). Thereafter, he gained his Master's Degree in *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), and later a Ph.D. at the same faculty.

Sheikh Al-Fawzân studied at the hands of a number of prominent scholars and jurists, including: Sheikhs `Abdul-`Azîz Ibn Bâz, `Abdullah Ibn Ḥumayd, Muḥammad Al-Amîn Ash-Shanqîṭî, `Abdur-Razzâq `Affî, Sâlih `Alî An-Nâsir and others. Moreover, he studied at the hands of a number of scholars from Al-Azhar University (Egypt), specialized in *Hadîth* (Prophetic Traditions), *Tafsîr* (Qur`anic Interpretation) and Arabic language.

The honorable Sheikh is a member of the Council of Senior Scholars, the *Fiqh* Committee in Mecca, and the Committee for Supervision of the Callers in *Hajj*. He also presides over membership of the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and *Fatwas*, and he is the Imâm and instructor at the Prince Mut`ib Ibn `Abdul-`Azîz Mosque.

Sheikh Al-Fawzân also takes part in answering questions on a radio program called "*Nûr `Alâ Ad-Darb*" (Light along the Path), and he also contributes to a number of Islamic research publications at the Council for Islamic Research, Studies, Theses and *Fatwas*, which are then collected and published.

Sheikh Al-Fawzân is the author of more than sixty published works, covering Muslim Creed, Islamic jurisprudence and Muslim's conduct, among which are the following:

- *The Book of Tawḥîd* (Monotheism).
- *Al-Irshâd ilâ Saḥîḥ Al-I`tiqâd* (Guide to Sound Creed).
- *Al-Mulakhkhas Al-Fiqhî* (A Summary of Islamic Jurisprudence).
- Rulings on Foods in *Shari`ah*.
- Among the Reforming Scholars in Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who has created us to worship Him and ordered us to believe in His Oneness and obey His commands, though He is not in need of our help whereas we need His. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allah Who is the [continual] Provider, the Firm Possessor of Strength.”

(Qur’ân: Adh-Dhâriyât: 56-58)

Allah, Exalted be He, sent His Messengers to call people to worship Him Alone and be devout in serving Him. He says:

“And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that there is no deity except Me, so worship Me.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ’: 25)

I testify that there is no deity except Allah, Who is the One that has no partners even if the polytheists hate that. And I testify that Muḥammad (PBUH) is Allah’s Servant and Messenger sent to all people. May Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, his household, and his Companions, who migrated, strived in Allah’s Cause and kept patient, as well as those who provided a refuge to the Prophet (PBUH) and supported him (may Allah have blessings and mercy on them till the Day of Judgment).

Clarifying the sound Muslim Creed and calling people to believe in it is the most crucial issue and the most urgent duty because this is the foundation on which one’s deeds are judged whether rejected or accepted. Therefore, Allah’s Messengers and their followers were keen on purifying their creed from all that which contradicts or contaminates it. Many of the Suras of the Qur’ân are devoted to handling the theme of creed. Besides, Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) has shown great interest in clarifying the themes of creed and teaching them to people. He spent thirteen years in Mecca calling people to believe in the Oneness of Allah and to be devout in their worship. Moreover, when Allah granted His Messenger (PBUH) victory and enabled him to conquer Mecca, destroying the idols, which had been worshipped by people, was the first thing he did, then he (PBUH) instructed people to be sincere in worshipping Allah, the One Who has no partners.

Furthermore, the eminent Muslim scholars have exerted great efforts in illustrating the pure Muslim Creed to people, thus they have written many books and held religious seminars to teach the sound Creed to people. Hence, the books dealing with the Muslim Creed occupy a lot of space in the Islamic libraries to the extent that they outnumber other books published in other fields.

With this in mind, I tried to contribute, with my humble effort, to this great area. Writing this book hardly adds any new information, but rather it clarifies some information, makes a connection between people's practices and the Muslim Creed and points out to what extent people abide by the principles of the Muslim Creed so as to judge those practices and explain the wrong acts they may contain so that people may abstain from doing them. Furthermore, this book offers advice to people so that they may prosper.

I have quoted in this book the writings of the great Imâms and eminent Muslim scholars like Ibn Taymiyah, Ibnul-Qayyim, Ibn Kathîr, and Muḥammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb and his disciples, who were the Imâms of the reformation call. Among the books I have quoted from is the book entitled *Fathul-Majîd (Bestowal of the Honorable)* by Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb. Again, I feel inclined to say that what I have written is not new, but I hope that I have clarified some information and related it to the daily practices of people whenever there is a chance to do so.

This book is compiled from a series, which I have presented on the Noble Qur'ân Broadcast Station in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At that time, I did not have the intention to introduce such episodes in the form of a book until Allah, Glorified be He, willed so. Some brothers urged me to compile, edit and classify these episodes and then publish them in the form of a book so that many people might benefit from them over time if Allah so willed. I hope that such work may be a good contribution in the field of *da`wah* (calling) to Allah, Glorified be He. For now we are living at a time when many people are ignorant of the method of sound *da`wah*. In addition, many of the Muslim preachers show great interest in small aspects that avail nothing without clarifying the sound Muslim Creed. In principle, they leave out the aspect of doctrine despite the fact that many people are, to a great extent, involved in major *Shirk* (polytheism) through seeking the help of dead righteous people and glorifying their graves, while many others are enslaved by innovations and superstitions. Moreover, it is observed that those calling to aberrations have controlled the minds of the lay people and the ignorant ones and driven them to do what destroys them and leads them astray. Lay people are deceived by those calling to deviations who have controlled their minds and properties and baselessly made themselves leaders in the name of being knowledgeable and devoted to Allah.

Unfortunately, many of the callers to Islam do not take interest in illustrating the aspect of creed and rectifying people's wrong practices in this regard. Some of those scholars may say that it is better to leave people adopt the doctrines they have so as not to make dispersion and differentiation among people. Some of them even say, "Let us gather together in adopting the doctrines we agree on and excuse one another in the doctrines we disagree on." They say similar utterances that contradict the implications of the Qur'anic verse:

"...if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result."
(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 59)

It goes without saying that Muslims will never be able to be united and strong enough except when they have recourse to the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and leave out what contradicts them especially in the issues of the Creed, which is the basis of success. Allah says:

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided..."
(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 103)

Moreover, the late generations will not prosper unless they follow the same teachings through which the early generations prospered. Finally, it is Allah Who grants us success and leads us to the right path, and peace be upon Prophet Muḥammad, his household and his Companions.



Creed means the doctrine that an individual believes in and abides by. Thus, if one's doctrine is consistent with the Creed set and approved by Allah Who revealed it via His Messengers and the Divine Messages, then it is an authentic sound doctrine that helps one to attain both salvation from Allah's chastisement and happiness in this life and in the Hereafter. By contrast, if one's doctrine is inconsistent with the Creed approved and revealed by Allah through His Messengers and the Divine Messages, one will be doomed to chastisement and misery both in this life and the Hereafter.

Furthermore, adhering to the sound creed preserves one's life and wealth and makes it forbidden for anyone to attack him/her or devour his/her wealth without right. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) says:

"I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight the people until they say, 'There is no deity but Allah,' and if they say it, they will have their blood and property protected from me except for (violating) its obligations (rights and conditions for which they can be punished justly)."

And he also says:

"He who testifies that there is no deity but Allah and makes a denial of whatever is worshipped other than Allah, his property and blood have become inviolable, and his account will be with Allah."

(Both hadiths are reported by Muslim.)

More importantly, believing in the sound Muslim Creed protects one from Allah's chastisement on the Day of Judgment; Imâm Muslim relates that Jâbir (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) has said:

"He who meets Allah without associating anything with Him in worship will be admitted to Paradise; and he who meets Him associating (anything) with Him will be cast in the Hellfire."

Also, it is reported in the Two Sahihhs (the Two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) on the authority of `Utbân Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) has said:

"Allah has forbidden the Hellfire for those who say, 'There is no deity but Allah,' for Allah's Sake only."

Moreover, Allah forgives the sins of whosoever believes in the sound Muslim Creed; At-Tirmidhî reported, as a hasan (good) hadith, that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he heard Allah's Messenger saying:

“Allah, Exalted be He, said, ‘O son of Âdam (Adam)! If you meet Me in the state that your sins fill the earth, but not associating anything with Me, I will meet you with the same (vastness) of forgiveness (on My behalf).”

Commenting on this *hadith*, **Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah will forgive the sins of those who have pure belief in His Oneness, who never spoil their belief with polytheism, unlike those who do that. Thus, if the believer who never associates anything or anyone with Allah has done so many sins that are equal in quantity to the size of the earth, Allah will forgive him in an amount equal in size to the earth. Meanwhile, those whose belief in the Oneness of Allah is deficient will not attain the same degree of forgiveness. Hence, the Muslim, who sincerely believes in the Oneness of Allah, and whose belief is not spoiled with any kind of polytheism, will have all his sins forgiven. That is because the sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah implies exalting Allah, glorifying Him, fearing His punishment and hoping for His mercy, and all that results in removing one’s sins even if they are equal in amount to the size of the earth. Thus, the impurity caused by the sin is accidental and the good deeds that abolish it are very strong...”

In addition, adopting a sound creed renders one’s deeds acceptable and benefits one in the Hereafter. Almighty Allah says:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.” (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 97)

On the contrary, having a distorted and false creed renders one’s entire good deeds void. Almighty Allah says:

“And it was already revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.” (Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 65)

And He also says:

“...if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing.” (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 88)

Furthermore, if any form of polytheism spoils one's belief in Allah, one will be deprived of Paradise and Allah's forgiveness; besides, one will incur Allah's chastisement and eternally abide in the Hellfire. Allah, the Almighty says:

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that..." (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ' : 48)

And He says also:

"...he who associates others with Allah - Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers." (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 72)

Moreover, having a corrupt belief (i.e., being a disbeliever) renders one's blood forfeited and makes one's property lawful to be expropriated by others. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"And fight them until there is no fitnah² and [until] the religion [i.e., worship], all of it, is for Allah..." (Qur'ân: Al-Anfâl: 39)

And He also says:

"And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush..."
(Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 5)

Consequently, having a sound doctrine has a good impact on one's heart, social behavior and the overall society. It is already known that during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH), there were two groups of people, each built a mosque. A group of them built a mosque with a good intention and they had sound belief in Allah while the other built a mosque for an evil purpose and their belief was corrupt. So, Allah ordered His Prophet to pray in the mosque which was founded on piety and forbade him to perform prayer in the mosque that was founded on disbelief and evil intentions; Almighty Allah says:

"And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, 'We intended only the best.' And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand [for prayer] within it - ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves;

and Allah loves those who purify themselves. Then is one who laid the foundation of his building on righteousness [with fear] from Allah and [seeking] His approval better or one who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a bank about to collapse, so it collapsed with him into the fire of Hell. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 107 - 109)



The Necessity of Learning the Muslim Creed

Know well, may Allah guide me and you, that it is obligatory on every Muslim to learn the sound Islamic Creed, to know its meaning and its principles as well as what contradicts and nullifies it of the major or minor *shirk* (polytheism). Allah, the Almighty, says:

“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin...” (Qur’ân: Muhammad: 19)

Imâm Al-Bukhârî (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote a chapter in his *Sahîh* (Authentic) Book of *Hadîth* entitled *Acquiring Religious Knowledge before Saying and Acting* then he cited the above-mentioned noble Qur’anic verse. Commenting on that, **Al-Hâfiz Ibn Hajar** quoted Ibnul-Munîr as saying:

“Al-Bukhârî means that obtaining knowledge is a condition stipulated for the validity of one’s sayings and deeds, therefore they are judged on its basis. Thus, religious knowledge takes precedence over both saying and acting, for knowledge corrects one’s intention which is the pre-requisite for the acceptance of ones deeds...”

Considering this, Muslim scholars have exerted earnest efforts in learning the rulings of the sound Muslim Creed and teaching it, regarding it as one of the basic types of knowledge. So, they have composed many books on the Muslim Creed, clarifying its rules and principles and illustrating the acts of *shirk*, superstitions and *Bid`ahs* (innovations in religion) that spoil and nullify one’s belief.

Therefore, the phrase “There is no deity that is worthy of worship except Allah” is not just a word voiced by the tongue, but it has a great connotation, meaning and implication. Thus, one should know all these aspects and act according to them externally and internally. In addition, one should know about the things that contradict and spoil the Muslim Creed. Surely, the only way to attain such knowledge is via learning.

Therefore, teaching the Muslim Creed should take precedence over other subjects and should be given great attention while selecting the curricula to be taught in schools at all stages. Furthermore, sufficient classes should be allocated for teaching the Muslim Creed, which should be taught by competent teachers. Moreover, the Muslim Creed should be a core subject in the syllabus, and the evaluation system should attend to such a crucial subject, which is not the case

in most of the current syllabuses in our educational institutes. As a matter of fact, the study of Muslim Creed is not given as much attention as that given to other subjects. As such, it is most likely that the rising generation will be ignorant about the sound Muslim Creed; they may accept the practices of polytheism, *Bid'ahs* and superstitions prevailing in the society, as they have found people doing that and have not been informed that such matters are invalid.

Consequently, 'Umar Ibnul-Khattâb said:

"People's adherence to the teachings of Islam will decrease as long as there arise Muslim people who have not lived in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah)."

Moreover, the Muslim Creed textbooks to be taught in schools should be selected from among books containing the sound creed adopted by the righteous *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) and the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community, and which accords with the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. Other books contradictory to the doctrine adopted by the *Salaf*, like the books containing the doctrinal principles laid down by the *Ash'arites*, *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah* and the other sects deviating from the creed adopted by the *Salaf*, should be ruled out.

In addition to the academic study carried out in educational institutes, there should be religious seminars and sessions held in the mosques, in which the doctrine adopted by the *Salaf* should be taught. In these sessions, both texts and explanations on the doctrine of the *Salaf* should be provided for the students and all the audiences attending these sessions. Besides, simple synopses should be taught to the lay people. By doing this, the authentic doctrine will spread among the Muslim community. In addition, there should be ongoing religious radio programs on the Muslim Creed.

Moreover, Muslim individuals should pay special attention to the Muslim Creed; they should read books on it and get well informed about the books written on it according to the methodology of the *Salaf*, as well as about the books written by the opponents of the *Salaf* so as to have deep insight about the authentic creed and to be able to refute the allegations concocted against the creed adopted by the Adherents of the *Sunnah*.

Muslim brother! When you reflect on the Glorious Qur'ân, you will find many Qur'anic verses and Suras devoted to such crucial issues of the Muslim Creed. More precisely, the Qur'anic Suras revealed at Mecca shed light on the issues related to the Muslim Creed and the claims raised about it. One of these is the Sura of *Al-Fâtiḥah* (the Opening Sura).

Commenting on the Sura of *Al-Fâtiḥah*, the eminent **Imâm, Ibnul-Qayyim**, says:

“Know well, O Muslims, that this Sura contains the most important supreme requirements in a very comprehensive way; it includes a definition of the worshipped, the Almighty, giving Him three of the Most Glorious Names upon which all the Sublime, Glorious Names and Attributes are based; they involve Allah’s Divinity, Lordship and Mercy. Thus the words ‘It is You we worship...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 5) refer to the Divinity of Allah; the words ‘...and You we ask for help...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 5) tackle the issue of Allah’s Lordship; and Allah’s command to people to ask for guidance from Him has to do with His mercy. Moreover, the phrase ‘[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 2) includes the three Most Glorious Names; Allah’s Divinity, Lordship and Mercifulness are praised; besides, both the praise and extolment of Allah are signs of His perfection. Furthermore, the Sura of Al-Fâtiḥah comprises a confirmation of the Day of Judgment as well as the fact that all human beings will be called to account for their deeds; the good and bad ones. It is Allah Alone Who will carry out the Judgment between creatures; He will judge people with fairness. All this is included in Allah’s words ‘Sovereign of the Day of Recompense’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 4). Moreover, this Sura confirms the prophethood of Allah’s Prophets through several aspects.”

In addition, **Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) explains these aspects in a long useful discussion till he concluded:

“The whole Qur’ân revolves around the Oneness of Allah, its requirements, and the reward of believing in it, as well as the state of the people of polytheism and the punishment waiting for them. Therefore, the words ‘[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds -’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 2) declare the Oneness of Allah, and also the words ‘The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 3) are a declaration of the Oneness of Allah. Similarly, the words ‘Guide us to the straight path – the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 6-7) comprise a supplication for guidance to the way of the people of monotheism. Besides, the words ‘...not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray’ (Qur’ân: Al-Fâtiḥah: 7) involve a supplication for guidance in avoiding the way of those who abandoned belief in the Oneness of Allah.”

Ibnul-Qayyim adds saying:

“Most of the Suras of the Qur’ân include the two types of Tawhîd (monotheism); thus the Qur’ân sometimes talks about Allah, His Names and Attributes; this is called the academic declarative Tawhîd. Some other times it calls people to worship Allah and believe that He is One and has no partners and to abandon worshipping any other partners with Him; this is called the volitional Tawhîd. Still at other times, it gives orders and prohibitions and urges people to commit themselves to the worship of Allah; these are among the requirements of Tawhîd. The Qur’ân, at some other times, refers to the favors Allah gives to the people of Tawhîd in this world and the final bliss He will give them in the Hereafter. Further, it also sheds light on the suffering of the people of shirk (polytheism) in this world and the severe chastisement Allah will inflict on them in the Hereafter; this is the punishment of those who abandon believing in the Oneness of Allah.”

In spite of the fact that the Qur’ân assigns great attention to the Muslim Creed, many of the people who recite the Qur’ân do not understand the Muslim Creed correctly, so they commit grave mistakes, for they follow the doctrines they have seen their fathers adopting. They do not recite the Qur’ân with reflection; O Allah, there is no power nor might except with You.



Preaching the Muslim Creed

It is obligatory on a Muslim, after being favored by Allah with the learning of the Muslim Creed and adhering to its principles, to call people to adopt such a creed so as to help bring them out from darkness to light. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"...So whoever disbelieves in tâghût and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it and Allah is Hearing and Knowing. Allah is the ally of those who believe He brings them out from darkneses into the light. And those who disbelieve – their allies are tâghût. They take them out of the light into darkneses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein."

(Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 256-257)

All Messengers initiated their call to Allah with teaching the Islamic Creed; they never taught anything before it. Almighty Allah says:

"And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid tâghût.'" (Qur'an: An-Nahl: 36)

Each Messenger told his people at the beginning of his mission to ***"...worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him..."*** (Qur'an: Hûd: 50) This utterance was said by Nûh (Noah), Hûd, Sâlih, Shu`ayb, Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsâ (Moses), 'Îsâ (Jesus) Muḥammad and all other messengers and prophets (peace be upon them all). Therefore, it is a duty on all those who learn the authentic creed to act upon it, and to call people to believe in it with wisdom and good admonition, as the messengers and their followers did. Calling people to believe in the authentic Muslim Creed should be the starting point in *da`wah*, thus Muslim preachers should not ask people to fulfill obligations or to abstain from forbidden acts unless people are taught the sound Muslim Creed, for it is the basis on which the soundness of their deeds are founded. Therefore, if one does not have a sound belief, one's good deeds will never be accepted nor rewarded. For, undoubtedly, no building can be erected without establishing its basis.

That is why the Messengers were concerned with teaching this Creed to their peoples; besides, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) used to send preachers to other areas and would order them to start their *da`wah* with teaching people the sound Creed. Ibn `Abbâs narrated that when Allah's Messenger (PBUH) sent Mu`adh to Yemen, he (PBUH) said to him:

“You are going to a people of the Scripture so let the first thing to which you invite them is to testify that there is no deity but Allah (in another narration “... to believe in the Oneness of Allah...”). If they obey you to do so, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them Five Prayers in every day and night (in twenty-four hours). If they obey you to do so, then tell them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the Zakâh from their property and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor. If they obey you to do so, then avoid taking the best of their properties, and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person, for there is no screen between his invocation and Allah.”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

Reflecting on this *hadîth* with keen insight into the missions of the previous Messengers as mentioned in the Qur’ân as well as into the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), we can deduce the methodology utilized by those Messengers in calling people to Allah. The first thing they would call people to is the adoption of the sound creed which lies in worshipping Allah Alone and associating no partners with Him as well as abandoning the worship of other false deities. And this is exactly the meaning of the phrase *“There is no deity except Allah.”*

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) spent thirteen years in Mecca calling people to correct their creed, worship Allah Alone and abandon worshipping the idols. He did that before asking people to perform prayer, pay *Zakâh* (poor-due), perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage), and strive in Allah’s Cause, and also before forbidding them from committing forbidden deeds like usury, adultery, drinking (wine) and gambling.

All this clearly shows the mistakes committed by some of the contemporary Muslim groups which take on their shoulders the responsibility of *da’wah*, but they neglect the teachings of the Muslim Creed and concentrate on other minor aspects like the moral code and behavior. On the other hand, those sects disregard the major polytheistic practices committed by people around the graves of the saints in some of the Muslim countries, and they do not denounce those practices or forbid people from doing them. Additionally, those sects never hold sessions or write books to warn people of getting involved in such incorrect practices. Adding insult to injury, among those sects, you might come across some members who fall into some practices of *shirk*, while others are involved in practices of deviated Sufism; however, other members do not warn them of that in spite of the fact that correcting the doctrine of those

members takes priority over calling disbelievers and atheists to Islam. For, the latter declare their disbelief and acknowledge that their deeds are inconsistent with the teachings of the Messengers of Allah, while the deviated Sufis who magnify the graves of the saints think they are right and regard their deviated practices as part of Islam, so they become self-conceited and tempt others to do the same. Almighty Allah has ordered us to start combating those committing acts of disbelief from among the nearest of kin. Allah says:

“O you who have believed, fight those adjacent to you of the disbelievers and let them find in you harshness and know that Allah is with the righteous”
(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 123)

Unless the belief of Muslims is refined from the alien incorrect doctrines, they will be unable to confront their enemies. It is related that a *qubûrî* (i.e., one of those people glorifying the graves of saints) saw a man worshipping an idol, so he denounced his deed. Thereupon, the worshipper of the idol said to the *qubûrî*, “You worship an absent creature (i.e., the saint) while I worship a present object existing in front of me. So, which one of us raises more astonishment?” Thus, the *qubûrî* was overcome. Although both of the two men are polytheists, as they both worship something which does not benefit nor harm them, the *qubûrî* is more deviated, for he commit a more heinous act. Hence, the Muslim preachers should pay much more attention to the sound Muslim Creed. They should learn it well and understand it thoroughly then teach it to others including the people who deviate from it or those who act contrary to it.

Almighty Allah has addressed His Prophet (PBUH) saying:

“Say, ‘This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me and exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him...’”
(Qur’ân: Yûsuf: 108)

In his comment on this Qur’anic verse, **Imâm Ibn Jarîr At-Tabarî** said:

“Almighty Allah says to His Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), ‘Say’ (O Muḥammad) ‘This’ i.e., the Message to which I call people to believe in, and this is the way I follow in calling people to believe in the Oneness of Allah and be sincere in worshipping Him and refraining from associating other deities or idols in worship with Him. I call people also to obey Allah and abstain from disobeying Him. The word ‘my way’ means ‘this is the method which I follow in da`wah.’ ‘I invite to Allah’ means that I call people to worship Allah Alone and associate no partner with Him. The phrase ‘with insight’ means

that the Prophet (PBUH) had deep insight and knowledge in calling people. And the phrase 'I and those who follow me' means that both the Prophet (PBUH) and those who follow and believe in him have deep insight in da`wah. Then Allah, the Almighty orders the Prophet (PBUH) to say, 'And exalted is Allah', which means the glorification of Allah and deeming Him far above having a partner in His Kingdom or worthiness of worship. Then Allah orders the Prophet (PBUH) to say, 'and I am not of those who associate others with Him', and this means that he (PBUH) shuns all polytheists and departs from their community as he is not one of them nor are they like him."

Therefore, the above-mentioned noble Qur'anic verse indicates the importance of learning the authentic Muslim Creed and calling people to adopt it. Moreover, this verse shows that the followers of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) were the best in following in his footsteps to obtain the two qualities, i.e., learning the Muslim Creed and preaching it to people. Hence, this verse is evidence that whoever does not learn the rules of the Muslim Creed, pay interest to it or call others to believe in it, is not a real follower of the Prophet, even though such a person is counted as one of his followers by way of allegation.

Commenting on the Qur'anic verse in which Allah says, '*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...*' (Qur'ān: An-Naḥl: 125) Imām Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Allah, Glorified be He, has mentioned the stages of da`wah (in this verse) dividing them into three according to the state of the addressed person. Thus, if the addressed person seeks knowing the truth and will prefer it to anything once he knows it, then such a person should be called to Islam (or religiosity if he is Muslim) with wisdom only as he does not need admonition or debate. But, if the addressed person is preoccupied with something other than the truth, but he will prefer the truth and follow it once he knows it, then such a person should be admonished by arousing his interest in Allah's mercy and pleasure and frightening him of His wrath and chastisement. However, if the addressed person is a stubborn opponent to the truth, then one should debate with him with good admonition until he relinquishes his stubbornness and inclines to the truth; otherwise, a different method other than debate should be followed in calling such a person, if possible..."

Hence, the methodology of *da`wah* and the steps followed in calling people to the truth become clear. It also becomes clear that the method applied by some of the Muslim movements working in *da`wah* is wrong since they neglect the aspect of Muslim Creed, and this is contrary to the sound methodology laid down by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH).



Endnotes

1 *Taghût*: False objects of worship, such as idols, heavenly bodies, spirits, human beings, etc.

2 *Fitnah*: Persecution.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ISLAMIC CREED

Prologue

Know, O Muslim brother (may Allah guide you and me), that the principles of the Islamic Creed, which is the Creed adopted by the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community, the Group that will be rescued from Allah's chastisement on the Day of Judgment, are Belief in Allah, His Angels, Scriptures, Messengers, the Last Day and the Divine Decree and Destiny, be it good or evil. Many texts in the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* as well as consensus support these principles.

Almighty Allah says:

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 177)

And He also says:

"Indeed, all things We created with predestination."

(Qur'ân: Al-Qamar: 49)

He, further, says:

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers,[saying], We make no distinction between any of His messengers..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 285)

In addition, He says:

"...And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray"

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 136)

Moreover, there is a Sahih (Authentic) hadith, in which the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"Faith is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Scriptures, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree, be it good or evil."

These great principles, which are sometimes referred to as the Pillars of Faith, are called for by all Messengers and heavenly religions, and preached in all the Divine Books. Thus, only those who have departed the fold of belief and joined the disbelievers deny these principles. In this context, Almighty Allah says:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His Messengers and say, ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between – those are the disbelievers truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. But they who believe in Allah and His messengers and do not discriminate between any of them – to those He is going to give their rewards and ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 150-152)

Hence, these great principles and pillars of the Muslim Creed need to be illustrated and explained to people. This is what we will try, if Allah so wills, to do in this book as far as possible.



Belief in Allah, Mighty and Exalted be He

This is the basis on which other Pillars of Faith are founded. It means to firmly believe that Allah is the Lord of everything and its Owner, and that He Alone is the Creator and Designer of the universe. Belief in Allah also means to believe that none deserves to be worshipped other than Allah, Who has no partners and that all other deities worshipped beside Him are false and worshipping such deities is void too. Almighty Allah says:

“That is because Allah is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because Allah is the Most High, the Grand.”
(Qur’ân: Al-Hajj: 62)

This verse indicates that Allah has the Attributes of Perfection and the Qualities of Magnificence. Besides, He is far above all deficiencies and faults.

There are three kinds of *Tawhîd* (Belief in the Oneness of Allah): *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* (Belief in Allah’s Lordship), *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* (Belief that no one deserves to be worshipped except Allah), and *Tawhîdul-Asmâ’ was-Sifât* (Belief in Allah’s Names and Attributes).

The First Aspect:

Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah (Belief in Allah's Lordship)

Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah means to have a firm belief that Allah Alone is the Creator of the whole universe and its Designer, and that it is He Who gives life and death. Besides, it also entails belief that Allah is the Provider, the Powerful and the Firm Possessor of strength.

Such a kind of *Tawhîd* is inherent in man's nature and none of the previous nations doubted that. Almighty Allah says:

"And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say, 'Allah.'"
(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 87)

And He says:

"And if you should ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth?' they would surely say, 'They were created by the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.'"
(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 9)

Moreover, He says:

"Say, 'Who is [the] Lord of the seven heavens and [the] Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say, '[They belong] to Allah...'"
(Qur'ân: Al-Mu'minûn: 86)

Similar examples are highlighted in many Qur'anic verses, where Allah mentions that the polytheists admitted the Lordship of Allah and that He Alone is the Creator of the universe, the Provider of all creatures and the One Who gives life and causes death.

None denied *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* except for some deviated groups of people (e.g., atheists), who pretended to deny the presence of the Lord, though they were completely certain in their hearts that He exists. They only denied Allah's presence out of stubbornness. This is evident in what Allah says about Pharaoh who said to his people:

"... 'I have not known you to have a god other than me'..."
(Qur'ân: Al-Qaṣaṣ: 38)

However, Moses addressed him saying:

"[Moses] said, 'You have already known that none has sent down these [signs] except the Lord of the heavens and the earth as evidence...'"
(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 102)

Moreover, Almighty Allah says:

“And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness...” (Qur’ân: An-Naml: 14)

In principle, those who denied the presence of Allah never relied on a proof, but it was their obstinacy that prompted them to do so. About this Allah, the Almighty says:

“And they say, ‘There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.’ And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.” (Qur’ân: Al-Jâthyiah: 24)

Thus, those people did not deny Allah’s presence out of knowledge, sound reasoning or the pure nature they had. As a matter of fact, the claims of those who denied the presence of Allah are all refutable since this universe and the cycle of life attest to the Oneness of Allah and His Lordship, for a creature must have had a Creator, exactly as a deed must have had a doer. Allah, the Almighty, says:

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves], or did they create the heavens and the earth...”

(Qur’ân: At-Tûr: 35)

Moreover, a poet says:

*And in every thing there is a sign
That attests that Allah is One*

Since these facts are evident, atheists or those who deny the presence of Allah become confused and fail to give answers to the questions set by the monotheists. Those atheists may, sometimes, say, “This universe has existed as a result of the nature, which consists of such things as plants, animals and the inanimate beings; according to these atheists, such things comprise the nature which has originated itself!” At some other times, those atheists may claim that nature consists of the qualities of the things and their characteristics such as heat, coldness, moisture, solidity, smoothness and roughness, and that nature is a group of abstract things such as motion, stillness, growing, marriage and multiplication. Those atheists claim that nature is made up of these qualities and abstract things, and that nature has originated things.

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned claims are baseless since the two considerations are unreasonable. According to their first consideration, nature in itself will be regarded as a creating and created object, thus it may be said that the earth created the earth or heaven created heaven, which is circular and impossible. Furthermore, the second consideration is more impossible, for

since the essence of the thing is unable to create itself, then its quality is, by a greater reason, unable to create it. For, the presence of a quality is dependent on the presence of the thing described by it, so how can a quality create the thing it qualifies whereas it needs that thing! Besides, since the occurrence of the qualified thing has been proved, then the quality that describes it necessarily exists. In addition, the nature has no feelings, for it is purely an instrument, so how can it create great things, which are extremely wonderful and perfect, proceed with extreme wisdom, and are closely related.

Some atheists also said that all creatures originated by accident, in the sense that the unification of atoms and molecules occurred accidentally and that resulted in the origination of life without the intervention of a wise creator and manager. Undoubtedly, this is a false statement, which is unacceptable to minds and pure natures. For, when one contemplates this organized universe with its planets, earth and heaven as well as the life of the creatures in the universe, which is run by accuracy and wonderful order, all this reflects the fact that this universe was created by a Wise Creator.

Ibnul-Qayyim says:

“Ask the one who denies the presence of Allah and never recognizes His Divine Attributes about the case of a waterwheel which is fixed on a river while its instruments are perfect in such a way that no deficiency is seen in its substance or the way it looks. This waterwheel is made to irrigate a lush garden full of all kinds of fruits and trees. In addition, there is someone to care for this garden, scour it from weeds so that everything in it is tidy. Besides, he distributes its ripe fruits among the deserving recipients in a fair way according to their needs and necessities, giving every category the amount fitting it in a continuous way. Does such an atheist think that all that happens by accident without the intervention of a designer or a manager? Is it possible that the waterwheel, the garden and the other things exist accidentally without a supervisor or a manager? Can the human mind accept that?! What may a reasonable person say about that? Will he be guided to the right path? However, Allah, All-Mighty and All-Wise has created some people who have hearts with which they do not comprehend and eyes with which they cannot behold, so they cannot reflect on the wonderful creatures in the universe; they are as ignorant as the animals.”



The Second Aspect:

Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah

Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah (i.e., the belief that no one deserves to be worshipped except Allah) means that all kinds of worship should be directed to none but Allah. The Arabic word '*Al-Ulûhiyyah*' means 'worship' and the word '*Ilâh*' means 'the worshipped One.' Therefore, this kind of *Tawhîd* is called '*Tawhîdul-'Ibâdah*' (the monotheism of worship).

Literally, the Arabic word '*ibâdah* (worship) means humiliation. Thus, Arabs would say *tariqun mu'abad* (i.e., a well-paved road) when it is even and trodden. As for the jurisprudential meaning of '*ibâdah* (worship), scholars have defined it in different ways though they agree on its meaning. Thus, a group of the scholars have defined '*ibâdah* as the acts that Allah has ordered people to do apart from their being a custom or something rationally required. Some other scholars have defined '*ibâdah* as the perfect love for Allah and the ultimate submission to Him. However, Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah has defined '*ibâdah* as an umbrella term that entails all that Allah loves and is pleased with of sayings, explicit and implicit deeds. This definition is the most accurate and comprehensive one, for the whole religion is manifested in '*ibâdah*. Moreover, some scholars have defined '*ibâdah* as the perfect love for Allah and submission to Him, for the perfect love and ultimate submission imply the obedience to the Beloved One and Complying with His Will. Hence, the slave of Allah is the one subdued by love for Allah and submission to Him. So, one's obedience to his Lord is dependent on his love for and submission to Him. Consequently, one's love for Allah and submission to Him imply that one worships Him Alone and associates no partner with Him.

Consequently, the worship that Allah has ordered people to do entails the meaning of submission to Allah and love for Him. Thus, worship is based on three pillars: Love for Allah, longing for His mercy and fearing Him, which are all complementary. So, a person who has only one quality of these is not a complete worshipper of Allah.

Moreover, it is known that the Sufi people have worshipped Allah via loving Him only, while the *Murji'ah*¹ have worshipped Him via longing for His mercy only, whereas the Kharijites² have worshipped Him via fearing Him only.

All the above-mentioned three ways of worship are wrong. For, loving Allah without submission to Him is not regarded as worship. Thus, he who loves something without submitting to it is not a true worshipper of it. This is

exactly the same as one's love for one's son or friend. In addition, submission to Allah without loving Him is not considered worship. This is also similar to one who is subjected to an oppressive ruler, trying to avoid his evils. Hence, worshipping Almighty Allah via loving only or fearing only is not sufficient; rather a true worshipper should love and glorify Him more than everything and anything.

It is known that worship is the end with which Allah is pleased and for which He created both the jinn and human beings. Almighty Allah says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

(Qur'ân: Adh-Dhâriyât: 56)

Besides, for worship, Allah has sent all His Messengers; Almighty Allah says:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying],

‘Worship Allah and avoid tâghût...’ (Qur'ân: An-Nahl: 36)

There are many kinds of worship; it includes Prayer, *Zakâh*³, Fasting, *Hajj* (Pilgrimage), truthfulness, paying the deposits back to their owners, doing good to parents, keeping good ties with one's kith and kin, fulfilling the covenant, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil, fighting against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and being good to the animals, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarers, the slaves and the livestock. Furthermore, worship also includes acts like supplicating Allah, invoking Him and reciting the Qur'ân. Other forms of worship are: Loving Allah and His Messenger, fearing Allah and turning unto Him in repentance. Likewise, worship also includes: Sacrificing animals to Allah Alone, vowing to Him, seeking refuge with Him, seeking His help and asking for His aid.

Accordingly, worship with all its forms should be devoted to Allah Alone, Who has no partners in worship. Thus, directing any form of worship to anyone other than Allah is a major *shirk* (polytheism). So he who supplicates anyone other than Allah, sacrifices or vows to any one other than Allah or seeks the help of a dead, an absent or a present person has committed a major *shirk* and a grave sin that is only forgiven by repentance. No matter whether the *mushrik* (polytheist) directs his worship to an idol, a tree, a stone, a prophet or a saint, be he alive or dead, as exactly some people do nearby the graves of the saints now; worshipping others beside Allah leads to Allah's displeasure, whether the worshipped one is a favorite angel, a sent Messenger, a saint or someone else. Almighty Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him...”

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 48)

He also says:

“...So do not invoke with Allah anyone.” (Qur’ân: Al-Jinn: 18)

Moreover, Allah says:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him...”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 36)

Unfortunately, the graves of the saints in some Muslim countries are glorified by some people who are supposed to be Muslims; they take these graves as idols to worship besides Allah. Moreover, those people seek the help of others but Allah wherever they are, even if they are not near the graves of the saints. For example, some of those people may mention the name of Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) when they stand up or when they are astonished by an amazing thing, seeking his help. Some others may say, “Give us aid O Allah’s Messenger or O so and so.” When those people are admonished not to do that (as it is *shirk*), they say, “We know that those people (i.e., the dead saints) are unable to do anything but they are righteous people who are very dear to Allah, and we supplicate Allah through their status and intercession with Him.” Those people, though they recite the Qur’ân every now and then, forget that such wording they are using is said too by the polytheists, about whom Allah says in the Qur’ân:

“And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say, ‘Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?’ Exalted is He and High above what they associate with Him.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Yûnus: 18)

Moreover, Allah says:

“Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion and those who take protectors besides Him [say], ‘We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.’ Indeed, Allah will judge between them concerning that over which they differ- Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever.”

(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 3)

Thus, Allah calls those idol worshippers as liars, most disbelieving, though they think that patrons are nothing but intermediates between them and Allah in fulfilling their needs. This is exactly what the grave worshippers say nowadays; Allah says:

“...Their hearts resemble each other...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 118)

Therefore, Muslim scholars should denounce such a grave *shirk* and clarify its reality to people. Furthermore, Muslim rulers are bound to demolish these idols and remove them from mosques.

Many righteous Muslim scholars denied such a kind of *shirk*; they forbade people to do it and warned them against doing it. Among those scholars were shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah, his disciple Ibnul-Qayyim, Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb, Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Isma`il As-San`ânî, Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn `Alî Ash-Shawkânî in addition to many early and late Imâms, whose books are available nowadays.

About that kind of *shirk*, **Imâm Ash-Shawkânî** says in his book entitled *Naylul-Awtâr min Asrâr Muntaqâ Al-Akhbâr* (*The Realization of Desires, from the Secrets of Selected Hadîths*):

“Erecting the tombs of the righteous people and decorating them have resulted in many destructive evils that affect the soundness of one’s belief. Among those evils is that some ignorant Muslims have deviated beliefs like those of the idol worshippers or even graver. Those ignorant people think that the dead righteous people can benefit and harm them, so they turn unto them, asking them to fulfill their needs and achieve their interests. They ask those dead righteous persons to do things that are sought only from Allah, thus they set out for visiting the graves of those people, touch the enclosure of their graves heretically seeking their blessings and help. To cut it short, those ignorant people left nothing of the deeds done by the idol worshippers in the the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) but they did it. So, it is to Allah that we belong and to Him shall we return.”

In spite of that prevalent abominable evil and heinous disbelief, we find none who gets angry at that for the sake of Allah or feels jealous of the true religion, be he a scholar, student, prince, or king. Moreover, I have been informed without doubt that many of those *qubûrîs* or perhaps most of them have the habit that when one of them is asked by his challenger to take an oath, he swears by Allah falsely. But when he is asked to swear by his dead sheikh, the so and so person whom he glorifies, he falters and hesitates, refusing to swear untruthfully, then he acknowledges the truth. This is, of course, clear evidence of the polytheism committed by those people; their polytheism is graver than that of those who say Allah is the second of two gods or the third of three.

Therefore, O you Muslim scholars and rulers, what a catastrophe that has afflicted Islam graver than disbelief! What affliction that is more harmful to faith than worshipping things other than Allah! What tribulation that may befall Muslims, which equals that disaster! What evil for which forbiddance is as obligatory as forbidding such an unequivocal *shirk*!

*One is able to deliver one's calls
If one has called an alive person
But not-alive is the person who one calls
If you had instead blown on a fire
It would have surely shined
But what you had blown on were ashes*

Here Imâm Ash-Shawkânî's words come to an end. Unfortunately, after the time of Ash-Shawkânî, the conditions of the Muslim world became worse and the affliction exceeded the state he had described. There is no might or power except in Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.

The Relation between *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* and *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*

It is known that both these kinds of *Tawhîd* are interrelated in the sense that *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* necessitates *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*, so one who believes in Allah's Lordship should necessarily acknowledge the fact that none but Him deserves to be worshipped. Therefore, whoever knows that Allah is his Lord, Creator, the Manager of his affairs, is duty bound to worship Him Alone and associate no partners with Him.

In addition, *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* comprises *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* in the sense that the meaning of *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* is included in *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*. Put differently, he who worships Allah Alone, associating none in worship with Him, should have necessarily believed before this that He is his Lord and Creator. This is the same as what Prophet Ibrâhîm (Abraham) (peace be upon him) said, addressing his people:

“Then do you see what you have been worshipping, you and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and He [it is who] guides me. And it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink. And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me and Who will cause me to die and then bring me to life, and Who I aspire that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense.”
(Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ': 75-82)

It is noticeable that sometimes *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* and *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* are mentioned together in the Qur'an, so there is a difference in meaning between both of them, and consequently, they are regarded as two different sections of *Tawhîd*; as in the Qur'anic verse in which Allah says:

“Say, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, The Sovereign of mankind, The God of mankind.’” (Qur'an: An-Nâs: 1-3)

Hence, in these contexts, the word *Ar-Rabb* (i.e., the Lord) means the Owner of the whole universe and the Manager of the affairs of the creatures; and the word *Ilâh* means the true God that deserves to be worshipped alone. At some other contexts, these two kinds of *Tawhîd* are mentioned separately, so in this situation they both have one and the same meaning, as expressed in the *hadith* which states that the Angels responsible for questioning the dead people in the grave ask each one of them saying, “Who is your “*Rabb*” i.e., Lord?” In this *hadith*, the word *Rabb* is used to mean both the Creator and the truly worshipped God. This shared meaning of *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* and *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* is expressed in the verse in which Allah says:

“[They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right—only because they say, ‘Our Lord is Allah...’”

(Qur'an: Al-Hajj: 40)

It is also expressed in the verse that states:

“Say, ‘Is it other than Allah I should desire as a lord...?’”

(Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 164)

And the verse:

“Indeed, those who have said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ and then remained on a right course...”

(Qur'an: Fussilat: 30)

In all these verses, *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* has the same meaning as *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*.

Notwithstanding, the kind of *Tawhîd* for which the Messengers called their people to believe in is *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*. This is because, all nations are known to have believed in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*. Only a few deviant nations deny *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* explicitly; however, they acknowledge it inwardly, but such inward acknowledgment by itself avails nothing, even *Iblîs* (Satan) believes in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*, Allah says in the Qur'an, conveying the words of *Iblîs*:

“[Iblîs] said, ‘My Lord, because You have put me in error...’”

(Qur'an: Al-Hijr: 39)

This is what Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) has said in refutation of the sayings of those who believe that the *Tawhîd* people are required to believe in is to believe in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*. His refutation is supported by the Qur'anic verse, in which Allah says:

**“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying],
‘Worship Allah and avoid tâghût...’”** (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 36)

Thus, Allah’s Messengers did not call their people to believe that Allah is the Creator of the universe, for they already believed in that; rather, the Messengers said to their people:

“...‘Worship Allah and avoid tâghût’...” (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 36)

Furthermore, **Ibn Taymiyah** says:

“The Tawhîd which the Messengers called people to believe in mainly concentrates on proving that there is no true deity that deserves to be worshipped except Allah, so people should not associate others in worship with Allah...”

Moreover, **Ibn Taymiyah** says:

“Tawhîd does not mean only Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah; Allah Alone is the Creator of the whole universe according to what is maintained by some theologians and Sufis, who believe that when they prove that with their insufficient evidence, then they will have confirmed the true essence of Tawhîd. In addition, they have believed that when they believe in that and when their souls are filled with it, then they will have firmly believed in the true Tawhîd (monotheism). However, if man firmly believes in all the Attributes Allah deserves to be described with, glorifies Allah, keeping Him far above all deficiencies, and believes that Allah is the Creator of everything, he will not be regarded as muwahhid(monotheist) until he testifies that there is no deity that deserves to be worshiped but Allah Alone. Furthermore, man should adhere to worshipping Allah Alone, associating no partners with Him. The Arabic word ilâh (i.e., God) means the Worshipped Deity that deserves to be worshipped alone, not the One Able to create. Thus, a person, who explains the word ilâh saying that it means the One Who is capable of creating from nothing and believing that this is the most accurate description of God, and that this is the true Tawhîd that one should believe in, is unaware of the reality of Tawhîd which the Prophet (PBUH) was sent to call people

Moreover, the polytheists, to whom Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was sent, believed in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*. This fact is clearly voiced in many Qur'anic verses. For example Allah says:

“And if you asked them who created them, they would surely say, ‘Allah.’”
(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 87)

With this in mind, we could say that he who believes in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* only is not regarded as Muslim, and his life and wealth are not inviolable unless he believes in *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* and worships none but Allah.

Consequently, here appears the nullification of what is claimed by some theologians and Sufis, who say that human beings are only required to acknowledge that Allah is the Creator of the universe and the Manager of its affairs. According to them, the one who believes in this only is a Muslim. Thus, those theologians and Sufis define *Tawhîd*, in their writings on the doctrines, in words that apply only to *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*. For example, they say that *Tawhîd* means acknowledging the presence of Allah and that He is the Creator and Sustainer...etc. Having mentioned that, they quote the proofs attesting to *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*.

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Most of the theologians acknowledge Tawhîd in books of theology and consideration; they aim at dividing Tawhîd into three kinds, so they say, ‘Allah is unique in His Divine Self that none is like Him, unique in His Attributes that He has no match, and He is unique in His Actions that no one can do like them.’ The most famous kind of Tawhîd, according to those scholars, is the third kind, Allah’s uniqueness in His Actions, which indicates that the Creator of the whole universe is One Creator. Those theologians and Sufis support their opinion with proofs preventing the similarity between Allah and anything else, thinking that this is the Tawhîd people are required to believe in and that it is what is meant by the words, ‘There is no deity except Allah’. Therefore, they explain the meaning of Al-Ulûhiyyah (Divinity of Allah) as His ability to invent. It is well known that the Arab polytheists to whom Prophet Muḥammad was initially sent never disagreed with him regarding the uniqueness of Allah’s Actions; besides, they believed that Allah is the Creator of everything and they also believed in the Divine Decree. In spite of all that, they were regarded as polytheists (for believing in that only was not sufficient)...”

to. It is known that the People who believe in that are the theologians like Abul-Hasan Al-Ash`ari and his followers. Besides, it is a well-known fact that the Arab polytheists who lived in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) and the early period of Islam firmly believed that Allah Alone is the Creator of everything, yet they were regarded as disbelievers. About that, Allah says, **'And most of them believe not in Allah except while they associate others with Him.'** (Qur`ân: Yûsuf: 106). In addition, a group of Salaf (early Muslim scholars) said, "When the Arab polytheists were asked, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they would say, 'Allah.' However, they worshipped others with Allah." Allah, the Almighty says: **'Say, [O Muhammad], 'To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?' They will say, 'To Allah.' Say, 'Then will you not remember?' Say, 'Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say, '[They belong] to Allah.' Say, 'Then will you not fear Him?' Say, 'In whose hand is the realm of all things-and He protects while none can protect against Him-if you should know?' They will say, '[All belongs] to Allah.' Say, 'Then how are you deluded?'** (Qur`ân: Al-Mu`minûn: 84-89)"

Moreover, **Ibn Taymiyah** added saying:

"Hence those who only acknowledge that Allah is the Lord and Creator of everything are not regarded as true worshippers of Allah Alone. Moreover, they are not among those who seek aid from Him Alone, befriending those who obey Allah and taking as enemies those who disobey Him as well as obeying Allah's Messengers..."

He, further, said:

"It is well known that most of the polytheists acknowledged that Allah is the Creator of everything; however, they believed in the intercession of those whom they take as partners with Allah..."

In addition, **Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

"That is why some of the polytheists used to prostrate to the sun, the moon and the stars; they would pray to them, fast for them, sacrifice animals to them and dedicate other acts of worship as means of drawing near to them. Then they would say that doing so is not shirk, but one would be regarded as a polytheist if one believed that those things are the managers of the universe. They would also say that regarding these things as intercessors would not turn one a polytheist. However, it is inevitably known in Islam that doing so is shirk..."

I say that this is what the *qubûrîs* (glorifiers of graves) do and say nowadays. They do many acts of worship to draw near to the buried saints, saying, "This is not *shirk* because we do not believe that these dead righteous people have created the universe nor have they managed its affairs but we take them as mediators in supplication to Allah..."

Calling for Belief in *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*

The Qur'anic Methods

People firmly believe in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*, as they are inspired by their pure nature and their reflection on the universe to believe that One Mighty Lord created it. Believing in *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* alone, however, is not sufficient to make one a true believer in Allah, and thus will be rescued from Allah's torment on the Day of Judgment. As such, the Divine Messages delivered by Messengers focused on calling people to believe in *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*. The Message sent to Muḥammad (PBUH), the Seal of all the Messengers, in particular, focused on *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*. He used to ask people to say, "There is no deity except Allah," for this utterance implies worshipping Allah Alone and abandoning the worship of any other partner. However, his people used to turn away from him, saying:

" 'Has he made the gods [only] one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing.' "
(Qur'ân: Sâd: 5)

Moreover, the stubborn people of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) tried their best to make him relinquish his Message and let them worship their idols. They tried all the available means to make him abandon his cause; sometimes exhorting him and some other times frightening him. But the Prophet (PBUH) would say:

"By Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in order to make me abandon this matter (Islam), I would not leave it until Allah makes it prevail; otherwise I would die for the sake of it (Islam)."

In addition, many Qur'anic verses were revealed to Prophet Muḥammad, ordering him to call people to believe in *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*, and refuting the doubts raised by the polytheists with the clear proofs. In doing so, the Qur'ân would follow various styles, some of which are highlighted below:

- 1- Allah, Exalted be He, orders people to worship Him Alone and abandon all other partners. Allah, the Almighty, says:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him...”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 36)

He, further, says:

“O mankind, worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous – [He] Who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 21-22)

- 2- Furthermore, the Qur’ân points out that Allah creates people to only worship Him, Allah says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

(Qur’ân: Adh-Dhâriyât: 56)

- 3- Moreover, the Qur’ân demonstrates that Allah sent all His Messengers to call their peoples to worship Him Alone and to shun all other partners. Allah says in the Qur’ân:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allah and avoid tâghût ...’” (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 36)

- 4- In addition, the Qur’ân asserts people’s duty to believe in Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah by proving that Allah Alone is the Lord, Creator and Manager of the universe. Allah, Glorified be He, says:

“O mankind, worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you...” (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 21)

He also says:

“...Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah, Who created them...” (Qur’ân: Fussilat: 37)

He, further, says:

“Then is He Who creates like the one who does not create?”

(Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 17)

- 5- The Qur'ân also demonstrates the obligation of worshipping Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, by showing that Allah Alone is given the Attributes of perfection while the gods worshipped by the polytheists are deprived of such attributes. Almighty Allah says:

"...So worship Him and have patience for His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him?" (Qur'ân: Maryam: 65)

He also says:

"And to Allah belong the best Names, so invoke Him by them..."
(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 180)

Furthermore, Allah quotes Abraham's words to his father as saying:

"O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all?"

(Qur'ân: Maryam: 42)

Moreover, Allah says:

"If you invoke them, they do not hear your supplication..."
(Qur'ân: Fâfir: 14)

In addition, Allah says:

"And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf - an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way?"

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 148)

- 6- Besides, the Qur'ân describes the gods worshipped by the polytheists with disability. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Do they associate with Him those who create nothing and they are [themselves] created? And they [i.e., the false deities] are unable to [give] them help, nor can they help themselves."

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 191-192)

He also says:

"Say, 'Invoke those you have claimed [as gods] besides Him, for they do not possess the [ability for] removal of adversity from you or [for its] transfer [to someone else].'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 56)

In addition, He says:

“And they worship besides Allah that which does not possess for them [the power of] provision from the heavens and the earth at all, and [in fact], they are unable.” (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 73)

Besides, He says:

“O people, an example is presented, so listen to it. Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah will never create [as much as] a fly, even if they gathered together for it [i.e., that purpose]. And if the fly should steal away from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from the fly. Weak are the pursuer and pursued.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Hajj: 73)

- 7- Furthermore, the Qur’ân reproaches the polytheists who worship partners other than Allah. In this relation, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

“He said, ‘Then do you worship instead of Allah that which does not benefit you at all or harm you? Uff to you and to what you worship instead of Allah. Then will you not use reason?’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ: 66-67)

Further, Allah says:

“And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection [i.e., never], and they, of their invocation, are unaware.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Ahqâf: 5)

- 8- The Qur’ân also sheds light on the severe punishment that will be inflicted on the Polytheists, who worship other partners together with Allah. It points out the destiny of those disbelievers and that of the false deities they worship on the Day of Judgment. Those deities will fail those polytheists in the most crucial situations. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

“And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment. [And they should consider that] when those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them], and

they [all] see the punishment, and cut off from them are the ties [of relationship], those who followed will say, 'If only we had another turn [at worldly life] so we could disassociate ourselves from them as they have disassociated themselves from us.' Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets upon them. And they are never to emerge from the Fire."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 165-167)

Moreover, Allah says:

"...And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association. And none can inform you like [one] Acquainted [with all matters]."

(Qur'ân: Fâtir: 14)

He, further, says:

"And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection [i.e., never], and they, of their invocation, are unaware. And when the people are gathered [that Day], they [who were invoked] will be enemies to them, and they will be deniers of their worship."

(Qur'ân: Al-Aḥqâf: 5-6)

In addition, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

"And [mention] the Day when He will gather them all and then say to the angels, 'Did these [people] used to worship you?' They will say, 'Exalted are You! You, [O Allah], are our benefactor excluding [i.e., not] them. Rather, they used to worship the jinn; most of them were believers in them.'"

(Qur'ân: Saba': 40-41)

Besides, He says:

"And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?' He will say, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right...'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 116)

- 9- Furthermore, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, replies to the polytheists who claim that they take deities as intercessors with Allah; He states that intercession is possessed by Allah Alone and cannot be sought except from Him. He also points out that none will be able to

intercede with Him except after having His permission and after His Divine satisfaction with him for whom intercession is made. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Or have they taken other than Allah as intercessors?” Say, “Even though they do not possess [power over] anything, nor do they reason.” Say, “To Allah belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...”

(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 44)

He also says:

“...Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 255)

He, further, says:

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.”

(Qur’ân: An-Najm: 26)

In all the above-mentioned verses, Allah has demonstrated that He Alone owns the right of intercession, and that it is only sought from Him, and it can only be obtained after His permission to the intercessor and His Divine Satisfaction with the one for whom intercession is made.

- 10- Furthermore, Allah, Exalted be He, has pointed out that the false deities whom the polytheists associate with Allah avail them nothing, as this is the state with worshipping those not fit for worship. Allah, the Almighty, says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allah.’ They do not possess an atom’s weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership [with Him], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant. And intercession does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits...”

(Qur’ân: Saba’: 22-23)

- 11- Moreover, Allah, Exalted be He, has set many parables in the Qur’ân, showing the falsity of shirk (polytheism). One of these parables is stated in the Qur’anic verse, in which Allah says:

“...And he who associates with Allah –it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Hajj: 31)

Thus, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, has likened *Tawhîd* (belief in Allah's Oneness) with its elevation, sublimity, wideness and exaltedness by way of simile to the heaven. He has assimilated the one who abandons *Tawhîd* to the one who has collapsed from the heaven to the basest of the base. This is because that person has fallen from the climax of belief to the lowest level of disbelief. Moreover, Allah has likened the devils, who tempt that person to disbelieve to the ferocious birds that snatch him away, tearing his parts. Besides, Allah assimilates the whims of the polytheist, which drives him away from the truth to the wind that sweeps him down into a far off place. This is one of the many parables stated in the Qur'ân, which Allah has mentioned to demonstrate the falsity of *shirk* and the loss to the polytheists both in this world and the Hereafter.

The above-mentioned are just a few styles of those followed by the Qur'ân in calling for *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* and declaring the falsity of *shirk*. A Muslim has only to read the Qur'ân with reflection so as to find many useful things and convincing clear proofs that inculcate belief in the Oneness of Allah in the hearts of the believers and uproot doubts from them.

Nullifying *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* by Committing *Shirk*

After learning all about the truth, a Muslim should learn all the falsity that opposes it so as to avoid it. This fact is portrayed in the following verse of poetry:

I knew evil not to do it

But only to avoid it

Moreover, Hudhayfah Ibnul-Yamân was reported as saying:

"People were used to ask Allah's Messenger (PBUH) about the good things while I would ask him about evil things lest I might commit them."

Besides, 'Umar Ibnul-Khattâb, the Commander of the Believers, is reported to have said:

"The basic principles of Islam would be destroyed one after the other if there come to existence generations, who have never witnessed (practices similar to those of) the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah)"

Centuries before, Al-Khalîl⁴ (Ibrâhîm) (PBUH), says:

"My Lord, make this city [i.e., Mecca] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people..." (Qur'ân: Ibrâhîm: 35-36)

The above-mentioned quotations entail that one should be completely cautious not to fall into *shirk* and one should be fully aware of it so as to avoid it.

Shirk means devoting any kind of worship to any one other than Allah; like supplication, vowing and seeking help, which can only be done for Allah. On the contrary, *Tawhīd* means devoting worship to Allah Alone, which is something inherent in the offspring of Adam unlike the *Shirk*, which is accidental. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed...”

(Qur’ān: Al-Baqarah: 213)

Ibn `Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“The period separating between Adam and Noah was ten centuries, and the people who lived at that time were adherents of Islam.”

Commenting on that, Ibnul-Qayyim says, *“This is the correct interpretation of the aforementioned verse.”* Ibn Kathīr also affirms the authenticity of the above-mentioned interpretation.

The first people to commit the grave sin of *Shirk* were the people of Noah, as they exaggerated in glorifying the righteous people; Allah says about them:

“And said, ‘Never leave your gods and never leave Wadd or Sūwā’ or Yaghūth and Ya`ūq and Nasr⁵...’” (Qur’ān: Nūh: 23)

Al-Bukhārī related in his *Sahīh* (Authentic Book of *Hadīth*) that Ibn `Abbās said:

“These (names of the idols) were the names of some pious men of the people of Nūh (Noah), and when they died Satan inspired their people to prepare and place idols at the places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by their names. The people did so, but the idols were not worshipped until those people (who initiated them) had died and the origin of the idols had become obscure, whereupon people began worshipping them.”

Ibnul-Qayyim says:

“More than one of the Salaf said, ‘After those righteous people had died, their people stayed by their graves, then they made idols having the same pictures of the deceased ones. Then, after the passage of much time, the following generations worshipped those idols.’”

Reflecting on the saying that Al-Bukhârî reported from Ibn `Abbâs about the people of Noah's excessive glorification of the righteous people, making picture of them, keeping their pictures and erecting idols bearing their pictures in the forums where they would gather, we know the danger of making pictures and hanging pictures on walls as well as erecting statues in squares and streets. For, all that leads people finally to *shirk*, as such glorification of the pictures and erected statues takes other forms with the course of time since people may worship them as happened in the case of the people of Noah.

That is why Islam has brought injunctions that forbid sculptures and cursed those who do it, threatening them with the severest punishment and the harshest chastisement on the Day of Resurrection. All that is done by Islam to block the means of falling into *shirk* and to keep people far away from trying to imitate Allah's creation (through drawing pictures, erecting idols, and the suchlike). Moreover, we deduce from this story that Satan is always keen on seducing the children of Adam and deluding them. He often tempts them by making use of their emotional states, claiming to urge them to do what is good. Thus, when Satan saw the passionate attachment of Noah's people to the righteous people and saw their love for them, he incited them to erect idols bearing their pictures. Satan's aim was to bring them gradually out of the truth to deviation. Satan's temptation was not restricted to the people living at the time of Noah, but he was farsighted as to try to seduce the coming generations as well, for those late generations were less knowledgeable since ignorance spread amongst them. So, Satan seduced them to worship those idols, thus causing them to fall into major *shirk*. Those people even stubbornly contended against Prophet Noah, saying: '*... Never leave your gods...*' (Qur'ân: Nûh: 23).

Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) comments on that saying:

"Satan seduced the polytheists to worship the idols, tempting every nation by using the method suitable for their mentalities. Thus, he tempted some nations by inciting them to glorify the pictures of the dead persons, as what happened in the case of the people of Noah. This is often the case with most of the polytheists. But there were some people who worshipped idols representing the pictures of the stars, which they thought to have been managing the universe. Such people appointed custodians and chamberlains for their idols and would offer sacrifices to them. The worship of stars existed in the world both at early and later times. The first people to worship the stars were the Şâbi'ûn (the polytheists to whom Prophet Ibrâhîm (Abraham) (PBUH) was sent). Ibrâhîm debated with those people

about the falsehood of shirk, refuted their argument with his knowledge and destroyed their idols, so they tried to set him on fire. Some other people worshipped idols representing the moon, claiming that the moon deserves worship and that it manages the affairs of the Lower World. Still some other people worshipped fire; those people were the Magi. A group of people worshipped water while another group worshipped animals, whereas other groups worshipped horses, cows, living persons as well as dead ones. Meanwhile, other groups of people worshipped the Jinn, others worshipped trees and others worshipped the angels...”

All that Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) has just mentioned enables one to understand the meaning of the verse, which states:

“...And he who associates with Allah –it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place.” (Qur’ân: Al-Hajj: 31)

And it also clarifies the meaning of the verse, in which Allah says:

“... ‘are separate lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing? You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Yûsuf: 39-40)

Moreover, it indicates the meaning of the verse, in which Allah says:

“Allah presents an example: A man [i.e., slave] owned by quarreling partners and another belonging exclusively to one man – are they equal in comparison?”

(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 29)

Therefore, when those polytheists had abandoned the worship of Allah Alone, for which they were created and by which they could have attained happiness, they were afflicted with the worship of Satan, thus, their whims and desires were dispersed. Ibnul-Qayyim says about that:

*They escaped from the slavery
For which Allah created them
So, they were enslaved by whims
And the worship of Satan*

Therefore, hearts will only be guided and the world will only be reformed by the belief in *Tawhîd*; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Or have they [i.e., men] taken for themselves gods from the earth who resurrect [the dead]. Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.”
(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ: 21- 22)

Thus, the Day of Resurrection will take place when there exists none who believes in *Tawhîd*. This is stated in the *hadith* related by Muslim in which the Prophet (PBUH) says:

“The Hour (Resurrection) would not come so long as Allah is worshipped in the world.”

In the same way as the early polytheists differed with one another as regards their practices of worship and worshipped gods, the *qubûris* have differed with regard to adoring the graves; there is a special grave for each group of them to which they present different kinds of worship. And for each of the Sufi groups there is a sheikh whose followers adore as a god beside Allah. That is, such a sheikh enjoins for them acts of worship, which Allah gave no permission about. This is certainly a kind of the seduction made by Satan to lead human beings astray. The only way to be secured from the evil and seduction made by Satan is to believe in *Tawhîd* with its forms and to adhere to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah*. We supplicate to Allah to show us the truth and guide us to abide by it, and to show us the falsehood and guide us to avoid it. For, He is our Patronizer; so how favorable is the Patronizer, and how favorable is the Ready Vindicator!

Dreadful Consequences of *Shirk* (Polytheism)

Shirk is the gravest of all sins, as Allah has informed us that committing such a sin will never ever be forgiven unless one has repented of it before death, though Allah has decreed upon Himself mercy. For this reason, one should be very cautious and alert so as not to fall into *shirk* since its consequences are so dire, and one should be well acquainted with it so as to avoid it, for it is the most ignominious of all disgraceful deeds and the worst kind of injustice. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

“...association [with Him] is great injustice.”

(Qur’ân: Luqmân: 13)

This is because *shirk* deprecates Allah, Honored and Exalted be He, and makes others equal to Him; Allah, the Almighty, says:

“...those who disbelieve equate [others] with their Lord.”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 1)

In addition, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 22)

For, *shirk* is at odds with the purpose for which Allah has created people and is contrary to Allah’s Commands in all aspects. That is, a polytheist compares the created one to the Creator, and how ignominious it is to liken the limited poor created ones, who own no benefits for themselves, to the Mighty One Who is Free of need of all creatures.

Verily, the Prophet (PBUH) has warned his followers against *shirk* and blocked all the means leading to it. It is known that Allah has sent Muḥammad (PBUH) to all people at a time when the state of the Arabs and the whole residents of the earth, except for some remnants of the People of the Scripture, was extremely bad. Depicting that, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Certainly did Allah confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book [i.e., the Qur’ân] and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error.”

(Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 164)

People who lived at the time preceding the mission of the Prophet (PBUH) were divided into different sects. First, confused pagans who used to worship idols made of carved stones, which were erected in places where they would stick to them, circumambulate them and sacrifice animals and, sometimes, their children to them. Allah, Exalted be He, says about this:

“And likewise, to many of the polytheists their partners have made [to seem] pleasing the killing of their children in order to bring about their destruction and to cover them with confusion in their religion... .”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 137)

The second sect was the People of the Scripture who were divided into two sects. The first group was the confused Christians, who had deviated from the Straight Path, believing in the trinity (i.e., worshipping a God in three persons). Those Christians associated Jesus’ disciples and the monks with Allah in divinity. The second group was the Jews, who committed abuse in the land, spreading corruption and inflaming seditions among peoples. They also broke their covenant with Allah and distorted the texts of their book from their proper meaning.

The third sect of people who existed at the time preceding the Prophet's mission was the Magi who used to worship fire, believing in two deities, one being the creator of good and the other being the creator of evil, as they claimed. A fourth sect was the *Sābi'ûn*, who used to worship the planets and stars, believing in their influence on whatever occurs on earth. A fifth sect of people were the *Dahriyyûn*⁶, who would not adopt any faith nor would they believe in Resurrection or Judgment.

This was the state of the people on earth at the time when the Prophet (PBUH) was commissioned with Prophethood; there prevailed overwhelming ignorance and dominant aberration. Therefore, Allah has rescued those who followed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from darkness to light, thus reestablishing the tolerant *Hanîfiyyah* (the True Religion), which was the religion of Prophet Ibrâhîm (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) has called for demolishing the idols and forbade *shirk*, blocking all the ways leading to it.

The following are the verbal and actual means leading to *shirk*, which the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden:

- 1- The Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden uttering words that inspire equalizing Allah to His creatures, like: "If Allah and you so will," and "Had it not been for Allah and you." He (PBUH) has ordered that one should say instead of that, "If Allah then you so will." That is because the conjunction "and" entails equality between the two things joined by it, but "*then*" refers to the time order of things. Thus, uttering the words that signify equality between Allah and His creatures is regarded as a minor *shirk* which is a means leading to the major *shirk*.
- 2- The Prophet (PBUH) has also forbidden excessive magnification of the graves of righteous people by establishing a building on them, lighting up candles on them, plastering or writing words of praise on them.
- 3- Furthermore, he (PBUH) has forbidden taking graveyards as mosques or places to pray in, for this is a means that may lead to worshipping them.
- 4- Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden praying at the times of the sunrise and sunset because this resembles the acts of people who got used to prostrate themselves to the sun at these times.
- 5- In addition, he (PBUH) has forbidden traveling to a place with the intention of doing acts of worship to Allah, excluding three mosques: Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (the Sacred Mosque), the Prophetic Mosque and Al-Aqsâ Mosque.

- 6- Besides, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden excessiveness in praising him, saying:

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary (Jesus), for I am only a servant (of Allah). So, call me the servant of Allah and His Messenger.”

- 7- Further, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden fulfilling one’s vows in case such a vow has to do with a place in which there is an idol worshipped by some people or where one of the festivals of the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) is celebrated.

The Prophet (PBUH) has warned people against doing all such acts so as to save Tawhîd from contamination and to block all means and ways leading to its contamination.

In spite of all the clarifications and precautions made by the Prophet (PBUH) so as to avoid shirk, the qubûris have contradicted the Sunnah of Allah’s Prophet (PBUH), disobeyed his commands and done the things he has forbidden them to do. They have erected domes on the graves of the righteous people, built mosques on them, decorated them with various kinds of decorations and devoted different kinds of worship to them associating them with Allah.

Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“If any one reflects on the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH) as regards the graves; his commands and prohibitions, as well as the tradition of his Companions in comparison to the practices of some people nowadays, one will find great contradiction between them, in such a way that no similarity exists between them at all. For example, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden people to perform prayer towards the graves, while some people pray towards the graves nowadays. In addition, he (PBUH) has forbidden using the graves as mosques while some people build mosques on the graves naming them ‘mashâhid’ (i.e., shrines) and regarding them the same as the Houses of Allah (i.e., mosques). Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden decorating the graves with lamps while some people endow some of their money to decorate the graves with lamps. Furthermore, he (PBUH) has forbidden that the graveyards be made as places of celebration while some people use them as places to celebrate their feasts and occasions in them. Also, the Prophet (PBUH) has ordered that the graves be leveled as related by Muslim in his Sahîh (Authentic Book) that ‘Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib said to Abul-Hayyâj Al-Asadî, ‘Shall I

*send you to the same principle the Prophet had sent me before? Do not leave an image without obliterating it, or a high grave without leveling it.' However, some people exaggerate in contradicting this and raise the graves above the earth, making them similar to houses, and build domes on them. Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden plastering the graves and building on them, as stated in the hadith related by Muslim on the authority of Jâbir (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: 'The Prophet (PBUH) forbade plastering graves, building and writing upon them.' Besides, Abû Dâwûd related in his Book of Sunan⁷ on the authority of Jâbir, who said, 'The Prophet (PBUH) forbade plastering graves, sitting and writing upon them.' At-Tirmidhî says that this is a *hasan sahih hadith*. However, these days some people fix tablets on the graves and write on them Qur'anic verses as well as other things. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden adding extra earth to that of the grave, as mentioned in a hadith related by Abû Dâwûd on the authority of Jâbir, which goes, 'The Prophet (PBUH) forbade plastering graves, writing on it or adding extra earth to it.' But, some people nowadays add baked bricks, plaster and stones to the graves. **Ibrâhîm An-Nakh`î** says, 'Early scholars would regard adding baked bricks to the graves as detestable.'*

The implication of all the hadiths highlighted above is that the people who glorify the graves, decorate them with lamps, and build mosques and domes on those graves contradict the teachings that Allah's Messenger was sent with. The gravest of those sins is using the graves as mosques and decorating them with lamps, which is regarded as one of the major sins."

With these words, Ibnul-Qayyim sums up what graves' worshippers invented in religion during his lifetime. However, the situation has become worst after him and the matter has aggravated to the worst state. Besides, those who would denounce such deeds of the qubûrîs were considered to be deprecating the rights of the dead sheikhs.

Amazingly, the qubûrîs (people glorifying the graves of the dead sheikhs) get troubled for disparaging the rights of their dead sheikhs, as they regard refraining from worshipping them a kind of deprecation of them. But, they do not get angry about decrying the right of Allah through the major shirk they fall into, nor do they get angry about decrying the rights of Allah's Messenger through contradicting his Sunnah. There is no power or mightly except in Allah, the Exalted, the Most Great.

8- The Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden exaggeration in praising him, and thus exaggeration in praising others with greater reason. This is because such an act may lead to associating others in worship with Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger.”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

Exaggerating in praise mentioned in the above-mentioned hadîth refers to exceeding the limits in praising the Prophet (PBUH). Put differently, the Prophet (PBUH) here instructs us not to exaggerate in praising him in the same way the Christians excessively praised Jesus (PBUH), the son of Mary, to the extent that they claimed his godhood. The Prophet’s words, *“...for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger”* mean, “Since I am Allah’s Servant and Messenger, you should not describe me with any other titles.” So, we should call him Allah’s Servant and Messenger, as these are the titles given to him by Allah. For instance, Allah says in the Qur’ân:

“All praise is [due] to Allah, Who has sent down upon His Servant [Muhammad] the Book...” (Qur’ân: Al-Kahf: 1)

Furthermore, Allah says:

“Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant...” (Qur’ân: Al-Furqân: 1)

In Addition, He says:

“And that when the Servant [i.e., Prophet] of Allah stood up supplicating Him...” (Qur’ân: Al-Jinn: 19)

Allah says also in the Qur’ân, *“O Messenger”* (Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 67). Moreover, He says, *“O Prophet”* (Qur’ân: At-Talâq: 1).

However, those who have committed shirk through glorifying the graves have insisted on acting against the Prophet’s commands and committed the things he has prohibited, so they have gravely contradicted his commands by glorifying him in the way he has forbidden. In this way they have resembled the Christians in committing shirk through exaggeration in praise. In addition, some of them have exaggerated in praising the Prophet (PBUH) in their poetry and prose in a way that shows obvious shirk. For example, Al-Busayrî says in his poem named Al-Burrdah (The Garment):

*I have none at the time of affliction
To seek refuge with except you
O you most honorable creature.*

These poetic lines and the following ones involve directing supplication to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) and seeking refuge with him as well as asking him to relieve one's griefs when one is constrained and afflicted by disasters, thus forgetting Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He.

Hence Satan has made pleasing to this poet and others their bad deeds, showing them that exaggeration in praising the Prophet (PBUH) – however a grave shirk – a kind of showing glorification and love for him. Further, Satan has misled those people showing them that abiding by the Sunnah through not exaggerating in praising the Prophet (PBUH) as a kind of hate and deprecation to him. On the contrary, committing the acts forbidden by the Prophet including excessiveness in praising him (PBUH) and refraining from acting upon his sayings, deeds and dissatisfaction with his judgment are, in fact, a real deprecation to the Prophet (PBUH). Therefore, glorifying the Prophet (PBUH) and loving him are not attained except through following his footsteps and exerting the utmost effort to make his religion and Sunnah established and applied.

The above-mentioned meaning is spelled out in the hadith narrated by `Abdullāh Ibnush-Shikhkhîr who says:

"We went out with Banû `âmir to meet the Prophet (PBUH). On reaching, we appealed to him saying, 'O Prophet of Allah, you are our 'sayyid' (great master) and the son of our 'sayyid' (great master).' Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Allah is the only Master, Blessed and Exalted is He.' Then we said, 'O, Prophet of Allah, you are the best among us all.' Hearing that the Prophet said, 'Say whatever, for Satan is trying to take you as agents for him.'"

(Related by Abû Dâwûd with an acceptable chain of transmitters)

In this hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) forbids people to call him master, saying:

"Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He is the Master."

Further, he (PBUH) forbids them to say to him, *"You are the best among us all"* for fear that they might fall into excessiveness in praising him. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) says, *"Satan is trying to take from you*

Ibnul-Athîr writes in his book *An-Nihâyah (The End)*:

“The title ‘master’ is given to the lord, the owner, the noble person, the generous person, the clement person, the husband, the president and the man in authority.

The saying, ‘Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, is the Master’ mentioned in the hadîth means that the real authority is that of Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, and that all mankind are servants of Him. When the title “Master” refers to Allah, it means “The Owner, The Patronizer and The Lord.” While interpreting the Qur’anic verse, “Allah, the Eternal Refuge” (Qur’an: Al-Ikhlâs: 2), Ibn ‘Abbâs says, “The Master is the one who has all kinds of authority.”

Moreover, **Ibnul-Athîr** writes:

“In this context, it is reported that a man from the tribe of Quraysh came to Allah’s Messenger and said to him, ‘You are the master of Quraysh!’ So, the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Allah is the Master.’ That is, Allah is the One Who deserves to be called Master. It seems that the Prophet (PBUH) hated being praised in front of him and preferred to be modest. As for the hadîth that states, ‘I shall be pre-eminent among the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and this is no boast...’, it has been said by the Prophet (PBUH) to inform people about the bounty and honor with which Allah endowed him and to discourse about the favor Allah bestowed on him, as well as to inform his nation about it so that their belief in him increases. That is why the Prophet (PBUH) followed that by saying, ‘and this is no boast...’. This is an indication that the status Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) has enjoyed is a bounty given to him by Allah and is not a status that he (PBUH) has acquired with his effort, so he has no right to take pride in it.”

Hence, the Prophet (PBUH) is the master of all the children of Adam as he said, but when some people praised him in front of him, he forbade them to do that lest they might fall into excessiveness in praising him, which might lead them finally to commit shirk.

This ruling is further supported by the hadîth narrated on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) that reads:

“A group of men once said, ‘O Muḥammad! You are our most righteous person, and the son of our most righteous person, our ‘sayyid’ (great Master) and the son of our ‘sayyid.’ The Messenger of Allah (PBUH)

thereupon said, 'O people! Say what you have to say, but do not allow Satan to deceive you. I am Muhammad Ibn `Abdullâh, Allah's Servant and Messenger. I do not like that you elevate me above the rank that Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He, has granted me.'"

(Related by An-Nasâ'i with a good chain of transmitters)

This hadith states that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade Muslims to call him "our sayyid" for fear that they might, in this way, praise him excessively. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) blocked the way that might have led Muslims to fall into minor shirk (polytheism). He (PBUH), instead, guided them to describe him with two attributes, Allah's Servant and Messenger, which are considered the highest degrees of slavery to Allah. It is well-known that Allah describes him with these two attributes in many verses in the Noble Qur'ân. The Prophet (PBUH) detested being elevated above the rank Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He, granted him, in order to safeguard the creed of monotheism in Islam.

There are numerous hadiths that indicate the same meaning. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Do not exaggerate praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a Slave. So, call me the Slave of Allah and His Messenger."

And in another hadith, he (PBUH) stated:

"No one must call for my help, but it is Allah, Exalted be He, Whose help is to be asked for."

Besides, the Prophet (PBUH) forbade Muslims to exaggerate in praising one another, as he (PBUH) said to the man who exaggerated in praising another one:

"Woe to you, you have cut off your companion's neck."

And in another hadith, he (PBUH) said:

"When you see those who shower others with (undue) praise, throw dust upon their faces."

These hadiths imply that the Prophet (PBUH) feared for the one who praised another lest he should commit an excess and for the one who was praised for fear that he might admire himself. Both of these two defects violate the prerequisites of the creed of monotheism in Islam.

Is it permissible to call someone "sayyid"? In response to this query, **Ibnul-Qayyim** says:

"Scholars differ on the permissibility of calling someone 'sayyid.' Some, like Mâlik, deem it impermissible, and support their opinion with the Prophet's saying, 'As-Sayyid is Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He' when some people called him 'sayyid.' According to other scholars, it is permissible to call a person 'sayyid' and they support their opinion with the Prophet's saying to the Ansâr, in which he said, 'Stand up for your 'sayyid' and this is the preponderant view."

The commentator on the Book of Tawhîd, **Sheikh Sulaymân Ibn `Abdullâh**, says:

"Some depend on the Prophet's saying to the Ansâr: 'Stand up for your 'sayyid' to maintain the permissibility of calling someone 'sayyid,' but it seems that the Prophet (PBUH) did not say this in front of Sa`d, thus, there must be further details of this ruling."

By saying 'further details,' the commentator may mean that it is impermissible to address someone calling him 'sayyid,' but it is permissible to call an absent person 'sayyid' if he deserves this attribute, in order to reconcile the seemingly contradictory proofs. And Allah knows best.

9. **Committing Excess in Praising the Righteous:** Since it is prohibited to commit excess in praising the Prophet (PBUH), exaggerating in praising the righteous, with greater reason, is more entitled to be prohibited. The excess in praising the righteous means to elevate them higher than their rank, and devote to them acts of worship which must be solely devoted to Allah, such as seeking refuge with them, slaughtering animals at their shrines, and asking them for aid. Satan managed to induce the people of Nûh (Noah) (PBUH) to fall into major polytheism through showering the righteous with their excessive praise, and therefore, Muslims must be aware of this prohibited praise even if they have good intentions. Likewise, some Muslims made the same mistake as the people of Noah, when Satan tempted them to exaggerate in praising the righteous and commit *Bid`ahs* (innovated acts in the religion). Satan always incites the worshippers of tombs to express their love for the dead righteous by building mosques or domes on their graves and devote acts of worship to Allah at their tombs, believing that their supplications to Allah are answered best

at such places. Then, Satan inspires such worshippers to invoke and seek help from the tombs and eventually they invoke, devote acts of worship to, and seek intercession from the deceased therein. Therefore, such tombs gradually turn into idols whose worshippers decorate with lamps and curtains, circumambulate, touch and kiss in order to get blessings, according to their claims. Then those worshippers call people to devote acts of worship to these tombs and make celebrations there. Eventually, the tomb worshippers believe that whosoever forbids their polytheistic practices at the tombs abhors and undervalues the allies of Allah (i.e., the righteous dead people).

Many ignorant persons and those who are misleadingly referred to as religiously learned ones have become tomb worshippers. Then on the pretext of their love for righteous men, they declare their enmity towards the people of monotheism by making wild accusations against them and alienating common people from the sound creed of monotheism. The tomb worshippers' love for the righteous is false, for the true love for the righteous people depends on how well one acts on the teachings of the Noble Qur'ân and the Sunnah, and it requires Muslims to know the merits of those righteous people and follow in their footsteps, observing good deeds without excessiveness or negligence, as indicated in the verse that reads:

"...saying, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts (any) resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.' "
(Qur'ân: Al-Hashr: 10)

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"The person commits an act of major shirk if he exaggerates in praising a prophet or a righteous man by devoting acts of worship to him, such as invoking him saying, 'O my sayyid, grant me victory (support, provision, etc.)' or 'O my sayyid, I belong to your party.' Such a person must be ordered to repent of this act of polytheism, and if he refuses to repent, he must be killed, for Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, sent the Messengers with Divine Books to call people to worship Him Alone without associating any partner with Him. Those who associate partners, like Jesus Christ, angels, or idols, with Allah do not believe that their false idols can create, send down rain, or cause plants to grow, but rather they worship them, their graves or images believing that such

idols will draw them near to Allah as indicated in the verse that reads, '... We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.' (Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 3) *The worshippers of idols believe that these idols are interceders with Allah. That is why Allah has sent the messengers to forbid people to invoke anyone other than Allah, whether the supplication is intended as an act of worship or only to ask for aid."*

This quotation cited above refutes the fallacies of the tomb worshippers, who justify devoting acts of worship to their idols by claiming that they do not believe that the allies of Allah are associates with Him in creating, giving provisions, bringing to life or inducing death, but rather they believe that these allies can intercede with Allah to satisfy their needs and relieve them from distress. Such a suspicion is like that of the polytheists in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) as mentioned and refuted in the Noble Qur'ân. In fact, the acts of polytheism committed nowadays have become more than those committed by the polytheists in the Pre-Islamic Period, for the tomb worshippers mention, with acclamation, the names of those deceased righteous people on every occasion and seldom remember Allah, while the polytheists in the Pre-Islamic Period associate partners with Allah at the time of welfare and ease, but they always devoted worship solely to Allah in the times of hardship. **Imâm Muḥammad Ibn Ismâ'il As-San`ânî** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

How often they utter these names when it is time of damage,

Like the desperate when he calls the One the Eternal Refuge.

O Muslim scholars, you are responsible for those devious people: Why do you not show them the right path and forbid them from committing acts of polytheism while you live and deal with them? Why do you neglect what Allah ordains you to accomplish in the field of da`wah and the explanation of Shari`ah (Islamic Law)? Your mission is indicated in the verse that reads:

"And (mention, O Muḥammad,) when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture, (saying), 'You must make it clear (i.e., explain it) to the people and not conceal it...'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 187)

Are scholars not the heirs of the prophets who denied and strived against polytheism in order to make religion entirely for Allah? So, fear Allah for He has assigned you to bear this great responsibility and

He will ask you about it on the Day of Resurrection. It is stated in a *sahih* (good) *hadith* that the scholar who does not apply his knowledge will be among the first to suffer the punishment of the Hellfire in the Hereafter. If you consider the practices committed by those devious people as acts of polytheism, and however, you do not point out the sound creed of monotheism to such people, this is really a serious matter. Yet, if you do not consider such practices polytheistic, this is far more dangerous since you then are ignorant of some of the most obvious facts of the Islamic Creed.

O Allah, improve the conditions of all Muslims and guide the erring Muslims to the straight path, for You are over all things Competent.

10. Making Pictures of a Living Being is a Means of Committing Polytheism: Making pictures of living beings means imitating the shape of a living being by means of drawing, taking photos by a camera, or making sculptures, whether the picture is a painting, sheet of paper, or statue.

Scholars have been accustomed to handling the topic of making pictures of living beings while explaining matters pertaining to the Islamic Creed, for making such pictures is an act of polytheism and a trial to imitate Allah's creation and associate such objects in worship with Allah. The first act of polytheism committed on the earth happened because of the pictures of living beings, when the people of Nûh (Noah) made pictures of some deceased righteous men and put such pictures in the places where they gathered.

The Prophet (PBUH) forbids Muslims of making any kind of pictures embodying living beings. He (PBUH) warns the makers of such pictures against the severe punishment prepared for them in the Hereafter. Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) orders Muslims to obliterate pictures of living beings, as making such pictures is an attempt to imitate the creation of Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He, Who is the Only Creator; whoever makes pictures of living beings tries to imitate the unique creation of Allah. This is due to the fact that making pictures of living beings is a means of committing polytheism. That is, the first act of polytheism on the earth happened because of pictures of living beings, when Satan incited the people of Nûh to make pictures of their righteous men and put those pictures in the places where they gathered in order to remember them and follow in their footsteps in the way they worshipped Allah. Eventually, the people of Nûh worshipped those pictures and believed in their power to give benefit and cause

harm. Therefore, making pictures is the main cause of polytheism, because it is a sign of glorifying the embodied person, especially when such a person has power, knowledge or piety, and when the picture is hung on the wall or placed in a street or a square. Then, the ignorant people as well as the devious ones gradually become devoted to such pictures. In addition, this is the beginning of making idols and statues to be worshipped along with Allah.

What follows is the text of the saḥīh (authentic) ḥadīths pertaining to this topic followed by a brief explanation.

It is related in the Two Saḥīhs (the two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) has said:

“Allah says, ‘Who are more unjust than those who try to create something like My creation? I challenge them to create even a small ant, a wheat grain or a barley grain.’ ”

This ḥadīth states that no one is more unjust than the one who imitates the creation of Allah by making pictures of people or animals. For, when a person makes pictures of living beings, he imitates Allah in His unique creation. Allah is the Sole Creator of everything and He gives shapes to His creatures and provides them with souls to maintain their lives, as He, the Almighty, says:

“He created the heavens and earth in truth and formed you and perfected your forms...” (Qur’ān: At-Taghābun: 3)

And He says:

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner...”

(Qur’ān: Al-Ḥashr: 24)

In order to prove their inability to create anything, Allah challenges the makers of pictures, to breathe souls into their pictures. Such a challenge indicates their failure; they cannot create a plant or even a seed of a plant. It is related in the Two Saḥīhs (the two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim) on the authority of `Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (PBUH) has said:

“The people who will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be those who try to make the like of Allah’s creations.”

In this hadīth the Prophet (PBUH) informs his nation about the severe punishment prepared in the Hereafter for the makers of the pictures of living beings, even if they lead a good life and people call them artists and encourage them to continue in their erring way. They will face this awful and inevitable destiny unless they repent, for they try to imitate the creation of Allah by making pictures of living creatures, while Allah is the Only Knowing Creator. Allah, Exalt be He, says:

“... Or they have attributed to Allah partners who created like His creation so that the creation (of each) seemed similar to them? Say, ‘Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Ar-Ra`d: 16)

Commenting on the above-mentioned hadīth, **Imâm An-Nawawî** says:

“This hadīth refers to the one who makes idols to be worshipped, for such a person is a disbeliever and will be among those who will suffer the severest punishment in the Hellfire. It is said that this hadīth refers to whosoever intends to imitate the creation of Allah and believes in his ability to do so; such a person is also considered a disbeliever and will suffer a severe punishment prepared for the disbelievers in the Hereafter. The more he disbelieves, the more he suffers in the Hellfire. However, if the maker of such pictures does not intend to help people to worship them nor does he mean to imitate the creation of Allah, he is considered a defiantly disobedient who commits a major sin, but he is not a disbeliever.”

Sheikh `Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Hasan (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Since this is the punishment of those who imitate the creation of Allah, the punishment of those who associate equals with Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and devote worship to them will be greater. It is related in the Two Sahīhs (the two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) that Ibn `Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) says, ‘I heard the Prophet (PBUH) say, ‘Whosoever draws pictures will enter the Hellfire, and there will be a soul for every picture he drew (in this world) with which he will be tormented in the Hell.’ This hadīth states that on the day of Resurrection, the pictures drawn in this life will be given souls in the Hellfire in order to torment their maker, whether these pictures are many or few. So, there will be a person for each picture in order to torment its maker in Hell.”

It is related in the Two Saḥīhs (the two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim), on the authority of Ibn `Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Whoever makes a picture will be asked to give life to it (on the Day of Resurrection), but he will not be able to do so.”

This is another kind of punishment prepared for the maker of pictures. His pictures will be brought in front of him and he will be ordered to breathe a soul into each one of them, which is far-fetched as it is stated in the Noble Qur`ān that ‘.. *The soul is of the affair (i.e., concern) of my Lord...*’ (Qur`ān: Al-Isrā’: 85)

This punishment shows the inability of the maker of pictures, for he is commanded to do what he cannot. Thus, he will suffer forever, as an appropriate recompense, for his attempt in this life to imitate the creation of Allah.

It is related in Saḥīh Muslim (Muslim’s Authentic Book of Hadīth) that Abul-Hayyāj says:

“Alī Ibn Abū Tālib said to me, ‘Shall I not direct you to the same mission as the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) directed me? Do not leave a picture without obliterating it or a high grave without leveling it.’”

In this hadīth, Muslims are commanded to obliterate the pictures of living beings, in order not to bear any resemblance to the creation of Allah anymore. According to this hadīth, Muslims are also ordered to destroy the domes and mosques built on the graves and to get rid of any other forms of polytheism. Thus, the hadīth aims at eliminating two of the major means of polytheism, making pictures of living beings and building on the graves of righteous people; this safeguards the Creed and Religion of Muslims.

Nowadays, making pictures of living beings, hanging them on the walls, and keeping them as souvenirs have become a prevailing common practice, and so has building on the graves of righteous people. This is due to the unfamiliarity with the religious teachings, the concealment of the acts of the Sunnah, the spread of *Bid`ahs*, and the silence of scholars and their surrender. As such, people have come to deny what is good and accept what is legally denied in most of the Islamic countries; there is no power or strength save in Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.

It is obligatory upon Muslims to be sincere to Allah, His Book, His Prophet, the Imâms of Muslims, and all Muslim people. The callers of falsehood are so many and it is obligatory to uncover their false allegations and enlighten Muslims to be aware of the evils of those devious people.

May Allah guide Muslims to act upon His Glorious Book and the exemplary Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

Refutation of the Polytheists' Arguments

Concerning *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*

A dispersal of misconceptions and fables, which have misled people and have been taken by most of them as arguments for justifying polytheism and delusion, makes it a prerequisite to uncover the falsity and invalidity of such misconceptions. So, ***'...that those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence...'*** (Qur'ân: Al-Anfâl: 42)

Some of these misconceptions are as old as the existence of polytheists while others are contemporaneous and still convicted by polytheists until these days. These misconceptions may be demonstrated as follows:

First, there is a common misconception usually reiterated by most polytheists in all nations. They always plead that they have inherited their convictions from their forefathers. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And similarly, We did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said, 'Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.'"

(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 23)

Those who fall short of substantiating their own views usually seek such an argument. It is not, however, compelling. Since their forefathers have not been on the straight path, they should not be imitated or even taken as models.

In refutation of their argument, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

"[Each earner] said, 'Even if I brought you better guidance than that [religion] upon which you found your fathers?'"

(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 24)

And says:

“...Even though their fathers knew nothing, nor were they guided?”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 104)

Moreover, He says:

“...Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 170)

Only if their forefathers are on the righteous path, following in their footsteps becomes, then, desirable. Narrating about the story of Yûsuf (Joseph) (PBUH), Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And it was not for us to associate anything with Allah...”

(Qur’ân: Yûsuf: 38)

Moreover, Allah says:

“And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants...”

(Qur’ân: At-Tûr: 21)

The pretext of following in unrighteous forefathers’ footsteps was pervasive among the polytheists and was always raised as a plea against Allah’s Prophets (peace be upon them all).

About Nûh’s people, the Qur’ân provides:

“ ‘O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him; then will you not fear Him?’ But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, ‘This is not but a man like yourselves who wishes to take precedence over you; and if Allah had willed [to send a messenger], He would have sent down angels. We have not heard of this among our forefathers.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mu’minûn: 23-24)

They raised the oft-repeated argument of following forefathers against Prophet Nûh (PBUH).

The people of Sâlih also argued against him:

“...Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?”

(Qur’ân: Hûd: 62)

The people of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) said, as the Qur'ân provides:

“...‘But we found our fathers doing thus’ ”

(Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ': 74)

Pharaoh would say to Mûsâ (Moses) (PBUH) as mentioned in the Qur'ân:

“...‘Then what is the case of the former generations?’ ”

(Qur'ân: Tâ-Hâ: 51)

Upon inviting the Arab pagans to proclaim monotheism by declaring the Oneness of Allah, they replied:

“ ‘...We have not heard of this in the latest religion. This is not but a fabrication.’ ”

(Qur'ân: Sâd: 7)

Second, there is a common mistaken notion usually raised by tomb worshippers who wrongly believe that the mere verbal proclamation of the Oneness of Allah is sufficient for a person to be admitted to the Paradise, whatever sins he perpetrates. As long as a man verbally declares the Formula of Faith⁹, man should not be barred from entering the abode of Islam. They adhere to the literal meaning of the hadîths, stating that the Hellfire will never touch the flesh of those who pronounce the Formula of Faith.

To this, the hadîths, which have been literally interpreted, are not of unconditional general meanings. Other hadîths provide that whosoever pronounces the Formula of Faith should maintain a strong and firmly fixed belief in it, translate it into action, and, consequently, renounce any deity or object worshipped besides Allah.

According to the hadîth narrated on the authority of `Utbân, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Allah precluded the Hellfire to approach the ones who sincerely declare that there is no deity worthy of worship save Allah.”

Therefore, hypocrites, though they verbally declare the Formula of Faith, will, definitely, dwell in the lowest depths of the Fire. There will be no avail of pronouncing the Formula of Faith, as they lack the firmly established belief of the heart.

According to Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth), the Prophet is reported to have said:

“He who professes that there is no deity but Allah and makes a denial of whatever is worshipped besides Allah, his property and blood become inviolable, and his affair rests with Allah.”

The Prophet has made the inviolability of man’s blood and property conditional upon declaring faith and renouncing any deity or object worshipped besides Allah. Verbal proclamation is, thus, not sufficient. The hadīth, thus, provides that whosoever merely declares his belief in Islam without forsaking the worship of dead persons or giving up the practice of hallowing shrines will not have his blood or property inviolable.

Third, some people allege that polytheism will never proliferate among the members of the Prophet Muḥammad’s nation as long as they declare their faith by proclaiming that there is no deity save Allah and Muḥammad is the servant and Prophet of Allah. They, moreover, falsely claim that ardent devotion to dead persons and hallowing shrines should not be regarded as polytheism.

To this argument, we reply that the Prophet (PBUH) has stated that there will be, in his nation, some people who will imitate the practices of the Jews and the Christians. Such practices include taking scholars and monks as lords besides Allah. Moreover, he (PBUH) has stated that the Hour shall not come until some people of his nation join the polytheists, and until some people of his nation become idol worshippers. Indeed, we can witness today the signs of polytheism, destructive ideas and erring doctrines that deviate people from Islam, though they declare that there is no deity save Allah.

Fourth, people falsely allege that they do not seek the fulfillment of their needs by invoking support of righteous saints, but they only seek their intercession with Allah. They, moreover, claim that such righteous saints are held in high esteem and great merit by Allah and their intercession should, thus, be sought.

This is, however, the same argument raised by the polytheists in the Prophet’s lifetime. The Qur’ān unveiled their disbelief and depicted them as polytheists according to the verse, which provides:

“And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ ”
(Qur’ān: Yūnus: 18)

Though the intercession with Allah is a right which may be granted to some people, only Allah has the right to allow it. He says:

“Say, ‘To Allah belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely...’”

(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 44)

It is Allah, not the dead, Who bestows such a right upon whom He pleases. Allah, moreover, does not grant the honorable angels, the prophets or any other persons the right to intercede on behalf of others. It is wholly confined to Allah and is solely sought from Him. To compare worldly and otherworldly intercession, a man, when being invited for entreaty or mediation in worldly disputes, does not consider the permission of the one with whom intercession is made before seeking the intercession; meanwhile, the one from whom the intercession is sought may accept such intercession though it may be against one’s will. This is due to the common interests between the one with whom intercession is made and the interceder. Conversely, Allah confers the right of intercession on whom He pleases. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.”

(Qur’ân: An-Najm: 26)

Fifth, some people allege that saints and righteous dead persons are held in high esteem in the Sight of Allah and such people may thus be taken as interceders with Allah.

To refute such a misconception, we may argue that all believers are generally held as Allah’s friends, but no one can be absolutely claimed to be a wali¹⁰ of Allah. Such a claim can only be justified by a substantiating proof from the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân or the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). Whosoever is proven as a friend of Allah according to the statements of the Qur’ân or the Sunnah can never be excessively besought as a source of blessing, since such a practice definitely entails disbelief. Allah, the Almighty, has commanded us to solely invoke Him without seeking mediators. Early polytheists claimed that they worshipped false deities by taking them as mediators leading them to Almighty Allah.

Categories of Major Polytheism

There are two major categories of polytheism, namely, major and minor polytheism. The former category contradicts monotheism and is of various subcategories, which have been elaborated before. Major polytheism, for instance, involves the *Bid'ahs* (matters innovated in religion) practiced at hallowed tombs and shrines. Subcategories of major polytheism may include the following:

1. Polytheism Due to Fear

Khawf (fear) as defined by scholars is a fearful or uneasy anticipation of harm. It is of three forms:

- A. Fear of a mysterious power. It is defined as fearing of the supernatural or so-called harm of an idol, false deity, dead person, human being or a jinni.

Narrating about the people of Hûd (PBUH), the Qur'ân says:

"We only say that some of our gods have possessed you with evil [i.e., insanity]." He said, 'Indeed, I call Allah to witness, and witness [yourselves] that I am free from whatever you associate with Allah.'"
(Qur'ân: Hûd: 54)

The Arab pagans, moreover, threatened the Prophet with supernatural harm of their idols. The Qur'ân provides:

"...they threaten you with those [they worship] other than Him..."

(Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 36)

This extreme awe of false deities is currently practiced by worshippers of graves and idolaters who fear these idols and frighten, of them, the believers who invite others to sincerity and devotion to Allah.

Due reverence and fear should be directed solely to Allah. It is a ritual religious act. Almighty Allah says:

"...So fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [indeed] believers."

(Qur'ân: Âlu 'Imrân: 175)

And He says:

"...So fear them not but fear Me..." (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 3)

Fearing Allah is, thus, one of the sublime grades of belief, so whoever devotes himself to or fears others than Allah will be held as one committing an act of major polytheism. We seek Allah's refuge from all these evil deeds.

- B. Similarly, some people abandon acting upon due ritual religious ordinances out of awe of others. This is absolutely abominable and is held as an act of minor polytheism, which is clearly enunciated in the following Qur'anic verse:

“Those to whom people [i.e., hypocrites] said, ‘Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.’ But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, ‘Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.’ So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. And they pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty - that is only Satan who frightens [you] of his supporters. So fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [indeed] believers.”

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 173-175)

It is also the kind of fear denounced according to the ḥadīth, which is related by Ibn Mâjah on the authority of Abû Sa`îd Al-Khudrî (may Allah be pleased with him) who has reported the Prophet (PBUH) as saying:

“Do not let anyone despise himself.” They (the Prophet’s Companions) asked, ‘How can a man despise himself?’ He said, ‘He witnesses an affair which requires a word (testimony, remark or a comment) uttered (or made) for the sake of Allah, but he declines. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will reprimand him saying, ‘Why should not you afford to say such a word for My sake?’ He will, then, say, ‘Out of being afraid of people.’ Allah will then say, ‘It is Me, Whom you had to fear.’”

- C. Fear may also be called forth by the normal feeling of agitation and anxiety caused by the presence or imminence of danger such as fear of a foe or a vicious beast. It is not, however, abominable or impermissible. In relation to the story of Mûsa (Moses), Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“So he left it, fearful and anticipating [apprehension].”

(Qur'ân: Al-Qaṣas: 21)

The first feeling of fear should be wholly and sincerely directed to Allah Alone, as it is among the greatest acts of worship; moreover, the second is complementary to man's perfect belief and worship.

Allah's saying ***“That is only Satan who frightens [you] of his supporters...”*** (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 175) is interpreted that Satan frightens the believers by his supporters and friends. But according to the Qur'anic verse which provides:

“...So fear them not, but fear Me...” (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 175)

Allah declares a divine prohibition to fear anyone besides Him. The believers should, thus, pay due reverence and awe to Allah Alone. If they wholeheartedly fear Him and sincerely dedicate themselves to His service, Allah will definitely grant them what they long for and He will absolutely make them safe from all fears. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Is not Allah sufficient for His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muhammad]? And [yet], they threaten you with those [they worship] other than Him...”
(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 36)

Ibnul-Qayyim says:

“One of the plots of Allah’s foe (Satan) is to frighten the believers with his soldiers and allies so that the believers may fall short of resisting them, enjoining them with good or forbidding them from evil. Allah, Exalted be He, has warned us against such evil plots of Satan. He has also admonished us not to fear them. Thus, the firmer the believer’s faith, the feebler will be his fears of Satan and his allies. As long as a Muslim’s faith is weak, his fear of Satan will become stronger.”

Almighty Allah says:

“The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give Zakâh and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.”
(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 18)

According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, Allah’s mosques are filled with the believers in Allah and the Last Day, who are of submissive hearts, obedient bodies and sincere devotion. It is apparent that Allah has distinguished the believers with maintaining mosques and denied the disbelievers doing so, because mosques can only be maintained through good deeds and obedience to Allah. Contrarily, the disbeliever’s deeds, no matter how great they may be, are ‘...like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks it to be water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing.’ (Qur’ân: An-Nûr: 39) or are even ‘...like ashes which the wind blows forcefully on a stormy day...’ (Qur’ân: Ibrâhîm: 18) Mosques, therefore, may only be maintained through sincerely offered good deeds, which conform to sound belief and are free from any *Bid’ahs* or superstitions. A mosque is not maintained through highly erected walls, or excessively decorated buildings or tombs. The Prophet (PBUH) has cursed those who construct mosques in this way. In interpreting the Qur’anic verse which provides, ‘...and do not fear except Allah...’ (Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 18), Ibn `Atiyyah maintains:

“Fear, as mentioned in this Qur’anic verse, signifies reverence, devotion and obedience, and there is no doubt that man fears the worldly dangers.”

Mu`āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote a letter to the Mother of the Believers, `Ā`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), asking her brief advice on the religion. `Ā`ishah, therefore, wrote:

“To Mu`āwiyah: Peace be upon you. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, ‘Whosoever seeks Allah’s pleasure through the dissatisfaction of people, Allah will suffice him the burdens resulting from people. And if he seeks people’s pleasure at the expense of Allah’s dissatisfaction with him, Allah will let him for people.’”

It is related by Abū Nu`aym in his book entitled *“Al-Hilyah (The Ornament)”* and Ibn Hībān in his *Sahīh* (Authentic Book) as follows:

“Whosoever seeks Allah’s pleasure through people’s dissatisfaction, Allah will be pleased with him and will turn people satisfied with him. And if he seeks people’s pleasure through Allah’s dissatisfaction, Allah’s wrath will be inflicted on him and people will be discontent with him.”

Shaykhul-Islām, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“`Ā`ishah wrote to Mu`āwiyah advising, ‘Whoever seeks Allah’s pleasure through the dissatisfaction of people, Allah will suffice him the burdens resulting from people. And if he seeks the pleasure of people through Allah’s dissatisfaction with him, people will be of no use to him.’ This is the text of the marfū` (traceable) ḥadīth as traced back to the Prophet (PBUH). As for the mawqūf (discontinued) ḥadīth ascribed to `Ā`ishah, it reads, ‘Whosoever seeks Allah’s pleasure through people’s dissatisfaction, Allah will be pleased with him and will turn people’s satisfaction toward him. And if he seeks the pleasure of people through Allah’s dissatisfaction, his praisers among people will soon defame him.’”

This point is of a paramount significance in the religion, since a man who pleases Allah even if through dissatisfying people will be held as a pious and righteous servant of Allah. Allah absolutely befriends the righteous and He will definitely make him content. Almighty Allah says:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect...”

(Qur’ân: At-Talâq: 2-3)

In this case, Allah will relieve a believer of all burdens. People will become satisfied with him when they free themselves of personal interests or when they deeply think about their ends. But if he pleases people through Allah’s dissatisfaction, people will be of no use to him in the Sight of Allah. His example will be like the wrongdoer who regrets by biting his hands on the Day of Resurrection. His praisers whose pleasure was ardently besought will abruptly turn against him. It frequently occurs, for the end is always best for the righteous. However, they do not consider the end at first as long as they act upon their personal interests and whims.

According to the two narrations of the aforementioned *hadith*, man may, if he ardently seeks the pleasure of Allah, get two great benefits; namely the satisfaction of Allah and that of people. Conversely, if he seeks the pleasure of people through Allah’s dissatisfaction, both Allah and people will be dissatisfied with him. Therefore, the *hadith* concludes that righteousness lies in seeking Allah’s pleasure while displeasing Him is a source of grave evil.

We should also know that fear of Allah should be espoused by love and hope. Fear should not lead to despair or losing hope in Allah’s mercy. A believer combines both fear of Allah and hope in His mercy. If he has only fear, it may entail despair of Allah’s mercy, and if he has only hope, he may feel secure from the plan of Allah. Excessive hope and despair contradict true monotheism. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Then, did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.”

(Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 99)

And He says:

“...no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”

(Qur’ân: Yûsuf: 87)

He further says:

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?”

(Qur’ân: Al-Hijr: 56)

Ismâ`il Ibn Râfi` says:

“To feel secure from the plan of Allah is to persistently perpetrate a sin while having hope that Allah will forgive it.”

Scholars maintain that despair is a complete loss of hope in getting relief or acquiring a happy end. It is opposite to feeling secure from the plan of Allah. Both acts are grave sins.

A believer should not excessively feel afraid of Allah so that he may fall a prey to despair of His mercy. Moreover, he should not excessively have hope so that he may feel secure from Allah’s punishment. Rather, the believer should espouse hope with fear, and obediently act upon Allah’s commands. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ’: 90)

And He says:

“Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’:57)

A servant of Allah, by combining fear of and hope in Allah, will be motivated to take every beneficial means. By keeping hope in Allah’s mercy, he will hasten in doing good deeds, and by experiencing fear, he will swiftly work on abandoning sins out of fear of Allah. If he experiences despair of Allah’s mercy, he may, thus, cease doing good, and if he feels secure from Allah’s punishment, he may turn lax in observing his duties and, therefore, rush into perpetrating evil deeds.

Scholars have said:

“Whosoever worships Allah by according Him reverent love only is a Sufi, and whosoever worships Him by according Him extreme awe only is, thus retaining Kharijites’ belief. Similarly, he is a Murj¹¹ whosoever worships Allah by only retaining hope in His mercy. As for he who combines love, fear and hope, he is certainly a true believer as depicted in the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân, ‘Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 57).”

Almighty Allah has depicted those who disregard fear of Allah, rush into perpetrating sins and feel secure from Allah's punishment as the losers in the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

"Then, did the people of the cities feel secure from Our punishment coming to them at night while they were asleep? Or did the people of the cities feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they were at play? Then, did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people."
(Qur'an: Al-A`râf: 97-99)

The intended meaning in the aforementioned verse is that Almighty Allah demonstrates that previous nations renounced their prophets, persisted in disbelief and perpetrated abominable acts mainly because they felt secure from Allah's plans and lacked fear of Him. Allah's plans are always drawn against sinners upon whom Allah bestows His favors until they misperceive that He is well pleased with them. Then, they will be enticed to sin more and more until they completely perish.

Almighty Allah, moreover, warns the following generations against such abominable acts. He says:

"Has it not become clear to those who inherited the earth after its [previous] people that if We willed, We could afflict them for their sins? But We seal over their hearts so they do not hear."

(Qur'an: Al-A`râf: 100)

Some scholars maintain that man's feelings of fear of Allah are a consequence of the following matters:

1. His full cognizance of the grave sin he committed and its consequence.
2. His full belief in Allah's punishment.
3. His fear of not seizing an opportunity of repenting his sins.

Through these three conditions, man fully fears Allah either before or after committing a sin. If he committed a sin, his fear would become greater.

Allah's prophets (peace be upon them all) never lost hope in Allah or even experienced despair of His mercy whenever being inflicted with severe tribulations.

Prophet Ibrâhîm (Abraham) (PBUH), when being given the glad tidings of receiving a child despite his old age and the difficult conditions of his wife, he said, as the Qur'an provides:

"...And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?"
(Qur'an: Al-Hijr: 56)

Certainly, he recognized how Allah's omnipotence and mercy are spacious and encompassing even though he expressed his exclamation to the angels in his saying:

"...Have you given me good tidings although old age has come upon me? Then of what [wonder] do you inform?"

(Qur'an: Al-Hijr: 54)

Moreover, when Ya'qûb's (Jacob's) pain and sorrow aggregated with the parting of his son, his hope in Allah's mercy and expectation of His compassion never ceased. He said to his sons, according to what came in the Qur'an:

"O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people." (Qur'an: Yûsuf: 87)

He is also narrated to have said:

"... 'so patience is most fitting. Perhaps Allah will bring them to me all together...'" (Qur'an: Yûsuf: 83)

Narrating the story of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Qur'an provides:

"...When those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Makkah] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he [i.e., Muhammad] said to his companion, 'Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.'"

(Qur'an: At-Tawbah: 40)

Therefore, the Prophet's hope in Allah climaxed at the time of distress. In addition, he (PBUH) is reported to have said, "After dark comes dawn".

Allah, moreover, prohibits His servants who have been burdened with excessive sins to feel despaired or even give up repenting from their sins. He says:

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.' And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him..." (Qur'an: Az-Zumar: 53-54)

The Prophet (PBUH) considered despair of Allah's mercy as one of the major sins. It is reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) was asked about the major sins and he said:

“(They are) associating others in worship with Allah, despairing of relief from Allah, feeling secure from the plan of Allah.”

Similarly, on the authority of Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“The most serious of all the major sins are associating others in worship with Allah, feeling secure from the plan of Allah, despairing of both the mercy and relief from Allah.”

Losing hope in Allah’s compassion is tantamount to retaining wrong thoughts about Him. It is also a consequence of unawareness of His forgiveness. Meanwhile, feeling secure from Allah’s plans is a result of ignorance of Allah’s limitless omnipotence. It is also a consequence of man’s self-conceit and exaggerated self-admiration.

Therefore, man should always combine fear and hope. If he accords Allah His due reverence, he should not, then, despair or be overcome by a sense of futility or defeat; rather, he should hope for Allah’s mercy. Nevertheless, man should not retain excessive hope in Allah lest it should turn into a feeling of ultimate safety from Allah’s punishment.

Some of the *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) would deem it desirable for man to strengthen his feeling of fear at times of affluence and increase his feeling of hope at times of distress.

Enjoying a state of balance between both fear and hope motivates man to perform good deeds, avoid sins and always repent of his sins. He may be thrown from attaining his aims or affording a sincere repentance only when he gets weary of maintaining a well-balanced heart.

A paramount significance lies in the stories of previous nations, as they lacked fear of Allah and thus deserved the severe divine punishment. The people of Hûd, for instance used to say, as the Qur`ân narrates:

“...It is all the same to us whether you advise or are not of the advisors. This is not but the custom of the former peoples, and we are not to be punished.’ And they denied him, so We destroyed them...”
(Qur`ân: Ash-Shu`arâ’: 136-139)

Keeping fear of and hope in Allah are of the most meritorious devotional acts. They should be sincerely offered to Allah. Additionally, lacking these matters leads to violating monotheism and corrupting one’s Creed.

2. Attachment to False Deities or Objects besides Allah

We have previously demonstrated that due fear of Allah should be espoused with due love for Him. Only fearing Him is a principal doctrine of *Al-Khawârij*.

Emotional attachment to Allah is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. With the realization of perfect attachment to Allah, man's religion becomes perfect. Lack of love impairs one's true and perfect belief.

Due attachment in this context means love involving submission, surrender and ultimate obedience and devotion to the beloved one. Such attachment must be purely devoted to Allah Alone, as it is not permissible to associate partners with Him in such a matter. Generally, love is of two kinds: particular and general. The first kind is the love connected with worship, which requires perfect submission and obedience to the worshipped one. This kind is to be confined only to Allah, Exalted be He. The second kind of love may exist in the following forms:

1. It may be an intrinsic attachment such as the hungry craving for food.
2. It may be a feeling of tender concern such as the parental care of a child.
3. It may also be a feeling of amiability such as cordial relations between friends.

All these forms of attachment do not necessitate submission or surrender and do not consequently affect due attachment to Allah. Although these forms are not acts of polytheism, they should be subsequent to real and true emotional attachment to Allah, which is maintained in Allah's saying:

“And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah...”

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 165)

In interpreting this verse, **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, informed us that whosoever devotedly cherishes anyone or an object besides Allah will be regarded as if he has set a rival to Allah in terms of affection and gratification.”

In the same vein, **Ibn Kathîr** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Almighty Allah, in the aforementioned Qur'anic verse refers to the worldly affairs of the polytheists and their final recompense and the

torture they will experience in the Hereafter as they assign rivals and likes to Allah. Moreover, 'They love them as they [should] love Allah' (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 165) i.e. they love and serve such rivals as they love Allah."

The view maintained by Ibn Kathîr is also favored by Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him). The Qur'ân reports that their treatment of Allah is the same as their treatment of such assigned rivals. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"By Allah, we were indeed in manifest error when we equated you with the Lord of the world." (Qur'ân: Ash-Shu'arâ': 97-98)

And says:

"...Then those who disbelieve equate [others] with their Lord..."
(Qur'ân: Al-An'âm: 1)

He, moreover, says:

"But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah..."
(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 165)

The aforementioned Qur'anic verse may mean that the believers are more attached to Allah than those who set rivals to Him. Another interpretation is that the believers' attachment to Allah is greater than the polytheists' attachment to the rivals they associate with Allah.

Sheikh Muhammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb (may Allah have mercy on him) says, "Whosoever sets up a rival and equally loves him as he loves Allah certainly commits major shirk (polytheism)."

Accordingly, attachment to Allah should comprise surrender to Him and should similarly be given precedence over love for parents, sons, spouses and property, because Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Say, [O Muhammad], 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihâd [i.e., striving] in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.'"
(Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 24)

Therefore, Allah warns and threatens whosoever gives precedence to the love for such eight people and objects mentioned in the Qur'anic verse over the love for Allah, His Messenger and the good deeds He likes. Nevertheless, a mere instinct love for such persons and objects is not volitional (i.e., does not contradict monotheism). Allah only threatens and warns those who favor such people and objects over Allah and His Messenger.

There are, however, specific indications which ascertain man's attachment to Allah. Those who love Allah should give precedence to all deeds favored by Him instead of following their personal yearnings and belongings. Similarly, those who love Allah should follow His Messenger and what he has brought forth. They should act upon his commands and abandon what he has forbidden. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Say, [O Muhammad], 'If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.' Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away - then indeed, Allah does not like the disbelievers."

(Qur'an: Âlu `Imrân: 31-32)

Some of the *Salaf* have said:

"A group of people falsely alleged their attachment to Allah, thereupon, Almighty Allah revealed the following verse, 'Say, [O Muhammad], 'If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you.'" (Qur'an: Âlu `Imrân: 31) ***This Qur'anic verse affirms the indispensability of producing proofs to affirm man's attachment to Allah. It also involves indications of one's love for Allah, and its blessings. Among such indications is following Allah's Messenger (PBUH), and the great blessing of loving Allah is obtaining His love and having one's sins forgiven."***

Allah, Exalted be He, refers to the proofs of man's true attachment to Him in the following Qur'anic verse:

"O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble towards the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic..."

(Qur'an: Al-Mâ'idah: 54)

He, thus, refers to four signs of man's truthful attachment to His Lord:

1. Those who love Allah should be humble, tender and compassionate toward the believers. `Atâ' maintains, "*They must be as compassionate and merciful as a father to his son.*"
2. They should be stern to the disbelievers. They must show strict treatment, relentlessness and pride to the disbelievers instead of being submissive or feeling weak before them.
3. They must strive in the cause of Allah with soul, power, properties and word for the sake of exalting Allah's religion and suppressing His enemies by all means.
4. They should never feel afraid of the blame of blamers. They are, therefore, not influenced by people's despise or reproach resulting from their persistent defense of the truth. This is due to the fact that they are fully content that they are on the straight path, and have firm belief and unrelenting certitude. Therefore, the one who succumb to people's blames is not a true lover of Allah.

There are ten means, mentioned by **Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) which strengthen man's attachment to Allah:

1. Recital of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an with due contemplation and comprehension of its meanings.
2. Drawing nearer to Allah by offering supererogatory prayers.
3. Remembering Allah at all times by tongue, heart and by sincerely offering good deeds.
4. Preferring what is favored by Allah to personal yearnings.
5. Pondering on Allah's Glorious Names and Sublime Attributes, and the meanings of perfection and glory they imply.
6. Contemplating Allah's visible and invisible blessings, His benevolence and blessings on His servants.
7. Continually feeling humble and in want of Allah.
8. Secretly and privately serving Allah during the last third of the night by offering supererogatory prayer, reciting the Qur'an, asking Allah's forgiveness and repenting of sins.
9. Accompanying righteous people who strive to be near Allah, and benefiting from what they say.
10. Avoiding any cause, leading the heart to be occupied with matters, which avert man's heart from Allah.

Among the consequences of man's attachment to Allah is to love His Messenger (PBUH). Al-Bukhârî and Muslim narrated on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"None of you will have (a complete) faith until he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind."

Therefore, man can never attain perfect belief until the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) becomes dearer and nearer to him than his own self and all other people.

Love for Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is adjacent to man's love for Allah. Whosoever loves Allah's Messenger should follow in his footsteps. Thus, anyone who claims that he loves the Messenger while obeying heretics and deviant scholars or those retaining false allegations, he is not true with regard to what he claims; the true lover always has affection for the ones whom he loves.

Therefore, those who innovate acts in the religion which contradict the exemplary *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH), such as commemorating the birthday of the Prophet or going beyond legally permitted limits of praising him (PBUH), are liars. Similarly, those who invoke the Prophet (PBUH) seeking support and relief from him are heretics. They allege their love for the Prophet, though it is clearly false. They are the ones depicted in the Qur'anic verse, which states:

"But they [i.e., the hypocrites] say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'; then a party of them turns away after that. And those are not believers."

(Qur'ân: An-Nûr: 47)

Although the Prophet (PBUH) has prohibited all such *Bid'ahs* (matters innovated in religion), those claiming his love still perpetrate these *Bid'ahs*.

3. Trusting False Deities besides Allah

Tawakul is an Arabic word, which literally means reliance and entrustment, and it is an act of the heart. The Arabs, therefore, used to say '*tawakkala fil-amr*' to mean 'somebody became confident to execute something.'

Relying on Allah and putting all trust in Him are of the most meritorious devotional acts, which should be sincerely offered by a Muslim. Almighty Allah says, "...*And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers.*" (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 23) There are specific forms and examples of reliance on false deities, persons or objects besides Allah. Such forms include the following:

1. Reliance on others for getting what can be sought only from Allah. Some people put their full confidence and trust in dead persons and false deities and exclusively rely on them for attaining victory, security, provisions, intercession, though all such acts are only bestowed by Allah. Such a practice is an act of major shirk (polytheism).
2. Reliance on others for securing man's needs. Some people exclusively rely on a king or a ruler for executing or securing a matter or averting harms away from them.
3. Authorizing a man to act as an agent who is empowered to make sales and purchases. It is, however, permissible. Yet, man should not exclusively rely on his agent by believing that he is the real cause and manager of his affairs. He should, in all spheres, exclusively rely on Allah believing that He is the real originator and creator of all affairs.

Exclusively trusting in Allah and relying on Him for averting injuries and acquiring provisions are of the most meritorious devotional acts. Reliance on others is, however, an act of major polytheism. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"...And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers"

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 23)

According to the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, Almighty Allah commands the believers to exclusively rely on Him Alone. He, moreover, stipulates in another verse that exclusively trusting in Allah is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of the fundamentals of belief and Islam. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And Moses said, 'O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely upon Him if you should be Muslims [i.e., submitting to Him].'"

(Qur'ân: Yûnus: 84)

According to the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, complete faith and Islam are invalidated by not having trust in Allah or relying on others though they are incapable of doing anything. Such is the case of those who rely on the dwellers of hallowed graves or false deities worshipped along with Allah.

Therefore, trusting Allah is an obligatory act of devotion, which should be sincerely devoted to Allah only. It is one of the most elevated ranks of perfect belief, since it is a preliminary to meritorious good deeds. Therefore, when man trusts Allah in all his devotional and worldly affairs, he will be truly sincere in his behavior to Allah.

Shaykhul-Islâm, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) says, *“No one had hope in a creature or exclusively trusted him, but became frustrated.”*

Trusting and relying on Allah are among the most elevated ranks of devotion referred to in what Allah commands us to say at least five times a day:

“It is You we worship and You we ask for help.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Fâtihah: 5)

Therefore, a perfect belief can only be attained through perfect trust and reliance on Allah. Almighty Allah says:

“[He is] the Lord of the East and the West; there is no deity except Him, so take Him as Disposer of [your] affairs.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Muzzammil: 9)

He, furthermore, commands the believers to rely on Him according to many verses. He says:

“And whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose...”

(Qur’ân: At-Talâq: 3)

In interpreting the Qur’anic verse, which provides, *“And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers”* (Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 23), **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Allah specifies the act of trusting Him as one of the prerequisites of perfect belief. Thus, if a person lacks perfect reliance on Allah, his belief is definitely deficient. The firmer man’s belief, the higher the degree of reliance on Allah. Feeble and relenting trust in Allah is an indication of weak belief. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, in many verses of the Qur’ân associates trust in Him with belief, Islam and true guidance. All these verses affirm that trust in Allah is a fundamental principle of all degrees of faith and all devotional acts of Islam. It is like a head to the body. Therefore, all ranks of belief and devotional acts of Islam are dependent on one’s degree of trust in Allah.”

Trust in Allah is one of the distinctive qualities of true believers. Almighty Allah says:

“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anfâl: 2)

The believers, according to the verse, rely on Allah wholeheartedly and are free of any hope or trust in others. Similarly, the believers in this verse are depicted as having three ranks of beneficence: fear of Allah and firm belief and full trust in Him Alone.

Putting one's trust in Allah does not contradict the necessity of exerting one's optimum efforts in attaining one's goals. Allah has decreed that there are causes and effects. He has commanded man to take all means available for reaping results. Taking all available means is, thus, an act of obedience to Allah which mainly requires physical effort, while trusting in Allah is a devotional act of the heart requiring only true belief in Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 71)

And says:

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power...”

(Qur'ân: Al-Anfâl: 60)

He, further, says:

“And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah....”

(Qur'ân: Al-Jumu`ah: 10)

Some scholars have said:

“Whosoever underestimates the matter of exerting efforts and taking all means available for attaining his goals should be regarded as one casting doubts upon Allah's way in treating people. And whosoever underestimates the matter of trusting in Allah is regarded as one whose faith is weak.”

Imâm Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Man's deeds are of three categories:

1. *The commands and acts enjoined by Allah on His bondmen and considered as means of salvation from the Hellfire and prerequisites for entering the Paradise. Such acts should be offered while keeping trust in Allah and relying on Him. Man offers such acts while being certain that what Allah wants will definitely occur and what He does not want will not happen. Therefore whosoever falls short of one of these acts deserves*

the punishment legally prescribed for committing such a sin in this world and in the Hereafter. Yûsuf Ibn Asbât says, 'When doing whatever deed, behave like a man who believes that only his deeds can save Him, and when putting trust in Allah, do so in a way like that of a man who puts trust in Allah being fully confident that he will get nothing but what has been predetermined by Allah.'

2. *The instinctive and spontaneous acts such as eating, drinking, seeking shelter from heat and so forth. Such acts are held incumbent upon every man. Whosoever falls short of undertaking such deeds and thus is harmed, is regarded as one doing wrong and, therefore, deserves punishment. If he acts according to his own limited capabilities for acquiring his basic utilities but fails, there will be no harm. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) used to continually observe fasting during night while prohibiting his Companions to imitate him. He is reported to have said:*

'I am not the same as you. I am fed and given to drink.'

Although some of the Salaf had strength to continually observe fasting as the Prophet did, they did not offer it in this way. So, if a man is capable of exerting efforts for attaining worldly gains without falling short of any of his due religious ordinances, there will be, then, no legal impediment. But if man overburdens himself with excessive acts until he falls short in fulfilling his basic religious duties, he is to be condemned.

3. *The deeds that are commonly practiced among people."*

In the same vein, **Ibn Rajab** further adds, "It is related that Ibn `Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) has said, "The people of Yemen used to travel to perform the pilgrimage without taking provisions, arguing that they relied on Allah exclusively. Upon reaching Mecca, they used to beg for food, thereupon, Almighty Allah revealed the Qur'anic verse, **'And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah.'**"

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) was once asked about a man taking to relaxation while arguing that he fully relied on Allah. **Ahmad** said:

*"All people should rely on Allah, but should gain their livelihood as well. Allah's prophets used to engage themselves in meeting the needs of the people, so did the Prophet (PBUH), Abû Bakr and `Umar. They never disregarded their duty, awaiting divinely descended provisions. Therefore, Allah, Exalted be He, says, **'disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah.'** (Qur'ân: Al-Jumu`ah: 10)"*

At-Tirmidhî, further, relates that Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) has said:

“A man, once, said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Should I hobble (the camel) and then put my trust in Allah or should I untie it and rely on Allah?’ the Messenger said, ‘Hobble it and then put your trust in Allah.’”

All such Qur’anic verses and *hadiths* stress one fact that having confidence in Allah does not contradict a Muslim’s endeavor to undertake lawful means. Rather, it is better to combine taking lawful means of attaining something with putting trust in Allah. `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) once met a group of Yemeni people whom he asked:

“Who are you?” They replied, “We are the reliant on and confident in Allah.” Thereupon he said, “No, you are just solicitors for food. A reliant person is the one who sows a seed in the ground and then puts his trust in Allah.”

4. Obeying Others besides Allah

One of the acts of polytheism is to obey scholars and rulers in permitting the unlawful or prohibiting the lawful. Allah, the Almighty, says:

“They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 31)

`Adî Ibn Hâtîm (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated:

“I heard the Prophet (PBUH) reciting (the Qur’anic verse which means,) ‘They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah..’ (Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 31) So, I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! We did not worship them.’ He (the Prophet) said, ‘Did they not prohibit what Allah made lawful, so you view it as prohibited, and, (similarly), they make lawful what Allah prohibited, so you view it as lawful?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ Thereupon, he said, ‘This is your worship of them.’”

The Prophet (PBUH) has explained that the concept of taking rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah is not confined to the literal meaning of bowing and prostrating before them. The Prophet (PBUH) has demonstrated that the Jews and Christians have followed the steps of their rabbis and monks in altering Divine Legislations by permitting the unlawful and prohibiting the lawful. By doing so, such people have been regarded as ones surrendering themselves to rivals set for sharing Allah’s duty of lawgiving. It is, in principle, an act of major polytheism. Almighty Allah has said:

“...And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him.”
(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 31)

And said:

“And do not eat of that upon which the Name of Allah has not been mentioned, for indeed, it is grave disobedience. And indeed do the devils inspire their allies [among men] to dispute with you. And if you were to obey them, indeed, you would be associators [of others with Him].”
(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 121)

Included in this category is the act of obeying rulers in applying secular, man-made laws, which categorically oppose the Divine Legislations by, for instance, approving usurious interests, allowing adultery or fornication and drinking, treating men and women equally in terms of inheritance, and allowing women to remove their veil and men mingling with women. Such laws also prohibit the lawful such as polygamy. Therefore, whosoever agrees with such rulers and approves of their mundane laws is deemed a polytheist and disbeliever. We ask Allah to keep us away from all these practices.

Similarly, following *faqîhs*’ (scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence) views, which contradict clear proofs, is classified under this category, especially when the views of those scholars conform to one’s desires and whims. These days, some half-educated people seek lenient permissive views of some scholars though they contradict clear proofs. As for the views of *mujtahids*¹², it is required to take what comes in accordance with the legal proofs and give up what contradicts them.

Imâms (may Allah have mercy on them all) have said, *“Everyone’s opinion is subject to approval or disapproval except the Prophet (PBUH).”*

Imâm Abû Hanîfah (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“When a hadîth is received, we unquestionably accept it. We do the same with a saying of any Companion. As for a view of one of the Tâbi`ûn¹³, we have independent views just like them.”

Some half-educated people have made use of the concluding clause of Abû Hanîfah’s saying in order to imitate competent and learned scholars. There is no doubt that Abû Hanîfah does not mean, by his saying, to equate scholars with ignorant persons.

Imâm Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him) has said, *“The views of all of us are subject to consideration or reconsideration except the views of the dweller of this grave, i.e. the Prophet (PBUH).”*

Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î (may Allah have mercy on him) has said, “When a *ḥadīth* is authentically proven, it is where my view lies.” Moreover, he has said, “In the case where an authentically proven *ḥadīth* is inconsistent with a view of mine, relinquish my view.”

Imâm Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“I am amazed at people being certain about the authenticity of a *ḥadīth*, yet they favor a personal opinion of *Sufyân Ath-Thawrī* while Allah, Exalted be He, says, ‘So let those beware who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet’s] order, lest *fitnah*¹⁴ strike them or a painful punishment.’ (Qur’ân: An-Nûr: 63)”

‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) has said:

“A time is about to come when you will be rained with stones from the heavens, for I say the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said such and such while you still want to approve what *Abû Bakr* and *‘Umar* maintained.”

In his *Fathul-Majīd* (Bestowal of the Most-Glorious), **‘Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Hasan** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“It is incumbent on every accountable person, when hearing or reading a proof substantiated by the Qur’ân or the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), to act accordingly regardless of whoever may contradict such a view.”

He adds:

“It is incumbent on every Muslim to sincerely seek the truth. When reading any of the books of scholars, the Muslim should critically review them in pursuit of the most consistent opinion with the Qur’ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), since every *mujtahid* and those who follow him mention their independent respective proofs. Imâms will be, however, rewarded for the *Ijtihâd*¹⁵ they introduce. Fair-minded individuals should preview the proofs to discriminate the truth from falsehood and thus only follow views substantiated by clear proofs. Hence, one should recognize those scholars who substantiate their views with irrefutable proofs and follow them.”

In interpreting the Qur’anic verse which states, “And if you were to obey them, indeed, you would be associators [of others with Him].” (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 121), **‘Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Hasan** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Many people have committed such a fatal mistake (i.e., associating others with Allah) mainly because they did not reconsider the proofs of their leaders who were before them. It is regarded as an act of polytheism¹⁶. Some people excessively and wrongly think that abandoning such views for the sake of following clear proofs is detestable or even impermissible; this matter causes fitnah (dissension) to spread. They base their opinion on the claim that the scholar they follow is more knowledgeable about the legal proofs of the case.”

Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“People’s acts had dramatically deteriorated to the extent that they took monks as lords besides Allah and regarded such a practice as the best act of devotion. They named it Walâyah (i.e., seeking the blessings of Allah’s friends). Additionally, they took their rabbis as lords besides Allah by obeying them in legalizing the unlawful or prohibiting the lawful without Allah’s permission. Then, circumstances dramatically changed to the extent that they worshipped the unrighteous persons besides Allah. They, thereafter, followed views maintained by ignorant people.”

Among the forms of taking monks and rabbis as lords besides Allah is obeying the deviant scholars in whatever they introduce of *Bd`ahs* and superstitions. Such *Bid`ahs* include, for instance, commemorating the birthday of the Prophet (PBUH). They also include the acts of Sufis, seeking the blessings of dead people and invoking them. Such deviant scholars have innovated religious practices not enacted by Allah. Therefore, the naïve and ignorant lay people follow them by regarding such practices as inseparable parts of obligatory religious ordinances. Moreover, they may consider those who denounce such practices and follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) as repudiators of religion and despisers of righteous scholars. They regard good as evil and take hold of *Bid`ahs* instead of following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). This is due to the lack of righteous reformers. O Allah, there is no power or strength save in You.

Since it is impermissible to follow mistakenly reached views maintained by *faqîhs*, though they are rewarded for their earnest seeking after the truth, we are decisively not allowed to follow those deviant heretics, falsifiers and swindlers who ignorantly exercise *Ijtihâd* in a field where it is impermissible to exercise it; namely, the Creed, for the Creed is a matter dependent on the Legal Texts. In this connection, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And We have certainly presented to the people in this Qur`ân from every [kind of] example. But, [O Muḥammad], if you should bring them a sign, the disbelievers will surely say, ‘You [believers] are but falsifiers.’ Thus does Allah seal the hearts of

those who do not know. So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth. And let them not disquiet you who are not certain in faith. (Qur'ân: Ar-Rûm: 58-60)

In addition to those indulging themselves in blind imitation with regard to the underlying principles and detailed principles, there is another group of people who view that exercising *Ijtihâd* is a duty on everyone, even the ignorant who do not recite the Qur'ân properly, or have anything of the required knowledge. Moreover, the latter group may view that referring to the books of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) is an impermissible act. They only incite the ignorant to deduce highly specialized legal rulings from the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. This is undoubtedly an excessive extremism. Such a group of people poses a danger not less in gravity than that of the former. The preferred view is to adopt the moderate path, through which we do not blindly imitate *faqîhs* or categorically dispel views deemed in conformity with the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. The voluminous legacy of our scholars should, thus, be regarded as a depository of jurisprudential issues. Their views, which conform to legal proofs, should be followed, while those contradicting them should be denounced as our *Salaf* used to do. Such a conclusion has to be applied particularly nowadays, when people exert no real efforts to seek juristic knowledge in addition to the spread of religious ignorance. Thus, we are in need of taking the moderate path, which does not succumb to excessiveness, remissness, extremism or leniency. We ask Almighty Allah to guide all deviant Muslims and firmly establish their leaders and Imâms on the straight path, for He is All-Hearing, All-Responding.

In addition to the impermissibility of obeying scholars in legalizing the unlawful and prohibiting the lawful, it is similarly impermissible to obey emirs and rulers in judging among people by means of mundane laws, disregarding the *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law). In settling all disputes, conflicts and all other affairs of people, reference should only be made to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (PBUH). This is a prerequisite of fulfilling the requirements of submission to Allah and attaining the perfection of belief. Legislation is absolutely confined to Allah Alone. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"...His is the creation and the command..." (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 54)

It means that He is the Judge to Whom all sovereignty belongs. Almighty Allah also says:

"And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah..." (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 10)

And says:

“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 59)

Therefore, referring to Allah’s Legislation is not only for the sake of seeking equity but, first and foremost, it is indeed one of the devotional ordinances. Therefore, whosoever refers to any other legislation or secular law is regarded as one taking those who give or enact such laws as rivals to Allah. In this regard, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?...”

(Qur’ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 21)

And says:

“...And if you were to obey them, indeed, you would be associators [of others with Him]” (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 121)

According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verses, the belief of those who resort to secular laws disregarding the Law of Allah is void. Almighty Allah says:

“Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you? They wish to refer legislation to t̂aghût, while they were commanded to reject it...” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 60)

To:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 65)

Therefore, those who call for the application of secular laws are setting rivals to Allah in obedience and legislation. Also those who judge according to non-divinely revealed laws by claiming that such laws are equal to or more authoritative than Divine Legislation are lacking belief. Thus, according to the aforesaid Qur’anic verse, Allah refuted those who falsely alleged belief. The Qur’anic verse states, “*claim*”, which affirms that their belief is a false allegation. Moreover, giving credit to secular laws is compatible to belief in false

deities and totally contradicts true faith. Almighty Allah has set categorical renunciation of false deities as a fundamental pillar of faith. He says:

“...So whoever disbelieves in tâghût and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 256)

Hence, those who judge according to the human codes of law are not monotheists. By following and abiding by such laws, they set partners to Allah, and pay full obedience to Satan. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...and Satan wishes to lead them far astray”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 60)

Allah also informs us of the hypocrites who express their abhorrence and renunciation when being called for judgment according to Allah’s code of law. In this relation, Almighty Allah says:

“And when it is said to them, ‘Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger,’ you see the hypocrites turning away from you in aversion.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 61)

He, further, tells us of the deterioration of their hearts and how their insight has been ruined in His saying:

“And when it is said to them, ‘Do not cause corruption on the earth,’ they say, ‘We are but reformers.’”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 11)

Reference to non-divine laws is regarded as hypocrisy and a grave mischief in the earth.

In interpreting the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“The majority of exegetes maintain that the verse announces the prohibition of spreading mischief in the earth by the spreading of sins and calling others to false deities after the advent of messengers and clarification of the Sharī’ah. Therefore, worshipping false deities besides Allah, propagating false religions and polytheism are the gravest mischief. There is no possible reform of people’s affairs without devotionally worshipping and obeying one God (i.e., Allah Alone), inviting people to the true religion and following in the footsteps of Allah’s Messenger (PBUH). Others may only be obeyed if they enjoin

resolute obedience of the Prophet. Contrarily, if they call people to disobey the commandments of the Prophet or contradict his Shari'ah, there will be neither obedience nor listening to them. If we ponder on the circumstances of the world, we will surely notice that every path of righteousness and good refers to belief in Allah, obeying Him and His Messenger (PBUH). On the other hand, while the real cause behind all mischief in the earth, including the spread of turbulence, catastrophes, famines and falling prey to our enemies is mainly referred to violations of Allah's commands."

Allah, Exalted be He, has named all laws contradicting His Divine Legislation as a judgment of ignorance referring to the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the *Jāhiliyyah*). Almighty Allah says:

"Then is it the judgement of [the time of] ignorance they desire? But who is better than Allah in judgement for a people who are certain [in faith]." (Qur'an: Al-Mā'idah: 50)

Ibn Kathīr (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"According to the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, decidedly denounces those who replace His Law which enjoins every possible good and precludes all forms of mischief with personal views, whims and doctrines which were established without a legal precedent from Divine Legislation. Such was the case of the Arabs, during the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jāhiliyyah), who used to judge according to delusions and false opinions. Such is also the case of the Tatar who would judge according to laws enunciated by Genghis Khan who composed Al-Yāsiq, a book of legal issues adopted from various Jewish, Christian and Muslim writings. Some of its rules were formulated in accordance with his personal views and whims. Afterwards, they would give precedence to such regulations over the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, whoever applies such legislation is deemed a disbeliever and should be fought until he returns to Allah's Divine Law."

Such is also the case of our secular laws, which have become in many Muslim countries the main sources of judiciaries with the exception of what is commonly known as Personal Status Law.

There are, however, a number of Qur'anic verses which prove the disbelief of those who resort to such secular laws. Almighty Allah says:

“...And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 44)

And says:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves...”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 65)

And He also says:

“...So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 85)

According to what have just been mentioned before, Allah’s Divine *Shari’ah* may be resorted to not only for seeking equity but it has mainly to be sought as a religious belief.

Therefore, man should accept the judgment of Allah whether it stands for his side or against him and whether it agrees with his own personal inclination or not. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 65)

And says:

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Ahzâb: 36)

Moreover, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“But if they do not respond to you-then know that they only follow their [own] desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah?”

(Qur’ân: Al-Qasas: 50)

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) has said, ‘None of you will become a (complete) believer until his inclination be in accordance with what I have been sent with (i.e., Islam).’”

Interpreting the *hadīth*, **Ibn Rajab** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Man does not have perfect faith until he inclines wholeheartedly to whatever Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) has been sent with. In other words, the true believer is the one who loves whatever is commanded by the Messenger, and detests whatever is forbidden by him. The Qur’ān has conveyed the same meaning in numerous verses. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, has dispraised whoever dislikes what causes His pleasure and likes what causes His anger. In this regard, Allah, the Almighty, says, ‘That is because they followed what angered Allah and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He rendered worthless their deeds.’ (Qur’ān: Muḥammad:28)”

Ibn Rajab goes on stating:

“In many verses of the Qur’ān, Allah has described the polytheists as following their desires; He, the Almighty, says, ‘But if they do not respond to you-then know that they only follow their [own] desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah?’ (Qur’ān: Al-Qaṣas: 50) Moreover, Bid’ahs (matters innovated in religion) exist when personal inclinations and whims are given priority over the Divine Legislation. Likewise, acts of disobedience take place when inclinations and desires are preferred over love for Allah and love for what He likes. Furthermore, one’s love for persons should be in conformity with what Allah’s Messenger has been sent with; hence, the true believer should love whomever Allah loves, for example angels, messengers, prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous.”

Things Nullifying *Tawḥīd* and Involving Apostasy

Nonetheless, there are a number of acts, which may invalidate *Tawḥīd* and consequently entail a renunciation of Islam, namely mistrusting Allah, and acts of ridicule. These acts are highlighted below in details.

Mistrusting Allah

While keeping full trust in Allah is regarded as one of the pre-requisites of belief, mistrusting Allah runs counter to one’s monotheism. Almighty Allah has described the hypocrites as those who retain wrong thoughts about Him. He says:

“...Thinking of Allah other than the truth - thoughts of ignorance, saying, ‘Is there anything for us [to have done] this matter?’ Say, ‘Indeed, the matter belongs completely to Allah.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 154)

In another Qur’anic verse, Allah has depicted them as those who retain evil thoughts about Allah. He says:

“And [that] He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the polytheists, men and women – those who retain mistrust about Allah. Upon them is a misfortune of evil torment; and Allah has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Fatḥh: 6)

In his interpretation of the first verse, **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** provided:

“The evil thoughts retained by those hypocrites are implied in their allegation that Almighty Allah will never support His Messenger and the whole affairs of his religion will come to decline. They, moreover, wrongly believed that the afflictions and trials, which Allah befell on His Messenger, did not come in agreement with Allah’s Divine Decree and Wisdom. Thus, the hypocrites’ mistrust of Allah is represented in their denial of the Divine Wisdom and Divine Decree. Such was the case of the wrong thoughts of the hypocrites and the polytheists according to the Qur’anic verse of the Sura of Al-Fatḥh (The Conquest). Allah depicted their thoughts as evil because they did not accord with the established and due wisdom of the Almighty and the truthful promise He made to stand up for His devout servants. Therefore, whoever wrongly thinks that Allah constantly replaces the truth with falsehood or presumes that things go without a Divine Decree or they go in accordance with a Divine Decree, which lacks reason and wisdom, such a man is held as a retainer of evil thoughts about Allah. Such are the evil thoughts of the polytheists and woe to the polytheists from the Hellfire.

Most people think wrongly about Allah either with regard to their own affairs or Allah’s treatment of others. Only those who correctly and completely comprehend Allah’s Sublime Attributes and their requirements are safeguarded against such evil thoughts. So, let the prudent be more cautious about these matters and let him who retains wrong thoughts about his Lord repent from his sins.

A great number of people are obstinately resistant to the Divine Decree and blame its occurrence, and thus saying, "Were it to be such and such." Also while deeming the gracious blessings which Allah bestowed on them as little, they regard His favors on others as excessive."

Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) adds:

"Whosoever wrongly presumes that Allah will never support His Messenger or the believers is definitely regarded as retaining evil thoughts about Allah, so does the one who wrongly thinks that Allah will never grant victory to His religion over all other religions or to His devout bondmen over their enemies. Similarly, the one who unrightfully presumes that Allah constantly gives dominance to polytheism and falsehood over Tawhīd (monotheism) and truth is regarded as one retaining wrong thoughts about the Lord. Moreover, such a person should be condemned for attributing to Allah what does not accord with His Majesty and Absolute Perfection. Allah's Glory, Wisdom and Divinity necessitate that the party of truth will predominantly be triumphant and victorious over that of the polytheists. So, whoever believes in the contrary has never known Allah nor comprehended His due Perfection and Sublime Attributes."

He goes on saying:

"Thus, among those who retain wrong thoughts about Allah are the ones who deny Allah's Divine Decree and Wisdom behind His Actions. Such people wrongly deem that Allah performs acts merely for a will or with a desire devoid of any reason or wisdom. Contrarily, the intents of His Acts are truly performed with full wisdom though they may, sometimes, be attained through seemingly unpleasant means. He never decides a thing for vanity or absurdity, '...That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire.' (Qur'ân: Sâd: 27)"

Ibnul-Qayyim adds:

"Most people wrongly think about Allah either with regard to their own affairs or Allah's treatment towards others. Only those who correctly and completely comprehend Allah's Sublime Attributes are safeguarded against such evil thoughts. Among those who retain the evil thoughts about their Lord are those who despair of Allah's help and those who deem it possible that Allah may punish His devotees in spite of their devotion to Him or He may

equate between the wrongdoers and righteous persons. Similarly, those who assume that Allah has vainly overlooked His bondmen without dispatching them Messengers or revealing scriptures to illuminate for them His commands and prohibitions are regarded as ones deeming wrong thoughts about Allah. Such is the case of those who falsely claim that Allah will not resurrect His bondmen for account in the Hereafter, when everyone will be either rewarded or punished on that very day. Allah will decisively judge among people and prove the truthfulness of His Prophets and falsehood of His enemies. Likewise, having wrong thoughts about Allah may be expressed by falsely presuming that Allah will render acts sincerely offered to Him as null and void without any justifiable reason. In addition, among the matters of retaining evil thoughts about Allah are supposing that Allah will punish people for acts they never perpetrated or acts they made under coercion, and presuming that Allah supports fabricators of lies about Him with miracles, as those produced by His real prophets and messengers, with the purpose of deceiving people. So will be the man who wrongly thinks that Allah will do every possible act to His creatures no matter whether such an action is good or evil and whether they deserve such an action or not, such as casting a man who spent all his life in devotion in the lowest degrees of Hellfire or rewarding a man who led his life in opposing religion and messengers by letting him receive the highest degrees of Paradise.”

Ibnul-Qayyim continues saying:

“In the same category of those who retain wrong thoughts about Allah lies the case of the one who falsely presumes that Allah describes His Sublime Attributes and Actions in a way which is apparently unsuitable for His Glory; for example, thinking that Allah speaks about Himself in a way indicating lying, fabricating, or having similarities to others. This may be in a language which indicates that He bears similar qualities to those of His creatures or that He expresses Himself in mysterious or ambiguous terms which seem impossible to understand. In the case when man presumes that Allah is incapable to express the truth in explicit and clear language, he should be regarded as one mistrusting Allah’s Omnipotence. If he deems that Allah prefers to express Himself in indecisive or unclear language, he will be held as one mistrusting Allah’s Wisdom and Mercy. Moreover, people who suppose that their speech involves the truth while Allah and His Messenger entail otherwise, or

wrongly think that Allah's words only cause deviation from the straight path are regarded as ones retaining the vilest thoughts about their Lord. In a word, all the aforementioned cases are of those people who retain wrong thoughts about Allah."

This is where Ibnul-Qayyim's words conclude and whoever wishes for more details on this theme should refer to his book "*Zâdul-Ma'âd* (Provisions for the Hereafter)."

Acts of Ridicule:

A Muslim must revere Allah's Scripture, the Messenger's *Sunnah* and show respect to the Muslim scholars. He should also be warned against practices which may entail disbelief. So, whoever shows contempt for or irreverence to Allah, the Qur'ân, the Messenger or to the contents of the *Sunnah* is held as a disbeliever according to the consensus of Muslim scholars. This is because ridiculing any of what Allah has mentioned, the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân, or His Messenger is in contradiction with the requirements of monotheism. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And if you ask them, they will surely say, 'We were only conversing and playing.' Say, 'Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?' Make no excuse; you have disbelieved [i.e., rejected faith] after your belief."

(Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 65-66)

The occasion of revealing these two Qur'anic verses refers to a group of the hypocrites who mocked at the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions during one of their military campaigns. Ibn Jarîr narrated on the authority of `Abdullâh Ibn `Umar, Muḥammad Ibn Ka`b, Zaid Ibn Aslam and Qatâdah who said:

"During the battle of Tabûk, a man among the hypocrites said, 'I have never seen people like those (referring to the Prophet and his Companions) cravers for filling their bellies, the worst liars and vilest coward.' Thereupon, `Awf Ibn Mâlik said, 'You have lied, since you are a hypocrite. I am going to inform the Messenger of Allah.' Then, `Awf went to inform the Messenger of Allah, but a Qur'anic verse was revealed describing the whole occasion. This man came to the Messenger of Allah while he (PBUH) had already mounted his she-camel; he came expressing excuses to the Prophet saying, 'We were just talking idly and jokingly for the sake of amusement.' Ibn `Umar said, 'I can recall him as keeping hold of the rope of the Prophet's she-camel expressing excuses to him by saying, 'We were just talking

idly and jokingly,' while the Prophet was reciting the Qur'anic verse which provides, 'Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?' Make no excuse; you have disbelieved [i.e., rejected faith] after your belief'}. (Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 65-66)"

In those two Qur'anic verses and according to the occasion of their revelation, there is a clear proof that whoever shows irreverence to Allah, any of His messengers, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet or to any of his Companions is to be regarded as a disbeliever. The reason for deeming such a person a disbeliever is that he ridicules both the Lord and the Message, which contradicts monotheism and the creed. Even if he does not deliberately intend expressive ridicule, his act will be regarded as contrary to true and pure belief. Included under this case, for instance, is the act of showing irreverence to scholars or seeding dissensions among them even though it might occur inattentively. Those people regarding whom the verse was revealed expressed their excuses by saying, "We were talking idly and jokingly," which means that they were not taking matters seriously. Nonetheless, the Prophet told them that their excuse was dismissed, as they had transferred from belief to disbelief by this saying, regardless of whether they meant what they said or not. The Messenger, in confronting them, did not utter more than reciting the Qur'anic verse before them:

"...Say, 'We were only conversing and playing.' Say, 'Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?' Make no excuse; you have disbelieved [i.e., rejected faith] after your belief."

(Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 65-66)

Hence, in such situations, due reverence to Allah and glorification of Him become obligatory. Similarly, due submission and surrender to the commands of Allah by showing full belief in Him and glorification of the Qur'ân are also incumbent. The one who idly and jokingly talks about these matters is regarded as one underestimating them.

Sheikh Muhammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Ridicule may be expressed either by explicit speech or an act; what is committed by hypocrites in the aforementioned verse is an example of ridicule by explicit speech. As for ridicule by an explicit act, it may be like twisting the lips or pulling tongues or winking the eyes when being commanded to observe the regular prayers or being advised to pay the due Zakah, and how grave ridicule would be if it is related to Tawhîd!"

Such is the case of those who show contempt to observe the proven commandments of the Prophet (PBUH), such as his instruction to grow beards, shave moustaches, use *siwâk* (tooth-stick), or enjoin good and forbid evil.

Ibn Ishâq is reported to have said:

"A group of the hypocrites including a man called Wadî'ah Ibn Thâbit from the tribe of Banû Umayyah Ibn Zaid Ibn 'Awf and a man from the tribe of Ashja' called Makhshî Ibn Humayr used to point to the Messenger of Allah in contempt while moving to Tabûk. Some of them in an attempt to frighten and terrify the believers said, 'Do you perceive that fighting the Romans is like engaging in a combat with the Arabs? We swear by Allah that soon you will be seen disheveled and shackled in ropes.' They said so to frighten and terrify the believers. Thereupon, Makhshî said, 'I wish each one of us would be slashed one hundred lashes lest a Qur'anic verse should be revealed in consequence to what we have expressed.' The Messenger of Allah (PBUH), then, said to 'Ammâr Ibn Yâsir, 'Attain those people because they have erred, question them on what they had said and if they deny, expose to them their secret discourse.' 'Ammâr moved out and told them what happened. Then, they came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) expressing their excuses. Wadî'ah Ibn Thâbit kept holding the reins of the Prophet's she-camel, while the Prophet (PBUH) was still mounting it and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! We were talking idly and jokingly.' Makhshî Ibn Humayr also said 'O Messenger of Allah! My name and that of my father have abased me'¹⁷. (i.e., I have been afflicted by the meaning of my name and that of my father.' Therefore, the complement of the Qur'anic verse was revealed, 'If We pardon one faction of you...' (Qur'an: At-Tawbah: 66) He was, thereafter, renamed 'Abdur-Rahmân. He further asked Allah to fall a martyr in a place where people cannot reach him. He was martyred on the Day of Yamâmah and people failed to identify the place of his body."

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

"Allah declared that such a group of the hypocrites disbelieved, though they gave the excuse that they unintentionally did so. They were just talking idly and jokingly. Allah also announced that showing irreverence to the Qur'anic verses of Allah is an act of disbelief. Such an act can only come from a man who feels satisfied with it. Had they possessed true and pure faith, they would have refrained from such speech. Moreover, the Qur'an announces that belief necessitates acting accordingly, 'But

they [i.e., the hypocrites] say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'; then a party of them turns away after that and those are not believers and when they are called to [the words of] Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, at once a party of them turns aside [in refusal]. But if the right is theirs, they come to him in prompt obedience. Is there disease in their hearts? Or have they doubted? Or do they fear that Allah will be unjust to them, or His Messenger? Rather, it is they who are the wrongdoers [i.e., unjust]. The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, 'We hear and we obey.' And those are the successful.' (Qur'an: An-Nûr: 47-51) In this Qur'anic verse, Allah denied the faith of those who disobeyed His Messenger. Faithful believers are those who, when being summoned to Allah and His Messenger for judgment, should attentively listen and obey. Therefore, obeying Allah and His Messenger are of the prerequisites of faith."

Accordingly, those who underestimate the *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) or accuse it of being inapplicable nowadays or consider that legal penalties are savage and severe or that Islam oppresses woman and so forth are regarded as disbelievers.

Acts of Polytheism

There are a number of acts, which may wave between being regarded as acts of minor or major polytheism. They are only judged according to the intention of their respective doers. Some of these acts may contradict true and pure faith; however, they are commonly and frequently perpetrated. Lay people may practice such acts due to their being influenced by swindlers, frauds and jugglers. The Prophet (PBUH) warned us against such acts, which may include the following:

1. Wearing Rings and Strings as Good Omens

Wearing rings or strings as good omens is an act of ignorance. It is regarded as minor polytheism and may be held major polytheism according to the intention of its perpetrator. 'Imrân Ibn Hujayn (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

"The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saw a man wearing a bracelet of brass in his hand. Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said to him, 'What is this bracelet?' The man replied, 'It is because of Al-Wâhinah (a vein that causes pain in the shoulder and the hand)."

Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Take it off, for it will not increase but your pain. If you die while wearing it, you will never gain salvation.'”

Imâm Aḥmad related this *ḥadīth* with an acceptable chain of transmitters, Al-Ḥākim and Ibn Ḥibbān deemed it *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), and Adh-Dhahabī agreed to its authenticity.

2. Wearing Amulets

Amulets are objects worn, especially around the neck, as a charm against evil or injury. The pre-Islamic Arabs used to attach them to their children to guard them against evil and envious eyes. Amulets may consist of bones or beads and may contain handwritings which all are deemed impermissible.

Amulets may include pieces of the Qur'ān. In such a case, scholars disagree on its permissibility. The preponderant opinion, however, is that it is impermissible since it may open the way for further evil practices by using other pieces of writing. There is, moreover, no exception of the Qur'ān from the Legal Texts prohibiting wearing amulets. Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

"I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, 'Using (illegal) incantations, amulets, and tiwalaḥ (a kind of magic used to make a woman love her husband) is an act of disbelief.'"

(Related by Imâm Aḥmad and Abû Dâwûd)

Moreover, 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir narrated, as a *marfū'* (traceable) *ḥadīth*, that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Whoever wears an amulet has done an act of disbelief."

These *ḥadīths* involve a general ruling, as they do not involve any specification.

3. Seeking Blessings from Trees, Stones, Antiquities and Plants

Seeking blessings from trees, stones, antiquities or plants is an act of major polytheism, since it implies having affection for objects other than Allah. The idolaters used to worship the idols to seek blessings therewith. Thus, seeking blessings by visiting tombs of righteous people is like worshipping Al-Lât (an idol used to be worshipped before Islam). Similarly, seeking blessings from trees and stones is like seeking the blessings of Al-'Uzzâ (an idol used to be worshipped before Islam). Abû Wāqid Al-Laythī (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“We went along with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) before (the Battle of) Hunayn. At that time, we were new to Islam. We passed by a lote tree belonging to the polytheists who were intent in devotion to it and they used to hang their arms on it. We said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Make a tree for us Dhātu Anwât (a tree to hang our arms on) as the disbelievers have Dhātu Anwât.’ The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Allah is the Greatest! (You have followed the evil) traditions (of previous nations.) By the One in Whose Hand my life is, you have said the same as the Children of Israel said to Mûsâ (Moses), ‘...make for us a god just as they have gods.’ He said, ‘Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly...’ (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 138) You will follow the traditions of those (nations) before you.’”

(Related by At-Tirmidhî who deemed it sahîh)

4. Sorcery

It is a practice in which evil spirits are used to produce supernatural effects or control events in nature. It is called ‘sorcery’ because the way by which the sorcerer attains his purpose is unseen. In practicing sorcery, the sorcerer may use charms, spells, or rituals. It may, sometimes, have an effect on bodies, hearts and may even cause death. It also causes dissension between a man and his wife. The influence of sorcery cannot occur without Allah’s Will.

In addition, sorcery is a devilish act, which quite often entails polytheism, and is attained through coming closer to wicked spirits and seeking their assistance. It is held as an act of polytheism for two main reasons. First, it entails an attachment to devils and seeking their affection by responding to their dictates. Second, a sorcerer alleges the capability of knowing the unseen, which is solely limited to Allah. Claiming such a faculty of knowing the unseen by a sorcerer is nothing but disbelief and aberration.

“...But they [i.e., the Children of Israel] certainly knew that whoever purchased it [i.e., magic] would not have in the Hereafter any share.”
(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 102)

Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, ‘Avoid the seven most destructive major sins.’ It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! What are they?’ He said, ‘(The seven most destructive major sins are: to join others in worship along with Allah, to practice sorcery, to kill the soul which Allah has forbidden to be killed except for a just cause

(according to Islamic law), to eat up usury, to eat up an orphan's wealth, to flee from the battlefield at the time of fighting, and to [falsely] accuse chaste, unaware and believing women.' ”

5. Divination

This is the act of foretelling future events or revealing occult knowledge by means of an alleged supernatural agency such as eavesdropping on news in the heavens. Soothsayers used to receive such news through the devils. The soothsayers used to communicate such news after adding dozens of lies to them.

Allah Alone is the One Who knows the unseen. So, whoever alleges having the knowledge of the future either through divination or otherwise and whoever believes a soothsayer is regarded as one associating a partner with Allah and is held a denier of Him and His Messenger. Divination is an act of polytheism as it involves associating a partner with Allah in an attribute confined solely to Him and having affection for evil spirits that help soothsayers to supposedly tell the future.

It is related in *Sahih* Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of *Hadith*) that on the authority of one of the wives of the Prophet (PBUH) that the Prophet said:

“He who visits a foreteller and asks him about anything and believes him in what he says, his prayers extending to forty days will not be accepted.”

Also, Abû Dâwûd related on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“If anyone visits a soothsayer and believes him in what he says, then he has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH).”

It is worth warning that sorcerers, soothsayers and jugglers spread mischief in the earth. People may perceive them as healers whose main concern is to remedy diseases while, certainly, they work on corrupting people's belief. Sometimes, they may command a patient to slaughter a sacrificial animal not for the sake of Allah. Others may write evil spells and charms. Moreover, some of those frauds may appear as fortune-tellers who know and inform people about the places of lost properties. For example, when an ignorant person loses an object, he may go to such a fortuneteller asking him about its place. Thereupon, he will tell that person about its place or may bring him such a missing object with the assistance of devils. Similarly, a group of those frauds disguise themselves in the appearance of devout and pious saints who are supported with inexplicable events such as casting themselves in fire without

being burnt or striking themselves with swords without being wounded or grasping serpents without being harmed. Definitely, they are allies of Satan and they are truly fraudulent. All those persons solely aim at swindling people by securing unfair and unlawful gains and spoiling their faith.

Therefore, Muslims should be warned against those frauds and avoid their plots. Moreover, the official authorities should call upon those who practice sorcery to repent from their sins; otherwise, they should be killed to relieve people of their corruption and mischief and to mainly implement the penalties of Allah. It is related in *Sahih* Al-Bukhârî (Al-Bukhârî's Authentic Book of *Hadith*) on the authority of Bajâlah Ibn `Abdah that `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb wrote to his governors:

"Kill every sorcerer and every sorceress."

Also, it is narrated on the authority of Jundub, as a *marfû` hadith*, that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"The punishment a sorcerer is to receive is a stroke with the sword."

6. Evil Omens

It is the practice of seeing evil omens in certain birds, names, words, places, persons, or the like. That is, man may take one of two ways when determining to handle a certain worldly affair or a ritual act upon hearing about or seeing an unfavorable event. First, man may decline and thus becomes greatly influenced by the evil omens he witnesses. In such a case his faith is impaired and his trust in Allah becomes feeble. Second, he may accomplish his objective, nonetheless, remnants of gloom, obsession, and grief are retained. In the two cases, man should strive to give up such obsessions and rely on Allah in accomplishing his aim. He should also say:

"O Allah! There is no one to bring forth the good turns but You and no one can remove the bad turns but You and there is no barrier nor strength over Yours."

Historically speaking, taking evil omens is an old tradition, which Allah mentioned in the Qur`ân, with regard to the disbelieving nations. Such nations used to consider evil omens in their prophets and in the true believers. The followers of Pharaoh, when being afflicted with a tribulation, would say:

"...They saw an evil omen in Moses and those with him."

(Qur`ân: Al-A`râf: 131)

Likewise, the adversaries of Sālih would say:

“We consider you a bad omen, you and those with you...”

(Qur’ân: An-Naml: 47)

Similarly, the dwellers of the town of Antioch said to their messengers:

“...Indeed, we consider you a bad omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you, and there will surely touch you from us a painful punishment.”

(Qur’ân: Yâsîn: 18)

Finally, the Meccan polytheists saw evil omens in the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), by saying:

“...and if evil befalls them, they say, ‘This is from you.’”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 78)

Such were the common manners of polytheists everywhere and in all times. When their minds declined and their hearts hardened, they wrongly believed that their messengers were the source of evil though they were the source of all good. This was due to the corruption of their natural disposition. Evil and good run by the command of the Divine Decree and go in accordance with Allah’s Wisdom and because of His Grace. Additionally, Allah bestows good upon whom He is pleased with as a reward out of Allah’s Grace. His torture is due upon the wrong doers because of His Justice, as a consequence of committing wrong. In this relation, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil, [O man], is from yourself...”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 79)

Having evil omens is an act of polytheism, since it connotes having full attachment to and reliance on created objects, which neither avail nor harm. It is also one of the consequences of satanic obsessions and insinuations. In addition, such a practice contradicts the requirements of reliance on Allah as it comes from the heart out of fear. The Messenger of Allah warned us against the practice of having evil omens as he said:

“There is no ‘adwâ (i.e., no contagious disease is conveyed to others without Allah’s will), nor is there tiyarah (taking evil omen from birds or the like), nor there is hâmah (the idea they believed in during the pre-Islamic period that the bones of a deceased person turn into a bird), nor is there safar (the people used to consider the month of Safar one of the sacred months).”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

He (PBUH) also said:

“There is no `adwâ (i.e., no contagious disease is conveyed to others without Allah’s will), nor is there tiyarah (taking evil omen from birds or the like, but I like the good omen.” They said, “What is the good omen?” He (PBUH) said, “(It is) a good word.”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

Moreover, Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, as a *marfû`* (traceable) *hadîth*, that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Tiyarah (evil omen) is an act of polytheism.”

It is related in *Sahîh* Muslim (Muslim’s Authentic Book of *Hadîth*) on the authority of Mu`âwiyah Ibnul-*Hakam* that he said to the Messenger (PBUH):

“There are persons among us who take omens.” The Messenger (PBUH) said to him, “That is something which one feels in one’s breast, so let it not prevent you (from doing a thing).”

The Messenger of Allah demonstrated the evil consequences of believing in evil omens to clarify to the Muslim nation that Allah does not create in objects, which they take as evil omens, any sign or evidence indicating benefit or harm and thus causing them to fear. Also, Allah clarifies these consequences of having evil omens so that the hearts of His bondmen are relieved and thus they live in tranquility solely seeking Allah’s pleasure and praising His Oneness for which He has sent His messengers and Scriptures and created the Earth and Heaven. So, whoever grasps the most trustworthy handhold of *Tawhîd*, and keeps hold of its firm rope (i.e., the Qur`ân), overcomes evil omens and obsessions before they take hold of him.

‘Ikrimah said:

“While we were sitting with Ibn ‘Abbâs, a crowing bird passed by. Thus, a man said, ‘What a good omen! What a good omen!’ Thereupon, Ibn ‘Abbâs said, ‘Neither a good omen nor an evil one may be sought.’ ”

Ibn ‘Abbâs hastened to reject the practice of this man lest he should believe that such a bird, of itself, can benefit or harm. Likewise, all creatures cannot benefit or harm anything themselves.

With regard to the good omen, which the Prophet expressed in his saying, *“and I favor the good omen,”* it was further explained by him as good speech which one may hear. Good omens were also favored by the Prophet since it is an indication of having trust in Allah. Man is always commanded to have good

thoughts about Allah. Evil omens, on the contrary, are an act of mistrusting Allah and anticipating the occurrence of evil. Thus, distinction becomes apparent between good and evil omens. When people have hope of getting good from Allah, they will put their full trust in Him. On the contrary, when they give up such a hope and have despair, they will be regarded as polytheists for they are attached to objects other than Allah.

Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) states:

“Being favorably impressed with a good omen and cherishing it do not necessarily imply any act of polytheism. It is only natural that people are favorably inclined toward what appeals to them, as the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have favored women and perfumes. He also liked desserts and honey. He is, also, reported to have enjoyed listening to melodious recitation of the Qur`an and the prayer call (adhân). Moreover, the Prophet liked good manners and noble traits. Generally, he used to favor perfection and all means and acts leading to it. In addition, Allah has made people instinctively incline to being called by good names and feeling pleased with words connoting success and prosperity, and utterances bearing congratulations and glad tidings. Thus, when such words and utterances touch upon the ears, the soul feels pleased, the breast becomes relaxed and the heart grows braver. By contrast, when words and utterances bearing pessimistic connotations are heard, the soul feels depressed and grieved. One may also feel discouraged from accomplishing one’s objectives, and this may consequently impose harm in this life and a decline of faith and finally a perpetration of acts leading to polytheism.”

Imâm Ahmad related on the authority of `Abdullâh Ibn `Amr that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“If anyone stops doing something because of (believing in) evil omen, then he has committed an act of disbelief.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah! What is the expiation for that?” He (the Prophet) said, ‘(The expiation for that is) to say, ‘O Allah! There is no good but Yours, and no omen but comes from You, and there is no deity but You.’ ”

This *hadîth* illustrates that evil omens cannot bear an influence upon those who pay no heed to it. As for those who do not sincerely rely on Allah but indulge in evil acts, they may be debarred from accomplishing their aims as they renounce pure belief in Allah. We ask Allah to bestow upon us perfect faith and due reliance on Him. We also seek refuge in Allah to avert us from the path of evil and polytheism, for He is the All-Hearing and the All-Answering.

7. Astrology

Some scholars have defined it as the study of the positions and aspects of celestial bodies in the belief that they have an influence on the course of natural earthly occurrences and human affairs such as changes in the climate, the fall or rise of prices and the occurrences of disease, death, happiness and misfortune. Astrology is of two kinds.

First, an astrologer may allege that celestial planets independently influence the course of natural occurrences without the intervention of Allah. Whoever believes so is, according to the consensus of Muslim scholars, a disbeliever, as it indicates believing in a creator other than Allah, and that this so-called creator controls Allah's creation without Allah's Will.

Second, an astrologer may take the movements of such planets as an indication of a future event. It is undoubtedly unlawful, because it is as if he alleges possessing knowledge of the unseen. The Prophet (PBUH) says:

"If anyone acquires any knowledge of astrology, he acquires a branch of magic of which he gets more as long as he continues to do so."

(Related by Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Mâjah and Imâm Ahmad and others. It is narrated with an authentic chain of transmitters; An-Nawawî and Adh-Dhahabî deem it *sahîh*).

Foretelling aided by the stars or other celestial bodies is tantamount to claiming to know the unseen which is one of Allah's unique attributes. It, therefore, contradicts the concept of *Tawhîd*, as it is a false claim.

Al-Khattâbî has said:

"Prohibited astrology is represented in the allegation of knowing future events such as the definite times of the wind blowing, the fall of rain, the change of prices and such other events which astrologers predict depending on celestial movements. Claiming that such celestial movements have an influence on the terrestrial world is like claiming to have the knowledge of the unseen, which is only possessed by Allah."

Al-Bukhârî relates in his *Sahîh* (Authentic Book of *Hadîth*) that Qatâdah has said:

"Allah created these stars for three purposes: (i) as decoration of the heaven (ii) as projectiles to hit the devils and (iii) as signs to guide travelers. So, if anyone tries to find a different interpretation other than that, he is mistaken, just wastes his efforts and troubles himself with what is beyond his limited knowledge..."

Al-Khaṭīb relates that Qatādah has said:

“Some people, who are ignorant of the commands of Allah, have practiced astrology saying: ‘The one whose marriage concurs with the appearance of such and such a star will have such and such a thing, and the traveler whose traveling concurs with the appearance of such and such a star will have such and such a thing, and so on. Surely, never does a star appear but one who is red, black, long, short, good or bad, be born concurring with it. Knowledge of such a star, such an animal or such a bird is not considered knowledge of the unseen. If someone were to know the Unseen, it would be Ādam (Adam) whom Allah created by His Hand, made His angels prostrate to him, and taught him the names of every thing.’”

Among frequently spread superstitions are horoscope and fortunetelling, which are commonly issued and published in daily papers and magazines.

Sheikh `Abdur-Rahmān Ibn Ḥasan (may Allah have mercy on him) provided in his *Fathul-Majīd* (Bestowal of the Honorable):

“If it is argued that astrologers may sometimes tell the truth and their predictions prove true, to this we reply that they are like soothsayers who tell a true word mixed with one hundred lies. If his predictions come true, it only occurs accidentally, for such predictions are nothing but baseless claims. Besides, the occurrence of such predictions may cause one to fall into polytheism if he believes in them.”

He further explained:

“A lot of Prophetic ḥadīths invalidate astrology, such as the Prophet’s saying, ‘If anyone acquires any knowledge of astrology, he acquires a branch of magic of which he gets more as long as he continues to do so.’ (Related by Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah) Rajā’ Ibn Ḥaywah also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Among what I fear for my nation are: believing in astrology, denying divine predetermination, and injustice of Imāms (rulers).’ (Related by Ibn Humayd).”

As for taking celestial bodies as a guideline in order to determine directions, it is among the favors of Allah and there will be no harm in doing so. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And it is He Who has placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darknesses of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know...”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 97)

Al-Khattabî has maintained:

“As for using the stars to determine the direction of the Ka`bah, it has been carried out by the competent scholars who have been sincerely concerned with the observance of ritual ordinances. The direction of the Ka`bah may, thus, be determined through direct observation or by help of celestial bodies. Muslims certainly accept views of those scholars if they are religiously reliable and scientifically skilled.”

Ibn Rajab maintains:

“What is permissible to be acquired and learned from such a science (i.e. Astrology) is only what meets our needs according to the Islamic teachings, and not what the astrologers allege to have an influence on our lives. The latter is definitely impermissible to learn or acquire, while the former may be obtained to guide people when traveling and let them recognize the proper direction of the Ka`bah. Such knowledge is, according to the unanimous agreement of the Muslim scholars, permissible to learn and acquire to a certain degree.”

It is similarly permissible to learn the changing positions of the sun and the moon so that people may realize the proper times of daily prayers, the alternations of seasons and due times of the meridian. **Al-Khattabî** states:

“Astronomy which is acquired through observation and obtained for the sake of realizing meridian hours and the accurate direction of the Ka`bah is not prohibited. Recognition of meridian hours is not more than knowing exact ante- and post- meridians; that is when shadows become smaller, this means that the sun moves from the east towards its meridian, and when the shadow begins to be cast again over the earth, this means that the sun moves from its meridian towards the west. Such knowledge is obtained through observation and may also be acquired through basic apparatuses which may save time and effort.”

Ibnul-Mundhir reported that Mujâhid did not disapprove of a man acquiring the knowledge of lunar perigee (i.e., the nearest point of the moon to the earth) and apogee (i.e., the farthest point of the moon to the earth).

To conclude, a Muslim's Creed should be the dearest and most beloved thing to him, through which he beseeches pleasure and salvation. Thus, he should avoid any act, which may impair his faith such as acts involving superstitions, *bid'âhs* (matters innovated in religion) and other acts of disbelief. A Muslim, moreover, should keep his faith clear by abiding by the Qur'ân and following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and that of his righteous *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars). Retaining a pure faith can only be attained through knowledge of this Creed as well as what contradicts it. Comprehensive knowledge about faith necessitates the avoidance of corrupt beliefs, for we, nowadays, are witnessing a number of Muslims who spoil the belief of others by professionally practicing fraud and jugglery and calling others to pay regular visits to tombs and consecrate graves of righteous people to seek the fulfillment of their desires and alleviation of their tribulations. Nonetheless, some people take such Sufis as an exemplary model to be followed, even though it may be a violation of the Law of Allah.

8. *Istisqâ'* by the *Anwâ'* (Over Belief in the Virtue of Stars)

Istisqâ' by the *Anwâ'* is an Arabic expression, which means attributing the rainfall to stars or other celestial bodies as people in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the *Jâhiliyyah*) used to do. They used to say, "We have been given rain by such-and-such a star." Such a saying implies that the appearance of a specific star in the sky represents an effective force or power which causes the rain to fall. The Arabic word *Anwâ'* is the plural of *Naw'*, which refers to the 28 phases of the moon. Every thirteen nights, one of these phases disappears and is replaced with another. Such process represents the lunar year.

The pre-Islamic Arabs believed that at the beginning of a new specific phase of the moon at dawn rain might fall; they believed that rain is sought by virtue of the moon. Islam nullified such a wrong belief, by stating that rain falls and is withheld only by the command of Allah and in accordance with His Divine Decree and Will

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Then I swear by the setting of the stars, and indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Qur'ân in a Register well protected; none touch it except the purified [i.e., the angels]. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent and make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Wâqi' ah: 75-82)

The phrase **“And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?”** (Qur’ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 82) is interpreted that attributing the fall of rain to the effective force of a specific star is one of the gravest sins and heinous lies. This is stated in the *hadîth* related by Imâm Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhî and deemed *hasan* by Ibn Jarîr, Ibn Abû Hâtim and Ad-Diyâ’ Al-Maqdisî in his book *Al-Mukhtârah (The Selected Hadîths)*. This *hadîth* is related on the authority of `Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib (may Allah be pleased with him) that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said:

“The Qur’anic verse ‘And make [the thanks for your provision...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 82) indicates your showing gratefulness. And the verse ‘...that you deny [the Provider]?’ means when you say ‘We have been given rain by such-and-such a star.’ ”

Sheikh `Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Hasan (may Allah have mercy on him) has provided:

“The aforementioned interpretation of the Qur’anic verse is the most accurate representation of its meaning. It may be traced back to `Ali, Ibn `Abbâs, Qatâdah, Ad-Dahâk and `Atâ’ Al-Khurasâny and others. It also agrees with the interpretation unanimously provided by the majority of Muslim exegetes.”

Abû Mâlik Al-Ash`arî (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has said:

“Among my nation, there are four characteristics belonging to the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) which they do not abandon: boasting of high rank, slandering other peoples’ lineages, seeking rain by stars, and wailing (for the deceased).”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) commented:

*“Some of the practices which were prevalent during the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance may not be unanimously avoided by all people, but it should be noted that referring the practices mentioned in the *hadîth* to the period of Jâhiliyyah is a sufficient proof that they are detested and rejected in Islam. It should also be noted that terming this period as ‘The Period of Ignorance’ is enough to denounce its practices. ‘... and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance.’ (Qur’ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 33)”*

As for the Prophet's saying, "*Seeking rain by stars*," it means attributing rainfall to the effective force and power of a star. Thus some people used to say, "We have been given rain by virtue of such and such a star."

Seeking rain by help of the stars and being convinced that they influence the fall of rain are acts of major polytheism and disbelief, which used to be retained by the people of the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the *Jâhiliyyah*). If a man is convinced that a star does not influence the fall of rain, but it customarily becomes familiar to see rain upon the appearance of a star, such a thought may be rendered as an act of minor polytheism, since Islam has prohibited the attribution of rainfall to the effective force of stars even if it is a metaphorical speech.

Al-Bukhârî and Muslim relate on the authority of Zayd Ibn Khâlid (may Allah be pleased with him) who has narrated:

"The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) led us in the Subh (Morning) Prayer at Hudaybiyah. There was some rainfall during the night. After he had finished prayer, he turned toward people and said, 'Do you know what your Lord has said?' They replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' Upon this, he (the Prophet) said that Allah said, 'Some of My servants entered upon morning as My believers and some as unbelievers. He who says, 'We have had a rainfall due to the Blessing and Mercy of Allah,' is a believer of Me and a disbeliever of stars, and he who says, 'We have had a rainfall due to the rising of such and such a star,' disbelieves Me and affirms his faith in the stars.'"

In the aforementioned *hadith*, the Prophet interpreted Allah's saying, "*Some of My servants entered upon morning as believers of Me and some as unbelievers*." That is, a true believer is the one who refers the giving of rain to the bounty and mercy of Allah. On the contrary, a disbeliever of Allah has been interpreted as the one who refers the fall of rains to the influence of the stars. Hence, the acts, which are solely Allah's, must not be attributed to others. If any of Allah's acts is referred to any of His creatures, such a reference may be rendered as an act of polytheism. If it is believed that stars influence the fall of rain, this is considered an act of major polytheism. Also, attributing the fall of rain to a star metaphorically is prohibited as it is considered as an act of minor polytheism through which one may ascribe such a bounty to a thing other than Allah.

Al-Qurtubî (may Allah have mercy on him) provides:

“Once a new star replaces an old one, some of the Pre-Islamic Arabs used to attribute the fall of rain to the new star while others referred its fall to the old one. They used to say that they were given rain by virtue of such and such a star. Therefore, the Lawgiver¹⁸ has prohibited such a saying lest it should be misconceived that the star is the dominant determiner of the fall of rain.”

With regard to the reason of revealing the verse, *“Then I swear by the setting of the stars, and ...”*, Imâm Muslim, in his *Sahîh* on the authority of Ibn `Abbâs, relates, *“Rain fell in the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) so some of the people said, ‘Such and such a star was right.’ It was upon this that these verses were revealed, ‘Then I swear by the setting of the stars,’ (Al-Wâqi`ah: 75) until the verse, ‘And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?’ (Al-Wâqi`ah: 82)”*

Rain only falls by the might and power of Allah without any intervention of any creature. Allah, Almighty, says:

“And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We Who bring it down?”

(Qur`ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 68-69)

So, whoever ascribes the fall of rain to the sole and direct influence of stars or attributes it to any natural phenomenon, such as the low pressure or climate conditions, should be regarded as a liar. Such a thought is similarly regarded as an act of major polytheism. If a man is well convinced that Allah is the Creator and the One Who causes rain, but only attributes its fall to stars figuratively speaking, his speech in such a case will be considered as an act of minor polytheism. A lot of people who work in mass media easily indulge in the latter acts. So a Muslim should be warned against such things.

9. Attributing Favors to Others but Allah

We have previously tackled the ruling on attributing the fall of rain to the appearance or disappearance of specific stars and seeking rain through their effective force. Now we are going to uncover the issue of generally attributing Allah's favors and graces to mundane causes instead of attributing them directly to Allah. Acknowledging the favors and blessings of Allah and dedicating oneself to pay due praise and give thanks to Him are of the essences of Muslim Creed. So whoever attributes beneficence to creatures should be regarded as one denying the favor of Allah. In this relation, Allah says:

“They recognize the favor of Allah; then they deny it and most of them are disbelievers.”

(Qur`ân: An-Nahl: 83)

Commenting on the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, some exegetes have stated:

“Though people who attribute Allah’s favors and graces to others recognize that Allah is the Giver and the One Who bestows His bounty on them, they deny Him and claim the inheritance of such favors from their respective forefathers.”

Those people, thus, may say, “It was only by the favor of so and so that I got such bounties.” They, in principle, attribute all graces to either their forefathers or to their false deities, and totally forget their main source and the real giver, Allah. Some people attribute their safety in the sea to the favorable winds and the skilled navigator while forgetting the real dispatcher of winds and the true causer of safety and security. They, for example, frequently use such phrases as “the wind was nice this journey and the navigator was skillful.” Similarly, others attribute the abundance of natural resources and the prevention of catastrophic consequences of natural disasters to the efforts of governments or the new advancements of experimental sciences. Thus, sentences such as, “It was only due to the advancement of medicine that a lot of diseases were eradicated,” become frequent among people. Hence, all these utterances should be avoided. A Muslim should only attribute the amplexness of resources and affluence of bounties to Allah. As for the endeavors of peoples and governments to improve their conditions, they should only be viewed as causes, which are not held responsible for the attainment of final results. People are only thanked for their actions not for the final achievement of results.

In the Qur’ān, Allah has provided examples of the people who denied the graces of Allah and attributed the affluence of their wealth to other than Allah. Those who ascribed the graces of Allah to others were convinced that their fellow men deserved being the source of such favors. They also believed that their personal experience or skill enabled them to be the makers of such favors. About man, Allah has stated:

“And if We let him taste mercy from Us after an adversity which has touched him, he will surely say, ‘This is [due] to me, and I do not think the Hour will occur; and [even] if I should be returned to my Lord, indeed, for me there will be with Him the best.’ But We will surely inform those who disbelieved about what they did, and We will surely make them taste a massive punishment.”

(Qur’ān: Fussilat: 50)

As for Qârûn (Korah) who was given great treasures, but acted boastfully and insolently towards his fellow men and disregarded the admonition to repent of his sins and acknowledge the graces of Allah, he said:

“... ‘I was only given it because of knowledge I have’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Qaşas: 78)

Thus, when he claimed he achieved this wealth through his own intellectuality, skill and experience, Qârûn received the worst end and the most heinous chastisement; Allah caused the earth to swallow him and his house.

It is worth noting that many people nowadays overestimate themselves and become self-conceited by introducing new inventions without acknowledging the favors of Allah Who endowed them with such capabilities to do so. They usually speak aloud of their own powers and strengths and, moreover, act in oppression and transgression against others. Such people are more deserving of the punishment of Allah. Such was the case of the people of ‘Âd who were proud of their own strength, as the Qurân provided:

“As for ‘Âd, they were arrogant upon the earth without right and said, ‘Who is greater than us in strength?’ Did they not consider that Allah Who created them was greater than them in strength? But they were rejecting Our signs. So We sent upon them a screaming wind during days of misfortune to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the worldly life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgracing, and they will not be helped.”

(Qur’ân: Fussilat: 15-16)

The following *hadith* provides the story of a group of people who were tested by Allah when He bestowed on them many graces and favors. However, some of them rejected to acknowledge the favors of Allah when they attributed such graces to their own personal experience claiming that what they had was inherited from their forefathers. Others acknowledged the favors of Allah and praised Him, so Allah was pleased with them.

Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying:

“Allah willed to test three from among the Children of Israel (Israelites) who were a leper, a baldheaded man and a blind man. So, He sent them an angel who came to the leper and said, ‘What thing do you like most?’ He replied, ‘Good color and good skin, for this may remove from me what make people feel repulsion of

me.' The angel touched him and he was cured, and he was given a good color and beautiful skin. The angel asked him, 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied, 'Camels (or cows).' - (The narrator is in doubt, for either the leper or the baldheaded man demanded camels and the other demanded cows.) - So he (i.e., the leper) was given a pregnant she-camel, and the angel said to him, 'May Allah bless you with it.' The angel then went to the baldheaded man and said, 'What thing do you like most?' He replied, 'I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, which makes people feel repulsion of me.' The angel touched him and he was cured, and he was given good hair. The angel asked him, 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied, 'Cows.' So the angel gave him a pregnant cow and said, 'May Allah bless you with it.' Then, the angel went to the blind man and asked, 'What thing do you like most?' He said, '(I like) that Allah may restore my eyesight to me so that I may see the people.' The angel touched his eyes and Allah gave him back his eyesight. The angel asked him, 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied, 'Sheep.' The angel gave him a pregnant sheep. Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones, and multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the (three) men had a herd of camels filling a valley, and one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley. Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said, 'I am a poor man, who has lost all means of livelihood while on a journey. So, none will satisfy my need except Allah and then you. In the Name of Him Who has given you such nice color and beautiful skin, and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination. The man replied, 'I have many obligations (so I cannot give you).' The angel said, 'I think I know you; were you not a leper of whom the people used to feel repulsion? Weren't you a poor man, and then Allah gave you (all this property)?' He replied, '(This is all wrong), I got this property through inheritance from my forefathers.' The angel said, 'If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.' Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one did. The angel said to him, 'If you are

telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.' Then, the angel, disguised in the shape of a blind man, went to the blind man and said, 'I am a poor man and a traveler whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah, and after Him, you yourself. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eyesight to give me a sheep, so that with its help, I may complete my journey.' The man said, 'No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eyesight; I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you from taking anything (you need) of my property for Allah's sake.' The angel replied, 'Keep your property with you. You (i.e., the three men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you (the blind man) and is angry with your two companions.' "

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

The aforementioned *hadith* is a great reminder. When the first two men denied the favor of Allah and did not pay the rights due on their properties, Allah showed His discontent with them and consequently prevented them from receiving His favor. On the contrary, the third man acknowledged the graces of Allah, attributed all favor to Him and fulfilled all rights due on his property, so that he deserved the pleasure of Allah and kept his property safe.

Ibnul-Qayyim has stated:

"The original meaning of praise is to acknowledge the gracious blessings of the Benefactor while showing Him due submission, surrender and love. A person is not regarded as one fulfilling the duty of praising Allah if he does not recognize His favors and becomes unable to notice them. Similarly, if he recognizes the favor but does not attribute it to the real Giver, he will not be regarded as one fulfilling the rights of due praise. Moreover, he will be regarded as ungrateful if he recognizes the blessings and the Giver without showing gratitude. Finally, if he recognizes the blessings and acknowledges the Giver without showing full submission, surrender or love to Him, he will be regarded as one showing ingratitude too. The true grateful one is the one who shows gratitude to Allah with full acknowledgement, submission and love. Therefore, praise should be realized by heart and then put into action by showing attachment and surrender to Allah."

Minor Polytheism

Minor polytheism invalidates *Tawhîd* (i.e., monotheism). There are certain acts of minor polytheism, against which Allah and His Messenger have warned us in order to safeguard our faith and protect our *Tawhîd*. Such acts may corrupt our *Tawhîd* and thus lead to major polytheism. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].” (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 22)

Ibn `Abbâs has commented:

“Associating rivals with Allah is polytheism. It is so covert that it is not easily traced. Such polytheism is similar in invisibility to ants creeping on a black object in deep darkness. However, it may be realized in expressions such as swearing by the Name of Allah associated with other names, as saying, ‘By Allah, by your life and by my life,’ or saying, ‘Were it not for the doggy of so and so, thieves would attack us,’ or saying, ‘Were it not for ducks in the house, thieves would attack us.’ This also can be expressed in expressions such as, ‘What you will and Allah wills,’ or ‘Had it not been for Allah and so and so.’ Do not associate others with Allah in such expressions, for all these words are acts of polytheism.”

(Related by Ibn Abû Hâtim)

While Ibn `Abbâs maintains that all such practices are deemed as acts of minor polytheism, the Qur’anic verse bears the probability of including both minor and major polytheism. Ibn `Abbâs includes these practices in minor polytheism, since they are frequently made by people either inadvertently or ignorantly. These practices include:

1. Swearing by things/creatures other than Allah:

Swearing by the name of anyone or any creature is deemed as an act of polytheism. `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

“He who swears by anything besides Allah is guilty of an act of disbelief (or of associating something with Allah).”

(Related by At-Tirmidhî who deemed it hasan, and by Al-Hâkim who deemed it sahîh)

As for the saying “*act of disbelief (or of associating something with Allah)*”, it may either be due to the doubt of the narrator, or the conjunction ‘or’ may be meant to combine between both disbelief and associating others with Allah. At any rate, this is an act of minor polytheism.

Nowadays, a great number of people swear by abstract words like trust or by the name of the Prophet or even by their own lives. According to the *hadith*, it is prohibited to swear by anything other than Allah. The main reason is that invoking the name of anybody other than Allah is a means of exaltation, while the only one deserving glory is Allah. Therefore, invoking any name other than Allah is an act of polytheism and a grave sin.

Ibn Mas’ūd has provided:

“To falsely swear by Allah is less grave than invoking the name of anybody other than Him.”

It is well-known that taking a false oath is one of the major sins, but polytheism which is introduced by swearing by names other than Allah is a much graver sin even though it is an act of minor polytheism. So, Muslims should be warned against such a practice. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Whoever has to take an oath should swear by Allah or remain silent.”

He (PBUH) also says:

“Do not swear by your fathers.”

These *hadiths* and others command us that if we are to take an oath, we are to swear only by Allah and not by anything else. On the other hand, if an oath, by Allah’s Name, is taken to someone, one must be satisfied with such an oath.

The Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Whoever swears by Allah must tell the truth, and if it is sworn to someone by Allah’s Name, he must be satisfied, and whoever is not satisfied with Allah is not close to Allah.”

2. Utterances Entailing Polytheism:

Among the utterances which may entail polytheism are sayings such as “By the will of Allah and my will,” which connotes associating the will of man with that of Allah. On the authority of Qutaylah, Imâm Aḥmad and An-Nasâ’î relate:

“A Jewish came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said, ‘You (i.e., Muslims) associate others with Allah as you say, ‘What Allah wills and you will,’ and say (when swearing), ‘By the Ka ‘bah.’ Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered them (Muslims) to say, ‘By the Lord of the Ka ‘bah,’ if they want to swear, and to say, ‘What Allah wills and afterwards you will.’ ”

An-Nasā’i relates that Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated:

“A man said to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), ‘What Allah wills and you will.’ Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said to him, ‘Have you made me an equal to Allah? Say, ‘What Allah Alone wills.’ ”

The aforementioned *hadiths* prohibit saying utterances such as, “By the will of Allah and mine,” “It was only by the favor of Allah and yours,” and “I only seek refuge in Allah and you.” Using the conjunction ‘and’ connotes setting up people as equals to Allah. Thus, it is more proper to say, “If Allah wills and then I will,” “It was only by the favor of Allah and then the favor of you,” or “I seek refuge with Allah and then seek your protection.” Here, the conjunction ‘then’ connotes sequence. The will of man is subsequent to that of Allah; man’s will is not in the same level as that of Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And you do not will except that Allah wills – Lord of the worlds.”

(Qur’ān: At-Takwīr: 29)

This verse explains that man’s will comes after that of Allah even though he has a will. This contradicts the doctrine of Fatalists who totally negate the will of man and state that all events are predetermined by fate and therefore unalterable. However, man’s will cannot absolutely work in contradiction with the will of Allah unlike the doctrine of Mutazilites that dictates that man has free-will that may contradict Allah’s Will; Allah is the Exalted above such doctrines.

3. Polytheism in Intentions

It is referred to as hidden polytheism and is manifested in two major acts:

A. Ostentation

Ar-Riyā’ is an Arabic word which is originally derived from *ru’yah* ‘vision’ and in the religious sense, it is behaving in an ostentatious way in order to be praised by others. *Ar-Riyā’* is distinguished from *Sum’ah* (i.e., ostentation in deed is distinguished from that in word) in view that the former is a means

of showing off with acts such as fake devoutness in prayers while the latter implies one talking boastfully about one's good deeds; it also includes the acts of reciting the Qur'an and delivering sermons which aim at causing other people to admire you. Allah says:

“Say, ‘I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.’”
(Qur'an: Al-Kahf: 110)

Commenting on this Qur'anic verse, **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“As it is confirmed that there is no deity but Allah, it should also be admitted that He Alone is most deserving of devotion and submission. Therefore, a pure act of devotion should be performed in accordance with the exemplary model of the Prophet and be void of pretentious display.”

Allah has promised ostentatious displayers times of deep distress and misery:

“So woe to those who pray [but] who are heedless of their prayer- those who make show [of their deeds] and withhold [simple] assistance.”
(Qur'an: Al-Mâ`ûn: 4-7)

He has also discerned showiness as one of the characteristics of the hypocrites. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them and when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people.”
(Qur'an: An-Nisâ': 142)

Abû Hurayrah narrated, as *marfû` hadîth*, that the Prophet (PBUH), said:

“Allah, Exalted be He, said, ‘I am the One Who is never in need of a partner. If anyone does anything in which he associates anyone else with Me, I shall abandon him with one whom he associates with Me.’ ”

(Related by Muslim)

“I am free from him (i.e., the one who does so) and he will go to the person whom he associated (with Me).”

(Related by Ibn Mâjah)

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(Related by Muslim)

"I am free from him (i.e., the one who does so) and he will go to the person whom he associated (with Me)."

(Related by Ibn Mâjah)

Ibn Rajab has maintained:

“Acts which are not fully devoted to Allah may fall into two categories. First, they may be acts absolutely performed for the sake of showing off. Such was the case of hypocrites as described in the Qur’anic verse that reads, ‘...and when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people...’ (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 142) Absolute showing off may be easily identified in acts offered publicly, such as the observance of Hajj, the performance of charity and other acts which may cause other people to admire one, while sincerity in such acts is rare. Such pure ostentation may hardly be witnessed in acts such as Prayer and Fasting. Any act, which is performed with the intention of showing off, is definitely null and void, and whoever does it deserves punishment.

Second, if an act is originally intended for the sake of Allah but blended with the hidden intention of pretentious display, such an act will be rendered null and void, according to legal texts. If a person mainly performs such an act for Allah’s sake but the intention of ostentation casually comes to his mind afterwards, it does not affect his act provided he immediately pushes such an intention away from his mind. But what is the ruling if a person continues to have such an intention of ostentation and behaves accordingly? There is a disagreement among the Salaf (early Muslim scholars) whether such an act is void or not. Such a disagreement has been reported by Ahmad and Ibn Jarir who have given preference to the ruling that such an act is not nullified, as such a person will be rewarded according to his first intention; namely, acting only for the sake of Allah. The same opinion has been reported from Al-Hasan and others.”

As such, one’s keenness on keeping one’s actions void of polytheism must be more than one’s keenness on keeping oneself secure from enemies as well as one’s keenness on keeping one’s properties secure from thieves. This is because the danger of polytheism is much greater.

B. Performing Rituals for a Worldly Gain

Offering a ritual ordinance with the intention of solely procuring a worldly gain is an act of polytheism. Allah and His Messenger have warned us against such acts, as they contradict the requirements of perfect *Tawhîd* and nullify one’s good deeds. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, has said:

'Whosoever desires the life of this world and its adornments We will fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived. Those are the ones for whom there is not in the Hereafter but the Fire and lost is what they did therein, and worthless is what they used to do.'
(Qur'ân: Hûd: 15-16)

It may be interpreted that for those who observe good deeds solely to procure a worldly gain or profit, Allah will guarantee for them a good and safe life, bestow upon them much wealth and many children, but such donations are contingent on Allah's Will, for Allah has said, ***"We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 18) However, those people will only expect hellfire in the Hereafter, since they do not observe these acts with the intention of receiving Allah's reward and avoiding His punishment.

Qatâdah has said:

"Allah, Exalted be He, says that those whose main intent and objective involve seeking the gain of this worldly life, Allah will let them pass this life securely but they will receive no reward in the Hereafter for the good deeds they have offered. By contrast, a believer is rewarded doubly for his good deeds; he is to be rewarded in this worldly life and in the Hereafter as well."

Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb (may Allah have mercy on him) has provided:

"Commenting on this verse, the Salaf (early Muslim scholars) have mentioned a number of acts frequently practiced by people without realizing their effects. They are as follows:

First, offering good deeds for the sake of Allah, without taking His reward into account (i.e., only for worldly gains), such as observing regular prayers, giving charity, keeping good relations with kith and kin and doing justice to people. A man, who observes these acts with the sole objective of keeping his offspring and property secure, does not aim at being recompensed with the Paradise or avoiding the Hellfire. As such, this man will be rewarded in this worldly life and he will have no share in the Hereafter. This is the type of practice mentioned by Ibn `Abbâs.

Second, Mujâhid, in interpreting the same verse, has discerned a second type of acts about whose effect people have no knowledge. This type is much graver than the former. It is implied in observing good deeds with the sole intention of showing off, without seeking any reward in the Hereafter.

Third, *there are certain righteous acts which are often observed with the intention of procuring property such as offering Hajj to make a trade, emigrating for the sake of getting a particular benefit or marrying a woman, or fighting in the cause of Allah for the sake of taking booty. Other examples may include the act of learning for the sake of teaching one's family, getting a job or taking a position among one's people, or punctually observing due prayers because one is employed in a mosque.*

Fourth, *a man may keep observing acts of obedience to Allah, but he may be a repudiator of Islam such as the examples of Jews and Christians who worship Allah and sometimes observe fasting or perform charity. Such is the case of Muslims who do acts of polytheism though they may offer righteous and good deeds. Although they may obey Allah and solely seek His rewards in the Hereafter, they do other acts, which exclude them from the realm of Islam, and cause the nullification of their good deeds. This type of acts is also included in the interpretation of this Qur'anic verse as reported by Anas Ibn Mâlik and others. The Salaf (early Muslim scholars) were cautious not to fall into such acts."*

The above-mentioned two Qur'anic verses include all these four types of acts, since their meaning is general. Thus, Muslims should be warned against the practice of observing a devotional act with the sole intention of seeking a worldly gain. It is related in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Al-Bukhârî (Al-Bukhârî's Authentic Book of *Ḥadīth*) that whoever seeks the worldly life making it his major concern becomes its slave. This is stated in the *ḥadīth* narrated by Abû Hurayrah in which the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says:

"May the slave of dinar, dirham, and khamîṣah (a striped garment made of silk or wool) perish! He is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased. May such a person perish and relapse, and if he is pierced with a thorn, may him not find anyone to take it out from him."

A slave of dinar, dirham and silk cloaks (clothes) here means a person who prefers these things to the Divine injunctions and commands and strives day and night to amass worldly goods. Instead of worshipping Allah, he adores such things and is thus guilty of worshipping others besides Allah, a condition which causes his ruin in this world and the Hereafter. In the aforementioned *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (PBUH) censures the person adoring such things and makes a supplication against him to perish, and, when such a person is afflicted with a thorn, he may lose the means of taking it out of his body. Therefore, whoever adores such things mentioned above in this *ḥadīth* should reflect on the significance of this supplication made by the Prophet (PBUH) and he, thus, should be cautious not to fall into such polytheism.

Shaykhul-Islâm, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“The Prophet (PBUH) called such a man, the slave of dinar, dirham and velvet and, moreover, invoked Allah to let him perish and deteriorate, and if he is pierced with a thorn, he may not find anyone to take it out of him. This is the case of a man who, when he is afflicted with an evil, will not be able to have it removed easily and, therefore, he will live in misery and deterioration. Thus, he will neither attain the satisfaction of Allah nor will he be totally pleased himself. This is the case of the person adoring money as he is marked in the aforementioned hadith as follows, ‘He is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased.’ Moreover, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says, ‘And among them are some who criticize you concerning the [distribution of] charities. If they are given from them, they approve; but if they are not given from them, at once they become angry.’ (Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 58) The hypocrites, as mentioned in the Qur’anic verse, are either pleased or displeased, but they do not experience these emotions sincerely for the sake of Allah. Such is the case of anyone who has cravings for attaining a position or gaining a worldly gain. If he obtains such a gain, he will be pleased; otherwise, he will become dissatisfied. He, thus, becomes a slave for his whims. That is slavery, in fact, is the enslavement of the heart. Such is the case of money seekers who are enslaved by their inclinations to money. Money may, thus, be one of two types: first, properties and possessions representing the basic needs and utilities of people including costs of living, marriage, and the like. In this case, man uses money with the purpose of fulfilling his basic needs, without adoring it, and it thus becomes like a donkey, which he uses as a ride to reach his own destination. The second type of possessions is that which may fall beyond the basic needs of man. A man who excessively craves for gaining these possessions becomes a slave to them and lacks pure and true submission to and reliance on Allah. Such a man, thus, becomes guilty of worshipping and relying on others besides Allah. He is, thus, the most deserving of the Prophet’s saying, ‘May the slave of dinar, dirham, and khamîsah (a striped garment made of silk or wool) and velvet perish and relapse.’ This man is certainly a slave to those materials. He becomes pleased if Allah grants him these materials, but becomes

dissatisfied if Allah deprives him of them. The slave of Allah is the one who is pleased with the pleasure of Allah and becomes discontent with Allah's displeasure with him. The true servant of Allah is the one who loves what Allah and His Messenger love and hates what Allah and His Messenger hate, and becomes loyal to the true devotees and servants of Allah and alienates the enemies of Allah. Such is the person who has perfected his faith."

We may add that among the slaves of money are those who indulge in unlawful transactions and illegal gains mainly stimulated by the love of material possessions, such as those who receive usurious interests from banks or those who gain money through bribes, gambling, defrauding or exceeding limits in quarreling with others. Although they are fully convinced that these gains are illegal, they seek them by all means.

4. Ascribing One's Deficiencies to Time or Condemning it

We will continue to shed light on specific practices, which are customarily made by people and may invalidate *Tawhīd* and impair the Muslim's Creed. Among these practices is the act of inveighing against the vicissitudes of time and wind. Such practices may also involve accusing the winds or other creatures of matters that have nothing to do with them. Hence, inveighing against misfortunes and accusing creatures are in fact directed against Allah, because He is the Manager and Disposer of all affairs. Depicting the disbelievers, Allah, the Almighty, says:

"And they say, 'There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.' And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming." (Qur'ān: Al-Jāthyiah: 24)

According to this Qur'ānic verse, those people denied the resurrection and said, "*We die and live,*" meaning that some people die and others are born. In this way, they denied the existence of the Creator and His ability to control the affairs of His creatures, and they ascribed the arrangement of events to nature. Thus, they claimed that they would live and nothing would destroy them except time, "*and nothing destroys us except time.*" That is, nothing can destroy them but the passage of time; hence, they ascribe their destruction to time as a means of accusing and blaming it. Their claim sprouts forth as a consequence of ultimate ignorance, as it is not supported by objective evidence, but goes beyond all reason. Therefore, the Qur'ān provides, "*And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.*" So, any claim, which lacks due proofs may be reduced to a mere false allegation. The decisive evidence proves

that the universe runs by the command of the All-Wise and Omnipotent Creator. Finally, whosoever inveighs against time (its vicissitudes) or refers the occurrence of events to it, is regarded as a polytheist and an atheist, even if he does not adopt their fundamental doctrine. Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

"Allah, Exalted be He, said, 'The son of Adam (Adam) hurts Me, for he abuses Time though I am Time: I cause the revolution of day and night.'"

According to another narration, the Prophet is reported to have said:

"Do not abuse Time for Allah is Time."

This *hadith* indicates that abusing time is tantamount to abusing Allah, since He is the real Creator of all vicissitudes occurring therein. Thus, according to the *hadith*, Allah is reported to have said:

"I am (the One Who manages) Time, and I alternate the night and the day"

Allah's saying, "I alternate the night and the day" is an explanation for His saying "Allah is Time." The two sayings mean that Allah is the One who manages the affairs and events of this life, so whoever abuses time, ascribing misfortunes in this life to it, abuses Allah, the Exalted, as He is the Creator of time.

Some of the *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) have provided:

"Arabs in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jâhiliyyah) used to inveigh against the vicissitudes of time, particularly when being afflicted with catastrophes. At times of calamities, they used to say, 'The calamities of life have stricken such and such a tribe,' 'The misfortunes of time caused them to perish,' or 'Disappointed be time!' In all such sayings, they regarded time as the effective cause and doer of all these events, while Allah is the real Creator of all events. Therefore, when they accuse time of their misfortunes, they are in fact abusing Allah, for He is the real Organizer of everything which happens."

Sheikh `Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Hasan (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

*"Ibn Hazm and the Zahirites erred when they considered time as one of Allah's Best Names, by taking this *hadith* as a proof. However, the accurate meaning of time means, as explained in the aforementioned*

hadith, that Allah is the One Who alternates day and night and the real Creator and Maker of all vicissitudes therein. Therefore, even if the Muslim believes that Allah is the Only Ordainer, he should avoid sayings which show inveighing against time as these sayings that bear a similarity to those of the disbelievers. When the Muslim avoids such sayings, then he averts imitating disbelievers and keeps his Creed perfect and is polite to Allah, the Almighty.”

Likewise, the act of accusing and condemning the wind is prohibited exactly as cursing time. This prohibition is demonstrated in the *hadith* which provides that Ubayy Ibn Ka`b (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

“Do not abuse the wind. When you see that which you dislike say, ‘O Allah! We ask You for the good in this wind, the good in what it contains and the good in what it has been commanded to do. And we seek refuge with You from the evil in this wind, the evil in what it contains and in what it has been commanded to do.’”

(Related and deemed sahih by At-Tirmidhi)

Like His innumerable other gifts, the wind is a gift from Allah, which is essential for man’s health and sustenance. It blows by the command of Allah, since He is its real maker. But if Allah wills, He can turn it into a means of destruction and ruin. Therefore, one should pray to Allah to enable him to benefit from its good effects and save him from the bad ones.

Reviling time, wind and other things created by Allah may entail a number of evil consequences. Reviling the wind is meaningless since it is only created for man’s service. In addition, reviling the wind or time is an act of polytheism; that is when reviling the wind, a reviler thinks that such things can bring benefit or remove harm, though Allah Alone is the real cause behind them. Revilement, then, is directed to the One Who created such things, i.e. Almighty Allah. Man, when the wind blows, should say, “O Allah! We ask You for the good in this wind, the good in what it contains and the good in what it has been commanded to do. And we seek refuge with You from the evil in this wind, the evil in what it contains and in what it has been commanded to do.” If he says so when the wind blows, he will be regarded as one seeking refuge with Allah and really relying on Him; this is the pure faith which stands opposite to the belief of Pre-Islamic Arabs.

A Muslim should, thus, refer all events and acts to the real Creator asking Him to bring good and avert evil. A true Muslim should never condemn or damn the vicissitudes of time or misinterpret them. He should realize that all tribulations are only due to Allah's Divine Decree and may in reality be a punishment due to the perpetration of sins and violations against Allah's commands. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

"And whatever strikes you of disaster – it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much." (Qur'an: Ash-Shûrâ: 30)

He also says:

"It is Allah Who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds..."
(Qur'an: Ar-Rûm: 48)

And in another verse He says:

"...And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people..." (Qur'an: Âlu 'Imrân: 140)

He, the Almighty, finally says:

"Allah alternates the night and the day. Indeed in that is a lesson for those who have vision." (Qur'an: An-Nûr: 44)

Therefore, all affairs should be attributed to Allah. He, the Almighty, should also be praised in all occasions either in prosperities or in adversities. A Muslim should also trust Allah and always return to Him in repentance. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"...And We tested them with good and bad [times] that perhaps they would return [to obedience]." (Qur'an: Al-A`râf: 168)

And:

"And We certainly seized the people of Pharaoh with years of famine and a deficiency in fruits that perhaps they would be reminded."
(Qur'an: Al-A`râf: 130)

This is the most proper interpretation of the vicissitudes of time, for a Muslim fully realizes that the tribulations, which afflict him, are mainly caused by the perpetration of sins and violations. He should, therefore, blame himself instead of pinning blame on the abrupt changes in life.

As far as the disbelievers, transgressors and the ignorant ones are concerned, they always pin all blames on time without even reviewing their deeds or repenting from their sins.

5. The word 'If' opens the gates of Satanic thoughts

Some utterances, which imply lamenting one's misfortunes, may contradict belief. Among these utterances is the word 'if', which is prohibited in some contexts. For instance, when a man is afflicted with a tribulation, he may sometimes say, "Had I not done so and so, I would not have received such a result." Such a saying is an indication of showing impatience. It also indicates dissatisfaction with Allah's Divine Decree, causes pain to the afflicted person, and opens the way for Satan's insinuations and obsessions. It is obligatory, upon receiving bad news, to submit to Allah's Divine Decree, show patience and take effective steps to avoid evil consequences without showing any sign of regret or disappointment.

In the Glorious Qur'ân, Almighty Allah disapproved of those who regretted their misfortunes upon defeat in the Battle of Uḥud. Allah says:

"... They say, 'If there was anything we could have done in the matter, we [i.e., some of us] would not have been killed right here...'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 154)

The condemned saying in the Qur'ânic verse is that of the hypocrites on the Day of Uḥud when the Muslims were tested by defeat. They aired this saying in defiance to the Divine Decree. They also harshly blamed the Messenger and Muslims for fighting against the disbelievers. Allah, in reply to their argument, said:

"Say, 'Even if you had been inside your houses, those decreed to be killed would have come out to their death beds...'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 154)

This Qur'ânic verse maintains that the Muslims' tribulation came in agreement with the Divine Decree which could never be averted even if they took shelter in caves or fortified places. The word "if" avails the sufferer nothing apart from feeling sad, disappointed and weak as well as causing more pain to himself; besides, it has bad effects on one's Creed as it indicates dissatisfaction with the Divine Decree.

In the process of referring to the hypocrites, Almighty Allah says:

"Those who said about their brothers while sitting [at home], 'If they had obeyed us, they would not have been killed.' Say, 'Then prevent death from yourselves, if you should be truthful.'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 168)

This Qur'anic verse gives mention to another story of the hypocrites on the Day of Uhud. It is related that `Abdullâh Ibn Ubayy Ibn Salûl used to express his clear opposition to the Divine Decree on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. He said, "Had the Prophet and his Companions responded to our admonition when we asked them to stay in Medina instead of fighting against the disbelievers, they would not have been killed." In this occasion, Allah replied him by saying:

"Say, 'Then prevent death from yourselves...'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 168)

According to this Qur'anic verse, Allah told the hypocrites that if a safe settlement in Medina and refraining from fighting were to guard the Muslims from being killed, why should not the hypocrites, who stayed at Medina and refrained from fighting, lead an eternal life? Allah also told them that since everybody would definitely die, they would experience death wherever they were. Moreover, Allah refuted their argument by asking them to avert death from their own selves if they were true in claiming that refraining from fighting and staying behind at Medina would guarantee them a secure life.

Shaykhul-Islâm, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

"Ibn Ubayy separated from the Muslim army upon arriving at an area between Medina and Uhud refusing to participate in this Battle and criticized the Prophet (PBUH) saying, 'How strange that he (i.e., the Prophet) puts aside my opinion and his and considers that of the "the inexperienced!" Thereupon, he failed in his test along with a great number of Muslims who were led astray by following him, though most of them did not show acts of hypocrisy before. Had they died before being tried, they would have died as pure Muslims. In addition, they were neither among the true believers exercising patience with tribulations nor were they hypocrites who have no faith at all."

To conclude, sticking to such sayings as 'ifs' and 'buts' at times of tribulations is a characteristic of the hypocrites who do not fully believe in Allah's Divine Decree.

Therefore, a Muslim should avoid repeating these words, particularly when being tested with a worldly tribulation. He should, instead, show satisfaction and patience toward Allah's Divine Decree and seek His reward. In this respect, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone. Abide by that which gives you benefit (in the Hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart. If anything (i.e., trouble) comes to you, don’t say, ‘If I had not done that, it would not have happened such and such,’ but say, ‘Allah so determined and did as He willed,’ for (saying) ‘if’ opens the (gate) for Satan.”

According to this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (PBUH) has directed the Muslims to take effective measures, which should cause benefit in this life and the Hereafter, provided that the measures and procedures taken are legal and in conformity with Allah’s Law. In taking these means, a Muslim should have full confidence in Allah. He should, moreover, rely on Him fully, since Allah is the Creator of all causes and results. Combing endeavor with reliance on Allah is an indispensable part of *Tawḥīd*.

Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) has forbidden falling short of any endeavor. In case a Muslim exerts his optimum efforts in attaining his aims, but unfortunately results become frustrating, he should not lament his misfortune or show impatience. Moreover, he should not reiterate words expressing regret such as ‘ifs’ and ‘buts,’ which, according to the *ḥadīth*, open the way for Satanic insinuations and obsessions, and lead to regretting and pinning the blame on the Divine Decree. This, in turn, contradicts due patience and satisfaction.

On the contrary, showing patience and enduring trials are obligatory on Muslims. Also, submitting to Allah’s Divine Decree and Will is indispensable for the Muslim’s belief. The proper supplication on occasions of trials and tribulations, as the Prophet has directed, is to say, “Allah so determined and did as He willed.” This is because what Allah determines must take place and thus we have to comply with it; moreover, Allah does what He pleases, and His deeds are out of His wisdom.

Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Man may have one of two responses when being afflicted with a tribulation. First, he may feel disappointed and thus regrets his misfortunes. Second, he may also ponder on what has stricken him and thus becomes able to realize Allah’s Wisdom behind that.”

The Prophet (PBUH), according to the *ḥadīth* has instructed the Muslim what to do in cases of prosperity and adversity. A Muslim is warned against lamenting his past misfortunes by reiterating words like ‘ifs’ and ‘buts,’ which contradict firm faith.

It may be argued that once the Prophet (PBUH) used 'ifs' and 'buts' in his speech. He is reported to have regretted his *qirân*¹⁹. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"If I had been to commence the rituals again, I would not have brought a sacrificial animal (and thus be able to make a break between Hajj and 'Umrah)."

The refutation of this argument is that though the Prophet (PBUH) used the word 'if' on this occasion, it may be argued that it only explains his future plans and it does not oppose the Divine Decree. That is, the Prophet (PBUH) said this *hadith* when he commanded his companions in *Hajj*, who did not bring their sacrificial animals required for *qirân* with them, to perform *'Umrah* first then release from *ihrâm* taking off their clothes of *ihrâm*, and afterwards they might assume *ihrâm* again for performing *Hajj*; this is called *tamattu'*. Such a kind of *Hajj* also requires offering a sacrificial animal. The Prophet (PBUH) preferred *tamattu'* to *qirân* because it imposes less hardship. He (PBUH) told them that if he was to observe the rituals again, he would not bring a sacrificial animal with him and, thus, be allowed to perform *tamattu'*. The Prophet (PBUH) expressed his regret in the aforementioned *hadith* to make his companions satisfied with performing *tamattu'* instead of *qirân*, as they hesitated to do something the Prophet did not do, for he had already brought a sacrificial animal with him. Therefore, such regret is considered as a way of expressing future plans. Undoubtedly, such a saying is not forbidden, as the only thing to be prohibited is that in which one opposes the Divine Decree. Allah, Exalted be He, knows best.

Shaykhul-Islâm, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Never fall short of fulfilling an obligatory act of worship nor feel impatient with a Divine Decree."

Patience as an Indispensable Pillar of Faith

We have tackled the problem of uttering words, which convey acts of disappointment and dissatisfaction with Allah's Divine Decree. We have concluded that a Muslim, during the times of trials, should show due patience and seek Allah's reward.

Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Allah has mentioned the word '*sabr*' (i.e., patience) ninety times in the Qur'an." There is a *sahih hadith* related by Imâm Ahmad and Imâm Muslim that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"Patience is brightness."

And `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"We have found that the best pleasure in our life is in patience."

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"The similitude of patience in comparison with faith is like the head to the body." He cried, "Lo! No faith lurks in the heart of a man who does not show due patience."

Al-Bukhârî and Muslim relate as a *marfû` hadîth*:

"None is blessed with an endowment greater than patience".

'Patience' is the corresponding English word to the word '*Ṣabr*. It literally implies the act of refrainment. It technically implies the act of refraining the soul from showing discontent or other practices, which may imply dissatisfaction. *Ṣabr*, according to Islam, is of three types:

- Showing patience in observing the commandments of Allah.
- Showing patience by avoiding the prohibitions of Allah.
- Showing patience with whatever trials Allah has decreed.

Allah, Exalted be He, says: **"No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah and whoever believes in Allah – He will guide his heart..."** (Qur'ân: At-Taghâbun: 11) In the commentary on this Qur'anic verse, `Alqamah said:

"The man who receives Allah's guidance is the one who, upon being afflicted with a tribulation, realizes that it goes in compliance with Allah's Divine Decree and, thus, submits and feels content." Other exegetes have maintained that this Qur'anic verse may be interpreted that at times of tribulations, if a man shows patience, seeks Allah's reward and submits to His Will, Allah will give him guidance in his heart, firm conviction about his faith and tranquility as a compensation for his suffering in the world.

Sa`îd Ibn Jubayr commented:

"The verse that reads, 'And whoever believes in Allah – He will guide his heart...' (Qur'ân: At-Taghâbun: 11) means that Allah will inspire his heart to say, 'Innâ lil-lâhi wa innâ ilayhi râji`ûn (i.e., to Allah we all belong and to Him we will return).'"

According to the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, observing good deeds is an indispensable part of faith. Patience is an effective means for attaining guidance. A true believer is always in need of showing patience in all occasions. That is, he direly needs patience particularly for abiding by Allah's commandments and avoiding His prohibitions. The true believer should also exercise patience whenever faced by difficult situations when calling others to Islam.

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”

To:

“And be patient, [O Muḥammad], and your patience is not but through Allah...” (Qur’ân: An-Naḥl: 125-127)

A Muslim needs to keep patient over harms he may encounter in calling people to do good and avoid evil:

“O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination.” (Qur’ân: Luqmân: 17)

Most importantly, a Muslim is in need of showing patience when being afflicted with tribulations. In such a case, he should realize Allah’s Wisdom behind the Divine Decree, submit to His Will, and refrain from behaviors and expressions revealing grief for lost things and dissatisfaction with Allah’s Decree. Showing patience on these occasions is an indispensable component of faith, since belief in the Divine Decree is held as one of the six essential pillars of faith; besides, having belief in the Divine Decree helps us to be patient during tribulations. So, whoever does not show due patience in times of adversities, surely lacks a basic component of perfect belief. The Prophet (PBUH) indicated that showing impatience in times of trials is an act of disbelief.

It is related in *Saḥīḥ* Muslim (Muslim’s Authentic Book of *Ḥadīth*) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

“Two (things) are found among people, which are tantamount to disbelief: slandering one’s lineage and wailing over the deceased.”

The two qualities mentioned in the *ḥadīth* are deemed as acts of disbelief, since they are among the acts, which were frequently practiced during the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the *Jāhiliyyah*). Being acts of disbelief does not necessarily imply that whosoever does them becomes a true disbeliever. However, there is a difference between the disbelief mentioned in this *ḥadīth* and that mentioned in the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Nothing is between man and disbelief or polytheism except the negligence of prayer.”

That is, the disbelief mentioned in the former *ḥadīth* is of a metaphorical meaning while that in the latter is of a factual one, according to which one becomes a true disbeliever.

It is also related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“He who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes (out of rage, sadness, etc.) and follows the traditions of the Pre-Islamic era is not one of us (Muslims).”

In commenting on this *ḥadīth*, **Ibnul-Qayyim** said:

“Following the traditions of the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (the Jāhiliyyah) is like calling for tribalism or fanaticism as well as feeling partial toward a party, sect or preferring a group of sheikhs to another. All these forms of partisanship are included in the meaning of the call to Jāhiliyyah practices.”

Hence, Almighty Allah afflicts His bondmen with tribulations for farsighted ends such as wiping out their sins. This meaning is affirmed in the *ḥadīth*, narrated by Anas, that the Prophet (PBUH) has said:

“When Allah wants to do good to His servant, He afflicts him with punishment beforehand in this world; but when He wants to cause evil to His servant, He defers punishing him for his sin until He takes from him full payment for it on the Day of Resurrection.”

Shaykhul-Islām, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Afflictions may be held as a blessing, since they help obliterate sins, test one’s patience for which one is rewarded and call people to return to Allah in submission, etc. Therefore, tribulations are a means of mercy and blessing for all people, as they are expiations for sins. Only if a man commits sins out of impatience and despair about what afflicts him, tribulations then, in this case, will have bad consequences. When some people, for instance, are tried by poverty or some diseases, they may, out of impatience, indulge in hypocrisy, dissatisfaction, acts of disbelief, negligence of obligatory rituals and perpetration of prohibitions. All these consequences impair their faith. In such a case, it is better for such persons not to be tried, as they may fall into other sins besides their impatience with tribulations, and not because of the tribulations themselves. But if a trial leads to patience and obedience, it is certainly a blessing. Allah says, ‘Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy.’ (Qur’ān: Al-Baqarah: 157).”

One of the great divine reasons behind trials and afflictions is to test people to clearly prove those who are patient and content and those who are dissatisfied and angry. This is stated in the *hadith* in which the Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Great affliction entails great reward (from Allah); and if Allah, Exalted be He, loves a group of people, He tests them; whoever is satisfied will be deserving of satisfaction (from Allah), and whoever is dissatisfied will be deserving of (Allah’s) wrath.”

(Related and deemed *hasan* by At-Tirmidhi)

Satisfaction means submitting one’s soul to the commandments of Allah and trusting Him and seeking His rewards, while discontent implies abhorrence of the affliction and dissatisfaction with Allah’s Divine Decree.

According to the *hadith*, rewards are given in accordance with good deeds. It also implies that Allah may show contentment and pleasure with the acts of His bondmen. It also explains that all trials and tribulations have a Divine wisdom behind them. Similarly, it proves the necessity of having belief in Allah’s Divine Decree; all trials go in full compliance with His Will. Showing patience, repentance and reliance on Allah are, according to this *hadith*, of paramount importance when facing tribulations.

To help Muslims in facing the hardships and difficulties of this life, Allah commands us to hold onto prayer and being patient, as this leads to the happy end:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.” (Qur’an: Al-Baqarah: 153)

This Qur’anic verse shows the great virtue of patience and how man is in need of it, as it is one of the basic components of faith.

Utterances Impermissible to be Said about Allah

Almighty Allah should be highly revered and greatly venerated. There are a number of utterances, which do not suit Allah’s grandeur, and are prohibited according to the *Sunnah*. Such utterances are highlighted below. Among those profane words is to convey a greeting to Allah by saying, “Peace be upon Allah,” since the original meaning of this greeting implies an invocation for granting the greeted one safety. Since only Allah is to be besought to grant peace and security to others, it is improper to supplicate to grant Him peace and safety.

He is the Only One to be invoked, since He is the Self-Sufficient to Whom the dominion of the heaven and the earth belongs. So, Allah is free from all want and imperfection. Allah is the Sole Possessor of peace and the Sole Source of peace, bestowing it upon His servants and creation.

It is stated in a *sahih hadith* related by `Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd saying:

“Whenever we were with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in prayer, we used to say, ‘Peace be upon Allah from His servants, peace be upon so and so.’ Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Do not say ‘Peace be upon Allah,’ for Allah, Himself, is the Perfection.’ ”

Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As-Salâm (peace) is an Arabic verbal noun which connotes an invocation for granting peace. It is also regarded as one of the Sublime Attributes of Allah. Since a person intends to ask for peace and safety when using the Islamic formula of greeting (i.e. peace be with you), one of Allah’s Names (i.e. the Source of Peace) is used. In offering greetings in Islam, Muslims say, ‘Peace be with you’ which in addition to including one of the Sublime Attributes of Allah, implies an invocation to grant the greeted, eternal peace and security. This is what should be intended by the Muslim.”

Similarly, it is not proper, when invoking Allah to say, “O Allah forgive me if You wish!” When seeking something from Allah, one should not make one’s invocation contingent on Allah’s Will, but one should make it with determination having good thoughts that Allah will answer him. It is stated in a *sahih hadith* related by Abû Hurayrah saying:

“The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, ‘None of you should say ‘O Allah! Forgive me if You wish; O Allah, be Merciful to me if You wish,’ but he should always appeal to Allah with determination, for nobody can force Allah to do something against His Will.’ ”

(Related by Muslim)

“Appealing to Allah with certitude” means that one should not invoke Allah with ‘buts’ or ‘ifs’ but should make a definite supplication and insist upon it. It is prohibited to issue such utterances for two reasons:

- No one has the power to compel Allah to do something He does not will; He does only what He wills. Unlike Allah, the servant may be compelled to do things out of fear and the like.

- Making invocation contingent on Allah's Will shows the weakness of the appeal and the lack of desire in getting it answered; the lack of determination in this context implies that one is in no need of Allah.

In the other narration related by Muslim, the Prophet (PBUH) affirms that a supplication should be made in full confidence, and one should persistently express one's desire (before Allah) in one's supplication, for no bounty is too great for Allah to bestow (upon His slaves), even if this bounty seems too great in the eyes of others. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is."
(Qur'ân: Yâsîn: 82)

Similarly, it is impermissible to take an oath in Allah's Name that He will not do good to a particular person. In this regard, Jundub Ibn `Abdullâh (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"A man said, 'By Allah! Allah will not forgive so and so (person).' Thereupon, Allah, Exalted be He, said, 'Who is he who swears on My behalf that I would not forgive so and so; I have forgiven so and so and rendered your deeds worthless.'"

(Related by Imâm Muslim)

Some people become self-conceited as a result of their excessive worship to the point that they start criticizing and having low estimates of their fellow Muslims and their deeds; little knowing that Allah's forgiveness is vast. They do not realize that if Allah so wills, He can nullify all their deeds and consign them to Hell and send the other people who have been criticized and underestimated to Paradise. Therefore, one should never become proud of one's piety nor should one consider others' good deeds of little value, as Allah Alone knows what is inside our hearts.

As Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) commented:

"(The man in the hadîth) has uttered a word which deteriorated his affairs in this life and in the Hereafter."

Moreover, the *hadîth* illustrates the necessity of showing good manners and politeness in addressing Allah. It also refers to the prohibition of being self-conceited, despising fellow Muslims and taking an oath in the Name of Allah in a view that may imply limiting Allah's Omnipotence. It is permissible, though, for a man to have firm confidence in Allah and thus make an oath in His Name for the sake of begging His favors. The Prophet (PBUH) has said:

“There are some people amongst Allah’s servants whose oaths are fulfilled by Allah when they take them.”

The *ḥadīth* narrated by Jundub Ibn `Abdullāh demonstrates the danger of what one’s tongue utters and the necessity of preserving it and avoiding evil speech.

Also, Mu`ādh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Are we answerable for what we say?’ The Prophet (PBUH) replied, ‘May your mother lose you!’²⁰ O Mu`ādh! Does anything cause people to be cast in the Hellfire on their faces (or ‘...on their noses...,’ according to another narration) other than what their tongues utter?’ ”

(Related and deemed *ṣaḥīḥ* by At-Tirmidhī)

To conclude, a Muslim should not utter words which may show improper manners in addressing Allah. Such utterances may impair firm belief and, thus, contradict *Tawḥīd*. Therefore, it is not proper to say, *“Peace be upon Allah,”* since Allah is the Peace and the Peace-Giver. Greeting somebody implies invoking Allah to grant him peace. Allah should be the One invoked not the One invoked for.

Similarly, it is improper to say, *“O Allah, forgive me if You wish!”* One should not supplicate with ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’; rather, one should make a definite invocation and insist upon it. It is also prohibited to take an oath in Allah’s Name that He will not grant forgiveness or mercy to so and so. It indicates prevention of Allah’s mercy and implies mistrust in Him. In addition to these prohibited sayings, a Muslim should not say, *“By the will of Allah and so and so,”* since it implies a combination of Allah’s Will and man’s wish. There is no rival to or an associate with Allah. On the other hand, it is permissible to say, *“By the will of Allah then so and so.”* That is because connecting by the conjunction ‘then’ connotes sequence; man’s will is subsequent to that of Allah.

Therefore, a Muslim is in need to be well acquainted with the prerequisites of true belief as well as the matters invalidating *Tawḥīd*, so that he may worship Allah on crystal grounds.



The Third Aspect:

Believing in the Oneness of Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes

We have explained before that monotheism is of three major categories: *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah* (Believing in Allah's Lordship), *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* (Believing in Allah's Divinity) and *Tawhîdul-Asmâ' was-Sifât* (Believing in the oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes). We have tackled the first two categories of *Tawhîd* and indicated that each type of them has been repudiated by different groups of people.

Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah, on the one hand, has been repudiated by *Al-Mu'attilah*, who deny the existence of Allah in the same way the atheists do. Communists are also included in this category. Although they apparently renounce belief in Allah out of their own ignorance, they tacitly acknowledge His existence. Indeed, it is implausible to argue or doubt the existence of a creature as having no creator.

The second category of *Tawhîd* (*Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah*), has been repudiated by most people. Allah has invited people to devote worship to Him Alone by dispatching Messengers and revealing His Scriptures. Disbelievers, over time, have renounced the concept of *Tawhîdul-Ulûhiyyah* by worshipping trees, stones, idols, graves and through adoring Sufi saints and acknowledging them as sources of good and evil.

The third category, *Tawhîdul-Asmâ' was-Sifât*, implies describing Allah with attributes of perfection stated by Allah Himself and His Messenger, and disclaiming any attributes of deficiencies alleged against Allah and which have been negated by Allah Himself and His Messenger. This is according to what is defined in the Qur'anic verse, in which Allah says:

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing."
(Qur'an: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

This category of *Tawhîd* has been repudiated by the Jahmiyyah²¹ and their followers among the Mu'tazilah (Mutazilites)²² and the Ash'ariyyah²³. Though this type of *Tawhîd* is categorized under *Tawhîdur-Rubûbiyyah*, it was independently discussed and researched due to the large number of its opponents, and thus many books have been written on it.

While Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, for instance, wrote his prominent confutation against the Jahmiyyah, his son, `Abdullâh, wrote a book entitled 'As-Sunnah (i.e., The Prophetic Tradition)' for the same purpose. Among others who refuted the Jahmiyyah's views is `Abdul-`Azîz. Al-Kinânî who wrote a book entitled 'Al-Haydah (i.e., Deviation from the Truth) in refutation of `Ali Ibn Bishrul-Mirrîsî's views that were further refuted in `Uthmân Ibn Sa`id's book entitled 'Ar-Rad `alâ Bishrul-Mirrîsî (i.e., Answering Bishrul-Mirrîsî).' The prominent scholar Muḥammad Ibn Khuzaymah has also authored a book entitled 'At-Tawḥîd (Monotheism)' for the same purpose. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyah and his disciple, Ibnul-Qayyim and many of their followers refuted such false doctrines.

The earliest known to deny Allah's Sublime Attributes were some of the polytheists among the Arabs, regarding whom Allah revealed the Qur'anic verse:

"Thus have We sent you to a community before which [other] communities have passed on so you might recite to them that which We revealed to you, while they disbelieve in the Most Merciful..."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Ra`d: 30)

The occasion of the revelation of this verse was that the Arabs, upon hearing the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) referring to Allah as Ar-Raḥmân (the Entirely and Most Merciful), disapproved of Ar-Raḥmân as one of Allah's Attributes. Therefore, Allah revealed:

"... While they disbelieve in the Most Merciful..."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Ra`d: 30)

Ibn Jarîr maintained that the verse was revealed in connection with the occasion of Al-Hudaybiyah Treaty, when the Prophet's scribe prefaced the treaty with 'Bismillâhir-Raḥmânir-Raḥîm (i.e., In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful).' The people of Quraysh, then said, "We do not acknowledge Ar-Raḥmân."

Ibn Jarîr further related on the authority of Ibn `Abbâs that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to invoke Allah while prostrating in prayer by referring to Him as Ar-Raḥmân Ar-Raḥîm. Thereupon, the polytheists said, "He claims that he invokes only one God while he actually worships two." Therefore, Allah revealed the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

"Say, 'Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful [Ar-Raḥmân]. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the Best Names..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 110)

And another verse, which provides:

“And when it is said to them, ‘Prostrate to the Most Merciful,’ they say, ‘And what is the Most Merciful?’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Furqân: 60)

Those polytheists among the Arabs are the predecessors of the Jahmiyyah and Ash`ariyyah who were the first to renounce Allah’s Best Names and Sublime Attributes. How wretched the predecessors and how wretched the successors! In this context, Allah provides:

“... Will you take him and his descendants as allies other than Me while they are enemies to you? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Kahf: 50)

As for the Messengers, especially Muḥammad, the Seal of the Messengers, and their followers and those who follow in their footsteps, they refer to Allah according to what He actually describes Himself with, denounce what He negates and dispraise whoever rejects this view.

‘Abdur-Razzâq As-San`ânî related from Ma`mar from Ibn Tâwûs, who narrated from his father that Ibn `Abbâs once saw a man who was trembling out of disapproval upon hearing a Prophetic *hadîth* tackling the issue of Allah’s Sublime Attributes. Thereupon, he (Ibn `Abbâs) said:

“Why do these people fear such issues? They accept what is precise (in meaning) and fear what is unspecific (and consequently they may reject it or misinterpret it).”

Ibn `Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) referred to a group of people who used to regularly attend his sessions. Upon receiving precisely clear and unambiguous Qur’anic and/or Prophetic sayings, which tackle Allah’s Sublime Attributes, they would tremble and refused to recognize it. They are very much like those whom Allah condemns in the Qur’ân:

“...As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]...”

(Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 7)

According to the Qur’anic verse, they follow the verses that are unspecific and set aside verses which have precise meanings. In other words, they believe in some parts of the Book and renounce the rest.

All texts that are concerned with Allah's Sublime Attributes are precise. Therefore, Muslims read them, fully comprehend their clear meanings and do not denounce or disapprove of any of them.

Wakī' said, "We observed Al-A`mash and Sufyān narrating *hadiths* pertaining to expressing Allah's Sublime Attributes without denying them." Such *hadiths* were only denounced by heretics among the Jahmiyyah, Mutazilites and Ash`ariyyah, who followed the deviated path of the early Meccan polytheists. They all disbelieved in Allah and renounced His Best Names.

Almighty Allah provides:

"And to Allah belong the Best Names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His Names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing."
(Qur`ān: Al-A`rāf: 180)

Allah, according to this Qur`anic verse, ascertains that the Best Names belong to Him. Moreover, He commands the Muslims to call on Him by these Best Names. How should He be invoked through names He never clarified or even introduced?! Furthermore, Allah threatens with chastisement those who deny His Names, or misinterpret them. Additionally, He describes them as disbelievers according to the Qur`anic verse, which provides:

"...They disbelieve in the Most Merciful..."

(Qur`ān: Ar-Ra`d: 30)

According to this verse, a great number of *Sunnis* consider the Jahmiyyah disbelievers.

The Necessity of Revering Allah's Names, Glorified be He

Almighty Allah says:

"And to Allah belong the Best Names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His Names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing."
(Qur`ān: Al-A`rāf: 180)

He, further, says:

"Allah – there is no deity except Him. To Him belongs the Best Names."

(Qur`ān: Tā-hā: 8)

Allah indicates that all His Names are absolutely beautiful and ultimately elegant. Such Names express the attributes of unique and matchless perfection and the sublime traits of His incomparable Majesty. Allah's Names are only revealed to us by Him; therefore, it is not possible to invoke or call upon Him by names other than those defined by Him or by His Messenger. As for His saying, "*So invoke Him by them*" (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 180), it means that we should ask for His favors and implore His blessings by invoking by these Names, such as saying:

"O Allah, forgive me and have mercy upon me, for You are the All-Forgiving and the Especially Merciful."

Allah's Names are too numerous to be counted. The knowledge of some of these Names are solely limited to Him; neither a close angel nor a Prophet has knowledge about them. According to the *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"O Allah! I invoke You by every name that You have and that You called Yourself by, sent down in Your book, taught to any of Your creatures, or kept with You in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You."

Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Allah's Best Names are of three categories: The first category involves those Names conveyed to whom He wishes of the angels and other bondmen and which are not revealed in any of His Books. The second category involves those Names mentioned in His Book and thus are known to His bondmen. The third category involves those Names exclusively known by Him Alone."

The command conveyed in His Words "*...And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His Names.*" (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 180) is an instruction for the believers to keep away from those who deny Allah's Best Names; Allah takes upon Himself to punish them. Therefore, He concludes the Qur'anic verse with the clause, "*...They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.*" (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 180) Denial of Allah's Names may be expressed by either misinterpreting their meanings or misrepresenting what they imply.

Disbelief in Allah's Names may be expressed in a number of ways:

1. Giving an idol any of Allah's Names such as naming an idol as Al-Lât, being derived from the Arabic word 'Ilâh,' which means God, or naming another idol Al-'Uzzâ, being derived from the word 'Al-'Aziz' (the Exalted in Might), one of Allah's Best Names.

2. Depicting Allah with names deemed inappropriate for His infinite majesty, such as the name 'Father' used by the Christians. Also included in this category is the philosopher's claim that Allah is an efficient cause; that is they say that He influences other things without having any free choice Himself.
3. Portraying Allah in terms showing deficiencies. To give an example, the wicked among the Jews allege that Allah is poor, and while creating the heavens, He took some rest on Saturday. They, further, claim that His Hand is chained i.e. He does not spend or give out of His bounty.
4. Misusing the proper implications of Allah's Best Names, such as the Jahmiyyah's claim that such names are abstract and meaningless. Despite admitting that Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, they further allege the absence of hearing and sight. This claim, according to the dictates of the Sharī'ah (Islamic Law) and sound reason, is one of the gravest sins of atheism. It is similar to acts of atheism perpetrated by early polytheists. While the polytheists describe their idols with attributes which are solely Allah's, the Jahmiyyah disregard His ultimate perfection and deny the meanings of His Names and Attributes.

It is obligatory to approve of His Names and Attributes without misusing or misinterpreting their meanings and without comparing Him to any of His creatures according to what is defined in the Qur'ān:

"...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing."
(Qur'ān: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

Believing in the Oneness of Allah's Best Names and Attributes also necessitates that His Names are not to be given to any of His creatures. Abû Shurayh narrated that he used to be nicknamed Abû Al-Hakam (i.e., the father of the Judge). Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Allah is the Judge and to Him belongs all judgment." The man, therefore, said, "My people, when being differed on a matter, they used to call me for arbitration. When I arbitrated, both (quarrelling) parties used to submit to my judgment." Hence, the Messenger of Allah said, "What a great act you do! But do you have a son?" He said, "I have Shurayh, Muslim and 'Abdullâh." The Messenger asked him, "Who is the eldest?" He said, "Shurayh." The Messenger said to him, "Then, you may be nicknamed the father of Shurayh."

The Prophet (PBUH) changed this man's nickname out of reverence to Allah's Best Names, for Allah is the Judge, and to Him belongs the ultimate judgment, and to Him all affairs and disputes are referred. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Ra`d: 41)

Allah is certainly the Judge in this life and in the Hereafter. He sends down His judgment amongst His bondmen in this life by means of His rules which are written in His Revelation and through His Omniscience in the Hereafter. Moreover, the aforementioned *hadîth* similarly indicated that it is prohibited to name anyone after any of the Best Names of Allah.

Revering Allah also necessitates, when calling one's slaves, whether men or women, not to summon them using words such as 'my slave,' since Allah is the only Master of all creatures. It is related in the Authentic Books of *Hadîth* on the authority of Abû Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"None of you is to say, 'Feed your rabb'²⁴ or help your rabb in performing ablution,' but should say, 'My master, or my guardian.' And one should not say 'My slave, or my slave girl,' but should say 'My lad, my maid, or my boy.'"

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) prohibited calling or being called by titles such as *rabb*, slave, etc. This is because such titles may imply polytheism. Therefore, it is more proper for a master to address his servants using words like 'maid' or 'young man' instead of 'slave' or 'bondwoman' and for the servant to address his master by calling him 'leader' or 'sir.'

Out of reverence to Allah, man should never let down anyone asking for something in the Name of Allah. Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Whoever seeks refuge with Allah, grant him shelter and whoever seeks something in the Name of Allah, grant him what he asks for."

Whoever deprives a man who asks in the Name of Allah is regarded as showing irreverence to Allah. Conversely, the one who generously grants the seeker what he asks for in such an occasion, is regarded as showing reverence to Allah.

Veneration of Allah's Best Names also necessitates that one should not invoke by Allah's Face, as a means of honoring, except when asking for Paradise. Jâbir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

"Nothing but Paradise should be asked for in Allah's Face."

(Related by Abû Dâwûd)

Put differently, one should not ask, by Allah's Face, for trivial worldly matters; rather, asking by Allah's Face should be for the utmost goal, i.e. Paradise. Similarly, veneration of Allah's Names requires abstaining from taking too many oaths in His Names. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...But guard your oaths..." (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 89)

Ibn `Abbâs has maintained:

"The command included in this Qur'anic verse means that we should not excessively swear by Allah's Names because taking excessive oaths by Allah shows irreverence to Him. In effect, it contradicts the perfection of due belief in Him."

Salmân (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

"There are three (types of) people to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, nor look at them, and they will have a painful chastisement. These are an aged man who commits zinâ (adultery or fornication), a proud poor person and a man who trades in Allah's Name; he only purchases and sells by taking oaths."

(Related by At-Tabarânî with an authentic chain of transmission)

"A man who trades in Allah's Name" is the one who trades by taking too many oaths. This hadîth implies the gravity of such a detestable act, which shows irreverence to Allah's Sublime Attributes and Names.

Showing due reverence to Allah also necessitates that a Muslim never uses Allah's Names as a means of intercession with others. This is due to the fact that intercession entails that the one interceded by (i.e., Allah in this case) is lower in rank than the one interceded before. **Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î** (may Allah have mercy on him) said, *"Intercession is only sought by one of a lower status before a superior and no one is superior to Allah."*

A Bedouin came to Allah's Messenger (PBUH), complaining to him of drought and the harm which afflicted properties, and asked him to invoke Allah for rain for his people and added:

“...for we seek Allah’s intercession with you and yours with Him on our behalf.” The Messenger (PBUH) said, “Exalted is Allah! Exalted is Allah!” And he continued exalting Allah until there appeared on the faces of his Companions that they were afraid (because of the Prophet’s anger). Then he (PBUH) said, “Woe unto you! Do you not know who Allah is? Allah is Greater than that; it is not proper to intercede by Allah to one of His creatures.”

Allah’s Majesty is exceedingly great. Intercession can be sought only from Allah for the one with whom He is pleased.

Understanding Allah’s Attributes and Names: Adherents of Sunnah Method and their Followers

The creed of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and the Muslim Community, who are generally regarded as the most authoritative group among the Muslims, is to approve of all the Best Names and Sublime Attributes of Allah as enunciated in the Qur’ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, fully accepting what they have explicitly stipulated in this regard.

Establishing the Names of Allah according to what is clearly demonstrated in the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* does not necessarily imply striking a similarity between Allah, Glorified be He, and any of His creatures. The Attributes of Allah are solely appropriate for and exclusively confined to Him and the qualities of His creatures are particularly confined to them. Not only does there exist a clear distinction between the Attributes of Allah and the qualities of His creatures, but man’s being is also distinguished from Allah’s Divine One. The doctrine of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and the Muslim Community are established on intact and sound foundations, which may be stated as follows:

1. Allah’s Best Names and Sublime Attributes are only received from Him; they do not establish for Allah except that which He has established for Himself. Put differently, the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and the Muslim Community only testify to what Allah has enunciated in His Book and what the Messenger (PBUH) has explicitly demonstrated in the *Sunnah*. They do not approve of any attribute or name out of their own personal thinking. They, moreover, do not disapprove of any attribute or deny any of His Names without clear evidence from the Qur’ān or the *Sunnah*. Their rational thinking does not, thus, go beyond the limits of what is explicitly dictated in the Glorious Qur’ān and the Noble *Sunnah*. As for questions not clearly explained in the Qur’ān or the *Sunnah*, such as substance and essence, Those Muslims have given up arguing over them.

2. The description of Allah, according to what He and His Prophet have stated, is the absolute truth and does not involve any mysteries or enigmas. Therefore, the adherents of the Sunnah establish the validity and truth of Allah's Sublime Attributes and their rational meanings. Additionally, all texts tackling Allah's Attributes are not of an unspecific nature and, thus, are not susceptible to differing interpretations. If we admit that such texts are not easily apprehended by intellect, they will be further regarded as texts of ambiguous nature. Since Allah has commanded us to fully contemplate the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an and completely apprehend its significances, the texts, enunciating the Attributes of Allah, must be clearly and explicitly apprehensible. Had these texts been inapprehensible, Allah would have been regarded as commanding us to attentively and thoroughly contemplate unintelligible matters or directing us to have a conviction about things which are not fully explained or made clear. Exalted be Allah above such a thing.

Hence, the significance of Allah's Attributes is well known and, therefore, we should believe in them. As far as their intrinsic natures are concerned, only Allah knows them. For this reason, **Imâm Mâlik Ibn Anas** (may Allah be pleased with him), upon being asked about the nature of Allah's *istiwa'* (i.e. being over the Throne in a manner that suits His Majesty) above His Mighty Throne according to what is maintained in the Qur'anic verse which states, "***The Most Merciful [Who is] above the Throne established***" (Qur'an: Tâ-Hâ: 5), he said, "*The fact that He rises over the Throne is known, but how He rises is unknown. He added questioning about how He rises is a Bid'ah (i.e., an act innovated in religion).*"

Imâm Mâlik's view regarding Allah's *istiwa'* is the authoritative opinion applicable to all the other Attributes of Allah. It is regarded as the doctrine accepted by the Adherents of the Sunnah and the Muslim Community. Thus, whoever falsely believes that the Salaf (early Muslims scholars) regard the texts, which tackle Allah's Attributes as of an unspecific nature and are, thus, apprehended by Allah Alone, has attributed a false allegation to them.

3. The Salaf approve of the Attributes of Allah without making any similarity between Allah's Attributes and those of mankind. Allah is unique and has no match, equal, partner or rival. Making a similarity between the Attributes of Allah and those of His creatures is null and

void, since such a claimed similarity should be based on full knowledge of the essence and nature of Allah's Attributes. As the knowledge of the essence of Allah's attributes fully relies on the understanding of His own intrinsic nature, which is solely known by Him, it seems utterly impossible to realize the essence of His Sublime Attributes. Consequently, both Allah's Attributes and Nature are not similar in any way to those of any of His creatures. In this regard, Allah says, **"...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing."** (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11), i.e. no one is similar to Him in His nature, attributes or acts.

Therefore, we must believe in Allah's Attributes as portrayed by Him Alone, since there is no one more cognizant of Allah's Names and Traits than Him Alone. He says:

"... Are you more knowing or is Allah?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 140)

Similarly, we must believe in Allah's Attributes as depicted by the Prophet, for he is second only to Allah in knowing Allah's Sublime Attributes. Talking about His Messenger, Almighty Allah provides:

"Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed."

(Qur'ân: An-Najm: 3-4)

Every legally accountable Muslim is thus obliged to believe in Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes as depicted by Him and His Messenger. Every Muslim is also obliged to refrain from comparing Allah's Attributes to any of those of His creatures.

Similarly, whosoever dares to disapprove of Allah's Sublime Attributes, which He and His Messenger have assigned, by claiming that such Attributes are not appropriate for Allah, though they are depicted by Him, is not regarded as a believer. Likewise, how should we regard as a believer the one who improperly misinterprets Allah's Attributes, falsely negates them or frequently refers to misconceived views of philosophers, as Jahmiyyah and Mutazilites do, instead of referring to the Qur'ân or the Sunnah to understand their meanings!

4. The Adherents of the Sunnah and the Muslim Community approve all the Attributes which Allah and His Messenger have affirmed. In addition, such Sublime Attributes are portrayed in a way appropriate for Allah's Majesty without comparing such Attributes to those of His

creatures. They, moreover, refrain from attributing any deficiency, insufficiency or inadequacy to Allah. In doing so, they never deny or even misinterpret any of His Attributes. The view of the Adherents of the Sunnah and the Muslim Community takes the moderate path, which does not deny Allah's Attributes or compares them with anything else. To conclude, they avoid denying any of Allah's Attributes when depicting His perfection and faultlessness and avoid comparisons when proving His Sublime Attributes.

5. The view adopted by the Adherents of the Sunnah and the Muslim Community in approving of Allah's Sublime Attributes and disapproving of any imperfection is taken from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Their doctrine may be consistent in generally disapproving of any deficiency claimed and approving of every possible attribute of perfection. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"... There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing." (Qur'an: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

Accordingly, while negating any deficiency in general terms, Allah details His attributes of perfection by saying:

"...He is the Hearing and the Seeing." (Qur'an: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

Negating any deficiency necessarily entails a corresponding proven perfection. It is not, therefore, a pure negation of defects, which does not involve praise, but a negation which proves utter perfection. An instance of a negation entailing the affirmation of Allah's Perfection is mentioned in Allah's saying:

"...And your Lord does injustice to no one."

(Qur'an: Al-Kahf: 49)

Thus, in addition to rejecting the possibility of Allah being unjust, the verse implies the assertion of Him having perfect justice. Similarly, as fatigue was disapproved of Him in His saying, ***"... And their preservation tires Him not..."*** (Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 255), His Omnipotence was consequently established. Likewise, by disclaiming any sleep or slumber overtaking Him in His saying, ***"...Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep"*** (Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 255), everlasting life and self-subsistence are necessarily proven. Hence, every defect negated or disapproved affirms the inevitable existence of its opposite; that is negating deficiencies entails affirming perfection.

Understanding Allah's Attributes and Names: Jahmiyyah Method and their Followers

A Muslim should approve of Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes in a way which seems appropriate for His Majesty and Greatness and in accordance with what is stipulated in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). This conviction is one of the prerequisites of a Muslim's creed. Moreover, it is the view of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and the Muslim Community, who only keep hold to Allah's Book and the Prophet's *Sunnah* as the sole references in this respect. By contrast, the Jahmiyyah and their followers among the Mutazilites and Ash'ariyyah disapprove of, out of their obstinacy, all or some of Allah's Attributes and Names He has assigned to Himself. They only refer to their own intellects, which are limited in all the sense of the word, in deciding what is due to Allah and what is inappropriate for Him. Certainly, there is a great distinction between those who regularly refer to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in understanding the Attributes of Allah and those who often refer to personal inclinations and obsessions. The latter misinterpret texts which express Allah's Sublime Attributes according to their own futile and vain thoughts.

Glorified be Allah, the Most Forbearing and the Most Clement! Such people disclaim the Sublime Attributes of utmost perfection, which Allah has stated in His Glorious Book. They contradict the dictates of Allah's Books and prefer their own futile thoughts and unavailing views. Moreover, they deny the Attributes and Names of Allah and the authenticity and guidance of the Qur'an.

Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) described those deviating sects as follows:

"Whosoever wrongly thinks that Allah depicts Himself or portrays His Attributes and Actions in a way which seemingly bears comparison to those of mankind is regarded as retaining wrong thoughts about his Lord. This category also involves whoever falsely believes that Allah refers to His attributes in a mysterious language and explicitly makes a similarity between Himself and His creation. Moreover, whoever presumes that Allah intends to put His servants in hardship by compelling them to alter His Words or misinterpret their meanings is certainly held as retaining evil thoughts about Allah. In addition, whoever deems that Allah compels people to refer to their own intellects and personal views in understanding His Attributes, instead of referring them to Allah's Book, retains wrong thoughts about his Lord. By the same token, whoever presumes Allah as compelling mankind to resort

to unjustifiable or implicit explanations of His speech, despite His ability to explicitly express the truth in unambiguous terms, is certainly regarded as keeping wrong thoughts about his Lord. If a man argues that Allah is incompetent to express the truth in unequivocal terms, he will be held as wrongly attributing deficiency to Allah. Similarly, if a man argues that Allah is competent to express the truth in unequivocal terms, but He inclines to ambiguity, which results in false beliefs, such a man will be regarded as mistrusting Allah's Wisdom and Mercy. As for those who deem that they could express the truth in clear language while Allah and His Messenger could not, and claim that true guidance and truth lie in their own speech while the words of Allah only imply resemblances and doubtful meanings, they are the ones who maintain the worst and vilest thoughts about Allah. Furthermore, whoever wrongly believes that Allah completely lacks hearing, sight, knowledge and free will, or that He lacks speech by which He can communicate with His creatures, is considered as retaining wrong thoughts about Allah. Additionally, whoever wrongly presumes that Allah does not establish Himself above His Mighty Throne is truly keeping evil thoughts about Him."

Ibnul-Qayyim in the aforementioned quotation meant the Jahmiyyah, the Mutazilites and Ash`ariyyah who denied all attributes of perfection due to Almighty Allah. By denying such attributes, they conversely attached deficiencies to Allah. By contradicting the Qur`an and the *Sunnah*, should such deviating sects be held more knowledgeable than Allah and His Messenger? What a great error they commit! How should we believe that such a group of ignorant people are more knowledgeable than Almighty Allah Who says:

"He [i.e., Allah] knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, but they do not encompass it [i.e., what He knows] in knowledge."
(Qur`an: Tâ-Hâ: 110)

Moreover, no one but Allah's Messenger (PBUH) knows best about Allah and His appropriate Attributes.

Only misunderstanding and ignorance have led the Jahmiyyah and their followers to deny Allah's Attributes which have been established by Him and His Messenger. The Jahmiyyah presume that approving of such Attributes which may be identified in mankind, necessarily leads to anthropomorphism. They have reached this conclusion because they

make no distinction between the Attributes of Allah and the qualities of mankind. Thus, they do not perceive that the Attributes of Allah are only appropriate for Him Alone, while those of mankind are appropriate for them. There is no similarity between Allah's Attributes and those of mankind as there is no similarity between His Being and theirs. Allah, thus, provides:

“...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing.”
(Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

In this Qur'anic verse, Allah proves His possession of hearing and sight without making them comparable to the hearing and sight of His creatures. This indicates that proving the possession of some attributes does not entail similarity between the Creator and His creatures. According to this fundamental principle, the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and the Muslim Community believe in Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes. They approve of what He has stated about Himself without comparisons and deny what He has denied without any misinterpretation.

The Jahmiyyah and their followers of the Mutazilites and Ash`ariyyah founded their doctrine on the false assumption that by accepting Allah's Attributes, a corresponding resemblance between Him and His creatures should follow. They substantiated their views either through deliberate misinterpretation of explicit texts or claiming that they have no knowledge of such texts thinking that they bear meanings other than their apparent ones.

Refutation of Anthropomorphism and Denial of Allah's Divine Attributes

Those who have deviated from the straight path of the *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) are of two major groups, namely proponents of anthropomorphism and deniers of Allah's Sublime Attributes.

First, the proponents of anthropomorphism draw up a resemblance between Allah and His creatures and describe Him with human traits, bodily form, and emotions. This view is traced back to Hishâm Ibnul-Hakam Ar-Râfidî and Bayân Ibn Sam`ân At-Tamîmî, to whom Al-Bayâniyyah (an extreme sub-branch of Shiites) is ascribed. The proponents of anthropomorphism, such as Hishâm Ibn Sâlim Al-Jawâliqî and Dâwûd Al-Jawâribî, have attributed to Allah many deficiencies, which are not appropriate for Him or approved of by His Messenger (PBUH).

According to the Glorious Qur'ân, Allah has forbidden both acts of striking parables and holding similarities between His Attributes and the traits of mankind. He says:

"...There is nothing like unto Him..." (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

And:

"...Do you know of any similarity to Him?"
(Qur'ân: Maryam: 65)

He also says:

"Nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Qur'ân: Al-Ikhlâs: 4)

Furthermore, Allah, Exalted be He, provides:

"So do not assert similarities to Allah..."
(Qur'ân: An-Nahl: 74)

Therefore, whosoever compares Allah's Attributes to those of His creatures is actually an idolater worshipping an image drawn by his sick imagination.

Ibnul-Qayyim has provided, *"We never compare His Attributes to ours. Verily, the one who does so is an idolater."*

In this regard, whoever compares the Attributes of Allah to human traits is like the Christians who worship Jesus, son of Mary (PBUH). **Ibnul-Qayyim** has also maintained, *"And whoever compares Allah to any of His creatures is certainly close to the belief of Christians."*

Nu'aym Ibn Hammâd, the sheikh (tutor) of Imâm Al-Bukhârî (may Allah have mercy on them both) said:

"Those who compare Allah to anyone of His creatures have disbelieved and whoever denies an Attribute of Allah, which is mentioned by Him or stated by His Messenger, is regarded as a disbeliever. In addition, depicting Allah according to what He and His Messenger have stated is not considered anthropomorphism."

Second, those who deny the well-established Attributes of Allah, who are known as Al-Mu`attilah, allege that recognizing Allah's Attributes necessarily requires incarnation and anthropomorphism. This false doctrine is traced back to the followers of the Jews, polytheists and deviating Sabians. Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham was the first to declare this

false allegation at the beginnings of the 2nd C. A.H. Al-Jahm Ibn Safwân received this wicked doctrine from Al-Ja`d and proclaimed it to people. Afterwards, it was dispersed among the followers of the Mutazilites and Ash`ariyyah. From this, we realize that the earliest origins of this doctrine are traced back to the Jews, the Sabians, the polytheists and the philosophers.

There is no agreement among these sects with regard to the extent of the well-established Attributes of Allah they deny. While the Jahmiyyah, for instance, deny Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes, the Mutazilites approve of Allah's Best Names devoid of their explicit and widely accepted meanings and reject Allah's Sublime Attributes. The Ash`ariyyah, on the other hand, approve of Allah's Best Names and only seven of His Sublime Attributes, namely, Knowledge, Everlastingness, Omnipotence, Will, Hearing, Sight and Speech.

The main argument usually given by them in this context is that complete approval of Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes requires similarity and anthropomorphism. Consequently, since Allah is not comparable to mankind, such attributes, according to their own belief, are not physically present in Him. They support their argumentation with Allah's saying, "***There is nothing like unto Him.***" According to their belief, denying and negating Allah's Attributes lead to making Allah above all deficiencies; therefore, they call the one affirming Allah's Attributes as 'mushabih' (i.e. one setting a similarity between Allah and His creatures). They interpret explicit texts in this regard in two ways:

1. Although they admit the authenticity of texts related to Allah's Attributes, they do not provide a decisive and conclusive interpretation for them. They do not maintain a particular interpretation, but, instead, they refer the knowledge of their meanings to Allah Alone. They, further, allege that such a belief is the belief of the *Salaf*, which is the sound view.
2. They falsely interpret the real meanings of these texts in an innovative way and ascribe such false interpretations to the *Khalaf* (late Muslim scholars).

To refute their fallacy, the Glorious Qur`ân absolutely negates the existence of any aspect of similarity between Allah's Attributes and the qualities of mankind. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, provides:

"...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing." (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

He also says:

"...Do you know of any similarity to Him?" (Qur'ân: Maryam: 65)

Allah, Exalted be He, also provides:

"Nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Qur'ân: Al-Ikhlâs: 4)

In addition, He says:

"...So do not attribute to Allah equals..." (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah:22)

He, moreover, maintains:

"So do not assert similarities to Allah..." (Qur'ân: An-Nahl: 74)

Although Allah absolutely rejects any probable similarity between Him and others, He states all Attributes, which ascertain His utter perfection. This is illustrated in His saying:

"...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing." (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

In this verse, while disapproving of any possible similarity or comparison between Himself and mankind, He states the existence of His Hearing and Sight. Despite stating these two attributes, which may be identified in a different way in mankind, Allah does not admit the concept of anthropomorphism. Ascribing every possible perfection and denying any deficiency to Allah are oft coupled in the Glorious Qur'ân. This is the doctrine of our righteous *Salaf* who approve of Allah's Attributes and disapprove of anthropomorphism.

Therefore, those who disclaim Allah's Attributes due to their being identified in others, have wrongly denounced what Allah has explicitly established for Himself. These sects have been led astray by misinterpreting the meanings of these Attributes, as they have assumed that affirming Allah's Attributes implies setting-up a similarity between Allah and creatures. This misunderstanding has led them to deny Attributes Allah has stated about Himself. Consequently, such persons have done to Allah what is not

appropriate for Him. If their intentions had been free of any remnants of these false beliefs, they would have realized that Allah's Attributes are too perfect and glorious to make room for visualizing any similarity between Allah's Attributes and human traits. Only by purifying their hearts of these false convictions, their hearts may be ready to receive true belief, making Allah above all deficiencies. But those who have presumed that Allah's Attributes are similar to those of His creatures have not fully or properly apprehended Allah's Majesty or given Him due praise. Moreover, they have failed to make a just estimate of Allah's due rights. Consequently, they not only misinterpret and deny Allah's established Attributes, but they also accuse those who believe in Allah's Attributes which are established according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of setting-up a similarity between Allah and His creatures. In fact those accusers are the ones who have first compared Allah's Attributes to those of His creatures, then denied such Attributes; there is neither help nor strength save through Allah!

In his confutation of the fallacies of the *Jahmiyyah*, the prominent scholar **Imâm Abû Bakr Muhammad Ibn Khuzaymah** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The Jahmiyyah (may the curses of Allah fall on them) accuse the Adherents of the Sunnah and the followers of the Messenger and his Companions, who fully believe in Allah's Book and in His Messenger's Sunnah and only refer to what Allah has explained in His most Authentic Book when approving of His Attributes, of anthropomorphism. Such an accusation is out of their ignorance about the Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunnah and the language, through which we have been addressed in the Qur'an."

Then he (may Allah have mercy on him) added:

"We, along with all other scholars in Muslim territories, admit that our Lord possesses a face, which, in addition to being filled with majesty and honor, enjoys an everlasting life. The Face of our Lord, Glorified be He, is illumined with light, glory and brightness, which if once revealed, it may burn every single object that sees it. We, on the contrary, prove that people possess faces, which will definitely perish. Faces of mankind are created by Allah; that is, Allah has created them from nothing. Moreover, these faces are mortal. Allah will, further, resurrect them after death and then lead them to enter either Paradise or Hellfire."

Imâm Abû Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Khuzaymah (may Allah have mercy on him) went on saying:

“Therefore, does it seem acceptable for anyone who masters the language of the Arabs and knows its styles to claim that both faces are similar or comparable? Is there a similitude between the Face of our Lord as described in the Qur’ân and the Sunnah and the faces of mankind? If we claim that our scholars admit a resemblance between Allah’s Face and those of mankind, one may consequently allege a resemblance between the faces of mankind and those of pigs, monkeys, donkeys, mules, serpents and scorpions. I do believe that if a man were allowed to make a comparison between the face of a pig or a dog or a monkey and the face of one of the Jahmiyyah, such a Jahmite would absolutely be raged”.

To conclude, we should admit that if anyone accuses the people who take hold of the Qur’ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet of making comparisons between Allah and His creatures, such an accusation should be regarded as false, fake and null. In effect, such an accusation runs contrary to the instructions of the Qur’ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet and, moreover, does not accord with the proper understanding of the Arabic style used in relevant texts.

Those who deny Allah’s Sublime Attributes amongst the Jahmiyyah deny any Attribute whether it has been revealed in the Glorious Qur’ân or proclaimed by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Using Attributes of Allah in describing some of His creatures in the Qur’ân has been argued by the Jahmiyyah as a justification of denying Allah’s Attributes and thus accusing those approving of them of anthropomorphism; however, such a belief originally goes back to their ignorance about the true knowledge.

To refute this false allegation, one may argue that while depicting Himself as the All-Hearing and the All-Seeing in His saying, “...He is the Hearing and the Seeing.” (Qur’ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11), He, on the other hand, depicts man as possessing faculties of hearing and seeing. To substantiate this view, Allah provides:

“...And We made him hearing and seeing.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Insân: 2)

Similarly, according to the Qur'ân, Allah is depicted as having sight. He says:

"And say, 'Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers.'" (Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 105)

And says:

"...I am with you both; I hear and I see." (Qur'ân: Tâ-Hâ: 46)

In this verse, Allah informs us that He will see people's deeds and that His Messenger, who is a human just like them, will see their deeds as well.

Mankind, on the other hand, are also depicted as possessing the capacity to see:

"Do they not see the birds controlled in the atmosphere of the sky?" (Qur'ân: An-Nahl: 79)

He also says:

"And construct the ship under Our observation..." (Qur'ân: Hûd: 37)

Allah, moreover, states His possession of eyes as mentioned in the Qur'ân:

"And be patient, [O Muhammad], for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are in Our eyes [i.e., sight]..." (Qur'ân: At-Tûr: 48)

And also states people's possession of eyes in His saying:

"...You see their eyes overflowing with tears..." (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 83)

Allah depicts Himself as possessing hands while addressing Satan in the Qur'anic verse:

"...What prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My Hands?" (Qur'ân: Sâd: 75)

According to the Qur'anic verse in which He says, "...Rather, both His Hands are extended; He spends however He wills..." (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 64), not only does Allah state that He has hands Himself and that mankind has hands as well, but He also mentions that they are two in number.

Does depicting Allah in the same way expressed in the above-mentioned verses necessarily require anthropomorphism as alleged by those transgressors? Exalted is Allah above such a resemblance drawn between Him and His creatures as claimed by the Jahmiyyah."

This is the refutation provided by Imâm Muḥammad Ibn Khuzaymah about the Jahmiyyah and their followers. It is an indisputable refutation.

There are, also, similar indisputable refutations provided by prominent Muslim scholars and figures such as Imâm Aḥmad, Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah and Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim. Their answers are still available, thus, we are going to quote the words of Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah who has discussed the views of those claiming that the texts of the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*, which tackle Allah's Sublime Attributes, are all of an unspecific nature and thus cannot be understood by human beings; that is no one knows about them but Allah. According to those people, the apparent meanings of these verses are not intended, as understanding these verses in accordance with their apparent meanings sets a kind of similarity between Allah and His creatures. Therefore, they admit that such verses convey meanings only known by Allah. Proponents of these views further claim that this is the view of our righteous *Salaf* while it is undoubtedly not. The creed of the *Salaf* approves of the Attributes of Allah as portrayed in the Glorious Qur'ân and the Prophetic *Sunnah*. They believe in them according to their apparent meaning without making any excessive interpretation. They regard these texts as being of a precise nature and thus having explicit meanings.

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“As for those who deny Allah's Attributes, they argue that the meanings of the texts expressing them are only known by Allah and they should not be accepted according to their apparent meanings. If we were to accept this view, we would then be required to presume that Allah's Prophets and Messengers, angles, and earlier Muslims did not apprehend the meaning of texts they received. This is absolutely wrong, for this results in that the meanings of all or some of Allah's Attributes were not known to His Prophets who accordingly conveyed something of which they had no knowledge. This false allegation implies disparaging the Qur'ân and Allah's Prophets, since it contradicts the main intent of the Qur'ân. Allah explained that He revealed the Qur'ân as a means of guidance, and dispatched His Prophets to convey His Message to people. He, moreover, commanded us to reflect on and comprehend the meanings of His Book. Claiming that the most important facets of the Qur'ân, which enunciate Allah's Attributes, His commandments and prohibitions, rewards and punishments and the details related to the Hereafter, are unintelligible is an unperceivable claim. This is because such a claim will mean that the Qur'ân is too difficult to understand and that the Prophet has not conveyed the Message.”

And for refuting the accusation directed to our *Salaf*, **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“The allegation that the Qur’anic texts tackling Allah’s Names and Sublime Attributes are of an unspecific nature and are, thus, comprehensible by Allah solely, lacks a substantiating proof. I have never heard that anyone of our Salaf or the leading Muslim scholars as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, for instance, claimed that the Qur’anic verses, which depict the Sublime Attributes of Allah are of an unspecific nature which is included in the meaning of the Qur’anic verse, ‘It is He Who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses which are precise - they are the foundation of the Book - and others unspecific...’ (Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 7) The view of the majority of Muslims is that such verses are explicit and precise and so are other relevant hadîths, which should be understood according to their apparent meanings without employing excessive interpretations. They also rejected, refuted and denied the Jahmiyyah’s interpretations which imply deviating from the apparent meaning of texts. Quotations ascribed to Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the leading scholars before him prove the falsification of the Jahmiyyah’s interpretations. Scholars also affirm the apparent meanings of such texts; hence, there is a unanimous agreement among them to the effect that they comprehend the meanings of these texts and that such meanings should be illustrated without alteration, misrepresentation or misinterpretation.”

This is the view of Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) and that of the leading Muslim scholars before him. They do not regard the texts, tackling Allah’s Sublime Attributes, as unspecific or as known solely by Allah. On the contrary, they have comprehended and interpreted the meanings of Allah’s Sublime Attributes; they have known ‘what’ but not ‘how.’ This is depicted in **Imâm Mâlik’s**, “*Establishing Himself above the Mighty Throne is widely known, and it must be accepted, but questioning about the how is regarded as a heresy.*”

Imâm Ibn Kathîr (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“People understood Allah’s saying, ‘...then established Himself above the Throne...’ (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 54) differently. We are not concerned with explaining their different views here, but it might be sufficient to touch on the accepted view of our righteous Salaf including Mâlik, Al-Awzâ`î, Ath-Thawrî, Al-Layth Ibn Sa`d, Ash-Shâfi`î, Ahmad, Ishâq Ibn Râhuwayh and other Muslim scholars.

They all have believed that the meaning of this Qur'anic verse should be interpreted according to the explicit and apparent meaning without seeking to adapt it for a specific use or situation or denying its original sense. The manner of Allah's establishment above the Mighty Throne should not also be compared to our act of rising over high places, since Allah can never be compared to anyone. He says, '...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing.' (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11) Therefore, according to the view of leading scholars, such as Nu`aym Ibn Hammâd Al-Khuzâ`î, the sheikh (tutor) of Al-Bukhârî, whoever compares Allah to any of His creatures, denies any of His established Attributes or refers to Him in a way which is not according to what He portrays, is a disbeliever. In addition, whosoever approves about Allah what is established about Him in the Qur'anic texts and authentic hadîths in a way befitting His Majesty and in accordance with the apparent meanings of these texts without interpretation, and disapproves of referring deficiencies to Him, is regarded as following the straight path of true guidance."

This is the view of our righteous *Salaf* regarding belief in Allah's Best Names and Sublime Attributes. To conclude, they accept them as explained in the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* without anthropomorphism or misrepresentation of their meanings. This view conforms to the Qur'anic statement in which Allah says:

"...There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing and the Seeing."

(Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 11)

So, he is a false accuser the one who alleges that our righteous and worthy *Salaf* confine the knowledge of Allah's Attributes to Him Alone.



Endnotes

- 1 The *Murji'ah*: An Islamic sect that holds the belief that sins do not harm believers and good deeds do not benefit disbelievers. They refer the case of those who commit major sins to Allah in the Hereafter.
- 2 The Kharijites (Al-Khawârij, i.e. the Seceders): An Islamic radical sect who broke away from the reign of `Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib, the Muslim Caliph then, and murdered him. Their followers believe that the Muslim who commits a major sin is a disbeliever. They also curse and revile the Prophet's Companions and deem the blood of Muslims violable.
- 3 *Zakâh*: A fixed proportion of one's property paid annually by every Muslim whose property has reached a specified amount called the *nisâb* (i.e. the minimum amount on which *Zakâh* is due). Paying *Zakâh* is one of the five pillars of Islam, namely the third. There are eight recipients of *Zakâh* according to the *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law) as stated in the Qur`ân (At-Tawbah: 60).
- 4 A title that Allah gave to Prophet Abraham that means the close friend.
- 5 These were the names of specific idols named after pious men of earlier generations.
- 6 The Dahriyyah: An atheistic sect that does not believe in the Hereafter and holds that time is eternal.
- 7 The *Sunan* refers to compilations of the Prophetic *hadîths* classified according to the Islamic jurisprudential subjects.
- 8 The Tablet is a Sacred Sheet that Allah has written in the states and conditions that will happen in this world till the Day of Judgment, while the Pen is a sacred tool used in writing the predestination of all things. Knowledge of these Sacred things are only peculiar to Almighty Allah.
- 9 Formula of Faith: It involves that there is no deity but Allah and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.
- 10 *Walî*, pl. *Awliyâ'*: Literally means a guardian, helper or a friend. Technically, it is defined as a person who believes in the Oneness of Allah and fears Him much, abstains from all kinds of sins and evil deeds, which He has forbidden, and loves Allah much by performing all kinds of good deeds, which He has ordained.
- 11 A member of the *Murji'ah*, which is an Islamic sect that holds the belief that sins do not harm believers and good deeds do not benefit disbelievers. They refer the case of those who commit major sins to Allah in the Hereafter.
- 12 *Mujtahids*: Jurists qualified to attempt a reasoned or deduced solution for unprecedented legal problems.
- 13 The *Tâbi`ûn* (Successors of the Companions): Plural of *Tabi`î*; a person who witnessed a Companion of the Prophet (PBUH), i.e. one of those who belonged to the first Muslim generation after the Prophet (PBUH).
- 14 *Fitnah*: Trials, affliction, dissension, strife, etc.
- 15 *Ijtihâd* (legal reasoning and discretion): An independent judgment in legal question, based on the interpretation and application of the Four Foundations: the Qur`ân, the Prophet's Sunnah, Consensus of scholars and Analogy.
- 16 He means major polytheism.
- 17 This man was called "Makhshi Ibn Ḥumayr"; his first name "Makhshî" indicates being hated and his surname "Ḥumayr" means young donkey.

- 18 The Lawgiver of *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law) is Allah, Exalted be He; the term can also refer to the Prophet (PBUH) as he never ordained but what was revealed to him by Allah.
- 19 *Qirân*: The type of *Hajj* in which a pilgrim assumes *ihrâm* for performing both `Umrah and *Hajj* together. Performing such a kind of *Hajj* requires offering a sacrificial animal, and it becomes obligatory, if the pilgrim intends it, to bring a sacrificial animal with him. On the other hand, it is permissible for the pilgrim intending to make *qirân* to change to *tamattu`* (i.e., assuming *ihrâm* for performing `Umrah during the months of *Hajj*, and then, after performing `Umrah the pilgrim assumes *ihrâm* for performing *Hajj* in the same season) instead if he does not bring a sacrificial animal with him.
- 20 This is an expression that the Arabs used to say in the past without intending its literal meaning. Rather, it indicates a lenient, friendly kind of blame.
- 21 The *Jahmiyyah*: An Islamic sect that denies some of the Attributes of Allah, claiming that those attributes are ascribed to people and cannot be ascribed to Allah. This belief violates that of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community.
- 22 The Mu`tazilah (Mutazilites): An Islamic sect that claims that those who commit major sins are in a state between faith and disbelief. This belief violates that of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community.
- 23 The *Ash`ariyyah*: An Islamic sect that departs from the more apparent meaning of some Attributes of Allah, in order to deny any similarity between Allah and His creatures. This belief violates that of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community.
- 24 *Rabb*: An Arabic common word that means God, a lord, or an owner.

PRINCIPLE

2

Belief in the Angels

Belief in the angels is one of the six essential principles of Faith according to the Prophetic *hadith* in which the Prophet (PBUH) says to Jibrīl (Gabriel):

“Faith is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree, both the good and the evil thereof.”

Belief in Allah’s angels is usually coupled with belief in Allah in many Qur’anic verses. Almighty Allah says:

“... All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers.” (Qur’ān: Al-Baqarah: 285)

He further says:

“...But [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets.”

(Qur’ān: Al-Baqarah: 177)

Belief in Allah's angels entails believing in them as honored creatures created by Allah mainly to serve Him and execute His commands. It also entails believing in their various ranks, traits and the jobs assigned to them according to what is mentioned in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). Belief in the angels, moreover, entails acknowledging their merit and status as decided by Allah.

According to the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, which is related in *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (Muslim's Authentic Book of *Ḥadīth*), Allah has created them from light. One of their merits is that Allah always attributes them to Himself for the sake of elevating their rank. He says:

"... Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels."

(Qur'an: Al-Aḥzâb: 56)

And says:

"... All of them have believed in Allah and His angels."

(Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 285)

He also says:

"... And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels."

(Qur'an: An-Nisâ': 136)

And says:

"... Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels."

(Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 98)

Allah further couples their testimony with His and the blessings they confer with those He confers upon the Prophet in the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

"Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels..."

(Qur'an: Âlu `Imrân: 18)

And in His saying:

"...Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask him to do so]."

(Qur'an: Al-Aḥzâb: 56)

Allah, moreover, describes them as generous and honorable in His saying:

"[Carried] by the hands of messenger-angels, noble and dutiful."

(Qur'an: `Abasa: 15)

And in His saying:

“And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, noble and recording.”
(Qur’ân: Al-Infitâr: 10)

He further provides:

“... Rather, they are [but] honored servants.”
(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ’: 26)

Allah also depicts them as high in rank and close to Him in His saying about the jinn:

“...They may not listen to the exalted assembly [of angels].”
(Qur’ân: As-Sâffât: 8)

And in His saying, about the record of righteous people:

“Which is witnessed by those brought near [to Allah].”
(Qur’ân: Al-Mutaffifin: 21)

Allah refers to them as the carriers of the Mighty Throne and those surrounding it in the Qur’anic verse:

“Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it...”
(Qur’ân: Ghâfir: 7)

And in His saying:

“And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne...”
(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 75)

Allah also mentions that they worship Him and hymn His glory according to the Qur’anic verse, which provides:

“Indeed, those who are near your Lord [i.e., the angels] are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, and they exalt Him, and to Him they prostrate.”
(Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 206)

And according to His saying:

“But if they are arrogant - then those who are near your Lord [i.e., the angels] exalt Him by night and by day, and they do not become weary.”
(Qur’ân: Fussilat: 38)

Allah’s angels are classified into categories according to the jobs assigned to them.

The bearers of the Mighty Throne as illustrated in the Qur'anic verse:

"Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it..."

(Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 7)

And the Qur'anic verse:

"... And there will bear the Throne of your Lord above them, that Day, eight [of them]."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hâqqah: 17)

Another group of them is of those who are very near to Allah according to Allah's saying:

"Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels near [to Him]..."

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 172)

A further group is of those who are the keepers of Paradise who are in charge of preparing it for righteous people.

One more group is of those who are the keepers of the Hellfire, who execute the torture prescribed for the disobedient therein. These angels are called Az-Zabâniyah (i.e., Angels of the Hell). They are nineteen keepers headed by Mâlik. Allah says:

"Over it are nineteen [angels]." (Qur'ân: Al-Muddaththir: 30)

And He also says:

"And they will call, 'O Mâlik, let your Lord put an end to us!'"

(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 77)

He further says:

"... Those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, 'Supplicate your Lord to lighten for us a day from the punishment.'"

(Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 49)

And says:

"... Over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded."

(Qur'ân: At-Tahrim: 6)

A further group of the angels is of those who are in charge of guarding people in the worldly life. Allah says:

"For him [i.e., each one] are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah..."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Ra`d: 11)

It signifies that man is accompanied by angels, who keep watching his front and back, but leave him only at times when Allah's Divine Decree is to take place; namely, when Allah decrees something such as a disease or a misfortune. Some of the angels are also in charge of recording people's deeds. Allah says:

"...Seated on the right and on the left. He [i.e., man] does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]."

(Qur'ân: Qâf: 17-18)

And says:

"And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, noble and recording."

(Qur'ân: Al-Infitâr: 10)

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is also reported to have said:

"Angels come to you in succession by night and day."

Therefore, each person is accompanied by angels who guard him against all harms and by others who keep registering his deeds.

Among the angels is a group who are in charge of wombs and the development of the fetus. According to the Prophetic *hadîth*, narrated by Ibn Mas'ûd (may Allah be pleased with him), Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"(As regards your creation), every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, and then he becomes a clot for other forty days, and then a piece of flesh for other forty days. Then Allah sends an angel to breathe the soul [created by Allah] into him and to write four words: his deeds, time of his death, means of his livelihood, and whether he will be wretched or blessed (in religion)."

Another group of the angels is in charge of taking souls. Almighty Allah says:

"... Until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers [i.e., angels of death] take him, and they do not fail [in their duties]."

(Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 61)

And says:

"Say, 'The Angel of Death, who has been entrusted with you, will take your souls. Then to your Lord you will be returned.'"

(Qur'ân: As-Sajdah: 11)

Accordingly, the angel of death has assistants who usually help him take the soul of man out of the body until it reaches the throat. Thereafter, he personally takes the soul out.

To conclude, Allah has authorized a number of the angels to arrange the affairs of both the celestial and terrestrial worlds in accordance with His commands and Will. Almighty Allah says:

“They cannot precede Him in word, and they act by His command.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ’: 27)

And says:

“... They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tahrîm: 6)

Therefore, Almighty Allah sometimes refers to them as those who directly execute His commands as described in His saying:

“And those who arrange [each] matter.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nâzi`ât: 5)

And sometimes, He attributes the full arrangement of matters to Himself as mentioned in His saying:

“...He arranges [each] matter.”

(Qur’ân: As-Sajdah: 5)

Thus, the angels are Allah’s messengers who manage the affairs of His creatures and communicate His Divine commands to them. The Arabic word ‘malak’ (angel) also means a messenger, since it is derived from ‘Al-Alûkah,’ meaning message. Allah says:

“... [Who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four...”

(Qur’ân: Fâtîr: 1)

And says:

“By those [winds] sent forth in gusts.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mursalât: 1)

The angels, therefore, are the messengers of Allah whom He dispatches for executing His commands by which He administers the affairs of the universe. They are also the messengers of Allah, with whom He sent His religious commands to the human messengers who, in turn, conveyed it to people. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“He sends down the angels, with the inspiration [i.e., revelation] of His command, upon whom He wills of His servants, [telling them], ‘Warn that there is no deity except Me; so fear Me.’ ”

(Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 2)

He further says:

“Allah chooses from the angels messengers and from the people...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Hajj: 75)

Jibrîl (Gabriel) (PBUH) is the greatest among them. He is the Trustworthy Spirit according to the Qur’anic verse, which provides:

“And indeed, it [i.e., the Qur’ân] is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down. Upon your heart, [O Muḥammad] -that you may be of the warners. In a clear Arabic language.”

(Qur’ân: Ash-Shu`arâ: 192-195)

In describing him, Allah also says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘The Pure Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down from your Lord in truth...’ ”

(Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 102)

Allah enables His angels to appear in different shapes. They, once, came to Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and Lût (Lot) (peace be upon them both) in the form of human guests. Jibrîl (Gabriel) used to appear to Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) in different shapes. Sometimes, he would appear in the shape of a man called Dihyah Al-Kalbî, and at other times in the shape of a Bedouin. He occasionally came to the Messenger (PBUH) in his original shape. This only occurred twice, since a human can hardly vision the angel in his original shape. Therefore, when the polytheists asked Allah to reveal an angel for them, Allah said:

“... But if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided; then they would not be reprieved. And if We had made him [i.e., the messenger] an angel, We would have made him [appear as] a man, and We would have covered them with that in which they cover themselves [i.e., confusion and doubt].”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 8-9)

Thus, had Allah sent an angel to people, He would have revealed him in the form of a human being so that they might be able to communicate with him and receive revelation from him. This is because every being is familiar with its own species, while it feels unfamiliar with different species.



Belief in Allah's Scriptures

Belief in Allah's Heavenly Scriptures is one of the fundamental principles of Faith. Believing in these Scriptures includes absolute approval of their authenticity and truthfulness. Such Scriptures should also be regarded as the Words of Allah, which contain guidance, light and adequacy for their recipients. We have to believe in the Scriptures, which Allah has mentioned such as the Qur'ân, At-Tawrah (the Torah), Al-Injil (the Gospel) and Az-Zabûr (Psalter) and those not mentioned by Him. Allah has other Scriptures, which are only known by Him.

The revelation of Scriptures is a sign of Allah's mercy bestowed upon His bondmen since people are always in need of them. This is related to the fact that man's mind is limited and, thus, cannot absolutely realize evil and good in detail though he may realize them as a whole. Human mind is also controlled by whims and dominated by desires and caprices. If human beings were completely left to their own limited minds, they would go astray and deviate.

Therefore, Allah's Wisdom and Mercy necessitated that such Scriptures should be revealed to His chosen Messengers to guide people and demonstrate to them His fair judgments, beneficial recommendations and commands and prohibitions which guarantee absolute good for humanity.

Upon descending Âdam (Adam) on the earth, Almighty Allah said:

"... When guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve."
(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 38)

He also said:

"O children of Adam, if there come to you messengers from among you relating to you My verses [i.e., scriptures and laws], then whoever fears Allah and reforms - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve."
(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 35)

According to their attitudes toward heavenly revealed scriptures, people are classified into three groups:

A group of them totally denies Allah's Scriptures. They are the enemies of Allah's messengers among the disbelievers, polytheists and philosophers.

Another group fully believes in Allah's Scriptures. They are the believers who believe in all the messengers and approve of the Scriptures they expound. Allah says:

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 285)

The third group believes in some scriptures and deny others. Such are the Jews and the Christians and those who follow them. They used to reiterate, as the Qur'ân narrated:

"... We believe [only] in what was revealed to us.' And they disbelieve in what came after it, while it is the truth confirming that which is with them."
(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 91)

In effect, the Jews and the Christians believe in some parts of their own scriptures and denounce other parts thereof as the Qur'ân describes them:

"... Do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you

except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 85)

Undoubtedly, keeping belief in some scriptures while disbelieving in others is tantamount to overall rejection of them. Belief in Allah's Scriptures should be regarded as inseparable. It should not bear any distinctions or divisions among these Divine Books. Thus, Almighty Allah disparages those who dispute or differ over the veracity and contents of Allah's Scriptures. The Qur'ân provides:

"That is [deserved by them] because Allah has sent down the Book in truth. And indeed, those who differ over the Book are in extreme dissension." (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 176)

The main cause of rejecting Allah's Scriptures or renouncing some parts thereof is that such people follow their whims and retain wrong ideas. Disbelievers always highly appreciate their minds and reasons and frequently call themselves the people of prudence and wisdom. Such disbelievers used to deride Allah's Messengers and their believing followers. They always describe them indecently, as Almighty Allah says:

"And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they [merely] rejoiced in what they had of knowledge, but they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule." (Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 83)

As for the followers of Allah's Messengers, they believe in every Book revealed by Allah without making any distinction between them. It is worth noting that while Muslims should believe in the aforementioned Scriptures altogether by keeping full conviction in them both verbally and through the heart, they must believe in the Qur'ân by confirming its veracity and, moreover, following its commands and judgments regarding every affair of theirs. Muslims must also believe that the Qur'ân is the uncreated Word of Allah revealed by Him, and that it is sent down from Him and to Him it will finally return.

Previous Scriptures, according to Allah's Wisdom, used to last for limited periods of time. They were also preserved by those to whom such Scriptures were sent. Almighty Allah says:

"Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The prophets who submitted [to Allah] judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of Allah, and they were witnesses..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 44)

Conversely, Allah has directed the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân to all nations and generations all over the globe until the end of this world. He has guarded it against all forms of corruption and distortion. Allah says:

“Indeed, it is We Who sent down the message [i.e., the Qur'ân] and indeed, We will be its guardian.” (Qur'ân: Al-Hijr: 9)

And says:

“Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord Who is] Wise and Praiseworthy.”

(Qur'ân: Fussilat: 42)

The Glorious Qur'ân must be taken as the means of arbitration in all disputes. All contentions and disputes should be referred to it. Therefore, any means of judgment other than the Qur'ân is termed as '*Tâghût*' (false objects of worship). Almighty Allah says:

“Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you? They wish to refer legislation to taḡhūt, while they were commanded to reject it...” (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 60)

'*Tâghût*' means excessive oppression. Similarly, Allah has disparaged all those falsely claiming an alleged belief in His Books while abandoning the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“And people who judge in their cases by means of what Allah has not revealed will be covered with confusions in party strife.”

One of the catastrophic consequences of assigning unrevealed laws for judgment is the spread of dissensions and conflicts among peoples. Referring to the Qur'ân for judgment is a prerequisite to true belief. Therefore, whoever claims belief in Allah without referring to His Book for judgment has a self-contradicting belief. Additionally, the Book of Allah is inseparable. It must be wholly applied and acted upon in all fields of a Muslim's life including his convictions, rituals, transactions, personal affairs, penal and criminal laws and, moreover, in his morals and proper behaviors.

Almighty Allah says:

“... And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers.”

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 44)

And says:

“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers [i.e., the unjust].”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 45)

He also provides:

“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed- then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 47)

Moreover, He, Exalted be He, says:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 65)

According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, Allah stresses, by taking an oath, the absence of belief of those who renounce the judgment of the Prophet in their disputes. Full acceptance of his judgment and unrelenting submission should be offered in this case. According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verses, those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are regarded as disbelievers, wrongdoers and rebels; nonetheless, they may claim the possession of full belief, fairness and justice. Woe to those who replace the book of Allah with mundane laws and false judges!



Belief in Allah's Messengers

Belief in Allah's messengers is one of the major fundamentals of Faith. Allah's messengers are the link between Allah and His creatures. They convey His messages and testify that He fully demonstrates His laws to people. Belief in them implies accepting the messages they have received, confessing their prophethood and believing in the authenticity of what they have brought forth. It also includes full conviction in their truthfulness in conveying and explaining the message with which they have been entrusted.

There are a number of proofs, which ascertain the necessity of believing in Allah's messengers. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

"... But [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets."

(Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 177)

And says:

“... All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers.’” (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 285)

Moreover, Allah says:

“Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 151)

According to these verses, Allah has coupled belief in His messengers with belief in Him, His angels and His books. He has attested decisively the disbelief of anyone who makes a distinction between Allah and His messengers by only believing in Him and renouncing belief in His messengers.

Dispatching messengers is one of the graces of Allah, which He bestowed on mankind, for people’s need for messengers is very great. Neither a worldly affair nor a religion can be established without Allah’s messengers. Allah appointed such messengers as a medium to convey His messages to people. They guide them to proper and adequate knowledge of Allah, indicate to them what is for their benefit and what entails harm, demonstrate for them legislations, commands, prohibitions and permissible acts and explain to them what Allah likes and what He dislikes. There is no way to encompass knowledge about all such things but through Allah’s messengers. Though rational thinking may lead to the realization of the necessity of Allah’s legislations, it cannot independently recognize their minute details. Almighty Allah says:

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 213)

People’s need for messages is greater than the patient’s dire need for a physician. Without an experienced physician, the body may suffer, but without Allah’s message, the heart may degenerate. People’s existence on the earth is only secured by the existence of Allah’s message. Once the message of Allah vanishes, life will ultimately come to an end.

Belief in Allah's twenty-five messengers mentioned in the Qur'ân is absolutely essential. Eighteen of them have been included in the Sura of *Al-An`âm*¹, starting from Allah's saying:

“And that was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Abraham against his people...”

To His saying:

“... And all [of them] We preferred over the worlds.”

(Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 83)

The rest of the messengers have been mentioned in a number of other Qur'anic verses. We should also believe in all messengers, whether they are mentioned in the Qur'ân or not. Almighty Allah provides:

“And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you...”

(Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 78)

And He says:

“And [We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you.”

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ':164)

At this point, it might be worth mentioning that there is a distinction between a prophet and a messenger. According to the most popular view, a messenger is a male human being to whom Allah revealed a divine legislation. He was, moreover, commanded to propagate it among people. A prophet, on the other hand, is a male human being to whom Allah revealed a divine legislation without being enjoined to propagate it.

Both messengers and prophets are entrusted with a revelation, but a prophet may be sent to a group of believers who follow a previously revealed law, such as the prophets who were sent to the Children of Israel. Those prophets were commanded to enjoin the laws of At-Tawrâh (the Torah); however, a prophet might receive a special revelation related to a special matter. Messengers, on the other hand, are usually dispatched in order to invite disbelievers to Allah and call them to believe in His Oneness. They are, thus, sent to people who may contradict them or renounce their messages. Here, the messenger is preferred to the prophet, and also some messengers are preferred to others. Allah says:

“Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 253)

The most distinguished messengers are those five of strong will: Nûh (Noah), Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsa (Moses), ‘Îsâ (Jesus) and Muḥammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon them all). They are mentioned in Allah’s saying:

“And [mention, O Muḥammad], when We took from the prophets their covenant and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 7)

And in His saying:

“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus...”

(Qur’ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 13)

The most distinguished among the five Messengers of strong will are the two close friends of Allah, namely, Ibrâhîm and Muḥammad (peace be upon them both and on the other messengers as well), Muḥammad is the intimate friend of Allah (PBUH).

Prophethood is an honor bestowed by Allah upon whom He chooses. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Allah chooses from the angels messengers and from the people...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Ḥajj: 75)

Prophethood is not acquired by exerting strenuous efforts, offering excessive rituals, observing tough religious exercises, persistently disciplining the soul or continually refining manners. According to the philosophers, prophethood may be acquired. Therefore, according to their conviction, whoever adheres to meditation purifying his inward and outward by refining his morals and observing religious exercises, the mirror of his soul will become so lustrous to transcend the seen, his insight will be more equipped to intuitively perceive the inward and hidden natures of things, which is a gift not available for others.

According to the philosophers, prophethood has three unique attributes:

First: The competence to know. Knowledge, according to them, is acquired without direct reception; it is rather acquired through endurance.

Second: The competence to envisage. A prophet, according to the philosophers, imagines himself as communicating with lustrous shapes to which he speaks and listens.

Third: The ability to influence people. They usually describe such ability as having an impact on the matter of this world.

All these attributes, according to them, are acquired. Accordingly, some Sufis sought to acquire prophethood. It is, according to them, a mere profession like any other profession that may be easily attained. Undoubtedly, this view is null and void according to what is stated in the Qur'anic verses which state:

"They say, 'Never will we believe until we are given like that which was given to the messengers of Allah.' Allah is most knowing of where [i.e., with whom] He places His message."

(Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 124)

And:

"Allah chooses from the angels messengers and from the people..."

(Qur'an: Al-Hajj: 75)

Thus, prophets are chosen in accordance with Allah's Wisdom and Omniscience. Prophethood is, thus, not acquired through human endeavor. Although prophets were privileged by a number of traits, which were solely theirs, such traits were not those described by philosophers.

Proofs of Prophethood

These are the proofs by which a true prophet may be distinguished from a false one. Proofs of prophethood are numerous, among which are the following:

1. **Miraculous Acts:** Acts of defiance introduced by a prophet to challenge his foes. They are events that appear inexplicable by the laws of nature which are carried out by whom Allah chooses as a prophet in order to establish his truth and the soundness of his message. The miracles of Allah's messengers (peace be upon them all) amount to a large number. One of these miracles is the she-camel of Ṣâlih (PBUH), which was rendered as a proof against his people. Similarly, among miracles of Allah's messengers are turning the stick into a snake by Moses as well

as Jesus' healing of the born blind, the lepers and bringing the dead to life. Our Prophet, Muḥammad (PBUH) had a number of miracles, the greatest of which is the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân. It is the everlasting miracle by which the jinn and mankind have been challenged. Also, *Al-Isrâ'* and *Al-Mi`râj*², the moon splitting, the pebbles offering a loud hymn of praise in the Prophet's palm and the date-palm trunk's crying because of its yearning for him are all some of authentically proven miracles introduced by the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet's telling about future and past events is also regarded as miracles introduced by him.

Contrary to the statements of theologians, the proofs of prophethood are not confined to miracles; rather, they are abundant and include the following:

2. The prophets used to tell their nations that victory will be theirs and utter decline will be the fate of their foes. What they assuredly foretold always came true. Such was the case of Nûḥ (Noah), Hûd, Sâlih, Shu`ayb, Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Lût (Lot), Mûsa (Moses) and our Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon them all). All their stories have been mentioned in the Qur'ân.
3. All the divinely revealed legislations which they conveyed and the past stories they narrated are ultimately accurate and perfect. They reveal the truth and lead people to absolute guidance. Such things may only emanate from the most knowledgeable and righteous persons.
4. Allah persistently supports their cause, since it is known that Allah never stands up for imposters or liars. Allah always disgraces liars and finally leads them to perish.
5. Their ways are consistent in that they all invited people to devote themselves to Allah, act upon His commands and believe in the Last Day and in His scriptures and messengers. No prophet may violate the norm, upon which all prophets agree. The latter ones among them believe in the messages of the early ones and each one gives glad tidings of the prophet coming after him. To illustrate, Jesus and the prophets before him informed about the advent of Muḥammad (PBUH). Moreover, Muḥammad (PBUH) believed in all prophets preceding him.

6. Allah supports His prophets. He never supports an imposter or a liar with that which He supports the truthful. He always disgraces the liars and leads them to perish. Allah may grant victory to an unjust ruler despite his injustice, but in such a case he is neither a liar nor a person falsely alleging prophethood; he is merely an unjust person given power over another. Allah says:

“And thus will We make some of the wrongdoers allies of others for what they used to earn.”
 (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 129)

There are a number of ways to distinguish between a false person and a true one in matters which are less than claiming prophethood, so what will be the case with ones claiming prophethood?

A man who claims prophethood may be either a perfect person or a deficient one. Therefore, when the Prophet (PBUH) invited the tribe of Thaqif to Islam, one of their figures said, *“I swear by Allah that I will only tell you a word; in case you are truthful, I will hold you in so great esteem that I cannot doubt your answer, and if you are a liar, I will regard you unworthy of my interest.”* Thus, it is so easy to detect the most perfect and truthful person from the most despised one.

Throughout history everyone who falsely claimed the possession of prophethood showed ignorance, falsehood, transgression and the devil’s domination over his deeds to the extent that everybody could easily realize his falsehood. Each true prophet, on the other hand, ultimately showed truthfulness and righteousness, which indicated his sincerity to everyone even those of little discernment. A messenger normally tells people specific news and commands them to enjoin particular deeds, whereas a false one is easily discerned by observing his deeds and commands which express his lies.

One may also wonder about the distinction between the proofs of prophethood and the inexplicable events and acts made by sorcerers, fortunetellers and the state of the art inventions, which appear nowadays. To this, we should ascertain the existence of many distinctions between the proofs of prophethood and unexplainable events made by sorcerers and fortunetellers on one hand and the newly introduced inventions on the other hand.

If a prophet foretells the future, his foretelling will inevitably come true without any delay or inadequacy. Most of the sorcerers and fortunetellers’ speech contains falsehood. They hardly tell the truth except when receiving the devils’ eavesdropping on the angels’ private talks in the heavens.

Additionally, acts of sorcery and fortune telling and the modern inventions are matters well known by people. They may be acquired and learned by human endeavor. The acts of sorcerers and fortunetellers may also be opposed or defied by their rivals. On the contrary, the miracles of prophets can never be imitated either by a human or a jinni. Almighty Allah says:

“Say, ‘If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur’ân, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.’”
(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 88)

The signs and miracles of the prophets are inimitable and matchless. Only Allah can make them happen in order to establish the prophet’s truthfulness and trustworthiness. Such miracles include the moon splitting, turning the stick of Moses into a snake, making the pebbles hymn the praise of Allah loudly in the Prophet’s palm and letting the trunk of the palm tree cry because of its yearning for the Prophet and little amounts of water and food increase unexplainably. Allah Alone is competent to perform all these miracles in support of His prophets.

Similarly, all prophets are believers in Allah. They worship Him Alone and believe in all prophets who came before them. By contrast, sorcerers and fortunetellers are only liars, who disbelieve in what Allah has revealed.

Among the signs through which one may distinguish between a true prophet and sorcerers and the like is that intuition and reason accord with what the prophets (peace be upon them all) say or convey, while sorcerers, fortunetellers and swindlers are all imposters who convey what may corrupt minds.

Those falsifiers contradict reason and intuition, whereas prophets have come for the refinement of intuitions and reason.

Moreover, the miracles of the prophets are not independently produced through their own personal endeavor, but are performed by Allah Who has produced them to support His prophets. Therefore, splitting the moon, turning the stick into a snake and the revelation of the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân are all miracles produced according to Allah’s Decree without the intervention or endeavor of a prophet. Thus, when the Meccan polytheists asked Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) to produce for them a miracle to prove his truthfulness, Allah revealed the Qur’anic verse, which provides:

“Say, ‘The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a clear warner.’”

(Qur’ân: Al-`Ankabût: 50)

On the contrary, unexplainable acts offered by sorcerers and fortunetellers and other human inventions are the result of human endeavor.

Distinctions between the miracles of prophets and the inexplicable events and acts produced by sorcerers are numerous. (For further information see *An-Nubûwât* (i.e., *The Prophethood*) by 'Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him).

The Miracle of the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân

One of the great miracles of our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân. Generally speaking, every prophet is supported with a miracle which accords with the status and circumstances of his people. Magic was, for instance, prevalent among the people of Pharaoh, thus, Mûsâ (Moses) brought the stick which swallowed up all what the magicians did. Consequently, they fell amazed and recognized that Moses' miracle was the truth. Almighty Allah says,

“So the magicians fell down in prostration [to Allah] - they said, ‘We have believed in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron.’”
(Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ: 46)

This specific miracle was particularly granted to Moses.

By the same token and at the time of `Îsâ (Jesus), medicine was dominant, thus Jesus produced what confused physicians. He gave life to the dead, cured the blind, the leper and designed out of clay forms similar to those of birds and breathed life into them to become birds by Allah's Will. Thereupon, physicians were greatly amazed to the extent that they surrendered to him and confessed that such acts were from Allah.

As the Arabs were the masters of eloquence and rhetoric, Allah assigned the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân as the Prophet's eternal miracle. Allah, Exalted be He, describes it as follows:

“Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord Who is] Wise and Praiseworthy.”
(Qur'ân: Fussilat: 42)

The Qur'ân is the everlasting miracle that will last forever. Allah has decided the Qur'ân to be the eternal miracle to all mankind. The Qur'ân is, thus, a miracle introduced to all generations. People, over ages, recite it and assuredly realize that it includes only the words of Allah. Human beings and the jinn have been challenged to produce something comparable with it or to produce even one sura like it. Nobody could imitate the Qur'ân or produce something matching it throughout history, despite the continuous trials of the enemies of Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). Almighty Allah says:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [i.e., the Qur’ân] upon Our Servant [i.e., Prophet Muhammad], then produce a sura the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [i.e., supporters] other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 23-24)

This challenge still exists until now, thus, the Qur’ân provides:

“... But if you do not - and you will never be able to...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 24)

Almighty Allah, further, says:

“Or do they say, ‘He has made it up’? Rather, they do not believe. Then let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tûr: 33-34)

Shaykhul-Islâm, Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“Such a challenge to produce ten suras or even one sura like the Qur’ân was launched while the Prophet was still living at Mecca before his immigration to Medina. This is simply because the Qur’anic verses demonstrating that challenge are parts of the Suras of Yûnus³, Hûd⁴, At-Tûr⁵ revealed at Mecca. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, proclaimed this challenge again after the immigration to Medina. In the Sura of Al-Baqarah⁶, revealed at Medina, Allah says, ‘And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [i.e., the Qur’ân] upon Our Servant [i.e., Prophet Muhammad], then produce a sura the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [i.e., supporters] other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.’ (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 23-24) According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, two points are highlighted. First, it is implied according to His saying, ‘... But if you do not - and you will never be able to...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 24) that in case the addressees in this verse could not produce a sura like those of the Qur’ân, they must recognize that the Qur’ân is the ultimate truth. So, they should fear Allah lest He should inflict His punishment upon them. Second, using the negation represented by ‘will never’ in His saying, ‘and you will never be able to’ (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 24) is an indication of the impossibility of producing any pieces like or even comparable with the Qur’ân in the future.

Similarly, Almighty Allah commanded our Messenger (PBUH) to proclaim the Qur'anic statement included in the Sura of Al-Isrâ'⁷, which is an event authentically proven to be in Mecca as stated in the Qur'ân and mutawâtir (continuously recurrent) *hadiths*. Allah says, "Say, 'If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.'" (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 88) According to this Qur'anic statement, Almighty Allah informs the Messenger (PBUH) to publicly proclaim that if mankind and the jinn were to get together to produce the like of the Qur'ân, they would absolutely fail even if they came to help one another. This challenge is set to all people. Whoever listens to the Qur'ân can recognize this challenge which has become known to everyone, whether a specialist or a layperson. In addition, it has become well-established that all people who have received this proclamation have not dared show any objection by producing a sura like those of the Qur'ân.

From the time of the Prophet's advent until now, people could not produce something comparable with the Qur'ân, though almost all people were disbelievers before the coming of the Prophet (PBUH). At the outset, when he invited people to Islam, a few number of them believed in him, whereas the majority of the disbelievers were keen to refute his message. They left no stone unturned in opposing him; they used to question the Jews and Christians regarding unknown events of the past, such as the story of Yûsuf (Joseph), Ahlul-Kahf (the Sleepers of Ephesus), Dhul-Qarnayn (the two-horned man or the lord of the two Epochs) and then they would assemble to plan how to discredit the Prophet. They compared the Prophet to the insane, magicians, soothsayers and poets, although they were well assured that such comparisons were false and nothing but malicious slanders. The Prophet (PBUH) frequently challenged them to produce something like the Qur'ân but they failed and therefore, their opposition collapsed. They were induced by the Prophet to oppose his message by producing something comparable with the Qur'ân. Had they been competent to do that, they would have done so. This challenge to produce something like the Qur'ân, even after taking into account the efforts disbelievers may exert, is proclaimed to all people. Therefore, the Qur'ân is regarded as the most influential miracle, since it is inimitable.

The Prophet's proclamation of the inability of mankind and the jinn, even if they came to support one another to produce a sura like the Qur'ân, while he was still living in Mecca and being followed by a few number of Muslims, assured his full certitude that probable opposition was impossible. Had the Prophet been in doubt, he would have never aired such a declaration lest he should be disgraced and thus renounced. Since the Prophet proclaimed this challenge with full certitude that all humanity will absolutely fail to produce something like the Qur'ân, he certainly received this declaration from Almighty Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) could not independently foretell people's failure to produce a sura. The Prophet might issue such a proclamation from his personal knowledge only if Allah previously manifested for him the impossibility of probable opposition. Consequently, the Qur'ân is held as an everlasting miracle."

The Ever-Glorious Qur'ân is miraculous by means of its language, style, composition, and the implications of its words and the meanings of its text. It is also miraculous with regard to the explanations it provides about Allah's Best Names, His Sublime Attributes, the angels and so forth. Likewise, it is miraculous with regard to the future events it foretells and the past stories it narrates and the Last Day.

Infallibility of Allah's Prophets

Infallibility here implies Allah's protection of His prophets against errors and sins. Citing and highlighting the disagreement among scholars regarding the prophets' infallibility and explaining the preferred view, **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Scholars unanimously agree on the fact that all prophets (peace be upon them all) were infallible; protected from erring with regard to conveying the message with which they were entrusted. Almighty Allah says:

"Say, [O believers], 'We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants [Al-Asbât] and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.' So if

they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 136-137)

And says:

'... But [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets.'

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah:177)

He further provides:

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 285)

Ibn Taymiyah goes on explaining:

"Through this assuredly established and proven infallibility, the main intent of prophethood may be realized. A prophet is thus the interpreter through whom the Will of Allah is expressed, while a messenger is the one sent by Allah to convey a message. Therefore every messenger is a prophet, but not vice versa. Their infallibility with regard to what they convey about Allah is established. They are protected from committing an error in conveying the message, according to the consensus of all Muslim scholars."

Concerning the prophets' infallibility in the worldly affairs, **Ibn Taymiyah** added:

"Scholars are in disagreement whether the prophets' infallibility should be proven through legal textual proofs or by means of rational proofs. They also disagree on a number of issues such as whether Allah's prophets are infallible to perpetrate major or minor sins and whether infallibility means their utter impeccability or the impossibility of acknowledging the truth and validity of a specific sin. Moreover, scholars differ whether it is confined only to being protected from erring in conveying their messages or not. Furthermore, scholars differ on the applicability of the concept of infallibility in their earlier lives before being commanded to convey their messages to people."

The preferred view upon which the majority of people agree, and which is considered the one that accords with our righteous ancestors' sayings, proves the prophets' infallibility with regard to acknowledging the perpetration of sins in general. Such a view also involves refuting the claim that prophets are liable to acknowledge the validity of sins. If we recount the arguments of the proponents of this view, we will come to the conclusion that they propose the preferred view, which we have already illustrated. The opponents of prophets' infallibility have not proposed any proof that any prophet once acknowledged the validity of perpetrating a specific sin.

Scholars who prove the infallibility of Allah's prophets argue that following the prophets' exemplary behavior should be observed with regard to whatever acts they persistently acknowledged, excluding what they forbade and invalidated. In addition, their commands and prohibitions should only be enacted provided they had not been abrogated or suspended. The proponents of this view have also further argued that committing sins contradicts impeccability, which is a prerequisite of prophethood. They have also argued that a sin may be held graver if perpetrated by such superior men like the prophets. Hence, committing sins lead people to repulse them. All these conclusions come true in the case of persisting in perpetrating sins without being followed by repentance. Sincerely expressed repentance, however, elevates the grade of the sinner according to the view adopted by our righteous Salaf. Dâwûd (David) (PBUH) enjoyed a higher merit upon repenting his sins. Had repentance not been the most endeared act to Allah, the most honored person in the Sight of Allah, the Prophet (PBUH), would not have been afflicted with falling into error. According to the authentic Prophetic hadîth, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“ Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant as he turns to Him in repentance than that when one amongst you is upon his she-camel in a desert and it is lost having his provision of food and drink on it. He, having lost all hope, lies down in the shadow of a tree. All of a sudden, he finds his she-camel standing before him. He takes hold of its noseband and then out of boundless joy says, ‘O my Lord, You are my servant and I am your lord.’ He commits this mistake out of extreme delight.”

Ibn Taymiyah continues to say:

“This view is substantiated by the dictates of the Glorious Qur’ân, Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) and previously revealed scriptures. Opponents of this view misinterpreted these texts in the same way as the followers of Jahmiyyah, Anti-Fatalists and Atheists misrepresented the texts portraying Allah’s Best Names and Sublime Attributes and other texts related to the demonstration of Allah’s Divine Decree and Resurrection. Such views are also similar to the convictions of Qarâmitah (an atheistic sect), which are necessarily false. Such convictions tend to alter explicit meanings of texts. Those atheists, moreover, tend to excessively over-glorify Allah’s prophets that they may contradict them or they may intend to believe in them but inadvertently fall into disbelief.

The prophets’ infallibility with regard to committing errors in conveying their messages is proved according to the *Sharî’ah* (i.e., the Islamic Law), the dictates of reason and the consensus of Muslims. These deviating groups did not derive benefit from the messages sent with their prophets, since they did not believe in what was revealed to Allah’s messengers. They only believed in misinterpreted texts, through which they solely sowed their own desires.

Even if we accept that Allah’s prophets are absolutely infallible as such sects wrongly conceive, they do not derive any benefit from such a conception, since they do not fully believe in Allah’s prophets. A man among these atheists may highly talk about Allah’s prophets without any justifiable authority while abandoning what is supposed to be given priority such as belief and obedience, with which happiness may be attained and without which only unhappiness can be incurred. Almighty Allah says:

‘.. Upon him is only that [duty] with which he has been charged, and upon you is that with which you have been charged.’

(Qur’ân: An-Nûr: 54)

Allah, on the contrary, has not mentioned any of His prophets without referring to their repentance and solicitude for Allah’s forgiveness. Regarding Adam and his wife, Eve, for instance, Allah says,

“They said, ‘Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”

(Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 23)

Concerning Nūḥ (Noah), Allah says:

'[Noah] said, 'My Lord, I seek refuge with You from asking that of which I have no knowledge. And unless you forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers.'

(Qur'ân: Hûd: 47)

Even, the close friend of Allah, Ibrâhîm (Abraham), is reported to have said:

'Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.'

(Qur'ân: Ibrâhîm: 41)

And:

" 'And who I aspire that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense.'

(Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ': 82)

As for Mûsâ (Moses), the Qur'ân narrates his saying:

" '... You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers. And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You.'

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 155-156)

And his saying:

"He said, 'My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me...'

(Qur'ân: Al-Qaṣaṣ: 16)

Likewise, according to the Qur'ân, Allah says about him:

"... And when he awoke, he said, 'Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.'

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 143)

Almighty Allah says regarding Dâwûd (David):

"... And he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down bowing [in prostration] and turned in repentance [to Allah]. So We forgave him that; and indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return."

(Qur'ân: Sâd: 24-25)

And says regarding Sulaymân (Solomon):

"He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'

(Qur'ân: Sâd: 35)

As for Yûsuf (Joseph), the man of truth, Allah does not give mention to his sin, and consequently does not mention his asking for forgiveness. The Qur'ân only provides:

"...Thus [it was] that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our chosen servants."

(Qur'ân: Yûsuf: 24)

According to this Qur'anic verse, Allah turned away from him all evil and indecent deeds. This indicates that neither evil nor indecent deeds were carried out by him. As for the phrase, '*inclined to her*' mentioned in the Qur'anic statement, '*And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof [i.e., sign] of his Lord.*' (Qur'ân: Yûsuf: 24), inclination, according to Imâm Ahmad, has two implications: a mere idea or a resolute idea. It is stated in a *sahîh hadîth* that the Prophet is reported to have said:

"If somebody intends to do a bad deed, it is not recorded in his account (until he does it); and if he does not do it, Allah records it as a full good deed for him. If he intends to do it (a bad deed) and actually does it, then Allah records it as one bad deed (in his account)."

Though Yûsuf (Joseph) had a mere idea, he got rid of it. Allah, thus, turned away from him all evil and indecent deeds due to his sincerity. Consequently, if an evil inclination is overwhelmed by sincerity, it will necessarily turn into a good deed. Such was the case of Yûsuf (PBUH). Almighty Allah said:

'Indeed, those who fear Allah - when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him] and at once they have insight.'

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 201)

Therefore, the argument that Allah's prophets are infallible even before their mission is refuted. This misconception is attributed to the *Râfiḍah*⁸. Also the argument that a prophet should be a believer even before his mission is untenable. They misconceived that committing sins is a defect, which impairs the infallibility of a prophet regardless of observing repentance. This was the source of their misconception. So, whosoever believes that a sinner retains defects even after offering sincere repentance is regarded as gravely erring. Punishment and dispraise incurred by sinners are not intended for a sincere repentant if he repents immediately upon committing sins. If he defers it, appropriate punishment and dispraise may be inflicted upon him.

Allah's prophets (peace be upon them all) would never defer repentance. They, on the contrary, hastened in repenting from any sin they committed. They neither postponed repentance nor persisted on committing sins, for they are utterly infallible in this regard. In case a prophet came to postpone repenting from a sin, Allah would forgive his sins by the tribulations inflicted on him. Such was the case of Yûnus (Jonah) when Allah put him in a trial by being thrown into the sea, which, according to the popular view, was after having been a prophet.

The one who repents from disbelief and sins may be preferred to those who do not fall into disbelief or commit any sins. Since repentance after committing sins is considered a merit, prophets, thus, are most deserving of having such a merit. Allah mentioned the sins of Yûsuf's brothers who were prophets. Moreover, Almighty Allah said:

“And Lot believed him. [Abraham] said, ‘Indeed, I will emigrate to [the service of] my Lord.’ ” (Qur’ân: Al-`Ankabût: 26)

It means that Lût (Lot) believed in the religion of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and afterward he (Lût) was dispatched to his people.

Regarding the story of Shu`ayb, Allah says:

“Said the eminent ones who were arrogant among his people, ‘We will surely evict you, O Shu`ayb, and those who have believed with you from our city, or you must return to our religion.’ He said, ‘Even if we were unwilling? We would have invented against Allah a lie if we returned to your religion after Allah had saved us from it. And it is not for us to return to it except that Allah, our Lord, should will. Our Lord had encompassed all things in knowledge. Upon Allah we have relied. Our Lord, decide between us and our people in truth, and You are the best of those who give decision.’ ” (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 88-89)

And says:

“And those who disbelieved said to their messengers, ‘We will surely drive you out of our land, or you must return to our religion...’ ” (Qur’ân: Ibrâhîm: 13)

Given that, a perfect end is considered more than a faulty beginning and that such a perfect end is realized by repentance and seeking Allah's forgiveness; everyone should offer repentance. Therefore, it is deemed obligatory on all people, the former and the latter of them. Almighty Allah says,

“... So that Allah may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the men and women who associate others with Him and that Allah may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.”

(Qur'ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 73)

Allah, moreover, refers to the repentance of Âdam (Adam), Nûḥ (Noah), the succeeding prophets and the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). Even the last revealed Qur'anic verse refers to this meaning:

“When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest, and you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes, then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.”

(Qur'ân: An-Naṣr: 1-3)

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah further mentioned a considerable number of texts to demonstrate how the Prophet (PBUH) used to seek Allah's forgiveness. Then, he said:

“Qur'anic verses and Prophetic ḥadīths which substantiate the view that the Prophet used to seek Allah's forgiveness are numerous and explicitly indicative. Similarly, sayings of the Companions, the Ṭābi`ūn (Successors of the Companions) and Muslim scholars in this regard amount to a large number.

Nevertheless, the opponents of this view misinterpret texts as the Jahmiyyah, atheists and those who wrote on this question. However, a keen insight into these texts shows that they are false, for they always twist meanings. In interpreting the Qur'anic verse which provides, “That Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your sin [i.e. errors] and what will follow and complete His Favor upon you and guide you to a straight path” (Qur'ân: Al-Fathḥ: 2), they claim that the Prophet's past sin refers to the original sin of Âdam (Adam), and his future sin refers to the sins that will be rendered by his nation. This interpretation is undoubtedly false.”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) added:

“The view of the majority of Muslim scholars is that the prophets may commit minor sins. They further maintain that the prophets are infallible with regard to the acknowledgment of the validity of committing minor sins. According to this view, prophets have perfect traits since all deeds are judged according to their endings.”

To sum up, some scholars prove the infallibility of prophets absolutely while some prove it partially. To clarify, consider the following points:

1. Scholars are unanimous to the effect that Allah's prophets are infallible with regard to the message they convey, for such infallibility is a prerequisite for attaining the objective of prophethood.
2. Scholars differ on their infallibility with regard to committing sins. Some scholars maintain that they are absolutely infallible with regard to major and minor sins. Those scholars argue that being prophets, they should disdain the perpetration of sins and other acts which entail deliberate disobedience to Allah. Furthermore, we have been commanded to take them as living examples, thus, such an attitude toward them could not be taken if they were to commit sins. Following their deeds necessitates that all their deeds be in conformity with Allah's commands. Such scholars interpret the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic *hadiths* in a way to suit their own point of view. The majority of scholars, on the other hand, maintain that it is possible for the prophets to accidentally commit minor sins which they do not acknowledge their validity, and of which they offer repentance; this is according to what is mentioned in the Qur'an and Prophetic *Sunnah*. As such, they become infallible with regard to the matter of accepting or acknowledging the validity of perpetrating minor sins. They may be, thus, taken as examples in offering repentance.

All Prophets Believe in One Religion

All prophets believe in only one religion, though their legislations are various. Almighty Allah says:

“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus to establish the religion and not be divided therein...”

(Qur'an: Ash-Shûrâ: 13)

And says:

“O messengers eat from the good foods and work righteousness. Indeed I, of what you do, am Knowing. And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me.”

(Qur'an: Al-Mu'minûn: 51-52)

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"We, Prophets, adopt one religion, and all the Prophets are paternal brothers."

The religion of all prophets is Islam, the only religion accepted by Allah. Islam means the full surrender and submission to Allah by believing in His Oneness, obeying His commands and renouncing polytheism. Concerning Nûh (Noah), Almighty Allah says:

"... And I am commanded to be of the Muslims [i.e., those who submit to Allah]." (Qur'ân: An-Naml: 91)

Regarding the religion of Ibrâhîm (Abraham), He says:

"When his Lord said to him, 'Submit,' he said, 'I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds.'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 131)

As for Mûsâ (Moses), Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And Moses said, 'O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims [i.e., submitting to Him].'"

(Qur'ân: Yûnus: 84)

Allah further asserts that it is the same religion retained by 'Îsâ (Jesus) in His saying:

"And [remember] when I inspired to the disciples, 'Believe in Me and in My messenger [i.e., Jesus]. They said, 'We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims [in submission to Allah].'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 111)

The same religion was attested by prophets coming after the revelation of the *Tawrah* (Torah). He says:

"The prophets who submitted [to Allah] judged by it for the Jews."

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 44)

The same was attested by the people of Sheba in Allah's saying:

"... My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

(Qur'ân: An-Naml: 44)

Therefore, Islam is the religion of all prophets. It originally connotes submission to the Will of Allah Alone. If one submits himself to the Will of Allah along with the wills of others, he will be regarded as a polytheist. Moreover, whosoever does not submit to Allah's Will should be regarded as being an arrogant one.

Submission to Allah implies both worshipping and obeying Him Alone. Allah must be obeyed in every command He enacts. If He, for example, at the beginning of Islam commanded Muslims to face Jerusalem when observing prayers and then, later, commanded them to face the Ka`bah, then both commands would be regarded as laws enacted in Islam. Thus, Islam implies full obedience to all the commands of Allah. Both acts, though they seem contradictory, are acts of devotion to Allah. So is the case of all prophets whose religion is only one, though their legislations, laws and rituals seem different. Therefore, difference in rituals and observances does not preclude the possibility of having one religion. As we mentioned before, a messenger may be commanded to do two contradictory commands at two different intervals such as directing one's face during prayers to Jerusalem at the beginning of Islam and then later turning to face the Ka`bah according to the *Shari`ah* of our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).

Therefore, although the religion of all prophets is only one, their legislations and laws are various. Almighty Allah sometimes enacts a law at a particular time for some reason and then enacts a different law later for another different reason. Responding to a Divine command before being abrogated is an act of obedience. After being abrogated, man must act upon the new command which replaced the old one. Whoever acts upon an abrogated legislation and leaves the new one is not regarded as a Muslim. He is not, thus, a follower of any of the prophets. Thus the Jews and the Christians are regarded as disbelievers, since they abide by abrogated legislations.

Almighty Allah enacts for every nation the laws, which suit its peculiar circumstances and secures its interest. Then, Allah may abrogate any legislation after a period of time because of the non-existence of the reason for which such laws have been legislated. Afterwards, Allah sent our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) for people all over the globe for all times until the Last Day. Allah sent with him a comprehensive and complete legislation, which is valid everywhere and at all times. It will not be abrogated or annulled. Therefore, all people must follow him and believe in his message. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all...” (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 158)

And says:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner...” (Qur’ân: Saba’: 28)

Moreover, He says:

“And We have not sent you, [O Muḥammad], except as a mercy to the worlds...” (Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 105)

He, further, says:

“Muḥammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the messenger of Allah and seal [i.e., the last] of the prophets...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 40)

The Qur’anic verses revealed to Prophet Muḥammad have all been addressed to all creatures including the jinn and human beings. Allah has not particularly enacted a law for the Arabs. Therefore, people are classified according to their response to Allah’s laws. Thus, the Qur’ân classifies people into believers and disbelievers, Muslims and hypocrites, righteous and unrighteous, obedient and wrongdoers. The Arabs have not thus been commanded with specific commands in the Qur’ân or the *Sunnah*. Allah classifies people according to the degree of their response to His commands.

The aim of revealing the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân in the Arabic language is for the sake of propagating the message to all people. It was first received by the Arabs and then communicated through them to others. Allah commanded the Messenger (PBUH) to communicate it to his people first and then convey it to the nearby nations in progressive regular degrees.

To conclude, the religion of all prophets is one; namely, sincerely devoting oneself to Allah and the abomination of polytheism and corruption, though their legislations are different according to the circumstances and needs of their people. When they were sealed by Muḥammad (PBUH), whose message prevailed and reached the farthest spots of the globe, no annulment, change or abrogation became possible. This is because it is the appropriate and adequate message for all times until the Day of Resurrection. Besides, no prophet is to come after the Messenger (PBUH) until the end of this life. He called people to belief and sincere devotion to Allah by means of His enacted legislations, exactly as the previous messengers. Furthermore, he believed in the messages

of the previous messengers, as well as the messengers who came before him, particularly the messenger who immediately preceded him, `Isâ (Jesus), as he gave glad tidings of Muḥammad's coming. Therefore, we read `Îsâ's (Jesus') glad tidings of the Prophet's coming in the Qur'ân:

"O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Aḥmad."

(Qur'ân: As-Saff: 6)

Moreover, included in the preceding scriptures detailed descriptions of the Messenger's characteristics, yet the Jews and Christians denounced these signs because of their envy. Almighty Allah says:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 146)

Privileges of the Messenger Muḥammad (PBUH)

The Messenger Muḥammad (PBUH) has specific privileges and qualities that exclusively belong to him when being compared to other prophets or when being compared to his followers.

The distinctive privileges, which are peculiar to the Prophet Muḥammad, when being compared to other prophets, are numerous. They include the following:

1. Prophet Muḥammad is the Seal of the Prophets. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Muḥammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the messenger of Allah and seal [i.e., the last] of the prophets..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 40)

He (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"I am the Seal of the Prophets; there will be no prophet after me."

2. *Al-Maqâm Al-Maḥmûd* means the right of the major intercession given to the Prophet alone on the Day of Judgment by permission of Allah. It is the highest degree in Paradise. It is spelled out in the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

"...It is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station"

(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 79)

It is stated in the long authentic *ḥadīth*, which states:

“Allah will gather the former and the later nations in one place. Some people will say to one another, ‘Do you not see in what condition you are and the state to which you have reached? Why do you not look for a person who can intercede for you with your Lord?’ They will go successively to *Ādam* (Adam), then *Nūḥ* (Noah), *Ibrāhīm* (Abraham), *Mūsā* (Moses), *‘Īsā* (Jesus), then to *Muḥammad* (peace be upon them all). Every one of those Prophets will say, ‘Go to another one,’ except *Muḥammad* (PBUH) who will say, ‘I am for it (the intercession).’ He (Prophet *Muḥammad*) will prostrate himself (before Allah) until Allah grants him permission to intercede.”

Hence, the Prophet's virtue, over all creatures, is established.

3. The universality of his message, which is intended for the jinn and human beings. Allah, Exalted be He, states:

“Say, [O *Muḥammad*], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all...’”
(Qur’ān: Al-A`rāf: 158)

And asserts:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind...”
(Qur’ān: Saba’: 28)

Moreover, He says:

“Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner...”

(Qur’ān: Al-Furqān: 1)

He, further, says:

“And We have not sent you, [O *Muḥammad*], except as a mercy to the worlds.”
(Qur’ān: Al-Anbiyā’: 107)

Additionally, He says:

“And [mention, O *Muḥammad*], when We directed to you a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān. And when they attended it, they said, Listen quietly.’ And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.”

(Qur’ān: Al-Aḥqāf: 29)

Scholars unanimously agree on this point. Moreover, the Qur'anic verses revealed to him are addressed to all creatures including the jinn and human beings. Although the occasions of revealing particular verses were particularly related to the Arabs, the meaning of these verses is not conclusively confined to these particular incidents according to the consensus of Muslim scholars. Therefore, no Muslim has declared that the Qur'anic verses related to the enunciation of divorce, *Zihar*⁹, *Li`ân*¹⁰, and penalties on thieves and highwaymen are not exclusively related to the person or persons regarding whom such respective Qur'anic verses have been revealed.

Therefore, though some Qur'anic verses have been particularly revealed in relation to some specific people, they bear general meanings. Muḥammad (PBUH) has been sent to the jinn and mankind, thus his message comprehensively includes both the jinn and mankind. As such, the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to communicate the message to the jinn, who listened to him reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân and turned to their folks as warners. This is mentioned in the Qur'ân and unanimously agreed upon by all Muslims.

Similarly, the Qur'ân addresses both the jinn and mankind. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“O company of jinn and mankind, did there not come to you messengers from among you...” (Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 130)

Likewise, the jinn are reported to have said, according to the Qur'ân:

“And among us are the righteous, and among us are [others] not so; we were [of] divided ways.” (Qur'ân: Al-Jinn: 11)

It means that they used to be of differing sects including Muslims and disbelievers, and people of *Sunnah* (Sunnis) and people of *Bid`ahs* (i.e., innovated matters in religion). According to the Qur'ân, they said,

“And among us are Muslims [in submission to Allah], and among us are the unjust...” (Qur'ân: Al-Jinn: 14)

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“Everyone should realize that Almighty Allah sent Muḥammad (PBUH) to both the worlds of the jinn and mankind. He further obliged them both to believe in him and in what he received, and obey his commands. They should also permit what Allah and His Messenger permitted and forbid what Allah and His Messenger forbade. They

should like what Allah and His Messenger like and dislike what Allah and His Messenger dislike. Whoever among the jinn or mankind receives the message of Muḥammad and does not believe in him will incur Allah's chastisement as it will be incurred by the earliest Arab pagans among whom the Messenger was sent. This principle is unanimously agreed upon by the Companions, the righteous Ṭābi`ūn (Successors of the Companions), Muslim leading scholars, and the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community."

4. Among the exclusive privileges of our Messenger Muḥammad (PBUH) is that he was granted the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, the everlasting miracle to which the two worlds of the jinn and mankind surrender. The Ever-Glorious Qur'ān is the most eloquent book that the jinn and mankind have not been able to produce a match for it. Moreover, eloquent people amongst the followers of all religions have acknowledged their failure to produce a single sura comparable with even its shortest sura.
5. The Prophet was also distinguished for his Ascension to the Heavens. He reached the highest place, the place of the Lot Tree, where the creaking of Pens writing man's records could be heard. He was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer to Almighty Allah.

As for the privileges and qualities by which the Prophet (PBUH) is distinguished from the members of his nation, **Imām Al-Qurtubī**, in his exegesis of the Qur'ān, has said,

"Almighty Allah gave specific legislative privileges to the Prophet (PBUH), which were not shared by any of his nation, with regard to obligation, prohibition and permissibility. For example, he was obligated to observe some matters not obligatory on others; he was prohibited from doing some matters not prohibited for others; and he was permitted to do some matters not permissible for others. While some of such privileges were unanimously accepted by all Muslims, others were held controversial."

Then Al-Qurtubī mentions these specific privileges granted to the Prophet.

Among these privileges mentioned by Al-Qurtubī is that the Prophet was commanded to observe *Tahajjud* (the Night Vigil Prayer). It was reported that the night prayer was held obligatory upon the Prophet until he died. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“O you who wraps himself [in clothing] - arise [to pray] the night, except for a little.”
 (Qur’ân: Al-Muzzammil: 1-2)

According to the Qur’ân, the observance of *Tahajjud* was held obligatory upon the Prophet at the beginning of his mission, but it was abrogated afterwards. In this regard, Allah says:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Qur’ân] as additional [worship] for you...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 79)

Similarly, when the Prophet (PBUH) offered a supererogatory act of worship, he never fell short of offering it persistently. Likewise, he and his family were prohibited to receive properties given in charity. He was also allowed to observe continuous fasting without a break. He was also permitted to keep more than four wives at the same time. In the same way, he was allowed to fight in Mecca. The property he left could never be inherited and his wives were prohibited to get married either after his death or upon divorce.

There are also a number of other privileges and qualities given to the Prophet (PBUH). We are going to tackle only three of the greatest privileges granted to the Prophet (PBUH). They are *Al-Isrâ’* and *Al-Mi`râj* (the Prophet’s Night Journey and Ascension), the universality of his message and his being the Seal of Prophets.

1) *Al-Isrâ’* and *Al-Mi`râj*

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Exalted is He Who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad] by night from Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarâm to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsâ, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”
 (Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 1)

In his commentary on the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, **Al-Ḥâfiz Ibn Kathîr** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Almighty Allah glorifies Himself and exalts His Greatness for the infinite Omnipotence He possesses. There is no deity or lord but Allah Alone, ‘Who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad]’. The Qur’anic adverb ‘by night’ indicates that the journey was carried out at night. The mosque mentioned in the Qur’anic phrase ‘from Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarâm’ refers the Holy Mosque of Mecca. ‘To Al-Masjid Al-Aqsâ’ refers to Al-Aqsâ Mosque located at İliyâ (now referred

to as Jerusalem), the origin of the prophets who descended from Ibrâhîm (Abraham). Thus they were congregated for the Prophet in their birthplace and he led them in prayer. Leading prophets in prayer refers to the Prophet's merit as a great leader and pioneering head of them all (peace be upon them all). The Qur'anic phrase **'Whose surroundings We have blessed'** means that the precincts of Al-Aqṣâ Mosque were blessed with crops and fruits. In explaining the purpose of the journey, Allah says, **'to show him of Our signs'** i.e. to let Muḥammad see our great signs. According to another verse, Allah says, **'He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.'** Finally, the verse was concluded with Allah's saying, **'Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing'** which affirms that He is All-Hearing of His servants' utterances, the believers and the disbelievers among them and He is, moreover, the All-Seeing. Accordingly, He will give everyone what he deserves in this life and the life to come."

Al-Mirâj is an Arabic word, which literally refers to the means through which a man ascends to high places. Its nature and how the Prophet was transported to the heavens is a matter solely known by Allah. We should believe in it without occupying ourselves with questioning the know-how.

According to the scholars of *Ḥadīth*, Al-Isrâ' occurred only once at Mecca after the Prophet's proclamation of Islam and a year, or a year and two months, before the immigration to Medina, as remarked by Ibn `Abdul-Barr.

Al-Isrâ' and Al-Mi`râj in the Qur'ân and the Sunnah:

In his exegesis of the Qur'ân, Al-Ḥâfîz Ibn Kathîr says:

"The truth is that the Prophet (PBUH) was transported from Al-Ḥarâm Mosque of Mecca to Al-Aqṣâ Mosque of Jerusalem while awake at night. He was conveyed by Al-Burâq¹¹ and upon reaching the gate of Al-Aqṣâ Mosque at Jerusalem, he tethered Al-Burâq to the gate. He, upon entering the mosque, offered a two-rak`ah prayer facing its qiblah and, then, he received the Mi`râj, which is similar to a ladder with rungs. He ascended by it up to the nearest heaven to the earth and then to the higher heavens. Upon reaching every heaven, he was welcomed by its dwellers. He greeted all prophets in the heavens, everyone in his respective degree and place. In the sixth heaven, he met Mûsâ (Moses), the one to whom Allah spoke directly. In the seventh heaven, he met Ibrâhîm (Abraham), the intimate friend of Allah. Then the Prophet

The dominant majority of Muslim scholars maintain that *Al-Isrâ'* of the Prophet (PBUH) was in both soul and body. The substantiating proof lies in the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

“Exalted is He Who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad] by night from Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarâm to Al-Masjid Al-Aqṣâ, whose surroundings We have blessed...” (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 1)

Glorification of Allah is only issued in great matters of concern. Had it been a dream, it would not have been incredible, the disbelievers would not have belied the Prophet, and those Muslims, who renounced Islam, would not have renounced it upon hearing the Prophet talking to people about that event. Likewise, the word 'Servant,' mentioned in the Qur'anic verse, refers to both body and soul. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad] by night.”
(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 1)

And says:

“... And We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people.” (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 60)

Ibn `Abbâs has said:

“The sight which Allah's Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was shown on the Night Journey was actual sight (i.e., not a dream).”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî)

Allah also says:

“The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].” (Qur'ân: An-Najm: 17)

Sight is an indication that *Al-Isrâ'* was carried out in soul and body. Being carried on *Al-Burâq*, a small brilliant white beast, necessarily requires the existence of the body since the soul does not need a means of transport when moving.

On the other hand, other people maintain that the Prophet was taken, during *Al-Isrâ'*, in soul only. This view was reported by Ibn Ishâq on the authority of `Âishah and Mu`awiyah (may Allah be pleased with them). It was also reported from Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrî. This view does not necessarily imply that *Al-Isrâ'* was only a dream. It indicates that the Prophet's soul was detached from his body and then transported to make the journey. Proponents of this view argue that it is one of the special qualities of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).

A dream may be a series of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations occurring involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep. Therefore, a sleeper may imagine himself ascending to the heavens or traveling to Mecca while his soul is still motionless, but only the angel might produce such ideas or emotions for him. There is a clear distinction between visioning something in a dream and experiencing it through the soul alone.

In addition, those who believed that *Al-Isrâ'* was solely carried out in the Prophet's soul substantiated their view by the Prophetic *hadith* narrated on the authority of Sharîk Ibn Abû Namir from Anas Ibn Mâlik who reported the Prophet (PBUH) as saying:

"Then when I woke up, I found myself lying in Al-Hijr (the unroofed portion of the Ka`bah which at present is in the form of an enclosed area beside the Ka`bah)."

This view may be refuted for two reasons. First, this Prophetic *hadith* includes a transmission fault attributed to Sharîk, for the memorizers of *hadiths* found faults in the *hadith* of *Al-Isrâ'* attributed to Sharîk. Second, the words 'woke up' may be contextually interpreted as a mere change of state rather than getting up. In this regard, Ibn Kathîr says, *"This interpretation sounds more preferable than rejecting the narration of Sharîk."*

Ibn Kathîr further added:

"We do not doubt the Prophet's having a dream about Al-Isrâ' before it occurred, which came true afterwards. The Prophet (PBUH) did not see a vision except that it would become true afterwards. This point was further elaborated on when talking about the earliest beginnings of revelation. That is, the Prophet saw what really happened to him before receiving the revelation in the form of pre-prophecy glad tidings."

Was the Prophet's Ascension Repeated?:

Al-Hâfiz Ibn Kathîr, after maintaining the Prophetic *hadiths* listed with regard to this subject, said:

*"The main conclusion of our overall understanding of all the Prophetic *hadiths*, including the *sahîh* (authentic), *hasan* (good) and *da`if* (doubtful) *hadiths* thereof, is that the Prophet's *Al-Isrâ'* occurred only once."*

Although transmitters have reported various relevant *hadiths* and some of them may add or skip specific words in the story, they are all susceptible to error.

Besides, whoever regarded the various differing reports concerning the story of *Al-Isrâ'* as an indication that there was more than one *Isrâ'* should be considered as adopting an erring view and would be mistaken. Some of the later scholars claimed that the Prophet (PBUH) was transported from Mecca to Jerusalem once, and ascended from Mecca to the heavens in another journey. They further claimed that he also traveled from Jerusalem to the heavens in a third trip. Such scholars falsely assumed that they could evade the paradoxical situation concerning the number of journeys by providing this view. This view however seems odd. No one of our righteous *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) were reported to have said that. Had the journey been repeated, the Prophet (PBUH) would have informed us about that.

Some Sufis alleged that *Al-Mi`râj* occurred thirty times. Some further claimed that it happened thirty four times, one being in both soul and body and the rest being only in soul. It is also said that *Al-Isrâ'* occurred twice, once in the state of awakening and the other while sleeping. Proponents of that view attempted to reconcile the narration of Sharîk and the mainstream *hadîths*. Some other people argued that the journey occurred twice, one before the Revelation and the other after it. Others claimed that it occurred three times, one before the Revelation and two after it. Whenever they suspect the interpretation of a Prophetic *hadîth*, they increase the number of journeys.

Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“What an amazing situation was that of those who claimed that the Prophet (PBUH) was transported many times! How could they assume that Allah, in every journey, prescribed prayers as fifty and then, due to the solicitude of the Prophet who frequented Allah and Mûsâ (Moses) many times, they were reduced to five? Did Allah say in every journey that He has finally assigned the prescribed prayers and relieved the burden levied on His bondmen?”

Ibn Kathîr has said:

“Some transmitters of hadîths narrated the story of Al-Isrâ' and Al-Mi`râj differently. They sometimes dropped some well-known details or even forgot them. They sometimes elaborated the meaning of the story in particular stances and abridged the text in other occasions. Thereupon, whoever interprets each version as a different journey is certainly erroneous. All contexts maintain that the Prophet (PBUH) greeted each prophet in the heavens only once and that Allah prescribed prayers only once too. How should one claim that the journey occurred so many times? It is utterly impossible.”

2) The Universality of Muḥammad's Prophethood and Refutation of Deniers' Claims:

A group of the Jews and Christians and those who follow them allege that Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was solely sent to Arabs, not to the People of the Scriptures. They say, "If Muḥammad's religion is true, our religion is true as well, and there are various ways to draw near to Allah." They compare the difference of religions to the various schools of scholars and Imâms; if one school is correct, this does not necessarily entail that the other schools are wrong.

This assumption, however, is apparently false, because if they believed in the prophethood of Muḥammad, they should consequently believe in whatever he would inform them about. The Prophet has decisively maintained that he is the Messenger of Allah to all people, therefore no one should belie him, instead his words should be taken for granted.

The Prophet, moreover, sent his messengers with messages to kings and rulers all over the globe to invite them to accept Islam. He sent messages to Caesar of the Roman Empire, Khosrau of Persia, Negus of Abyssinia and Al-Muqawqis of Egypt, and all the other major rulers at the Prophet's time.

The Prophet (PBUH) also fought against the People of the Scripture (the Jews and Christians), captivated their offspring and deemed killing them lawful after they (i.e., the Jews and Christians) broke peace treaties. He also obliged them to pay the *jizyah*¹². This has been proven according to authentic reports. Therefore, he invited the People of the Scripture to embrace Islam as he did with the polytheists. He engaged in military combats against Banû Qaynuqâ', Banû An-Nadîr and Banû Quraydhah and the people of Khaybar who were all Jews after they broke treaties held with him. He, moreover, captivated their women and children and took their properties as war booties. Furthermore, he fought against the Christians in the year of (the battle of) Tabûk, in which Zayd Ibn Hârithah, the Prophet's freed slave and Ja`far (may Allah be pleased with them) were killed. The Prophet also imposed the payment of the *jizyah* on the Christians of Najrân.

Similarly, the Prophet's Rightly-Guided Caliphs fought against the People of the Scripture and enjoined them to pay the *jizyah* willingly while being humble.

The Qur'ân, which was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad, frequently calls the People of the Scripture to follow his message. The Qur'ân declares the disbelief of those who do not follow his call. Almighty Allah says:

"O you who were given the Scripture, believe in what We have sent down [to Muḥammad], confirming that which is with you..."

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 47)

In the Qur'ân, Allah addresses the People of the Scripture so many times by saying:

“O People of the Scripture...” and “O Children of Israel...”

He also says:

“Those who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists were not to be parted [from misbelief]...”

(Qur'ân: Al-Bayyinah: 1)

This style is oft repeated in the Qur'ân. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, [from Him] to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...”

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 158)

And says:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind...”

(Qur'ân: Saba': 28)

It is also repeatedly reported that the Prophet said:

“I have been given superiority over other Prophets in five respects...”
Among those five respects, he said, [... Every Prophet had been sent to his people in particular but I have been sent to all mankind in general.]

It is authentically proven that the Prophet (PBUH) was sent to the jinn and mankind.

This is substantiated by a number of proofs maintaining that the Prophet invited the People of the Scriptures to believe in his message, and declared the disbelief of those who renounced his call. He also commanded Muslims to fight against them until they embrace Islam or pay the *jiziah* willingly in full humbleness. He was reported to have fought against them and sent military campaigns against them. He also imposed the *jiziah* on them, killed their fighters, captivated their women and children and took their properties as war booties. He also besieged Banû Qaynuqâ' and then expelled them to Azru`ât. Similarly, he besieged Banû An-Naḍîr and expelled them to Khaybar, regarding whom Allah revealed the Sura of *Al-Hashr*¹³. The Prophet also besieged Banû Quraydhah when they broke their treaty with the Prophet. Accordingly, he killed their men, captivated their women and took their properties. It is fully maintained in the Sura of *Al-Ahzâb*¹⁴. Likewise, the Prophet fought against

the people of Khaybar and conquered their territory. He killed their men, captivated their women and allotted their land among the believers. This is mentioned in the Sura of *Al-Fath*¹⁵. The Prophet also imposed the *jiziah* on the Christians, regarding whom parts of the Sura of *Âlu 'Imrân*¹⁶ were revealed. Moreover, he conquered territories owned by the Christians in the year of (the battle of) Tabûk, regarding whom Allah revealed verses in the Sura of *At-Tawabah*¹⁷. In most of the suras revealed at Medina, such as *Âlu 'Imrân*, *An-Nisâ*¹⁸ and *Al-Mâ'idah*¹⁹, there are numerous calls directed to the People of the Scripture to embrace Islam.

The Prophet's Rightly-Guided Caliphs like 'Umar and Abû Bakr, and the *Muhâjirûn*²⁰ and the *Anṣâr*²¹, who are well-known for their full obedience to the Prophet and complete observance of his commands, have conquered the Roman and Persian Empires. In addition, they fought against the People of the Scripture and the Magi and enjoined them to pay the *jiziah* willingly while being humble.

According to one of the *ṣahîh ḥadîths*, the Prophet is reported to have said:

"By the One in Whose Hands my soul rests, no Jew or Christian will hear about me without believing in me but will be cast into the Hellfire."

Sa'îd Ibn Jubayr said:

"In support of the meaning of this Prophetic ḥadîth, we quote the Qur'anic verse, which provides, '... But whoever disbelieves in it from the [various] factions the Fire is his promised destination' (Qur'an: Hûd: 17) The meaning of this ḥadîth is authentically attributed to the Prophet (PBUH)."

Therefore, Muḥammad is thus, the Messenger of all peoples and groups. The Prophet (PBUH) frequently affirmed that he was sent as the Messenger of the People of the Scripture and others. Henever told a lie. He could never fight against people without a divine command from Allah, and never declared people's blood and properties lawful without Allah's permission. Whoever belies Allah by claiming that he (PBUH) has been commanded to fight against a particular people, while in reality not being commanded so, is definitely regarded as a liar and unjust. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or says, 'It has been inspired to me,' while nothing has been inspired to him..."
(Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 93)

In addition to being a liar, such a person is deemed among the worst people tending to spread mischief in the earth. He is also considered worse than tyrant rulers, for such tyrant rulers usually fight people for the sake of subjecting them to their wills without even inviting them to Paradise or warning them against Hellfire through the claim of being messengers from Allah. Even Pharaoh and the tyrants like him are not included in such an abominable category. Only false prophets like Musaylimah and Al-Aswad Al-'Ansî are included in this category of the worst liars.

Thus, once verified as a true Prophet, everything he conveys should be regarded as true and therefore his obedience becomes obligatory. Almighty Allah says:

“And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allah...” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 64)

Similarly, if he calls the People of the Scripture to follow him, such a call must be regarded as true.

Further, whoever believes in the Messenger of Allah without accepting that his call is also for the People of the Scripture is regarded as erroneous like the ones who believe in Moses but falsely assume that Moses was supposed not to make exodus to Ash-Shâm²² or let the Israelites depart Egypt. Moreover, such people would be regarded as ones alleging that Allah did not command Moses to do so nor to observe the Sabbath, and that he did not receive the revelation of the Torah nor did he have direct speech with Allah. Such is the case of those who believe in Jesus but claim that he was not sent to the Children of Israel, and that the Children of Israel did not have to obey him, and that he oppressed the Jews. Therefore, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His Messengers and say, ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between. Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”

(Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 150-151)

3) Muhammad’s: The Concluding Message

Almighty Allah concluded all messages with the revelation of Muhammad’s message. Almighty Allah says:

“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the messenger of Allah and seal [i.e., the last] of the prophets...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Ahzâb: 40)

The Prophet, moreover, is reported to have said:

“I am the Seal of the prophets. There will be no Prophet to come after me.”

According to this *ḥadīth*, the finality of prophethood necessitates the finality of the Divine Revelation, since the absence of the general case requires the absence of the specific one.

Sealing prophethood by the prophethood of Muḥammad (PBUH) means that neither a prophet will appear again nor a new divine legislation may be enacted after him.

Jesus’ new coming at the end of life does not contradict this statement, since Jesus (PBUH) will follow Prophet Muḥammad’s legislation. He will not follow his own legislation, which has been already abrogated. Thus, he will become a successor of the Prophet and a ruler among his nation.

Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), the seal of all prophets and messengers (peace be upon them all), was dispatched with the most perfect Book, the most comprehensive legislation. He was sent with a legislation held adequate for the needs of all creatures everywhere until the Last Day. By his coming, Allah concluded Prophethood.

In the Two *Saḥīḥs* (the Two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim), Jābir Ibn `Abdullāh (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“My similitude in comparison with the other prophets is that of a man who has built a house completely and excellently except for a place of one brick. When the people enter the house, they admire its beauty and say, ‘But for a place of a brick (how splendid the house will be)!’ ”

According to the narration maintained in Muslim’s Authentic Book of *Ḥadīth*, he added:

“...Thus, I have come to finalize the chain of Prophets.”

According to a third narration related by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated a further addition, which complements the aforementioned *ḥadīth*. It provides:

“...The people go about it, but say, ‘Would that this brick be put in its place!’ So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets.”

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"The Children of Israel used to be ruled and guided by prophets; whenever a prophet died, another would take over his place. However, there will be no prophet after me, but there will be caliphs."

(Related by Al-Bukhârî)

Jâbir Ibn Samurah also narrated:

"I saw a seal on the back of the Prophet (PBUH) looking like an egg of a pigeon."

(Related by Muslim)

Al-Hâfiz said in his book entitled, *'Fathul-Bârî fî Sharh Sahîhul-Bukhârî (the Bestowal of the Creator in Expounding Al-Bukhârî's Sahîh):*

"Al-Qurtubî maintained that all authentic hadîths agreed that the seal of prophethood appeared on the Prophet's left shoulder. It was a prominent reddish object, which would be equal in size to the egg of a pigeon when it shrank, and it would be equal in size to a handful when it stretched". And Allah knows best.

Scholars explained why the seal of Prophethood was on the left shoulder of the Prophet. They maintained, *"It should be closer to his heart."*

As-Suhailî maintained that the seal of Prophethood was put on the Prophet's shoulder, since Satan can easily penetrate the human body through that part. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) was guarded against Satanic insinuations.

Al-Hâfiz said:

"It is of Allah's mercy on His servants that He sent Muḥammad (PBUH) to them. It is also a means of honor to conclude the prophets and messengers and to perfect the religion with him (PBUH). According to the Qur'ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet, it is fully clear that no prophet will come after him. This declaration is fully demonstrated to denounce any straying liar who may claim prophethood later even if being equipped with all sorts of magic, spells and charms. All such acts, if produced, should be regarded as mere deceptions. Examples of those who falsely claimed prophethood after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) are Al-Aswad Al-'Ansî in Yemen and Musaylimah Al-Kadhdhâb in Yamamah. They produced such apparent paradoxes and absurdities, which unveiled their deception and untruthfulness;

may the curse of Allah befall them. Allah will unveil the falsehood of every impostor claiming to be a prophet until the Day of Resurrection when those falsely claiming the prophethood are concluded with the Antichrist. Allah will expose, before true believers and scholars, the absurdities such a liar produces. This is out of Allah's beneficence toward His creatures. Such imposters never enjoin good or forbid evil except for a hidden reason or bad intention they may secretly retain. They always show falsehood and wickedness through their deeds and sayings. Almighty Allah says:

“Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar.” (Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ': 221-222)

On the contrary, true prophets (peace be upon them) show truthfulness, right guidance, uprightness and equity in whatever they say, command, do or produce of miracles and proofs which prove their prophethood. Prayers and peace of Allah be upon them all.

People are not, however, in need of a new legislation after the revelation of Muḥammad's message, since it adequately responds to the needs of humanity. Therefore, there is no reason for sending a new prophet after Muḥammad (PBUH). But one may argue that the Muslim nation has come to a decline, so that a new prophet may work on its reform. To this, one may say that reform is not an adequate reason for the revelation of a new message after Muḥammad (PBUH). A prophet is always dispatched to receive Divine Revelation; the reason for Divine Revelation is people's need for a new legislation or to complement the principles of a preceding divine message. It may also be needed to purify preceding legislations of all alterations and forgeries. Since Allah has preserved the Qur'ân and ultimately perfected the religion of Islam, no need for further prophets will arise. The Muslim nation is only in need of reformers.”

This is quoted from *Ar-Radd `Alâ Al-Qâdyâniyyah* (Refuting the false claims of Al-Qâdyâniyyah²³) with slight changes made by the author.

Allah proclaims the finality of prophethood by sending Muḥammad (PBUH) in His saying:

“Muḥammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the messenger of Allah and seal [i.e., the last] of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing.”

(Qur'ân: Al-Aḥzâb: 40)

It is, thus, well-known that the Qur'ân remains preserved as a comprehensive book of people's legislations and regulations exactly as it was first revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). Similarly, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet remains as the enunciator of the Qur'ân's meanings and thus it serves as a living example of the Prophet. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"... If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger."
(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 59)

Reference to Allah means recourse to His Book, and reference to the Messenger after his death means seeking solutions in his *Sunnah*. Therefore, the world is no more in need of further prophets and new legislations after the coming of Muḥammad (PBUH). If Allah sends more prophets or messengers, they will not add to the main fundamentals of Islamic faith or to the Islamic legislation. Allah has perfected the religion and accomplished His law. He says:

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 3)

If the reason behind dispatching messengers only lies in inviting people to their messages and spreading it among them, it may be easily carried out by Muslim scholars, since they should stand for propagating the message among people.

In addition, whoever believes in the continuity of prophethood or accepts the view of anyone believing so should be regarded as an apostate. Therefore, the Companions fought against those who falsely alleged prophethood after the death of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and regarded them as apostates. This view is unanimously agreed upon by earlier and later Muslim scholars.

The Significance of Concluding Prophethood with Muḥammad:

Prophethood was concluded with the Message of Muḥammad because he was sent to all peoples and nations until the Last Day. Accordingly, Almighty Allah says:

"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner..."
(Qur'ân: Saba': 28)

He also says:

"... And We have not sent you, [O Muḥammad], except as a mercy to the worlds."
(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 105)

Moreover, He says:

“Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.” (Qur’ân: Al-Furqân: 1)

Allah, further, says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all...’ ” (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 158)

Since Muḥammad’s Message is generally intended for all peoples all over the globe, it should be perfect and thus meet the needs of people. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“... This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 3)

He also says:

“... And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.” (Qur’ân: An-Nahl: 89)

He further maintains:

“And We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], the Book [i.e., the Qur’ân] in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it...” (Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 48)

In his argument against *Al-Qâdyâniyyah*, **Shaykh Abul-A`lâ Al-Mawdûdî** has maintained:

“If we peruse the Qur’ân to enumerate the reasons why Allah sends a prophet to a particular nation, we may discern the following four reasons:

- 1. Such a nation has not received a prophet or the precepts of a former prophet might not have reached them.***
- 2. They might have received a prophet but later his teachings were subjected to forgery or oblivion to the extent that people could not properly or fully follow his path.***
- 3. A prophet might have been sent to this nation but his teachings were not adequate for fulfilling the needs of coming generations. Therefore, a dire need arose for sending more prophets to perfect the religion.***

4. *This nation might have received a prophet, but that prophet was in need of another messenger to substantiate him or support his cause.*

These four reasons have become null and refuted after the advent of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). Therefore, the Muslim nation and all other nations become in no need of further prophets after the advent of Muḥammad (PBUH).

The Qur'ān maintains that Muḥammad (PBUH) has been sent for the guidance of all people. Allah says:

"Say, [O Muḥammad], 'O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all...'" (Qur'ān: Al-A`rāf: 158)

Also, the history of civilization affirms that the world, since the advent of Muḥammad's Message until the present day, has been suitable to make the Islamic call reach everywhere on the globe and be accessible to every existing nation. There is, thus, no need for sending further prophets to any nation. In this sense, the first reason for sending other prophets after Muḥammad (PBUH) becomes null. Similarly, the Qur'ān and books tackling the hadīths and life of the Prophet affirm that the teachings of the Prophet still exist now without being subjected to distortion, corruption, forgery or alteration.

The Book Muḥammad (PBUH) sent with does not suffer any omission, deletion or addition. More importantly, it will never ever be a subject of any form of forgery until the Last Day.

In addition, the guidance, which the Prophet (PBUH) disseminated through his deeds and dictums, is still preserved as if we still observe the integral character of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, the second reason for sending further prophets is refuted.

What refutes the third reason for sending other prophets is the fact that the Qur'ān explicitly highlights that Allah's religion has become perfect by sending Muḥammad, the Seal of all prophets.

Finally, if there had been any need for sending another prophet with Prophet Muḥammad to support his message, then he would have been sent at his time. Thus, the refutation of these four reasons entails refuting any further reasons for sending prophets after Muḥammad."

***Karâmatul-Awliyâ'* (Supernatural Acts Produced by Allah's Allies)**

We have previously tackled the Prophets' miracles and the distinction between a miracle and inexplicable acts of sorcerers and fortunetellers on the one hand and the newly advanced inventions on the other hand. The coming section, therefore, is devoted to the inexplicable, supernatural acts of those whom Allah honors with His love and friendship. These inexplicable acts are, however, closely related to the Prophets' miracles. In this same section, it seems pertinent to distinguish between these supernatural acts and the wonders done by sorcerers and jugglers.

Allah's allies are, according to the Qur'ân, the righteous pious believing people. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. Those who believed and were fearing Allah."
(Qur'ân: Yûnus: 62-63)

Every pious and believing individual becomes, according to the degree of his piety and belief, an ally of Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He. Allah may support him with some supernatural acts, which are commonly called '*Karâmât*' (supernatural acts).

Technically defined, *Al-Karâmah* is an inexplicable act carried out by some of the righteous, who follow the path of the messengers, as a means of honoring them for following the messengers' path. Not all of Allah's allies are supported with supernatural acts. An inexplicable marvelous act is always carried out to reinforce the faith or substantiate the argument of Allah's allies against the opponents of truth. Those of Allah's allies who are not substantiated with such acts are not usually deficient. This means those of Allah's allies who are supported with inexplicable acts are not held preferable to those who are not.

The veracity of supernatural acts shown by Allah's righteous allies is proven by the consensus of Muslim scholars and the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community. The occurrence of these inexplicable acts are also approved by the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). Only heretics like the *Mu'tazilah* (Mutazilites) and the *Jahmiyyah* and their followers deny them. Such a denial is contradictory to what has been established by the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. The Qur'ân, for instance, mentions the story of the People of the Cave (the Sleepers of Ephesus) and the story of Mary, the Virgin. Moreover, according to the *hadiths*, the angels used to descend in the shape of a canopy of lamps to listen to the Qur'anic recitation

of Usayd Ibn Hudayr (may Allah be pleased with him). They are also reported to have greeted `Imrân Ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him). There are also other similar instances. For reviewing this issue, see *Al-Furqân bayn Awliyâ' Ar-Rahmân wa Awliyâ' Ash-Shaytân (the Decisive Distinction between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of Satan)* by Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him).

Establishing the veracity and truth of supernatural acts carried out by Allah's allies, however, caused discord and great confusion among people. A group of them including the *Mu'tazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah* and their followers completely deny the occurrence of supernatural acts by Allah's allies. Their denial contradicts explicit texts of the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*, and reality as well.

Another group, however, extravagantly attributes unearthly supernatural acts to the supposedly allies of Allah. This group of people includes laymen and deviating learned persons. They affirm the occurrence of extraordinary wonders by transgressors and wrongdoers and other allies of Satan. They, in doing so, mostly rely on fake stories, dreams and satanic practices. In attributing such wonders, they attribute them to sorcerers, jugglers and swindlers, Sufi saints and other retainers of erroneous beliefs, whom they adore while they are alive or by commemorating their tombs. They, moreover, have built tombs for them and alleged their elevated and hallowed status by telling fabricated stories about them. Such tales include, for instance, the alleged beliefs that such persons have the power to affect matters in the world, fulfill the needs of people and relieve those who seek their help. In addition, they claim that such sorcerers and jugglers are poles and succors.

Therefore, alleged supernatural acts have been taken as a pretext for adoring those allies of Satan. They may falsely allege that soothsaying, swindling and sorcery are manifestations of miracles. They, thus, do not differentiate between supernatural acts maintained by Allah's allies and satanic acts provided by the allies of Satan. Those who are explicitly proved as Allah's allies by means of the Qur'ân or the *Sunnah* should never be adored even though they are supported with miraculous acts. Similarly, blessings should never be sought by visiting their tombs. Allah Alone is the One worthy of worship.

There is a number of distinctions between the extraordinary acts carried out by Allah's allies and those acts carried out by swindlers and jugglers. The former, for instance, are mainly performed as consequences of righteousness and piety while the latter are mainly corollaries of disbelief, transgression and wrongdoing.

Moreover, the supernatural acts of Allah's allies are chiefly carried out to invite people to do deeds of righteousness and piety while the inexplicable acts of jugglers and swindlers are usually carried out to lead people to abominable and prohibited acts such as polytheism, disbelief and killing.

In addition, supernatural acts offered by Allah's allies are intensified by remembering Allah and retaining His Oneness while inexplicable acts of jugglers and swindlers usually vanish upon mentioning the Name of Allah, reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'an or retaining Allah's Oneness. There are, thus, clear distinctions between the acts carried out by Allah's allies and jests of swindlers and jugglers.

As we have mentioned before, Allah's allies do not make use of the acts sustained by Allah for practicing swindle and fraud or even for acquiring glorification. They get, nonetheless, more modest and closer to Allah and are always dedicated to His service. Swindlers and jugglers, on the other hand, utilize the satanic acts offered by them to make people applause, glorify and even adore them. Thus each one of them has his own group or sect, which is named after him such as Ash-Shâdhiliyyah (being attributed to Ash-Shâdhilî), Ar-Rifâ`iyyah (being attributed to Ar-Rifâ`î), An-Naqshabandiyyah (being named after An-Naqshabandî) and other Sufi sects.

To conclude, people disagree with regard to belief in the inexplicable acts produced by Allah's allies. They are of three groups:

The first group have excessively denied and renounced such acts which are proved in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, although such acts are always provided by Allah in favor of His righteous allies for substantiating the truthful and straight path they follow.

The second group have excessively approved of such acts to the extent that they believe that sorcery, jugglery and other deceptive acts are manifestations of *Karâmah*. Such a group of people have utilized such a conviction to be a means of practicing polytheism by adoring sorcerers and jugglers whether being alive or dead. Hence, major polytheism, represented in frequenting tombs and adoring persons, and excessively attributing fables and inexplicable acts to sorcerers, has emerged.

The third group involves the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community who have taken the middle path, which is free from any excessiveness or inadequacy. Such a group of people have proved what is enacted in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and they never excessively adore Allah's allies. They are still convinced that there are degrees of preference

among Allah's allies; however, they do not prefer one ally to another. This is due to the fact that one of Allah's allies, though not supported with supernatural acts, may be preferred to another supported with such miraculous acts. Such a moderate group has also renounced acts of sorcery, jugglery, swindle and fraud, which they held contradictory to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). They regard such acts as supernatural acts emanating from Satan not produced by Allah's allies.

Thus, all praise and grace belong to Allah Who explicitly revealed the truth and unveiled falsehood. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"... That those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence; and indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

(Qur'an: Al-Anfâl: 42)



Endnotes

- 1 *Al-An`âm*: The Grazing Livestock, specifically: camels, cattle, sheep and goats, as mentioned in verses 143-144 of this Sura. The sixth Sura of the Qur'an.
- 2 *Al-Isrâ'* and *Al-Mi`râj* (the Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension): Prophet Muhammad's miraculous night journey from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca to Al-Aqsâ Mosque in Jerusalem, then his miraculous ascension from Jerusalem to the heavens to meet his Lord.
- 3 *Yûnus*: The Prophet Jonah. The tenth Sura of the Qur'an.
- 4 *Hûd*: The Prophet Hûd. The eleventh Sura of the Qur'an.
- 5 *At-Tûr*: The Mount, where Allah spoke to Moses. The fifty-second Sura of the Qur'an.
- 6 *Al-Baqarah*: The Cow. The name is taken from the story in verses 67-73. The second Sura of the Qur'an.
- 7 *Isrâ'*: The Night Journey. The Sura is also known as *Banû Isrâ'îl* (The Children of Israel). The seventeenth Sura of the Qur'an.
- 8 *Râfidah*: A Shiite group who refused the caliphates of Abû Bakr As-Siddîq and `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb and waged accusations against them and against many of the Prophet's Companions as well.
- 9 *Zihâr*: the saying of a husband to his wife, when he wants to abstain from having sex with her, "(Sexually,) you are to me like the back of my mother," i.e. unlawful to approach sexually. That was a type of divorce practiced by Arabs in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance (*Al-Jâhiliyyah*).
- 10 *Li`ân*: Swearing allegation of adultery upon one's wife and divorcing her by public imprecation
- 11 *Al-Burâq*: It is the animal mounted by the Prophet (PBUH) during *Al-Isrâ'*.

- 12 The *jizyah*: A tribute or a tax required from non-Muslims living in an Islamic state exempting them from military service and entitling them to the protection of the Islamic state.
- 13 *Al-Hashr*: The Gathering. The fifty-ninth Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 14 *Al-Ahzâb*: The Companions or The Combined Forces, referring to the alliance of disbelieving Arab tribes against the Muslims in Medina for the battle called "*Al-Ahzâb*" or "*Al-Khandaq*" (*the Trench*). The thirty-third Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 15 *Al-Fath*: The Conquest. The forty-eight Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 16 *Âlu `Imrân*: The family of `Imrân. The third Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 17 *At-Tawabah*: Repentance. This Sura is also known as *Barâah*, meaning disassociation, freedom, release or immunity. The ninth Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 18 *An-Nisâ*: The Women. The fourth Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 19 *Al-Mâdah*: The Table, referring to the table spread with food requested by the disciples of Jesus (PBUH) in verse 112 of this Sura.
- 20 The *Muhâjirîn*: The Emigrants; those Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Medina as they were persecuted in Mecca because of embracing Islam.
- 21 The *Anṣâr*: The Supporters; the inhabitants of Medina who had accepted Islam and supported the Prophet (PBUH) and all the Muslim Emigrants (the *Muhâjirîn*) upon their arrival there.
- 22 Ash-Shâm: The Levant; the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.
- 23 *Qadyâniyyah*: A sect that claims to belong to Islam. It was founded by Mirzâ Ghulâm; its adherents believe that Muḥammad (PBUH) is not the last Prophet, divine revelation is still in effect and that *Jihâd* is prohibited.

Belief in Last Day

It includes the following aspects:

First Aspect:

Belief in the Signs of the Day of Judgment

As the Last Day is necessarily preceded by a number of signs which preface its coming, commonly called *Ashrât As-Sâ`ah* (Signs of the Day of Judgment), it seems pertinent to mention the most eminent signs, since belief in the Last Day and its signs is an indispensable core of a Muslim's faith. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]."

(Qur`ân: Al-Qamar: 1)

He further maintains:

"Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications."

(Qur`ân: Muḥammad: 18)

Imâm Al-Baghawî (may Allah have mercy on him) has said, "And the coming of the Prophet (PBUH) is regarded as one of the portents which preface the Last Day." Almighty Allah says,

"... And what will make you perceive? Perhaps the Hour is near."

(Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 17)

And says:

"Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?"

(Qur'ân: Az-Zukhruf: 66)

To refer to the close occurrence of the Last Day, Allah calls it 'tomorrow.' Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"... And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hashr: 18)

Almighty Allah further provides:

"Indeed, they see it [as] distant, but We see it [as] near."

(Qur'ân: Al-Ma`ârij: 6-7)

At-Tirmidhî related the following *hadîth*, and deemed it *sahîh* (authentic) *hadîth*, from the *marfû`* (traceable) *hadîth* narrated by Anas; the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"I have been sent and the Hour (is at hand) as these two (fingers)."

Allah's Messenger (PBUH) held up his index finger and the middle finger together to illustrate how the Last Day is drawing nearer.

It is also related in the Two *Sahîhs* (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) that Ibn `Umar narrated the Prophet (PBUH) as saying:

"Your lifetime (i.e., the Muslims' lifetime) in comparison to the lifetime of the previous nations, is like the period between the `Aṣr (Afternoon) Prayer and sunset."

The affairs of the Last Day are regarded so great, and therefore, great attention has been given to illustrate its earlier and preceding signs. Put differently, the Prophet (PBUH) has illustrated its main portents and foretold that dissension will occur before it, in the hope that his nation will be well prepared for that Day.

As for the definite time of its occurrence, it is solely known by Allah. He has not disclosed it to people, so that they may be well equipped and prepared for its coming. Similarly, He conceals the definite time of anyone's death to induce people to be more energetic in offering good deeds at all times.

The prominent scholar, **As-Safârîni**, has said:

“You should know that the portents of the Last Day are classified into three categories. The first category involves some signs that have already occurred and are now past. Those signs are referred to as the remote signs of the Last Day. The second category involves some other signs that have already appeared, nonetheless, they are still present. The third category is called the major signs, which are immediately followed by the Last Day. They will successively and continuously occur like the uninterrupted fall of loose beads.

Included in the first category of the portents, which occurred and terminated, are the coming of the Prophet (PBUH) and his death, the conquest of Jerusalem, and the murder of ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with him), the third Caliph after the Prophet (PBUH). In this regard, Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) has said, ‘The first dissension occurring in the Muslim community is the murder of ‘Uthmân.’”

In addition, he has made mention of the civil wars, which occurred among the Muslims and the ensuing appearance of deviating sects like the Kharijites¹ and the Râfidah². Then, he added:

“And also included among the portents of the Last Day are the emergence of imposters who allege prophethood, and the decline of the Arabs’ sovereignty. Such a saying has been related by At-Tirmidhî. The abundance of fortunes is also mentioned by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim as one of the signs of the Last Day. Also the spread of earthquakes, landslides, deformation and downfall of stones from the heavens are included among the signs of the Last Day, which have occurred and expired.

The second category is called the transitional signs, which have occurred and still exist and are increasing nowadays. They are so great in number. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

‘The Hour will not occur until the pleasures of this worldly life are reaped by wicked and thick-witted people.’

This hadîth is related by Imâm Ahmad, At-Tirmidhî and Ad-Diyâ’ Al-Maqdisî from the hadîth related on the authority of Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him). It is interpreted that the Last Day will not occur until the thick-witted and wicked persons take authority.

Similarly, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

'A time will come to people when he who adheres to his religion will be like (i.e., as difficult as) one who seizes live coals.'

This hadith is related by At-Tirmidhî on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet is reported to have said:

'The Hour (the Day of Resurrection) will not be established until people would boast each other in (building and excessive ornamenting of) mosques.'

It is related by Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Hibbân and Ibn Mâjah on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet is also reported to have said:

'At the end of time, there will appear ignorant worshippers and wrongdoing reciters (of the Qur'ân).'

It is related by Abû Nu`aym and Al-Hâkim on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him).

In addition to the foregoing signs, the crescent may appear in an extraordinary large shape. Such a sign is related in a narration which is not reported (word-by-word) by At-Tabarânî on the authority of Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be please with him). The hadith literally reads:

'Among the portents of the Last Day is the swelling of the moon.'

Also included among the signs of the Last Day is the practice of taking mosques like roads, i.e. people will spend little time at mosques.

Moreover, in the hadith reported in Sahîh Al-Bukhârî (Al-Bukhârî's Authentic Book of Hadith), Anas has said:

'Shall I narrate to you a narration which I heard from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and none other than I will narrate it to you? I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, 'From among the portents of the Hour are (the following): The religious knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious scholars), and general ignorance (of religion) will increase, and the drinking of alcohol will be very common, and zinâ (adultery and fornication) will spread, and men will decrease in number while women will increase so much so that for fifty women there will only be only one man to look after them.'

It is also related in the Authentic Books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim that Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“While the Prophet (PBUH) was addressing people in a gathering, a Bedouin came and asked him, ‘When would the Hour (the Day of Resurrection) take place?’ The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) continued his talk. Some people said that the Prophet (PBUH) had heard the question while some of them said that he had not heard it. When the Prophet (PBUH) finished his speech, he said, ‘Where is the questioner who inquired about the Hour?’ The Bedouin said, ‘Here I am, O Allah’s Messenger!’ The Prophet (PBUH) said (to the man), ‘When honesty is lost, then wait for the Hour.’ The Bedouin said, ‘How will it be lost?’ The Prophet (PBUH) replied, ‘When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour.’”

The third category of the portents of the Last Day is that of the major signs and indications, which are immediately followed by the Hereafter. They include the emergence of Al-Mahdî, the Anti-Christ, the return of ‘Isâ (Jesus), son of Mary (PBUH), the emergence of Gog and Magog, the demolition of the Ka`bah, people being afflicted with smoke, the evanescence of the Qur`ân from the Qur`ân books and from people’s memories and the sun’s rise from the west. Also included in this category are the Beast which will be brought forth from the earth, the fire emerging from Aden, and the Horn being blown for resurrection. With the first blow of the Horn, the whole world will fall into terror and horror. With the second blow, all creatures will perish while, with the third blow, they will be resurrected.”

Although the affairs and incidents of the Last Day are so grave, we pay no heed to them. A considerable number of these signs have taken place, so we ask Allah to keep us steadfast in maintaining the straight path, make us die as Muslims and be safeguarded against all dissensions, whether apparent or concealed thereof.

The signs foretold by the Prophet (PBUH) are among the proofs which ascertain the veracity of his prophethood and the miracles, which substantiate his call. This is because the Prophet told about future events that came to his knowledge through revelation from Allah. The occurrence of these signs exactly as the Prophet told us about them reinforces a Muslim’s faith.

Similarly, the Prophet, in foretelling and mentioning the signs of the Last Day, admonishes us to be well prepared for the Last Day. May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him who has honestly and clearly conveyed the message and we, to that, are of those who testify.

The portents of the Last Day will appear successively. The first sign to appear is the emergence of Al-Mahdî, being followed by the Anti-Christ and then by the descending of `Îsâ (Jesus), son of Mary (PBUH), and then the rest will follow.

1. The Emergence of Al-Mahdî:

An overview of the major signs preceding the Last Day was given in the last section; the following is an elaboration of those signs.

`Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Days will not pass and time will not come to an end before the Arabs being ruled by a man from my own family whose name conforms to mine.”

(Related by Imâm Aḥmad, Abû Dâwûd and At-Tirmidhî with an authentic chain of transmitters)

At-Tirmidhî deemed it as *ḥasan* (good) and *ṣahih* (authentic) *ḥadîth*. There are further *ḥadîths* reported on the authority of `Alî, Abû Sa`îd Al-Khudrî, Umm Salamah (the Prophet’s wife) and Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them all).

The prominent scholar, **As-Safârînî** has said, *“Reports traced back to the Prophet (PBUH) and the Companions are numerous, all affirm the emergence of Al-Mahdî.”* **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said, *“Prophetic ḥadîths which prove the emergence of Al-Mahdî are all authentically related by Abû Dâwûd, At-Tirmidhî, Aḥmad and others.”*

The name of Al-Mahdî is Muḥammad Ibn `Abdullâh. He is one of the descendants of Al-Ḥasan Ibn `Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib (may Allah be pleased with them). He will emerge at the end of this life when the earth is dominated by oppression and injustice. Upon his emergence, justice and equity will prevail.

The prominent scholar, **As-Safârînî**, has said:

“Views are in disagreement about the emergence of Al-Mahdî to the extent that some people maintain that Jesus is the Expected Al-Mahdî. The proper view upon which the people of truth agree is that the emergence of Al-Mahdî is different from the return of Jesus. The former will emerge before the latter. Reports substantiating this view are so numerous that Al-Mahdî’s emergence may be regarded as undoubtedly established. It is recognized by the scholars of the Sunnah and is certainly included among their established convictions.”

To conclude, concerning the emergence of Al-Mahdî, people adopt three different views.

The first group renounces the emergence of Al-Mahdî. They are some of the modern writers who lack expertise, deeply rooted knowledge of religious texts and transmitted reports of prominent Muslim scholars. They only rely on their rational deductions and ideas.

The second group excessively believes in Al-Mahdî. They are mostly among the deviating sects, as each sect of such a group claims that its respective leader is the Expected Mahdî. *Ar-Rafidah*, for example, claims that Al-Mahdî is their expected Imâm who will emerge from the vault. They name him Muhammad Ibnul-Hasan Al-`Askarî, and claim that he entered the vault of Samurrâ` (Samarra) while he was a child five hundred years ago³. They have been waiting for his emergence until now! Similarly, whosoever would like to dominate people or gain control over them, would call himself the Expected Mahdî. Such is the case of Sufis who swindle and deceive people by alleging sovereignty and claiming that they belong to the household of the Prophet (PBUH).

The Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community adopt the intermediate view. They agree on the emergence of Al-Mahdî according to what is maintained in the authentic texts regarding his name, the name of his father, his genealogy, his personal features and the time of his emergence. They do not exceed the limits mentioned in *hadîths*. Before his emergence, there will appear a number of portents and indications mentioned by scholars. The prominent scholar, As-Safârîni said:

“Views have dramatically differed regarding the emergence of Al-Mahdî to the extent that some people maintain that Jesus is the Expected Al-Mahdî. The sound view, upon which the people of truth agree, is that Al-Mahdî is different from Jesus. Al-Mahdî will, according to their view, appear before the coming of Jesus (PBUH). Reports, which affirm the emergence of Al-Mahdî are so numerous that they are authentically proven. Such a belief is well known among the scholars of the Sunnah and is certainly held among their established convictions.”

He went on saying:

“A considerable number of hadîths have been reported on the authority of the Companions mentioned above, and the leading followers which all provide decisive proofs on the emergence of Al-Mahdî. Therefore, belief in his emergence is obligatory according to what is stipulated by the prominent scholars and the established doctrines of the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community.”

In elaborating his biography, **As-Safârîni** has further added:

“Scholars have said that Al-Mahdî would act upon the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). He will be so peaceful that he will never awake a sleeper, and will fight according to the Prophet’s Sunnah. Moreover, he will enact every exemplary practice of the Prophet and eliminate all Bid’ahs (i.e., matters innovated in religion). He will further establish the religion of Islam as established by the Prophet, and will demolish the Cross, kill pigs and restore Muslims’ unity and prosperity. He will fill the earth with justice and equity.”

In describing his personal features, **As-Safârîni** added:

“A man from the Prophet’s offspring, rightly-guided and of good manners, will emerge to conquer the city of Caesar. He is the final emir emerging from the nation of Muhammad (PBUH). During his lifetime, the Anti-Christ will emerge and `Îsâ (Jesus), son of Mary, will return.”

As-Safârîni further maintained:

“In his book Fawâ'id Al-Fikr (i.e., Fruits of Reflection) Abul-Hasan Muhammad Ibnul-Husayn provides that there are numerous hadiths tackling the matter of Al-Mahdî. All such reports agree that Al-Mahdî will descend from the offspring of the Prophet (PBUH) and he will reign for seven years. They also maintain that Al-Mahdî will fill the earth with equity and justice. In addition, he will support Jesus in killing the Anti-Christ at the gate of Ludd in Palestine. He will lead this nation in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and Jesus himself will perform prayer standing behind him.”

This is the story of Al-Mahdî according to what is maintained by the Prophet regarding his distinct features, time of emergence and biography. However, many deviating persons have claimed to be the Expected Mahdî, though it was so early for Al-Mahdî to appear in such times. Though they have been named after his name, most of his characteristics cannot be identified in them. They have mainly aimed at deceiving naives and utilizing their name which is similar to Al-Mahdî for attaining personal gains. Therefore, Allah exposed their falsehood and unveiled their lies. Do not be surprised at such a false claim, since a group of people who came before them, falsely alleged prophethood and fabricated lies against Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or says, ‘It has been inspired to me,’ while nothing has been inspired to him...”
(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 93)

We ask Allah to show us the truth, support us to follow it and we ask Him to unveil for us falsehood and let us be averted from it. We also ask Him to guard us against mischief of misguiding leaders, swindlers and frauds.

2. The Emergence of the Anti-Christ

All the prophets (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them) warned their nations against the coming of the Anti-Christ; the Messiah of deviation and falsehood. We ask Allah to pervert his harm. All prophets introduced a description of his personal features to their followers so that they might be warned against his evil. The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) has described him in detail and elaborated his personal characteristics to his nation so that they might easily recognize him.

According to At-Tirmidhî, the Anti-Christ will emerge from Khurasân. In *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)*, Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (PBUH) as saying:

"The Antichrist would be followed by seventy thousand Jews of Aṣbahân wearing Persian shawls"

He is called *Al-Massîh* (i.e., the wiper or the wiped) because one of his eyes is wiped off or because he will spread swindle and confusion all over the earth. He is further called *Ad-Dajjâl* (i.e. the imposter) because he will spread perplexity and confusion on earth. He will be contemporaneous to Al-Mahdî.

Al-Hâfiz Ibn Kathîr (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Then the Anti-Christ will be permitted to emerge at the end of this life. He will first appear in the shape of an absolute ruler who will falsely allege prophethood. Then, he will falsely claim Lordship when being followed by ignorant people, villians and laymen. He will be only opposed by the righteous and those who fear Allah. He will conquer all countries, fortresses, provinces, and small towns and villages. He will not leave a country without treading it with his men and horses with the exception of the two holy cities; Mecca and Medina.

He will stay for forty days on the earth, one day being as long as a full year, another day being as long as a month, a third day being as long as a week while the rest of his days will be of normal length. The duration is estimated as a year, two months and fifteen days.

Allah will endow him with the ability to make supernatural acts, which he will carry out to deviate whom Allah wills. True believers will remain steadfast in following true guidance and righteousness.

*The appearance of Jesus (PBUH), son of Mary, will be contemporaneous to that of the Anti-Christ. True believers and pious persons will follow Jesus and gather around him. Jesus will lead them in going to the Anti-Christ at Jerusalem where he will defeat him at the gate of Ludd. Jesus (PBUH) will further murder the Anti-Christ with a spear while trying to enter the gate. Jesus will say to him, 'I am destined to shoot you with a strike hitting its target.' When the Anti-Christ faces Jesus, he will be dissolved like salt in water. Then Jesus will hit him with the spear at the gate of Ludd. He will be killed there, may Allah curse him. This is fully illustrated in many *hadiths*."*

The Anti-Christ will cause the sky to rain and the crops to grow for those who follow him. He will also cause their pasturing cattle return with their udders full of milk. As for those who do not follow his cause, they will be stricken with famines, drought and loss of cattle. They will also be tested with loss of wealth, lives and fruits. The treasures of the earth will follow him wherever he goes. It is also reported that he will kill a young man then bring him back to life. All such acts are a means of trying people.

Despite all such acts, he is regarded as deficient, wrongdoer and unjust in Allah's Sight. Moreover, despite introducing such inexplicable acts, between his eyes appears the word '*Kafir*' (i.e., a disbeliever). All the acts introduced by him are regarded as ways of trying people. It is really a highly serious and grave trial. Only people of perfect faith and firm belief will survive. Due to the gravity of such a trial, all prophets, particularly our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), warned us against him.

Abû `Ubaydah Ibnul-Jarrâh (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying:

"No prophet came after Nûḥ (Noah) but warned his people against Ad-Dajjâl (the Anti-Christ), and I warn you against him."

(Related by Imâm Aḥmad, Abû Dâwûd and At-Tirmidhî)

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) has instructed his nation to seek refuge with Allah from the trial of the Anti-Christ at the conclusion of every prayer. Therefore, Abû Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"When any one of you utters the final tashahhud⁴, he should seek refuge with Allah from four (trials): the torture in the Hellfire, the torture in the grave, the trials of life and death, and the evil of the trial of Al-Masîḥud-Dajjâl (Antichrist)."

(Related by Imâm Aḥmad and Muslim)

Prophetic *hadiths*, which prove the emergence of the Anti-Christ and the Prophet's invocations for seeking Allah's refuge from his trial, are numerous. The Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community unanimously agree to the fact that the Anti-Christ will emerge at the end of this world. Belief in his coming is, moreover, of the core basics of the Muslim's faith. Thus, whoever denies the emergence of the Anti-Christ should be regarded as contradicting authentic *hadiths* and opposing the view of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community. Only innovators, including the Kharijites (the Seceders), *Al-Jahmiyyah*, some of the *Mu'tazilah* (Mutazilites), and modern writers, deny the appearance of the Anti-Christ. They only rely on their rational thinking and whims in arguing for their views.

The true believer must believe in what is stated by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). He must not be among those intended in Allah's saying:

"Rather, they have denied that which they encompass not in knowledge and whose interpretation has not yet come to them..."

(Qur'an: Yûnus: 39)

This is because one of the prerequisites of true faith is submitting to what is dictated by Allah and His Messenger. He is regarded as the follower of his whims the one who does not submit to Allah's will and law.

We ask Allah to keep us safeguarded and secured from skepticism and polytheism, from disbelief, hypocrisy and bad manners. We also ask Him not to deviate our hearts after being guided and all praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

3. The Descending of Jesus (PBUH), Son of Mary, from the Heavens:

It is certainly proved that Jesus (PBUH), son of Mary, will descend from the heavens according to what is maintained in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an. It is also reported by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who never spoke out of his own inclination. Similarly, it is agreed on unanimously by the Muslim scholars, the earliest and latest among them, and they have regarded it as one of the basic convictions of Muslims.

As-Safârîni has maintained,

"The descending of Jesus (PBUH) is proved by the Glorious Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the consensus of the Muslim scholars. As for the Glorious Qur'an, Almighty Allah says, 'And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in him [i.e., Jesus] before his death.' (Qur'an: An-Nisâ': 159) It means that all people of the Scripture (the Jews and the Christians) will believe in Jesus before his death after being descended from the heavens. At that time, religion will be established in conformity with the pure religion of Ibrâhîm (Abraham), i.e. Islâm."

As-Safârîni has added:

“As for the authentic hadiths, the Prophet has been reported, according to what is related in the Two Sahîhs of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim on the authority of Abû Hurayrah, as saying, ‘By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, son of Mary (Jesus) will shortly descend amongst you (Muslims) as a just ruler and will break the Cross and kill the pigs and abolish the jizyah⁵...’ According to the narration related by Muslim, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, ‘By Allah, the son of Mary (Jesus) will surely descend as a just ruler and will break the Cross...’ Furthermore, Muslim relates on the authority of Jâbir Ibn ‘Abdullâh (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, ‘A group of my people will not cease fighting for the Truth and will prevail until the Day of Resurrection. ‘Isâ Ibn Maryam (i.e., Jesus, son of Mary) would then descend and their (Muslims’) commander would invite him to come and lead them in prayer, but he would say, ‘Your commanders are only from amongst you. This is the honor from Allah for this nation.’”

Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed on the descending of Jesus, son of Mary. No one has breached the Muslim consensus held on this view. Only philosophers and atheists renounce this conviction.

Muslims unanimously agree that Jesus will descend from the heavens to reign according to the Shari‘ah (Islamic Law) of Muḥammad (PBUH). He will not act upon a new independent legislation although he will return as a prophet. He will take over the matter from Al-Mahdî, who will become one of his followers.”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Jesus (PBUH) is still alive in the heavens; he is not dead. When he descends from the heavens, he will judge according to the Qur‘ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) without any violation of their principles.”

Shaykhul-Islâm further added:

“Jesus (PBUH) is still alive according to the authentic hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Son of Mary (Jesus) will descend amongst you (Muslims) as a just judge and ruler, and will break the Cross, kill the pigs and abolish the jizyah.’ Moreover, it is stated in the Sahîh Muslim (Muslim’s Authentic Book of Hadith) that the Prophet (PBUH) has said, ‘...He (Jesus) will descend on Al-Manârah Al-Baydâ’ (i.e., the White Minaret) in the east of Damascus, and he will kill Al-Masihud-Dajjâl (Antichrist).”

As for Allah' saying, **'...Indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...'** (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 55), it does not mean that Allah caused him to die. Had Jesus died, he would have been like the other believers, since all the souls of people would normally ascend to the heavens after death. Therefore, Almighty Allah says, **'... and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve...'** (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 55) **Had his soul been taken, his body would have remained on the earth like other prophets' bodies.**

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

'... And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself.'

(Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 157-158)

The phrase, **'...Rather, Allah raised him to Himself'** indicates that he was ascended to the heavens in soul and body. According to what is maintained in the Two Sahîhs (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim), he will be descended in soul and body. Had Jesus died, Allah would have said, **'And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but he died.'**

Some scholars have explained the meaning of the Qur'anic phrase, **'... Indeed I will take you'** (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 55) to mean that Allah took his body and soul. It may, thus, be said that the verb 'take' in the verse may be interpreted as 'to settle or pay in full.' in addition, that verb may be used in referring to the Arabic verb 'sleep' as maintained elsewhere in the Qur'ân. In this regard, Allah says, **'Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep.'** (Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 42) and says, **'And it is He Who takes your souls by night and knows what you have committed by day...'** (Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 60)"

Judge `Iyâd has maintained,

"The descending of Jesus (PBUH) from the heavens and his killing of the Anti-Christ is stated as of the creed of the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community and is substantiated by a number of sahîh hadîths. According to the dictates of Shari`ah and reason, there is no reason to reject it. Some of the Mu`tazilah (Mutazilites), Jahmiyyah and their followers have alleged that all hadîths which mention the descending

of Jesus should be rejected since they contradict the Qur'anic verse which provides, '... Seal [i.e., the last] of the prophets.' (Qur'an: Al-Ahzâb: 40) and the hadîth in which the Prophet (PBUH) says, 'There will be no prophet coming after me.' According to their allegation, belief in the return of Jesus also runs contrary to the consensus of the Muslim scholars who agree that no prophet will come after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and that his legislation is the final and eternal message which will remain valid until the Last Day. This argument is void since Jesus (PBUH) will not, according to the hadîths, descend with an independent and abrogating legislation. He will descend to reign according to the Muslims' legislation and revive the religious ordinances abandoned by people by then."

In our modern age, there are some ignorant writers and half-educated men who negate the descending of Jesus (PBUH), relying on their reason and personal thoughts. They may even doubt the authenticity of well-established and *ṣaḥîḥ* (authentic) *hadîths* and may even misinterpret their meanings. A Muslim, should, first and foremost, believe in what is maintained by the Prophet (PBUH) since this is held as one of the indispensable prerequisites of Muslim's belief in the unseen.

The prominent scholar, **As-Safârîni** (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

"Jesus (PBUH) will descend to reaffirm and reestablish the Sharî'ah of our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), not as a Messenger to the Muslim nation. He should have, thus, been taught the principles of this Sharî'ah by Allah's command before descending from the heavens."

As-Safârîni has added:

"Some people wrongly thought that by the descending of Jesus, all obligatory religious ordinances will be taken away. Such a view should be rejected since all reports affirm that he will be descended to substantiate, revive and reestablish Muḥammad's Sharî'ah, for it is the final and concluding Sharî'ah. Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is the last prophet and no life would survive without the existence of religious ordinances. This will continue until the word 'Allah' will not be heard anymore. This is mentioned by Al-Qurtubî in his book entitled 'At-Tadhkirah (The Reminder).'"

As-Safârîni has further maintained:

"As for the duration he will spend on the earth and the time of his death, it is related by At-Ṭabarâni and Ibn 'Asâkir on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) says, 'Jesus (PBUH), son of Mary, will descend (from the

heavens) and remain for forty years.' According to another *hadith* related by *Imâm Aḥmad*, *Ibn Abû Shaybah* and *Abû Dâwûd*, *Ibn Jarîr* and *Ibn Hîbbân* on the authority of *Abû Hurayrah* (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, 'He (Jesus) will remain (on the earth) for forty years, then he will die and the Muslims will offer Funeral Prayer over him. He will be buried near the Prophet's tomb.' "

4. The Emergence of Gog and Magog:

The emergence of Gog and Magog is proved by the Qur'an, *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and the consensus of the Muslim nation. Therefore, believing in their emergence is obligatory on every Muslim. The following is an elaboration on the issue of their emergence in the light of what is maintained in the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). In this regard, *As-Safârîni* has provided the following proofs:

As for the Ever-Glorious Qur'an, Almighty Allah says:

"Until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend and [when] the true promise [i.e., the resurrection] has approached; then suddenly the eyes of those who disbelieved are staring [in horror, and they say], 'O woe to us; we had been unmindful of this; rather, we were wrongdoers.'"
(Qur'an: Al-Anbiyâ': 96-97)

He further maintains:

"Then he followed a way until, when he reached [a pass] between two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand [his] speech. They said, 'O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land. So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier?' He said, 'That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength [i.e., manpower]; I will make between you and them a dam. Bring me sheets of iron' - until, when he had leveled [them] between the two mountain-walls, he said, 'Blow [with bellows],' until when he had made it [like] fire, he said, 'Bring me, that I may pour over it molten copper.' So they [i.e., Gog and Magog] were unable to pass over it, nor were they able [to effect] in it any penetration. [Dhul-Qarnayn] said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promise of my Lord comes [i.e., approaches], He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true.' And We will leave them that day surging over each other, and [then] the Horn will be blown, and We will

assemble them in [one] assembly and We will present Hell that Day to the disbelievers, on display.” (Qur’ân: Al-Kahf: 93-100)

The erected iron barrier was constructed between two mountains by Dhul-Qarnayn. It became one construction to prevent such corrupters from harming the rest of people. When Allah wills, the barrier will collapse and it will be leveled down to the ground. It is a certain promise of Allah; when the barrier demolishes, Gog and Magog will come out. Allah shall leave them to surge like waves, and shortly after the Horn will be blown.

According to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH), it is related in *Sahîh Muslim* on the authority of An-Nawâs Ibn Sam`ân (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“...After `Îsâ Ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary) kills Al-Masihud-Dajjâl (Antichrist), Allah, Exalted be He, will reveal to him, ‘I have made servants of Mine to emerge; none has the power to fight them, so take my servants to At-Tûr Mount (Mount Sinai). After that, Allah sends Gog and Magog who descend from every elevation. Their foremost part will pass by Lake Tiberias and drink all what is in it, so when the rear passes by it, they will say, ‘Once, there was water in this (lake).’ Gog and Magog will besiege `Îsâ and his followers until (they suffer starvation and) the head of an ox would be better for the one of them than hundred dinars (because of the hunger they would suffer)...”

And according to the *hadith* related by At-Tabarânî on the authority of Hudhayfah Ibnul-Yamân, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Allah will prevent them (Gog and Magog) from reaching Mecca, Medina and Baytul-Maqdis (Jerusalem).”

Imâm An-Nawawî said, *“They are from the descendents of Adam according to the view of the majority of scholars.”* Ibn `Abdul-Barr maintained, *“Consensus of Muslim scholars is held that they are among the descendants of Yâfith, the son of Nûh (Noah) (PBUH).”*

The prominent scholar, As-Safârîni maintained, *“Ibn Kathîr mentions that Gog and Magog are two groups of the Turks among the descendants of Adam. They are among the descendants of Yâfith, the son of Noah and the father of the Turks.”*

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have referred to their emergence and he, further, warned us against them. According to what is related in the Two *Sahîhs* (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“An opening has been made in the wall of Gog and Magog like this,” making a circle with his thumb and index finger.”

Also, it is related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) was sleeping in the house of Zaynab Bint Jahsh (the Prophet’s wife, may Allah be pleased with her), then he woke up with his face red and said:

“There is no deity but Allah. Woe unto the Arabs from a danger that has come near. An opening has been made in the dam of Gog and Magog like this,’ making a circle with his thumb and index finger.”

As for the physical features and characteristics of Gog and Magog, **Imâm Ibn Kathîr** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“They resemble their species among the Mongol Turks whose eyes are like dried bread, their noses are snub, and their hair is reddish-brown. They take their shape and color. Whoever falsely alleges that some of the people of Gog and Magog are as tall as palm trees and others are as short as minimal trivial things or that some of them have two huge ears, one being used as a cover and the other being used to sleep on, is regarded as airing wrong views which lack convincing, substantiating proofs.”

As for the mischief and corruption they will spread in the earth, **Imâm Ahmad** has related on the authority of Abû Sa`îd Al-Khudrî (may Allah be pleased with him) who heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying:

“When (the barrier of) Gog and Magog is demolished, they will go out to people according to what is defined in Allah’s saying, ‘... And they, from every elevation, descend.’ (Qur`ân: Al-Anbiyâ: 96) They will attack people, who will seek refuge in cities and fortresses taking their cattle along with them. Then, they will drink waters of the earth to the extent that some of them, upon passing by a running river, may drink all of its water and leave it dry. Those who will follow them may pass by the river and say, ‘There used to be water in this river.’ No man will remain alive except those who sought protection in a fortress or a city. One of the people of Gog and Magog will say, ‘We have completely devoured the people of the earth but the people of the heavens still remain.’ Then, one of them will shake his spear and shoot it at the sky and it will return imbued with blood, as a means of trial. Allah will then afflict them with worms like those that inflict the necks and noses of camels and sheep, and destroy them. They will then die and no voice will be heard of them. Thereafter, the Muslims will say, ‘Why should not a man sell himself (seeking divine reward) by (taking the risk of) seeing what the enemy has done?’ A man will take the risk to go out while making sure that he will definitely die. He will find them dead.

Then, he will call (people) saying, 'O Muslims be delighted for Allah relieved you of the harms caused by your enemy.' They will then go out of their cities and fortresses and let their cattle gaze freely. The cattle will find nothing to feed on but their (Gog's and Magog's) flesh. They will fatten as much as they are with the best among foods."

Imâm Ibn Kathîr said:

"This hadîth is related by Ibn Mâjah on the authority of Yûnus Ibn Bakîr from Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq with a good chain of transmission."

Some of the modern writers denounce the existence of Gog and Magog and their barrier. Others interpret Gog and Magog as the atheistic developed countries, which are greatly advanced in industry. Undoubtedly, it is a renunciation or misrepresentation of what is maintained in the Qur'ân and the authentic *Sunnah* of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). It is undisputed that any renunciation of what is provided in the Qur'ân or the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) is an act of disbelief. Such is the case of those who excessively misinterpret texts; such people are regarded as deviators and most endangered to be disbelievers.

The only argument of those who renounce the existence of Gog and Magog is that all the earth has been discovered without detecting their residence or the barrier. To this, one may say that although new discoveries have not detected the place of Gog and Magog, it does not necessarily rule out the possibility of their existence. It, instead, signifies man's inability and limited knowledge to encompass the unlimited kingdom of Allah. Allah might have averted man from detecting the places of Gog and Magog or He might have prevented them to obtain access to their places. Almighty Allah says:

"But your people have denied it while it is the truth. Say, 'I am not over you a manager [i.e., authority]'. For every news [i.e., happening] is a finality; and you are going to know." (Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 66-67)

In support of this view, Allah averted earlier nations from discovering the treasures of the earth, such as oil. It is only to make such treasures accessible at the definite prescribed time assigned by Allah.

5. The Emergence of the Beast:

A further sign of the Last Day which Allah mentions in the Qur'ân is the emergence of the Beast. He says:

"And when the word [i.e., decree] befalls them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them, [saying] that the people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith]."

(Qur'ân: An-Naml: 82)

In his book entitled *'An-Nihâyah (The End),'* **Imâm Ibn Kathîr** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"In commenting on the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, Ibn 'Abbâs, Al-Hasan and Qatâdah have maintained that the Beast will speak unto them (i.e., people). Ibn Jarîr preferred to say that the Beast would speak to them saying, '... The people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith].' (Qur'an: An-Naml: 82) This view has been reported by 'Atâ."

Ibn Kathîr commented, *"The last view is controversial."* He further said:

"Ibn 'Abbâs is further reported to have said, 'The meaning of the verse is that the Beast will injure them by inscribing the word 'Kâfir (disbeliever)' on the forehead of the disbeliever and the word 'Mu'min (believer)' on every believing man's forehead.' He is further reported to have interpreted the words 'speaking to them' as 'to injure them.' This view is the preponderant view.

Ibn Kathîr further maintained in his exegesis:

"This Beast will emerge at the end of the world when people become completely corrupt, negligent of Allah's ordinances and undutiful to the true religion of Islam. At that very time, Allah will make apparent to them the Beast, which will be brought forth from the earth. Some people say that it will emerge from Mecca and others maintain that it will emerge from other places."

In his commentary on the Glorious Qur'an, **Al-Qurtubî** has maintained:

"Scholars differed with regard to the meaning of Allah's saying, 'And when the word [i.e., decree] befalls them...' (Qur'an: An-Naml: 82) as well as the description of the Beast. Concerning the meaning of this Qur'anic phrase, some scholars have maintained that 'the word [i.e., decree] befalls them' refers to Allah's wrath. It may be interpreted that when the wrath of Allah occurs, Allah will bring forth the Beast, which will speak to them. This view was expressed by Qatâdah. Mujâhid has interpreted the phrase that reads, 'the word [i.e., decree] befalls them' as the Divine Decree consisted in Allah's predestined word that they will never accept belief. Ibn 'Umar and Abû Sa'îd Al-Khudrî (may Allah be pleased with them) have maintained that if people come not to enjoin the good and forbid evil, Allah's wrath will be necessarily inflicted upon them. 'Abdullâh Ibn Mas'ûd further maintains that 'the word [i.e., decree] befalls them' will occur when scholars die, knowledge fades away and the Qur'an is uplifted. It is

reported that 'Abdullâh Ibn Mas'ûd has said, 'Recite the Qur'ân as much as you can before it is uplifted.' People questioned, 'The Books of the Qur'ân may be uplifted, but what about the Qur'ân being memorized in people's hearts?' He said, 'Within one night, people will become completely devoid of the Qur'ân. They will, moreover, forget 'Lâ Ilaha illah Allah (there is no god but Allah)' and indulge in the practices of the Jâhiliyyah (the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance). It will occur when the word of Allah's wrath is pronounced.'

Ibn Kathîr further mentioned other views concerning the meaning of Allah's saying, "And when the word [i.e., decree] befalls them..." (Qur'ân: An-Naml: 82) and then concluded:

"All views, upon contemplation, may be referred to only one meaning which is substantiated by the end of the Qur'anic verse which reads, '...The people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith]:' (Qur'ân: An-Naml: 82) It is related in *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* on the authority of **Abû Hurayrah** (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported the Prophet (PBUH) as saying, 'When three things appear, no one will benefit from his faith as long as he has not believed before or has derived no good from his faith: the rising of the sun in its place of setting, *Al-Masihud-Dajjâl* (Antichrist), and the Beast of the earth.' Scholars have differed regarding the description of the Beast and the place of its emergence, which are all addressed in **Ibn Kathîr's** book entitled 'At-Tadhkirah (The Reminder)' in detail."

Hudhayfah Ibn Usayd Al-Ghifârî (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"The Prophet (PBUH) once came to us while we were reminding each other of the affairs of the Hereafter) and he (PBUH) asked, 'What are you discussing?' We answered, 'We are discussing (the matters of) the Hereafter.' Thereupon, he (PBUH) said, 'The (Last) Hour will not come until ten signs preface its occurrence...'

He mentioned the emergence of the Beast among these signs. This *ḥadîth* has been related by **Imâm Ahmad**, **Abû Dâwûd At-Tayâlisî**, **Muslim**, and the compilers of *Sunan*. **At-Tirmidhî** said, "This *ḥadîth* is *ḥasan* and *ṣaḥîḥ*."

Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Hasten to do good deeds before six things happen: the rising of the sun from the west, the smoke, *Al-Masihud-Dajjâl* (Antichrist), the Beast..."

(Related by **Imâm Muslim**)

Abû Hurayrah also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Hasten to do good deeds before six (things) happen: Al-Masihud-Dajjal (Antichrist), the smoke, the Beast of the earth...”

(Related by Imâm Muslim)

‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “I have memorized a *hadîth* from the Prophet (PBUH) which I have not forgotten yet. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as saying:

“The first sign to emerge will be the rise of the sun from the west and the emergence of the Beast before the people in the forenoon; and which of the two happens first, the second one would follow immediately after that.”

(Related by Imâm Muslim)

Ibn Kathîr said:

“The earliest unfamiliar signs to preface the Last Day is the emergence of the Beast. The appearance of the Anti-Christ, the descending of Jesus (PBUH) from the heavens and the emergence of Gog and Magog will all be familiar signs for people, as they will appear in human forms. The emergence of the Beast in an unfamiliar shape and its speaking to people and sorting them into believers and unbelievers by inscribing words on their foreheads are all unfamiliar incidents. The emergence of the Beast is held as the earliest terrestrial sign of the Last Day. On the other hand, the sun’s rise from the west is held among the earliest heavenly signs of the Last Day.”

The Beast, according to what is maintained in *hadîths*, will inscribe a sign on people’s foreheads. A believer’s face will seem like a brilliant star with the word ‘*Mu’min* (believer)’ being inscribed between his eyes. The Disbeliever, on the other hand, will be marked with a black dot between his eyes. The word ‘*Kâfir* (disbeliever)’ will also be inscribed between his two eyes.

According to another variant report, the Beast will meet the believer and mark him with a white dot. His face will consequently turn white. It will also mark the disbeliever with a black dot and his face will consequently turn black. Properties will become common wealth among people. They will wander on the earth and each man will discern whether the other is a believer or a disbeliever to the extent that the believer will, then, call the disbeliever saying, “O, disbeliever! Fulfill my need.”

As for the description of the Beast, in his exegesis of the Glorious Qur'an, Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahmân Ibn Nâsir Ibn Sa'dî said:

"The Beast will emerge at the end of this world and it is one of the portents of the Hour according to the numerous hadîths. Neither Allah nor His Messenger (PBUH) provided a description of this Beast. They only specify the main objective of its emergence and state that it is one of the miracles provided by Allah. It will speak to people when the Divine Decree of Allah occurs and when they become skeptical about the clear signs of Allah. It will be held as an established proof and a counter argument for the believers against the obstinate disbelievers."

Some modern writers deny the emergence of the Beast and misinterpret the texts which prove its emergence. They do not have any proofs apart from the baseless argument that reason does not confirm it.

A believer is obliged to submit and surrender to what is stated by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) since such convictions are among the unseen matters that must be believed in, which Allah praises the believers for.

6. The Sun's Rise from the West

Almighty Allah says:

"Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come or that there come some of the signs of your Lord? The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had not earned through its faith some good. Say, 'Wait. Indeed, we [also] are waiting.'"

(Qur'an: Al-An'am: 158)

In his book 'An-Nihâyah (i.e., The End), Al-Hâfiz Ibn Kathîr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Commenting on the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, Al-Bukhârî related on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) saying, 'The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'The Hour will not be established until the sun rises from the west; and when it rises (from the west) and the people see it, they all will believe. And that is (the time) when no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had not earned through its faith some good.'"

(Related by the Group of Compilers of Hadîth⁶ except At-Tirmidhî)

As-Safârîni said, "Scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them) have maintained that the sun's rise from the west at the end of this world is confirmed by the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), in reliable reports and the Qur'an revealed upon the Prophet (PBUH)."

Allah, Exalted be He, says,

"...The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had not earned through its faith some good." (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 158)

Qur'anic exegetes or the majority of them have unanimously agreed that the signs mentioned in the foregoing Qur'anic verse refer to the sun's rise from the west. The Qur'anic verse means that those of unstable and weak faith, at the time of the sun's rise from the west, will have no chance to revive their faith or to offer righteousness since they lack the fundamental bases of faith. Therefore, all righteous deeds such as doing charity, keeping good relations with kith and kin, freeing captives, being generous to guests and other moral virtues will not be rewarded, since they all lack the fundamental base which is needed for them to be accepted. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"The example of those who disbelieve in their Lord is [that] their deeds are like ashes which the wind blows forcefully..."

(Qur'an: Ibrâhîm: 18)

Thereupon, faith occurring in such a time will not be accepted.

Al-Bukhârî and Muslim have related on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"The Hour will not be established until the sun rises from the west; and when it rises (from the west) and the people see it, they all will believe. And that is (the time) when no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had not earned through its faith some good."

Imâm Ibn Kathîr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"This is mentioned in the hadîth related by Imâm Ahmad, At-Tirmidhî, Ibn Mâjah and An-Nasâ'î, who deems it sahîh, on the authority of `Âsim Ibn Abun-Najûd from Zarr Ibn Hubaysh from Safwân Ibn `Assâl who heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying, 'Allah has opened a gate at the side of west, as wide as the distance of seventy years (or he said forty years), which is dedicated to receive (people's) repentance. It will not be closed until the sun rises from west.'

All these *hadiths* along with the aforementioned Qur'anic verse prove that whosoever believes or repents after the sun rises from west, his belief and repentance will not be accepted. That is because the sun's rise from the west is an indication of the Last Day. Thus, such a time is regarded as a part of the Last Day.

Almighty Allah says:

“Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come or that there come some of the signs of your Lord? The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith...” (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 158)

And says:

“And when they saw Our punishment, they said, ‘We believe in Allah Alone and disbelieve in that which we used to associate with Him.’ But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment. [It is] the established way of Allah which has preceded among His servants. And the disbelievers thereupon lost [all].”

(Qur'an: Ghâfir: 84-85)

He further says:

“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then how [i.e., what good] to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?” (Qur'an: Muhammad: 18)”

In explaining the meaning of the Qur'anic verse, which provides, “...No soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before...” (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 158), Ibn Kathîr has stated that: if a disbeliever believes on that day, his belief will not be accepted. As for the believer, if his deeds are righteous, this will be good for him, but if they are not, his repentance is not accepted. This is according to what is illustrated in numerous *hadiths*. Therefore, the meaning of the second part of the verse may be fully understood referring to the above statement. The second part states, ‘...Or had not earned through its faith some good.’ (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 158) It means that a righteous deed will only be accepted if it was offered before that Day.

Al-Baghawî said:

“The Qur'anic verse that reads, ‘The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before...’ (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 158) may be interpreted that such belief will avail nothing upon the appearance of the signs which will compel people to inevitably believe. Allah's saying, ‘...Had not earned

through its faith some good.’ (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 158) means that neither the belief offered by a disbeliever nor the repentance initiated by a defiantly disobedient person will be accepted.”

In explaining the meaning of the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, **Al-Qurtubi** (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Scholars have maintained that belief when the sun rises from its west will avail nothing because when the terror resulting from the appearance of this sign occurs, every desire for perpetrating sins will be extinguished and every energy will be enfeebled. Thus, all people, because of their certainty about the closeness of the Last Day, will be like those at the verge of death. They will, therefore, lack any incentive for perpetrating sins. Hence, their repentance will not be accepted like the case of those offering repentance at deathbed. The Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘Allah accepts a servant’s repentance as long as he is not on his deathbed’ (that is, before the soul of the dying person reaches the throat). This is the time when the dying person envisages his resting abode whether in the Paradise or in the Hellfire. The same applies to the one who sees the sun’s rising from the west.”

This great incident is regarded as a great means of turmoil, which refers to a whole change of the universe and the coming of the Last Day. It also refers to Allah’s Omnipotence. The sun is regarded as one of the creatures of Allah, which is solely managed by Him.

We ask Almighty Allah to sustain us with true faith and beneficial certitude in Him, so that we may be well equipped with good and righteous deeds for the Day of Resurrection, before it is too late. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

7. Assembling All People in the Land of Ash-Shâm⁷:

In his book entitled ‘*An-Nihâyah*,’ **Imâm Ibn Kathîr** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This sign is proved according to the Two Sahîhs (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) regarding the hadîth narrated by Abû Hurayrah saying, ‘The Prophet’s (PBUH) said, ‘The people will be gathered in three ways: (The first group will be) those who will have a hope (for Paradise) and will have a fear (of punishment); (the second group will be those who will gather) riding two on a camel or three on a camel or ten on a camel (successively) and the rest of the people (i.e., the third group) will be urged to be gathered by the Fire which will accompany them at the time of their afternoon nap

and be with them in the morning wherever they may be, and stay with them where they spend the night...’ ”

Ibn Kathîr mentioned numerous *ḥadīths* to substantiate this meaning. Then he added:

“The contexts of all these texts maintain that the gathering referred to is the gathering of living people at the end of this world in the area of Ash-Shâm. People will be classified into three groups. A group of them will be assembled while being dressed, having an appetite completely satisfied, and mounted. Another group will gather riding in turns, two on a camel or three on a camel or ten on a camel as expressed in the ḥadīths.”

Ibn Kathîr further added:

“Ten will ride a camel in turns because of the lack of riding camels. The third group (the rest of people) will be urged to be gathered by the Fire. This Fire will emerge from Aden and it will surround people and drive them from every possible side toward the Place of Gathering. Whoever lags behind will be devoured by the Fire. All these incidents will occur before the end of this world. This is indicated by implying that people will be alive; eating, drinking and riding. Also, those who lag behind will be devoured by the Fire. Had it been after blowing the Horn, no life, death, food or drink would have been mentioned.”

In addition, a number of *ḥadīths* have been mentioned to substantiate the view that the Fire, which will drive people toward the Gathering Place, will emerge from Aden. One of these *ḥadīths* is the one related by Imâm Aḥmad, Muslim and the Compilers of *Sunan*, in which the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“A fire will emerge from the farthest place in Aden which will drive (or ‘gather’; the narrator doubted) people. It will accompany them where they spend the night and stay with them at the time of their afternoon nap...”

Included among those *ḥadīths* is the *ḥadīth* reported by `Abdullâh Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“A fire will emerge from Hadramaut (or he said from the side of the sea of Hadramaut) before the Day of Judgment. That Fire will gather the people in one place. They said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! What do you command us to do?’ He said, ‘Keep going to Ash-Shâm.’ ”

This *ḥadīth* has been related by Imâm Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhî and Ibn Ḥibbân in his *Saḥīḥ*. At-Tirmidhî deemed it as a *ḥasan* (good), *saḥīḥ* (authentic), *gharib*⁸ (unfamiliar) *ḥadīth*.

As-Safârîni said:

“Muslim scholars differ on whether the gathering of people from east to west will occur before or on the Day of Judgment. Al-Qurtubî, Al-Khattâbî, and Judge ‘Iyâd, maintained that it would occur before the Day of Judgment. As for the resurrection after death, it is mentioned in the hadîth narrated by Ibn ‘Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him), as a marfû’ hadîth, and related in the Two Sahîhs (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim). It reads as follows, ‘You will be resurrected (on the Day of Resurrection), barefooted, naked and uncircumcised.’ ”

As-Safârîni added:

“Judge ‘Iyâd has supported the view of Al-Khattâbî and Al-Qurtubî by maintaining that the hadîth reported by Abû Hurayrah that reads, ‘...the Fire will accompany them at the time of their afternoon nap, stay with them where they spend the night, and be with them in the morning and the evening wherever they may be...’, supports the view that all such gatherings will occur in the worldly life. Therefore, gathering people to Ash-Shâm will occur before the Last Day.”

As-Safârîni also said:

“In his book entitled “At-Tadhkirah (The Reminder),” Al-Qurtubî has mentioned that there are four gatherings: two in this life and two in the Hereafter. The two gatherings which occur in this life are mentioned in the Sura of Al-Hashr. This was when the Jews were driven to Ash-Shâm. The Prophet (PBUH) commanded them to evacuate Medina. They said, ‘To where?’ He said, ‘To the land of Al-Maḥshar (gathering).’ ‘Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) evacuated the rest of them from the Arab Peninsula.

The second gathering is reckoned among the major signs of the Hour. It is represented by the fire, which will drive people to the west as maintained in the hadîth reported by Anas and ‘Abdullâh Ibn Salâm. In a marfû’ hadîth, moreover, ‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated the Prophet (PBUH) as saying, ‘A fire will be sent on the people of the east which will drive them to the west. It will remain in mornings and afternoons and will devour who falls and lags behind. It will drive them as the camel is driven.’ ”

Al-Hâfiz Ibn Hajar said,

“Emerging from the bottom of the land of Aden does not contradict the view that it will drive people from east to west, since it will initiate from Aden and then pervade throughout the land. It will generally gather all people starting from the east.”

Al-Qurtubî said:

"As for the two final gatherings in the hereafter, the first will be the gathering of the dead after being resurrected from their graves. Almighty Allah says, '...and We will gather them and not leave behind from them anyone.' (Qur'an: Al-Kahf: 47) The second is when people are resurrected to enter either Paradise or the Hellfire.

Therefore, the last major sign which will occur immediately before the Last Day is the people's gathering from east to west and from Yemen to Ash-Shâm as explicitly maintained in decisive texts and authentic reports."

Then, **Al-Qurtubî** mentioned the *hadîths* pointing out that the emergence of the fire would be from Yemen, and other *hadîths* substantiating the view that such a fire would drive people from east to west to the Place of Gathering at Ash-Shâm. He further reconciled these narrations saying, "There will be two types of fire: One which will drive people from east to west and the other which will emerge from Yemen and drive people to the Place of Gathering, namely, Ash-Shâm."

Al-Qurtubî further said:

*"If it were only one fire, reconciliation would be held necessary between the seemingly two contradicting *hadîths*. The first *hadîth* states, 'The fire will emerge immediately before the Day of Resurrection from Hadramaut which will drive people,' and in another narration, 'The fire will emerge from the farthest place in Aden and will drive people to the Place of Gathering.' The second *hadîth* provides, 'It will gather people from east and drive them to the west.' To make reconciliation between the two foregoing *hadîths*, we may say that Ash-Shâm which will be the Gathering Place is held as the west while the farthest place of Aden is the east. Therefore, it will emerge from Yemen and end at As-Shâm."*

8. Blowing the Horn and Falling Dead

The blowing of the Horn is frequently mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an. **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "The Ever-Glorious Qur'an mentioned three blows of the Horn. The first blow is called 'the Blow of Terror' which is mentioned in the Sura of An-Naml⁹. Almighty Allah says, 'And [warn of] the Day the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will be terrified except whom Allah wills.' (Qur'an: An-Naml: 87) The second blow is called 'the Blow of Falling Dead' and the third is 'the Blow of Resurrection.' They are both mentioned in the Sura of Az-Zumar¹⁰ in Allah's saying, 'And the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will fall dead except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on.' (Qur'an: Az-Zumar:

68) *This Qur'anic verse indicates that those in the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth will fall dead with the exception of whom Allah wills. Those exempted from falling dead are the inhabitants of Paradise (i.e., the houris; the maidens of beautiful, big and lustrous eyes), since death does not strike the dwellers of Paradise. It is authentically proved in the Two Saḥīḥs (the two authentic books of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim) that the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, 'All people will fall dead on the Day of Judgment, then I will be the first to rise to find Moses holding to the Throne. I would wonder, then, whether he rose before me or he was among those whom Allah excluded (from death).'*"

As-Safārīnī said:

"On the Day of Resurrection, the Horn will be blown three times. The first blow is called 'the Blow of Terror,' by which the whole world will cease to be in the form and system we see now. This is maintained in the Qur'anic verse, which provides, 'And these [disbelievers] await not but one blast [of the Horn]; for it there will be no delay.' (Qur'ān: Ṣād: 15) Almighty Allah further says, '...the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will be terrified except whom Allah wills.' (Qur'ān: An-Naml: 87) Az-Zamakhsharī has explained, in his book entitled 'Al-Kashshāf (The Oft-Revealer),' that those who are exempted from the terror below are those whom Allah stabilizes their hearts from among the angels. They are Gibrīl (Gabriel), Mikā'il (Michael), Isrāfīl (Israfil) and the angel of death. Terror will occur because of the fear resulting from this Blow.

As-Safārīnī further added:

The second blow is called 'the Blow of Falling Dead' by which everything will perish. Almighty Allah says, '... And the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will fall dead except whom Allah wills...' (Qur'ān: Az-Zumar: 68) Accordingly, Falling Dead is conceived as death."

As-Safārīnī added:

As-Ṣūr (translated in the verse as 'the Horn') is a horn of light, where the souls of people lie. Mujāhid said that it is like the horn. This last view is also mentioned by Al-Bukhārī. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibnul-Ās (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, 'A Bedouin came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked him, 'What is As-Ṣūr?' Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'It is a horn which is blown.'

(Related by At-Tirmidhī who judges it as a hasan ḥadīth)

As-Safarîni said:

The third blow is called 'the Blow of Resurrection.' The Ever-Glorious Qur'ân refers to it and elaborates on some of its details. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says, 'And the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten' (Qur'ân: Yâsin: 51) and, '...Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on.' (Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 68) He further says, 'And when the trumpet is blown, that Day will be a difficult day - for the disbelievers - not easy' (Qur'ân: Al-Muddaththir: 8-10) and, 'And listen on the Day when the Caller will call out from a place that is near - the Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth.' (Qur'ân: Qâf: 41)

In explaining the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, exegetes maintain that Isrâfil (Israfil) will blow the Horn and call upon people saying, 'O such rotten bones, crumbled joints and torn flesh, scattered hair! Allah commands you to reunite to be judged. It is also said that Isrâfil (Israfil) will blow the Horn while Gibrîl (Gabriel) will call upon them. The 'near place' mentioned in the aforementioned Qur'anic verse refers to the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem. A group of exegetes maintain that forty years is the duration between the two blows. Some scholars said that reports mostly agree on that.

It is related by Muslim on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Between the two blows of the Horn there will be forty.' The people said, 'O Abû Hurayrah! Forty days?' He said, 'I refuse to reply (for I have no knowledge of that).' They said, 'Forty months?' He again answered, 'I refuse to reply.' They again asked, 'Forty years?' He then said, 'I refuse to reply...'

Abû Hurayrah's saying 'I refuse to reply' has been interpreted differently. He might have refused to definitely tell about the duration between the two blows. He might have refused to question the Prophet (PBUH) or he has forgotten the exact period. It is also maintained that the duration between the two blows is one of the divine secrets solely known by Allah.

There is a long hadîth narrated by Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) and related by Ibn Jarîr, At-Tabarânî, Abû Ya' lâ in his Musnad (Collection of Ascribed Hadîths), and Al-Bayhaqî in his book entitled 'Al-Ba`th (The Resurrection):

"The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'After Allah had accomplished the creation of the heavens and the earth, He created As-Sûr (the Horn). Then, He gave it to Israfil, who put it on his mouth staring with his eye at the Throne and waiting for Allah's command (to

blow it).' Abû Hurayrah said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What is *As-Sûr*?' He said, 'It is (like) the horn.' Abû Hurayrah said, 'What about its size?' He said, 'So great, the size of one of its circles is as wide as the heavens and the earth. It will be blown three times. The first (blow) is the Blow of Terror, the second is the Blow of Falling Dead and the third is the Blow of Resurrection before Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Allah will command Israfil to blow it for the first time. He will command him saying, '(Sound) the Terror Blow!' He will blow (the Horn), so that the inhabitants of the heavens and the dwellers of the earth will be smitten with terror except those whom Allah wills to exempt. Allah will command him to prolong (the Blow), so Israfil will prolong it without feeling any fatigue. This is mentioned in Allah's saying, '**And these [disbelievers] await not but one blast [of the Horn]; for it there will be no delay.**' (Qur'ân: *Sâd*: 15) Thus, mountains will pass away like the clouds and then will turn into a mirage. The earth will, then, be extremely shaken like a loaded ship at sea being stricken with sea waves, or it will be like a chandelier, suspended from a ceiling while being swung by high winds. It (the Blow) is mentioned in Allah's saying, '**On the Day the blast [of the Horn] will convulse [creation], there will follow it the subsequent [one]**'. Then, the earth will lose its gravity so that people will lose their balance moving sideways. At that time, every nursing mother will forget (her suckling-babe) and every pregnant female will drop her load (unformed), children will turn hoary-headed and the devils will flee out of terror. The devils will reach the horizons (of the heavens and the earth), so that the angels will meet them and strike their faces. They will then retreat. People will, therefore, turn their back calling each other. This is (the Blow) mentioned in Allah's saying, '**...the Day of Calling - the Day you will turn your backs fleeing; there is not for you from Allah any protector.**' While being in this state, the earth will gradually split asunder in all territories. People will, then, witness a terrific matter. Then, they will look at the sky, they will find it like the murky oil. It will be, hence, rent asunder, then its stars will scatter, and the sun and the moon will eclipse.' Allah's Messenger (PBUH) then, said, 'At that time, the dead will perceive nothing of this.' Abû Hurayrah said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Who are those Allah has excluded in His saying, '**...except whom Allah wills?**' He said, 'They are the martyrs (in Allah's

cause). And terror reaches the alive. As for them (the martyrs), though they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, Allah will guard them and make them secure from the terror of that Day, which will smite the evil creations of Allah. Almighty Allah says, 'O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing- on the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of Allah is severe.' They will remain (in such chastisement) as long as Allah wills.' "

I ask Allah, Glorified be He, to guide us to the straight path and make us among those who are not grieved by the great terror and let us be welcomed by the angels with mutual greetings and being addressed by them with the words, "This is your Day, (the Day) you were promised."



Second Aspect:**Belief in the Last Day**

It is called the Last Day because it will end this life. It is commonly perceived by natural intuition and reason. All the heavenly revealed religions as well as prophets and messengers agreed on its coming.

In almost every Sura of the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân, Almighty Allah states it and refutes the arguments of those who deny that it will come. All mankind commonly confess the existence of the Lord. Such conviction is intuitive. Only obstinate disbelievers like Pharaoh rejected belief in the existence of Allah. There are, however, many people who renounce belief in the Last Day.

Being the seal of all prophets, Muḥammad (PBUH) was sent in a time very close to the Last Day. He has elaborated on the description of the Last Day in a way that cannot be found in any of the other prophets' books.

There are, however, numerous proofs, which prove resurrection after death, in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân. It elaborates on the story of those whom Allah caused to die and then brought to life again. This is like the people of Mûsa (Moses), whom Allah revived after death. They, according to the Qur'ân, said:

“...Show us Allah outright.” (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 153)

Allah said:

“...So the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on. Then We revived you after your death...” (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 55)

Almighty Allah also makes mention of the story of **“...those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, “Die”; then He restored them to life”** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 243) and the story of Abraham who, according to the words of the Qur'ân, said:

“...My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.”

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 260)

The Qur'ân also mentions the story of `Îsâ (Jesus) who used to bring the dead to life by Allah's permission and the story of the People of the Cave (the Sleepers of Ephesus) who were resurrected after spending three hundred and nine years.

In addition, the Qur'ân proves resurrection after death by referring to Allah's Omnipotence in initiating creation. Resurrection is, thus, easier than the first initiation of creation. Almighty Allah says,

"...If you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hajj: 5)

And,

"Say, 'He will give them life Who produced them the first time...'"

(Qur'ân: Yâsîn: 79)

He further says:

"And they will say, 'Who will restore us?' Say, 'He Who brought you forth the first time.'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 51)

And:

"And it is He Who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him..."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Rûm: 27)

Moreover, the Qur'ân proves resurrection by referring to Allah's Omnipotence in creating the heavens and the earth. Their creation is certainly greater than the creation of man. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and did not fail in their creation, is able to give life to the dead?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Ahqâf: 33)

Sometimes, the Qur'ân refers to the necessity of resurrection in order to hold people accountable for their actions, since He did not create them without a purpose. Almighty Allah says:

"Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Mu'minûn: 115)

He, further, says:

"Does man think that he will be left neglected?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Qiyâmah: 36)

To His saying:

"Is not that [Creator] Able to give life to the dead?"

(Qur'ân: Al-Qiyâmah: 40)

People, in this worldly life, are classified into righteous and wrongdoers. They may die without getting recompense for their deeds. Thus, another abode for absolute justice should be established so that everyone will receive recompense for his deeds.

Belief in the Last Day is one of the fundamental pillars of Muslims' faith. This is emphasized in a number of verses in the Qur'an. Belief in the Last Day is frequently associated with the other five Pillars of Faith, namely, belief in Allah, His angels, His scriptures and His messengers. This is maintained in the *hadith* reported by `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) in which Gibrîl (Gabriel) descended to question the Prophet (PBUH) specific questions.

Sometimes, belief in the Last Day is coupled with belief in Allah. Almighty Allah says:

"Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day..."

(Qur'an: At-Tawbah: 29)

And:

"O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day..."

(Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 264)

Almighty Allah has given this Day several indicative names to warn people and make them very attentive, so that people may fear its consequences. It is called 'the Last Day' since it is the final day of this worldly life. It is also called 'the Day of Resurrection' since people will rise after being dead. Moreover, it is called 'the Occurrence,' 'the Inevitable Reality,' 'the Day of the Striking Calamity,' 'the Day of the Blast,' 'the Day of the Deafening Blast,' 'the Approaching Day,' 'the Day of Great Terror,' 'the Day of Account,' 'the Day of Recompense,' 'the True Promise,' etc. All these names indicate the greatness and seriousness of that Day and the great clamors and terrors, which will afflict people on that Day. It is a Day on which the eyes of the disbelievers will intently stare in horror and their hearts will reach the throats. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"On the Day a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him."

(Qur'an: `Abasa: 34-37)

And:

“On the Day the sky will be like murky oil and the mountains will be like wool and no friend will ask [anything of] a friend. They will recognize each other. The criminal will wish that he could be ransomed from the punishment of that Day by his children and his wife and his brother and his nearest kindred who shelter him and whoever is on earth entirely [so] then it could save him.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Ma`ârij: 8-14)

Belief in the Last Day motivates man to be well prepared for it. Almighty Allah says,

“...So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Kahf: 110)

And:

“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah] who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 45-46)

He, further, says:

“They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive [saying], ‘We feed you only for the countenance [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, we fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful.’ So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness.” (Qur’ân: Al-Insân: 7-11)

Belief in the Last Day helps the Muslim to be steadfast when combating the enemies and enduring calamities and afflictions. This is implied in the story of Tâlût (Saul) and his soldiers who, after passing the river, met their enemy that excelled them in number and equipment; however, only a few were steadfast and could go through such a trial. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...Then when he had crossed it along with those who believed with him, they said, ‘There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers.’ But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said, ‘How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah. And Allah is with the patient.’”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 249)

Disbelief in that Day, on the other hand, drives man to perpetrate sins, do injustice, aggression and mischief. Almighty Allah says:

“Indeed, those who do not expect the meeting with Us and are satisfied with the life of this world and feel secure therein and those who are heedless of Our signs. For those their refuge will be the Fire because of what they used to earn.” (Qur’ân: Yûnus: 7-8)

And:

“Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account.”

(Qur’ân: Sâd: 26)

Moreover, He says:

“Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor.” (Qur’ân: Al-Mâ`ûn: 1-3)

Allah has also commanded people to beware of this Day by being equipped with good and righteous deeds, which keep them guarded against its terrors. Almighty Allah says:

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged [i.e., treated unjustly].” (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 281)

And:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 123)

He, further, says:

“...And fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allah by the Deceiver [i.e., Satan].” (Qur’ân: Luqmân: 33)

Belief in the Last Day means that one should believe in all consequences and events occurring after death such as the chastisement or felicity procured in the grave, resurrection, account, the Scale of weighing good and evil deeds, reward and punishment, Paradise and Hellfire, and all other things and events which will occur on the Last Day.

The Last Day, however, has a considerable number of names in the Qur'an. The following are some of such names:

- 1- *Yawmul-Ba`th* (i.e., Day of Resurrection). It is so called because it is a day on which people will rise after death.
- 2- *Yawmul-Khurûj* (i.e., Day of Emergence). People will emerge from their graves to the Hereafter.
- 3- *Yawmul-Qiyâmah* (i.e., Day of Standing). People will stand before Allah for accountability.
- 4- *Yawmud-Dîn* (i.e., Day of Recompense). People will be recompensed for all their deeds on that Day.
- 5- *Yawmul-Faṣl* (i.e., Day of Judgment). People will be justly judged on that Day.
- 6- *Yawmul-Hashr* (i.e., Day of Gathering). Allah will gather people for recompense.
- 7- *Yawmul-Jam`* (i.e., Day of Assembly). People will be assembled before Allah for accountability.
- 8- *Yawmul-Hisâb* (i.e., Day of Accountability). People will be held accountable for their deeds on that Day.
- 9- *Yawmul-Wa`id* (i.e., Day of Threat). Allah will carry out His threats to disbelievers on that day.
- 10- *Yawmul-Hasrah* (i.e., Day of Regret). The disbelievers will experience regret on that Day.
- 11- *Yawmul-Khulûd* (i.e., Day of Eternity). Life on that Day will be eternal.
- 12- *Ad-Dârul-Âkhirah* (i.e., The Home of the Hereafter). It is the final destination man reaches, as there will be no other home.
- 13- *Dârul-Qarâr* (i.e., The Home of Permanent Settlement). People will settle therein eternally without suffering death or experiencing transition.
- 14- *Dârul-Khuld* (i.e., The Home of Eternity). The residence on that Day will last forever.
- 15- *Al-Wâqi`ah* (i.e., The Occurrence). It will inevitably occur.
- 16- *Al-Hâqqah* (i.e., The Inevitable Reality). It will truly happen and consequently any doubt regarding its occurrence will be refuted.

- 17- *Al-Qâri`ah* (i.e., The Striking Calamity). Its clamor will strike ears and hearts.
- 18- *Al-Ghâshiyah* (i.e., The Overwhelming Event). It will overwhelm the two worlds of the jinn and mankind.
- 19- *At-Tâmmah* (i.e., The Great Overwhelming Calamity). It is the greatest and hardest calamity.
- 20- *Al-Âzifah* (i.e., The Approaching Day). Its time is drawing near.
- 21- *Yawmut-Taghâbun* (i.e., Day of Deprivation). This is the Day of mutual loss and gain (i.e. loss for the disbelievers as they will enter the Hellfire and gain for the believers as they will enter Paradise).
- 22- *Yawmut-Tanâd* (i.e., The Day of Calling). Every nation will be summoned with their respective leader. Every one will call upon the other. The people of Paradise will call upon the people of the Hellfire and vice versa, and so will the Companions of Elevations (those on the elevations between Paradise and the Hellfire).



Third Aspect:

End of the First Life (i.e., Death) and Beginning of the Second Life (i.e., Resurrection)

One of the preludes of the Last Day is death, which is considered the end of the first life. It is the death of each one of us; a way through which one moves from this world to the Hereafter.

Allah reminds His servants of death so as to get ready for it by doing good deeds and repenting of bad ones; for when death is due, the chance for man to do any deeds is finished and his death can never be postponed.

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that – then those are the losers. And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, ‘My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous.’ But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come and Allah is Acquainted with what you do.” (Qur’ân: Al-Munâfiqûn: 9-11)

The Exalted also says:

“Every soul will taste death...” (Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 185)

Thus, death is the end of the first life whereas the establishment of the Hour indicates the beginning of the second life upon Resurrection.

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, recurrently mentions both matters in the same Sura as in the Sura of Al-Wâqi`ah¹¹. He mentions ‘The Resurrection’ in the beginning and how the people will be divided into three categories, as He says, ‘When the Occurrence occurs, there is, at its occurrence, no denial. It will bring down [some] and raise up [others]. When the earth is shaken with convulsion. And the mountains are broken down, crumbling. And become dust dispersing. And you become [of] three kinds.’ (Qur’ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 1-7) Then, at the conclusion of the same Sura, Allah mentions ‘death’ and how people will be divided into three categories after their death. So He says, ‘Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat. And you are at that time looking on – and We [i.e., Our angels] are nearer to him than you, but you do

not see. Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed, bring it back, if you should be truthful. And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah], then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right, Then [the angels will say], 'Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right.' But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray, Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water. And burning in Hellfire.' (Qur'an: Al-Wâqi`ah: 83-94)"

When death is due, the human soul is raised and taken away from the body by the Command of Allah, the Exalted. Allah assigns the mission of raising souls to Himself in the verse that provides:

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death..."

(Qur'an: Az-Zumar: 42)

Allah entrusts this very mission to the angels in the verse that reads:

"...Until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers [i.e., angels of death] take him, and they do not fail [in their duties]."

(Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 61)

And in His saying:

"And if you could not see when the angels take the souls of those who disbelieved..."

(Qur'an: Al-Anfâl: 50)

In another verse, Allah entrusts the same mission to the Angel of Death in the verse that provides:

"Say, 'The angel of death, who has been entrusted with you, will take your souls..."

(Qur'an: As-Sajdah: 11)

There is no contradiction between the above verses, as they specify the task assigned to each. Allah is the One Who has decreed death and predestined it, so death goes according to His Divine Decree, Predetermination, and Command; so causing death is attributed to Him. The task assigned to the Angel of Death is taking the soul and then the angels of mercy or the angels of chastisement take it after him. Thus, it is absolutely acceptable to attribute death to each of them (Allah, angels and the Angel of Death).

❖ **Death of Sleep and Actual Death**¹²

The soul which is created for running the body and parts it via death is the very soul which is breathed into it and is the same which parts the body during sleep.

When the Prophet (PBUH) overslept and did not perform prayer at its due time, he said:

“Allah seized our souls when he willed and He returned them to us when He willed.”

In this regard, Bilâl apologized for not waking the Prophet up saying:

“O Messenger of Allah, the One Who seized yourself is the same Who seized mine (i.e., Allah, Exalted be He).”

In addition, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term...”
(Qur’ân: Az-Zumar: 42)

Ibn `Abbâs and most of the exegetes agree that Allah takes hold of souls with two kinds of grasps, the grasp of death and the grasp of sleep. In sleep, Allah takes hold of the souls of those predetermined to die and releases the other souls for a specified term until their decreed time of death comes.

It is reported in the Two *Sahîhs* that the Prophet (PBUH) used to say before sleep:

“In Your Name, my Lord, I place my side (upon the bed) and it is in Your Name that I lift it up (after sleep). In case You withhold myself (i.e., if You cause me to die), then forgive and pardon myself, and if You release it (myself), then protect it with what You protect Your righteous servants with.”

An interpretation of the verse cited above is that both the grasped and released souls experience the death of sleep. Then, Allah keeps the soul which has completed its predestined time of existence and does not return it to the body. As for the soul which has not completed its predestined time of existence yet, He returns it to the body to complete it.

The second interpretation is that the grasped soul is the one which has actually been predetermined to die while the released one is that which has experienced only the partial death through sleep. This means that Allah takes the soul of the one who is predestined to die, grasps it and does not release it until the Day of Resurrection. Allah takes the soul of the sleeping person, then He releases it and sends it to his body to complete his predestined time of existence and once it is completed, He takes it forever. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And it is He Who takes your souls by night...”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 60)

❖ The Truth about the Soul

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“There seems to be a uniform agreement among the Companions, the righteous Tâbi`ûn (Successors of the Companions), the Salaf (early Muslim scholars) and the scholars of the Sunnah that the soul is an independent entity different from the body. It is separable from the body at death, and susceptible to happiness, misery or chastisement. The soul is neither the body nor one of its components.”

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:

“The sound opinion is that the soul is not composed of sensitive substance, matter or form. It is not of the distinctive tangible normal substances. The soul can be referred to, and it ascends, descends, and parts the body, which has been confirmed via legal texts and ratified by rational evidence. One may say, ‘Where is the soul in the body?’ To this, the answer is there is no specific place for it in the human body; it flows all through it just as life itself. Life is conditioned on the soul; so long as the soul is still in the body, this body has life, and whenever the soul departs it, life departs it too.”

❖ The Soul is Created

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah said, *“There is a consensus among the Salaf, the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community that the human soul is created. Such a consensus has been reported by many Muslim scholars.”* **Ibnul-Qayyim**, the prominent scholar and the student of Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah, said, *“There are twelve points that prove that the soul is created.”* What follows are some of these points as given by **Ibnul-Qayyim**:

- 1- Allah, Exalted be He, says, *“...Allah is the Creator of all things...”* (Qur`ân: Ar-Ra`d: 16) Here, the noun *“All things”* is generic, which is comprehensive and does not imply any kind of specification. Allah’s Attributes, which are implied in His Names, are ruled out here as Allah, Glorified be He, is the Lord in Whom the Attributes of Perfection are inherent. Allah is the Creator by virtue of His Self and His Attributes; anything other than Him is created.
- 2- Almighty Allah says, *“...For I created you (i.e., Zakariyyâ; Zechariah) before, while you were nothing.”* (Qur`ân: Maryam: 9) Allah, in this verse, addresses both the soul and the body because the body alone is incapable of understanding, communicating or reasoning; rather, it is the soul that is credited with the faculties of thought, action, and emotion.

- 3- Allah, Exalted be He, says, *“And We have certainly created you, [O mankind], and given you [human] form. Then We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate to Adam.’ ”* (Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 11) The address here in the verse, according to the majority of scholars, is directed to both the soul and body. Other scholars say the addressee, here, are the souls before giving them a shape (body). At any rate, each of the two opinions clearly proves the creation of souls.
- 4- Further evidence lies in the texts which prove the creation of the human being as a whole and that his submissiveness to Allah is not restricted to his body only without his soul, but the submissiveness of the soul is rather the main one while the submissiveness of the body is the subsidiary. Moreover, the body is the soul’s subsidiary when following the rules of Allah, for the soul is the one which runs and uses the body, thus the body is its subsidiary in being submissive to Allah.
- 5- Allah says, *“Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?”* (Qur’ân: Al-Insân: 1) Were his soul old, man would be something to be mentioned. Man is a human being because of his soul not because of his body.
- 6- One more point lies in the *hadith* narrated by Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) and related in *Sahîh Al-Bukhârî (Al-Bukhârî’s Authentic Book of Hadith)* and other Books of *Hadith* and which proves that the soul is created. Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *“Souls are (like) troops collected together: Those who have familiarized with each other would have affinity with one another, and those who have opposed each other would be divergent.”* Affiliated souls can never be except if they were created.
- 7- The soul is susceptible to death, grasping, ascending and descending, which are all attributes of a created submissive entity.

❖ **How *Ar-Rûh* (i.e., the Soul) of the Dying Person is Taken and its Destination after Death**

The description of the process of dying and the destination of the soul after death are clarified in the long *hadith* narrated on the authority of Al-Barâ’ Ibn `Âzib, which provides:

“We witnessed a funeral procession in Baqî`ul-Gharqad (the graveyard of the people of Medina) and the Prophet (PBUH) came to us, sat down and we sat around him motionless with awe, while the grave was being prepared for the deceased person. The Prophet

(PBUH) said, 'I seek refuge with Allah from the punishment in the grave,' which he repeated thrice. Then, he (PBUH) said, 'When a believing servant (of Allah) is approaching the beginning of his term in the Hereafter and the end of his term in the life of this world, angels descend onto him with faces (as white and radiant) as the sun, carrying both a shroud and fragrance for enshrouding from Paradise. They sit as far from him as the sight goes. Then, the Angel of Death comes and sits next to his head, saying, 'O good soul! Depart (your body) to Allah's forgiveness and pleasure.' So, the soul flows (out of its body), just as the drop flows out from the tip of the jug, and the Angel of Death takes it. Once, the Angel of Death grasps the soul, the angels do not leave it with him for more than an instant. In principle, they seize and wrap it in that shroud and in that fragrance. The most pleasant musk scent ever smelt on earth, flows out of the soul.

Afterwards, the angels ascend with the grasped soul (to heaven). They will not pass by a group of angels but they say, 'Whose good soul is this?' They (the angels who are ascending with the soul) reply, 'Such a person, the son of such and such a person,' calling him by the best names by which he used to be called in the world. They reach the lower heaven and ask for opening its door for him and it is opened. The best of the residents of every heaven will then accompany him to the next heaven, until he is brought to the heaven where Allah, Exalted be He, is. Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He, will say, 'List my servant's record in 'Illiyûn (the highest degree of Paradise) and send him back to earth, for I have created them from it, and into it I shall return them, and from it I shall bring them out once again.' Thus, the soul will be joined again with its body, and two angels will come to him, sit him up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will say, 'Allah is my Lord.' They will ask him again, 'What is your religion?' He will say, 'My religion is Islam.' They will ask him, 'What do you say about this man (Prophet Muhammad) who was sent to you?' He will say, 'He is the Messenger of Allah.' They will ask him, 'And what proof do you have of it?' He will say, 'I read the Book of Allah (the Qur'ân), and had faith and belief in him.' Then, a caller (Allah) will call from heaven, 'My servant has said the truth. Therefore, furnish him from Paradise, and let him wear from (the clothes of) Paradise, and open a door for him to Paradise.' So he is given from Paradise's tranquility and good scent, and his grave will be expanded for him as far as his sight can reach. Then, a man, with a handsome face, handsome

clothes and pleasant scent, will come to him, saying, 'Receive the glad tidings with what pleases you. This is the day which you were promised.' He will ask him, 'Who are you, for yours is the face that carries the good news?' He will reply, 'I am your good deeds.' So, he will say, 'O Lord! Establish the Hour, so that I can return to my family and my wealth.'

However, when the disbelieving person is approaching the end of his term in the world, and the beginning of his term in the Hereafter, there will descend onto him from heaven angels with dark faces. They will bring with them garments made of hair (to shroud him with) and will sit as far from him as the sight reaches. Then the Angel of Death will come forward and sit right next to his head, saying, 'O evil soul! Depart (your body) to the anger of Allah and a wrath from Him.' The soul will scatter throughout his body, and the Angel of Death will seize it as when the skewer with branches is removed from wet wool. The Angel of Death will seize the soul, and when he does, they (the angels) will not let it stay in his hand for more than an instant, and they will wrap it in the garments made of hair. The most putrid smell a dead corpse can ever have on earth will emit from the soul, and the angels will ascend with it. Whenever they pass by a group of angels, they will ask, 'Whose evil soul is this?' The angels will respond, 'He is such a person, the son of such a person,' calling him by the worst names he was known by in the worldly life. When they reach the lowest heaven, they will ask for opening its gate for him, but their request will be denied.

The Prophet (PBUH) then recited the Qur'anic verse, '**...The gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle [i.e. never]...**' (Qur'an: Al-A`râf: 40) Then, Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He, will say, 'List his record in Sijjîn (the lowest depths of the Hellfire) in the lowest earth.' Therefore, his soul will then be thrown (from heaven). (The Prophet (PBUH) then recited the Qur'anic verse,) '**...And he who associates with Allah – it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place.**' (Qur'an: Al-Hajj: 31) So, his soul will be returned to his body, and two angels will come to him, sit him up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will say, 'Oh, oh! I do not know.' They will ask him, 'What is your religion?' He will say, 'Oh, oh! I do not know.' They will ask him, 'What do you say of this man (Prophet Muhammad) who was sent to you?' He will say, 'Oh, oh, I do not

know.' A caller (Allah) will call from heaven, 'My servant has lied, so furnish him with the Fire and open a door for him to the Fire.' He will suffer from its heat and fierce hot wind. And his grave will be constricted until his bones crush each other. Then, a man with a dreadful face, in dreadful clothes and with a disgusting smell, will come to him, saying, 'Receive the tidings with what will displease you! This is the day that you have been promised.' He will ask that man, 'And who are you, for yours is the face that brings about evil?' He will reply, 'I am your evil deeds.' He will therefore cry, 'O Lord! Do not establish the Hour (the Day of Resurrection)!'

This *hadith* has been related by Imâm Aḥmad, Abû Dâwûd, Al-Ḥâkim and Abû 'Uwânah (in their two *Saḥîhs*) and Ibn Hibbân.

The commentator on At-Tahâwiyah¹³ said:

"All the scholars of the Sunnah and Hadith agree on the meaning of this hadith and it has corresponding texts (i.e., hadiths whose words or meanings are identical to each other but there is a difference concerning the narrator) in the Authentic Books of Hadith."

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"As for the mentioned hadith about grasping the believer's soul and how it is raised to the heaven where Allah is, it is a well-known hadith with a good chain of transmitters. Saying 'where Allah is' in that hadith is similar to Allah's saying, 'Do you feel secure that He Who [holds authority] in the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you and suddenly it would sway? Or do you feel secure that He Who [holds authority] in the heaven would not send against you a storm of stones? Then you would know how [severe] was My warning.' (Qur'an: Al-Mulk: 16-17)"

Ibnul-Qayyim said:

"There is great disparity between souls in the Barzakh¹⁴: Some souls are in the highest rank with the highest group of souls, these are the souls of the Messengers (peace be upon them all), who are of different ranks, just as the Prophet (PBUH) saw them in the Night of Al-Isrâ' (Night Journey).

Other souls are found in the crows of green birds that fly wherever they want in Paradise. They are the souls of some martyrs but not all of them for some souls of other martyrs will be prevented from entering Paradise for not paying a debt or the like. Other martyrs will be confined at the door of Paradise, while others will be confined

in their graves. An example of such a martyr is in the hadith of the person who took a cloak from the booty before its distribution and then he was martyred. Whereupon, people said, 'May he be comfortable in Paradise!' The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! The sheet which he stole from the war booty before its distribution on the Day of (the Battle of) Khaybar, is now burning over him in his grave.' Some other martyrs' souls may be accommodated at the door of Paradise, as Ibn 'Abbâs narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'The martyrs convene at the bank of a river close to the door of Paradise, in a green tent, where their provisions are brought to them from Paradise day and night.' "

Some souls are bound to earth, so they do not reach the highest group. These souls are terrestrial ones; hence, the earthly souls cannot be affiliated with the heavenly souls just as what happens in this worldly life. The soul, which has not known its Lord, how to love Him, how to remember Him or how to get closer to Him, is a lowly earthly soul that cannot go anywhere except on earth even after it parts the body. By contrast, the heavenly soul, which has devoted itself to love, remember and work to get closer to Allah, is with other heavenly souls which suit it after departing the body. Everyone will be gathered with whom he loves in the Barzakh as well as on the Day of Resurrection. Allah, the Exalted, creates affinity between souls in the Barzakh as well as on the Promised Day, as it has just been illustrated in the hadith. He affiliates a believer's soul with similar good souls. Thus, after parting bodies, souls join other souls of the same kind and deed; they are to be situated with their likes after death.

Some other souls are to be thrown in the furnace of adulterers and adulteresses, while other souls will be swimming in the river of blood and are fed with stones. To cut it short, souls, be they happy or miserable, have different abodes; some join the loftiest group of souls while others are earthly souls that are not raised from earth."

Ibnul-Qayyim further said:

"When one contemplates the Sunan (books recording Prophetic hadiths) and traditions carefully, one will grasp the proofs highlighted above. In addition, one should not think that there is a contradiction between different authentic traditions. In principle, they all verify and support each other. More importantly, it is imperative to have thorough knowledge and sound understanding of the soul and the judgments pertaining to it as well as knowing that their condition is different from that of the body."

Finally, **Ibnul-Qayyim** said:

“Souls are divided into: released, confined, heavenly and earthly souls. After parting the bodies, souls experience health or ailment, pleasure or comfort, and sorrow or pain. These feelings are to be experienced in a much greater manner than when the souls are still connected with their bodies. Some souls will taste confinement, pain, torture, ailment and regret while others will taste pleasure, comfort, ease and freedom.”

❖ **Are *Ar-Rûh* (i.e., the Soul) and *An-Nafs* (i.e., the Self) the same or are they two different entities?**

People have different views regarding the issue whether soul and self are one entity or two different entities; the majority of scholars view that they are one and the same entity while others view that they are two different entities. The sound view, however, is that the two terms (soul and self) are used to denote various meanings, which might mean the same and might be different. For example, the soul may be used to mean the self as in the verse that provides, **‘Discharge your souls!’** (Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 93) and in the common saying ‘his soul has been taken.’ In both examples, the soul means *Ar-Rûh*. Another meaning of *An-Nafs* is the ‘self’ as in their saying ‘I have witnessed Zayd himself.’ One further meaning for *An-Nafs* is blood as in one’s saying, ‘*Sâlat nafsuhu*’ which means ‘one’s self is bleeding.’

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah said:

*“It is said that *An-Nafs* (i.e., the self) are of three kinds:*

1. *The self inclined to evil and which is controlled by its own desires that tempt it to commit sins and acts of disobedience.*
2. *The reproaching self which commits sins and then returns in repentance to its Creator. Such a soul has two facets; good and evil; but whenever it commits evil, it regrets and turns to Allah in repentance. It is called ‘reproaching’ because it reproaches itself for committing sins. It continually wavers between good and evil.*
3. *The peaceful soul which is mainly characterized by the love of goodness and good deeds and abhorrence of evilness and evil deeds.*

These are all characteristics and conditions of one entity, because each human being has only one soul.

*The word *Rûh* (i.e., soul or spirit), on the other hand, has a number of connotations too. It is used to mean the Qur’ân revealed by Allah to His Messenger. This meaning is spelled out in the verse that reads, ‘**And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command***

[i.e., the Qur'ân]...' (Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 52) *Another meaning of the word 'Rûh' is Jibrîl (Gabriel) as demonstrated in the verse that provides, 'The Trustworthy Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down.'* (Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ: 193) *A further meaning of the word 'Rûh' is revelation that has been inspired to prophets and messengers. Allah, Exalted be He, says, '...He places the inspiration of His command [i.e., revelation] upon whom He wills of His servants...'* (Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 15) *It (the inspiration) is called 'Rûh' because of the benefits it brings about for human beings, for life without it cannot be beneficial at all. 'Rûh' is also used to mean air going in and out of the body. Finally, 'Rûh' refers to the soul leaving the body at death; this meaning is highlighted above. According to this, 'Ar-Rûh' and An-Nafs are two synonyms, as their meanings are identical. To conclude, the two words differ in that An-Nafs refers also to the body and the blood while Ar-Rûh does not. Allah knows best."*

❖ **The Trial of the Grave, its Torment and its Pleasure**

Believing in the Last Day means believing in all that the Prophet (PBUH) conveyed about the conditions of man after death. Among these conditions are the trial of the grave; its torment and its pleasure.

Between death, which ends the first life, and Resurrection, which begins the second one, there is a period of time the name of which was mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ân as "*Barzakh* (i.e., the barrier or the interval between the two worlds)." Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.' No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a Barzakh (barrier) until the Day they are resurrected." (Qur'ân: Al-Mu'minûn: 99-100)

Barzakh, here, means a barrier that separates two things (the worldly life from the life in the Hereafter). In effect, this barrier is an example of the recompense of the Hereafter. It represents the first abode among the abodes of the Hereafter, as it includes the questioning of the two angels and then torment or pleasure.

1) The Two Angels Questioning

The questioning of the two angels is called the trial of the grave. It is a test for the deceased person when the two angels question him. There are many *mutawâtir* (continuously recurrent) *hadîths*, highlighting the trial of the grave, narrated on the authority of Al-Barâ' Ibn `Âzib, Anas Ibn Mâlik, Abû Hurayrah, and others (may Allah be pleased with them all).

This trial is general for all those who are legally accountable, apart from Prophets about whom there is a disagreement of opinion among scholars. The disagreement is further extended to children and insane people. Such people and children are said not to be subjected to the trial of the grave because this trial is only for those who are accountable, but some said that they will be tried.

The argument of those who said that they will be tried is based on the fact that it is permissible to perform the Funeral Prayer over them and to invoke Allah for them so that He may absolve them from the torment and trial of the grave. Imâm Mâlik mentioned in his *Muwatta'*¹⁵ that Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) performed Funeral Prayer over a boy and I heard him invoking Allah saying, ‘O Allah! Protect him from the punishment in the grave.’”

Furthermore, they cite what `Alî Ibn Ma`bad reported from `Âishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that when a funeral procession of a boy passed by her, she wept. It was said to her, “‘What has made you weep, O Mother of the Believers?’ She said, ‘I weep for my fear for this boy of the squeezing of the grave.’” It was also said that Allah, Exalted be He, makes their minds sound so that they may know their rank and they are also inspired with the answer to what they are asked. This opinion is consolidated by many *hadiths* which state that they are tested in the Hereafter. Al-Ash`ary reports that this is the opinion of the scholars of *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and *Hadith*. If such people are to be tested in the Hereafter, then their test in the graves is not impossible.

As for those who say that insane people and children will not be trialed in their graves, they base their opinion on the premises that questioning is for the person who can reason and understand, so as to understand the questions whether he has believed in Allah’s Messenger and obeyed him or not. That is, it is unreasonable to ask a child who cannot distinguish between right and wrong about his opinion concerning the belief in the Messenger sent to humanity in the life of this world. Even if his mind is brought back to normal in his grave, he is not to be asked about something he has no ability to know. Therefore, it is pointless to ask him. In effect, questioning them is different from their trial in the Hereafter, when Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, sends a Messenger to them and commands them to obey him while they are enjoying sound minds. Whosoever obeys him will be rescued, and whosoever disobeys him will be cast down into hell-fire. This is a trial in which Allah orders them to do something at that time; it is not an interrogation about their condition in the past life or whether they had been obedient or disobedient, like that of the Two Angels in the grave.

The second group refuted the pretexts of the first saying:

The trial of the grave in the *hadith* narrated by Abû Hurayrah definitely does not mean tormenting the child for abandoning an act of obedience or committing an act of disobedience, for Allah does not punish anyone for a sin he has not committed. The torment of the grave may refer to the torment which befalls the deceased person because of someone else; it is not a punishment for something he has committed himself, as the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

“The dead person is tortured by the wailing of his relatives?”

This means that the dead person suffers and is tormented because of it, not because he is punished for the sin of the living people. Allah says,

“...And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

(Qur’ân: Al-An`âm: 164)

This is similar to the Prophet’s saying: *“Traveling is a kind of torture.”*

Torment is a more general term than punishment. No doubt that being in a grave involves a considerable share of pain, grief, and regret which may cause a child to suffer. Thus, it is permissible for anyone who prays for him to ask Allah, the Exalted, to save him from such suffering. Allah knows best.

Scholars also have disagreed whether the questioning in the grave is general for Muslims, hypocrites and disbelievers or it is only for Muslims and hypocrites. Some scholars are of the opinion that the questioning is for Muslims and hypocrites only, not the disbelievers. Some other scholars, on the other hand, are of the opinion that questioning is general for the disbelievers as well as the Muslims. The latter opinion is consistent with the Qur’ân and the *Sunnah*, whereas excluding the disbelievers from the questioning of the grave has no evidence.

Scholars have also disagreed whether the questioning of the grave is specific for this nation. They have three opinions regarding this issue:

1. Questioning in the grave is specific for this nation, because messengers were sent to the past nations with their message, and if their people denied, the messengers would dissociate themselves from them, whereupon their torment was immediate. When Muḥammad (PBUH) was sent with mercy as a guide for humanity, as Allah says:

“And We have not sent you, [O Muḥammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ: 107)

Allah, Exalted be He, withheld their torment. He then gave permission for His Messenger to use the sword so that some people may embrace Islam firstly because of their fear and afterwards faith would be firmly

established in their hearts. They were granted a respite, so this resulted in the appearance of hypocrites who used to hide their real disbelief and show their false belief. They were screened among Muslims, but when they died, Allah appointed the two angels of the grave to interrogate them. Those who held this opinion used, as an argument, the *hadiths* in which the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says:

“The people of this nation are passing through the ordeal in the graves.”

And:

“It was revealed to me that you will be put to trials in your graves.”

These *hadiths* clarify that this questioning is specific for this nation. This is also proved by the saying of the two angels:

“What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad) who was sent to you?”

2. The questioning of the grave happens to this nation and to other nations as well. Those who maintain this view have said that the arguments of the first group do not prove that the questioning is limited to this nation only. In the first *hadith*, the phrase, “*this nation*” means the nation of mankind, as Allah says:

“And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you...”

(Qur’an: Al-An`âm: 38)

Every species is called a nation or a community. Even if the Prophet (PBUH) means his nation, this does not exclude other nations from being questioned, for the *hadith* is just a declarative statement illustrating that his nation will be questioned in their graves. The same can be said about the second *hadith* in which he (PBUH) said:

“It was revealed to me that you will be put to trials in your graves.”

3. The third opinion does not give any preference concerning this subject because the proofs pertaining to it are not conclusive. Allah knows best.

The Description of the Questioning of the Two Angels as Related in *Hadiths*:

In the *hadith* narrated by Al-Bará’ Ibn `Âzib (may Allah be pleased with him), Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said:

“... His soul (the soul of the deceased) will be returned to his body, and two angels will come to him...”

In the Two *Sahîhs* (two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim), it is related from Qatâdah on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“When a deceased person is laid in his grave and his companions return and he even hears the sound of their footsteps, two angels come to him and sit him and ask him, ‘What did you use to say about this man, Muḥammad?’ If he is a believer, he will say, ‘I testify that he is Allah’s servant and His Messenger.’ Then it will be said to him, ‘Look at your place in the Hellfire. Allah has given you a place in Paradise instead of it.’ So, the dead person will see both his places. But when they say to a non-believer or a hypocrite, ‘What did you use to say about this man?’ He will say to the angels, ‘I do not know, but I used to say what the people used to say!’ So, it will be said to him, ‘Neither did you know nor did you take the guidance (by reciting the Qur’ân).’ Then he will be hit with an iron hammer between his two ears, and he will cry and that cry will be heard by whatever on earth except human beings and jinn.”

In another *hadith* related in *Sahîh* (Authentic Book of) Abû Hâtim, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“...There appears before him two angels, both having black faces and blue eyes. One is called Munkar and the other is called Nakîr...”

In the *Musnad*¹⁶ and in the Authentic Book of Abû Hâtim, it is related that Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“When the dead person is laid in grave, he even hears the sound of the footsteps of people when they depart and leave him. If he is a believer, the Prayer will stand by his head, Fasting by his right, Zakâh by his left, and the righteous deeds, such as charity, keeping relations with kith and kin and acts of kindness to people will stand by his feet. He will be approached from his head, and the Prayer will declare, ‘No entrance from my side.’ He will be approached from his left, and the Zakâh will declare, ‘No entrance from my side.’ He will be approached from his right, and the Fast will declare, ‘No entrance from my side.’ He will be approached from his feet, and the acts of righteousness will declare, ‘No entrance from our side.’ He will be commanded to sit up, and he will sit up while the sun appears to him just like when it is about to set. He will be told, ‘What do you say about that man who was sent to you, and what do you testify concerning him?’ He will say, ‘Leave me until I perform prayer.’ They will say to him, ‘You will perform prayer, but first tell us what we ask you...’”

The above *hadith* and those related *hadiths*, which bear the same meanings, verify a number of points:

1. The questioning happens when the dead person is placed in his grave, which refutes the views of the innovators like Abûl-Hudhayl and Al-Mirrîsî, who have said that the questioning happens at the time between the two blows¹⁷.
2. Calling the two angels 'Munkar' and 'Nakîr' is a reply to those Mu` tazilah (Mutazilites) who claim that it is impermissible to call them so. They (Mu` tazilah) mistakenly interpret their names in the *hadiths* by saying that 'Munkar' means the dead person's hesitation in answering back while 'Nakîr' refers to the angels' scolding of the dead person.
3. The dead person's soul is returned to him in his grave at the time of his questioning, where he sits and is interrogated. This is a response to Abû Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm who denies that the deceased person's soul is returned to him in his grave. But if he means to deny that the returning of souls in the graves is different from the normal life of this world, this will be true. The returning of the dead person's soul in his grave differs from its returning in this life, although it may be more comprehensive in some respect, just as the creation of man in the Hereafter is different from that in this world, though it is more comprehensive. Every place, whether in this life, the *Barzakh* or the Resurrection, has its special conditions. That is why the Prophet (PBUH) has said that the grave of the deceased person is widened for him, that he is questioned and so on. Thus, even if dust does not change, souls are returned to and withdrawn from the bodies of the dead.

The soul is attached to the body in several ways, which are illustrated below.

The Connections between the Soul and the Body

The soul is connected to the body through five different kinds of connections, each of which has its own ruling:

1. Its connection to the body in the mother's womb as a fetus
2. Its connection to the body after its coming to the face of the earth
3. Its connection to the body during sleep, during which it is connected to the body in one respect and is separated from it in another
4. Its connection to the body in the *Barzakh*, for although the soul is separated from the body, it is not completely detached from it without any return. The *hadiths* prove that the soul returns to the body at the questioning of the two Angels and when Muslims greet a Muslim in the grave. This returning is a special case which does not imply returning the body to life before the Day of Resurrection.

5. Its connection to the body during the Day on which bodies will be resurrected. It is the most inclusive connection between the body and the soul, and it cannot be compared to the aforementioned kinds of connection, for it is a kind of connection with which the body cannot be dead, asleep or decayed.

2) Torment and Pleasure in the Grave

The opinion of the *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) and scholars of the Muslim nation is that when someone dies, he is either in torment or pleasure which is experienced by both his body and his soul. They agree that the soul of the deceased feels pleasure or suffers torment after being separated from the body. The soul is sometimes joined to the body and feels the pleasure or suffers the torment. The Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community agree that the soul feels pleasure or suffers torment while it is separated from the body and also feels pleasure or suffers torment while it is joined with the body. Thus, the soul and the body may feel the pleasure or the torment together; and the soul may feel either of them while it is separated from the body. However, can the body feel the pleasure or suffer the torment without being joined with the soul? There are two different opinions, concerning this issue, adopted by the people of *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, and the people of Scholastic Theology.

Proofs of Torment and Pleasure in the Grave from Qur'ân:

- 1- Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And if you could but see when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands, [saying], ‘Discharge your souls! Today you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation for what you used to say against Allah other than the truth and [that] you were, toward His verses, being arrogant.’ ”

(Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 93)

The people addressed in the verse cited above are the unjust people on their deathbed. In the same verse, the angels, who are truthful, tell us that those unjust people are to suffer the punishment of extreme humiliation and were this torment delayed until the end of this world, then it would not be said to them “...*Today you will be awarded...*” (Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 93).

Thus, the torment referred to in the verse is the torment in the grave.

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2- Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“So leave them until they meet their Day on which they will be struck insensible – the Day their plan will not avail them at all, nor will they be helped. And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tûr: 45-47)

The cited verses above may refer to the punishment that afflicts the unjust people in this worldly life by being killed or any other punishment. Meanwhile, they may refer to the torment that afflicts them in the grave, which is more likely. This is because many of those unjust people die without being punished in this world. A further opinion, which is more preponderant, says that whosoever dies among them will be tormented in the grave; and whosoever remains alive will be punished in this world by being killed or any other punishment; this is a threat for them to be punished in this world and in the *Barzakh*.

3- Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

“So Allah protected him from the evils they plotted, and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment – the Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], ‘Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.’”

(Qur’ân: Ghâfir: 45-46)

In this verse, Allah, Exalted be He, mentions the torment in the grave and in the Hereafter explicitly, which does not leave room for any other meanings. Thus, these verses prove the torment in the grave.

4- In addition, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Then why, when it [i.e., the soul at death] reaches the throat and you are at that time looking on and We [i.e., Our angels] are nearer to him than you, but you do not see. Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed, bring it back, if you should be truthful? And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allah], then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure. And if he was of the companions of the right, then [the angels will say], ‘Peace for you; [you are] from the companions of the right.’ But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray, then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water and burning in Hellfire.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 83-94)

In these verses, Allah, Exalted be He, mentions three cases under which peoples' souls fall at the time of death. In the beginning of this Sura, Allah mentions the cases of souls on the Day of Resurrection. Allah mentions the kinds of people on the Day of Resurrection first as the situation there is more important than that at the time of death. Moreover, as Allah, Exalted be He, divides people into three kinds at the time of death, He also divides them into three kinds on the Day of Resurrection.

Proofs of Torment and Pleasure in the Grave from *Sunnah*

When one contemplates the Prophetic *hadiths* which mainly tackle the punishment and pleasure in the grave, one will find that they paraphrase and explain in detail what is mentioned generally in the Qur'ân in this regard. The *hadiths* narrated about the Prophet (PBUH) talking about the punishment in the grave are considerable and recurrent. Among these *hadiths* are the following:

- 1- It is related in the Two *Sahîhs* on the authority of Ibn 'Abbâs that the Prophet (PBUH) passed by two graves and said:

"These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid). One of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine, while the other used to go about with malicious gossip (to make enmity between people)." The Prophet (PBUH) then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree, split it into two pieces and fixed one on each grave and said, "I hope that their torment might be lessened until these (the pieces of the leaf) become dry."

- 2- It is related in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)* on the authority of Zayd Ibn Thâbit who narrated:

"As Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was going along with us in a garden belonging to Banûn-Najjâr, riding upon his mule, it shied and he was about to fall. He found four, five or six graves there. He said, 'Who amongst you knows about those lying in these graves?' A man said, 'I do.' Thereupon, he (PBUH) said, 'When did these people die?' The man said, 'They died in the pre-Islamic period.' He said, 'This nation is passing through the ordeal in the graves. Were it not for the reason that you would stop burying (your dead), I would invoke Allah to make you hear the torment in the grave, which I am hearing.'"

- 3- It is also related in *Sahîh Muslim* and the Books of *Sunan* (books recording the Prophetic Tradition) that Abû Hurayrah narrated, "The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"When any one of you completes the Final Tashahhud¹⁸, he should seek refuge with Allah from four (things): from the torment of the Hell, from the torment of grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the trial of Al-Masîhud-Dajjâl (the Antichrist)."

- 4- Moreover, it is related in the Two *Sahîhs* (two authentic books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) that Abû Ayyûb (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

"Once, the Prophet (PBUH) went out after sunset and heard a (dreadful) voice, so he said, 'The Jews are being punished in their graves.'"

- 5- In addition, it is related in the Two *Sahîhs* that `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

"An old woman from among the Jews entered upon me and said, 'The dead suffer torment in their graves,' but I belied her and did not believe her at the beginning. When she went away and Allah's Messenger (PBUH) entered upon me, I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! An old woman from among the Jews of Medina came to me and told me that the dead suffer torment in their graves.' He said, 'She has told the truth; the dead are really punished, to the extent that all the animals hear (the sound resulting from) their torment.' Since then I always saw him seeking refuge with Allah from the torment of the grave in his prayers."

N.B.

The punishment and the pleasure in the grave and the questioning by the two angels are to happen to every deceased person even if he is not buried. The punishment in the grave entails the interval called *Barzakh* between this world and the Hereafter and what happens in it either of torment or pleasure. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...And behind them is a Barzakh [a barrier] until the Day they are resurrected"
(Qur'ân: Al-Mu'minûn: 100)

Thus, if anyone dies by crucifying, burning, sinking, or being devoured by wild animals or birds of prey, he is to receive the punishment or the pleasure he deserves, according to his deeds and in the way that may differ from one case to another.

One of the people in ancient times thought that if his body was burnt and became mere ash to be blown after that in a windy day, some in the sea and some on the earth, he would be saved from the punishment in grave. So, he commanded his sons to do that with his body after death and they did. Allah commanded the sea to collect the ashes scattered on it and He commanded the land to collect ashes contained in it. Allah, then, ordered him to rise, so he rose before Allah (in his original form). Allah asked him why he had done so. He replied, ***“My Lord, it is out of Your fear that I have done it and You are well aware of it.”*** Thereupon, Allah forgave him.” Thus, those molecules of that man’s body which were blown in the air were not saved from the punishment or the pleasure of the grave.

If a sinful person is hung after death on the top of a tree and left to be exposed to the wind, his body will suffer the torment of the *Barzakh* he deserves. On the contrary, if a pious person is buried in a fire, his body and his soul will experience the pleasure of the *Barzakh* he deserves. Thus, Allah, Exalted be He, will make the fire a source of coolness and safety for the latter and He will make the air a source of blaze and severe heat for the former. This is because the materials of this world are submissive and obedient to their Lord Who created and originated them, so He directs them wherever He wishes and nothing of them can resist His will. Rather, they are all at the Command of Allah and submissive to His Might. With that in mind, it is not impossible for the soul of the one who died by crucifying, sinking or burning to be returned to the body even if we do not notice that. This is because the soul is to be returned to the body in a way other than what we are familiar with. That is, the fainted, the drunkard and the unconscious are still alive though we do not notice their souls. Likewise, the one whose body parts are dispersed; that is, it will not be difficult for the One Who is able to do all things, to make these parts of the body rejoin with the soul; whether these parts are away or near from each other. Moreover, it will not be difficult for Allah, Exalted be He, to make these parts suffer pain or feel pleasure.

Allah, Exalted be He, created feelings in inanimate beings, and through these feelings, these beings glorify their Lord. That is, stones fall out of fear of Allah; mountains and trees fall in prostration to Him; and pebbles, water and plants glorify Him. With regard to this, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 44)

Since these inanimate beings have feeling and sense, then the animate beings are more entitled to experience such feelings. Moreover, Allah, Exalted be He, made His servants witness in this life how He returned life to a body after the soul had departed it. After that, this person led a natural life in which he could speak, walk, eat, drink, marry and have offspring. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, ‘Die’; then He restored them to life...”
(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 243)

In addition, Allah says:

“Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, ‘How will Allah bring this to life after its death?’ So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, ‘How long have you remained?’ He [the man] said, ‘I have remained a day or part of a day.’”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 259)

Another example is that of the people of Mûsâ (Moses), who said to him, “... **We will never believe you until we see Allah outright...**” (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 55) After Allah had taken their lives, He returned them to life again. There are many other examples for this such as that of the People of the Cave¹⁹ and the story of the four birds of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) (PBUH)²⁰. Thus, as Allah, Exalted be He, returned life to these bodies after they had died, then how could it be difficult for His absolute Might to return them to a temporary life in which these bodies will be subjected to what Allah ordained?! Therefore, they will either suffer torment or feel pleasure, according to their deeds. Thus, denying this life in the grave is only out of stubbornness and denying the truth.

Refuting Claims of Deniers of Grave Torment and Pleasure

Atheists and unbelievers deny the torment and the pleasure in grave saying, “When we open a grave, we do not find therein either angels tormenting the dead, snakes, or a blazing fire. We are wondering how the grave can extend to the range of vision or be constricted around the dead given that we find it in the same way as we have dug it, without any expansion or constriction. In addition, how does the grave become a garden from Paradise or a hole of the Hellfire?” To these, we may cite the following:

First: What happens in the grave is from amongst the unseen things which the Prophets have informed us about and since what they have told us cannot be false, then what they say must be believed.

Second: The fire and the gardens of the grave are not those of this life, so no wonder that the one who is used to the fire and the gardens of this worldly life cannot see or feel them. However, the fire of the Hereafter is much severer than that of this life; people cannot feel it even if they touch the dust and the stones under the dead person. That is, Allah heats the dust and the stones under the deceased person until they

become hotter than the fire of this world and none can feel this except the dead one. This is because Allah is able to do what people deemed to be far-fetched and cannot be done.

Nonetheless, if Allah wants to make anyone aware of the torment in the grave, He may do so and make it unseen to other people. Had Allah made it possible for all people to see the torment in the grave, the wisdom behind the divine obligations and believing in what is unseen would have been useless. Moreover, this may make people stop burying the dead amongst them. In this regard, it is related in the Two *Sahîhs* that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

“Were it not for the reason that you would stop burying (your dead), I would invoke Allah to make you hear the torment in the grave, which I am hearing.”

As this is not the case with regard to animals, for they are not charged with duties like human beings, they can hear what results from the torment in the grave. This happened when the mule of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) deviated from the way and was about to drop him when he passed by a grave where a deceased person was being tormented. In effect, seeing the fire in the grave is like seeing the angels and the jinn; Allah makes it possible for whomsoever He likes. Here and at this point, it seems pertinent to air a question that how could the one who really knows Allah, Exalted be He, and confesses His great Might, deny Allah's Might to do things which He conceals from the sights of some people? Allah does so out of His great Wisdom and Mercy, for people cannot bear seeing or hearing the torment in the grave. Besides, the human being is too weak, either with regard to his sight or his hearing, to see the torment in grave. The wisdom behind this is that what happens in the grave regarding expansion, constriction, light, greenness or fire, are unlike what is known in this world. Allah, Exalted be He, has made people witness in this life what belongs to it; but as for what belongs to the Hereafter, Allah has concealed it from people. Thus, when people confess and believe in this unseen world, this will lead them to being pleased (in the Hereafter), and if this is revealed, it will be seen and witnessed by them. Moreover, if the deceased person was to be placed among people, it would not be difficult for the Two Angels to come to him and ask him without those present around him noticing it. Moreover, the deceased person would answer them without those around him being able to hear him; besides, the Angels would punish him without the people present being able to see him being tormented. In addition, one may sleep near another who is awake and the former may be tormented and beaten, and may suffer pain in one's dream, without the one who is awake noticing anything of that.

With regard to this, **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The hadiths narrated concerning the torment in the grave and Munkar and Nakîr²¹ are numerous and recurrently narrated from the Prophet (PBUH). One of them is the hadith related in the Two Sahîhs on the authority of Ibn `Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him). Ibn `Abbâs narrated, ‘The Prophet (PBUH) passed by two graves and said, ‘These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid). One of them used to go about with malicious gossip (to make enmity between people), while the other never saved himself from being soiled with his urine.’ The Prophet (PBUH) then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree, split it into two pieces and fixed one on each grave. They said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Why have you done so?’ He replied, ‘I hope that their torment might be lessened until these (the pieces of the leaf) become dry.’ Moreover, it is related in Sahîh Muslim and the Sunan, on the authority of Abû Hurayrah, that the Prophet (PBUH) said, ‘When any one of you completes the Final Tashahhud, he should seek refuge with Allah from four (things): from the torment of the Hell, from the torment of grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the trial of Al-Masîhud-Dajjâl (Antichrist).’ ”

After that, **Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah** mentioned many hadiths about this matter and then added:

“There are recurrent hadiths reported from the Prophet (PBUH) stating the torment and pleasure in the grave to whoever deserves either of them, and also proving the questioning by the Two Angels, so the Muslim must believe in that. However, one is not to indulge in talking about the manner; how these matters happen, as the human mind does not know how this happens since one is not acquainted with the life in the grave. Furthermore, the Shari`ah (Islamic Law) does not come with what minds can always perceive but it may come with what minds cannot comprehend completely. When the soul is returned to one’s body in the grave, it is not returned in the way known in this world but it is returned in a way different from what is known in our life.”

Then, **Ibn Taymiyah** said:

“One should know that the punishment in the grave refers to the torment in the Barzakh between this life and the Hereafter. Thus, whoever dies while deserving to be punished in the grave, will receive what he deserves, whether he is buried or not. Such a person will receive his punishment even if he is eaten by wild animals, burnt until

he becomes mere dust thrown in the wind, crucified, or drowned. Whatever the case of such a person is, both his body and his soul will suffer the torment of the grave just as the buried ones suffer. As for what is narrated from the Prophet (PBUH) concerning the sitting of the deceased person by the angels and causing his ribs to be compressed and the like of what happens to the one punished in the grave, it must be understood without exaggeration or omission. In other words, what the Prophet (PBUH) said must not be misunderstood and what he meant with regard to guidance should be understood as he intended so. This is because misunderstanding what the Prophet (PBUH) meant or deviating from it has led those doing so to stray from the right path in a way that no one but Allah knows.”

After that, **Ibn Taymiyah** continues saying:

“One passes through three stages: this world, the Barzakh and the Hereafter. Allah, Exalted be He, has ordained certain rulings concerning each of them. He created man from a body and a soul. Moreover, He decreed that the rulings of this world are to be applied to the body and subsequently the soul; however, He decreed that the rulings of the Barzakh are to be applied to the soul and subsequently the body. In the Hereafter, when people are resurrected from the graves the torment and the pleasure are to be executed on both the bodies and souls of the people, according to their deeds. When one contemplates these meanings carefully, one will find that the grave really can be a garden of Paradise or a hole of the Hellfire; this is an indisputable fact that comes in conformity with reason.

Thus, believers can be distinguished from non-believers. Moreover, it must be known that the fire and the pleasure of the grave are not the same as those of this world. Allah, Exalted be He, heats the dust and the stone which are under and over the deceased person until they become intensely hot; yet, if the people of this world touch such dust or stones, they will not feel that heat. What is more stranger is that two persons may be buried beside each other and one of them could be in a hole of the Hellfire and the other could be in a garden of Paradise, and neither does the latter feel the fire the former suffers nor does the former feel the pleasure the latter enjoys. The Might of Allah is much more greater and astonishing than that; yet, some people deeply persist in denying that about which they have no knowledge.

Allah, Exalted be He, has shown us in this life, from amongst the Signs of His Might, what is much more incredible than this. In addition, if Allah wills, He may reveal to some of His servants some

of His Signs while concealing them from others. Yet, if Allah reveals His Signs to all His servants, then there will be no wisdom behind obligations and belief in the Unseen; rather, the people would stop burying whoever dies amongst them. This is stated in Sahih Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadith) that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, 'Were it not for the reason that you would stop burying (your dead), I would invoke Allah to make you hear the punishment in the grave, which I am hearing.'"

3) Causes of Torment in Grave:

The great scholar, **As-Safarini**, said:

"The causes due to which some people are tormented in the grave are of two kinds: General causes and detailed ones.

As for the general causes, people may be punished for their ignorance of Allah, disobeying Him, and committing sins. This is because Allah, Exalted be He, does not punish any soul that has known Him, loved Him, obeyed Him and refrained from committing sins, nor does He torment a body which was once joined with such a soul. This is because the punishment in the grave or in the Hereafter is the consequence of the anger and wrath of Allah upon His disobeying servant. Thus, whoever causes the anger and wrath of Allah in this world through committing prohibited acts and does not repent before death, is to receive a punishment in the grave equal to the wrath of Allah upon him. People are of different categories, in this concern, according to their deeds.

As for the detailed causes, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said concerning the two persons tormented in their graves that one of them used to go about with malicious gossip to make enmity between people, while the other never saved himself from being soiled with his urine. Then, the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned the person tormented in the grave because he performed prayer without purifying himself with ablution, the one who passed by someone being wronged and he did not help him, and the one who recited the Qur'an by night but did not act according to its teachings by day. The Prophet (PBUH) also mentioned the punishment in the grave that befalls the adulterers, the adulteresses, those who deal in usury, and those who show sluggishness in performing Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned the punishment of those who refuse giving the Zakâh, those who stir up discord among people, the arrogant ones, hypocrites, slanderers and backbiters.

The atheists and the unbelievers do not believe in punishment or pleasure in the grave. They depend on their minds and senses because they do not see anything from what the deceased one feels or sees in the grave.”

The reply to what they claim is that the punishment in the grave belongs to the Unseen which is derived from the authentic religious texts, and the human mind has nothing to do with such an unseen world. This is because the life in the Hereafter is not to be compared with the life in this world. Moreover, being unaware of something does not necessarily mean that such a thing does not exist. And Allah, Exalted be He, knows best.

The Resurrection

The resurrection from graves is proved via the Noble Qur’ân, the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), human mind, and also by natural disposition. Allah, Exalted be He, stated the occurrence of the Resurrection in many contexts in His Noble Book (the Qur’ân), and refuted the claims of those denying it in many verses in the Glorious Qur’ân as well. In addition, all the Prophets (peace be upon them all) informed their nations about the Resurrection and asked those denying it to believe in it. As our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is the Seal of all the Prophets and as he was sent as near to the Day of Resurrection as the forefinger is to the middle finger, he explained the affairs of the Hereafter in detail as it was not explained as such in any of the Books of the Prophets before him.

The Day of Resurrection is explained clearly by all Prophets beginning from Adam until Nûh (Noah), Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsâ (Moses), ‘Îsâ (Jesus), and other Prophets (peace be upon them all). Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, has informed us about the Day of Resurrection, since the descent of Âdam, as He says:

“...And We said, ‘Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.’ ”
(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 36)

And He also says:

“He said, ‘Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.’ ”
(Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 25)

Moreover, Allah has mentioned it when Satan (may Allah curse him) said what is stated in the verse which provides:

“Hesaid, ‘My Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected.’ [Allah] said, ‘So indeed, you are of those reprieved until the Day of the time well-known.’ ”
(Qur’ân: Al-Hijr: 36-38)

According to what is mentioned in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ân, Nûh (PBUH) said to his people:

“And Allah has caused you to grow from the earth a [progressive] growth. Then He will return you into it and extract you [another] extraction.”
(Qur'ân: Nûh:17-18)

And Ibrâhîm (PBUH) said:

“And Who I aspire that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense.”
(Qur'ân: Ash-Shu`arâ': 82)

Moreover, Allah said to Mûsâ (PBUH):

“Indeed, the Hour is coming — I almost conceal it — so that every soul may be recompensed according to that for which it strives. So do not let one avert you from it who does not believe in it and follows his desire, for you [then] would perish.”

(Qur'ân: Tâ-Hâ: 15-16)

Mûsâ invoked Allah saying:

“And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You...”

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 156)

Allah, Exalted be He, states that when the disbelievers are doomed to the Hellfire, they confess that their Messengers have warned them of the Day of Resurrection. This is stated in the verse:

“... ‘Did there not come to you messengers from yourselves, reciting to you the verses of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?’ They will say, ‘Yes, but the word [i.e., decree] of punishment has come into effect upon the disbelievers.’”

(Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 71)

Thus, all the Messengers of Allah (peace be upon them all), as well as the Seal of the Prophets Muḥammad (PBUH), warned their nations of the Day of Resurrection.

Allah, Exalted be He, told us that the dead people will be resurrected from the graves when the third blow is blown. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“...Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on.”
(Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 68)

And He also says:

“And the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten.”
(Qur’ân: Yâsîn: 51)

As-Safârîni said:

“Interpreting the Sura of Az-Zumar²² in his exegesis of the Qur’ân, Ath-Tha`labî relates on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) a marfû` (traceable) hadîth. In this hadîth, Abû Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, ‘Allah, Exalted be He, will send rain on earth which will continue falling for forty days until it becomes twelve cubits height. At that time, Allah, Exalted be He, commands the bodies to rise as the vegetation grow. When their bodies are done as they originally were, Allah will command the Angels bearing the Throne to return to life, then He commands Jibrîl (Gabriel), Mikâ`îl (Michael), Isrâfil (Israfil), `Izrâ`îl (Azrael), to return to life. After that, Allah commands Isrâfil to hold the Horn, put it on his mouth and call the souls. The souls will then come: The souls of the believers will be shining with light while the souls of the disbelievers come in darkness. Isrâfil will grasp them all and throw them in the Horn. Then, Allah will order him to blow the blowing of Resurrection; thereupon, all the souls will come out like bees filling the space between the heaven and the earth. Whereupon, Allah, Exalted be He, will say, ‘By My Honor and Majesty, every soul will return to its body.’ Thus, the souls will enter into bodies through noses then spread (in bodies) the same as poison spreads in the body of a stung person. Then, the earth will break away from them and they will emerge rapidly. I will be the first one to emerge from the earth, and you will come out from it to your Lord in haste.’”

Also, Al-Bukhârî and Muslim related on the authority of Abû Hurayrah that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said:

“Water will fall from the sky and then the dead bodies will grow like vegetation grows. There is nothing of the human body that does not decay except one little bone; that is the bone at the end of the coccyx from which the human body will be recreated on the Day of Resurrection.”

In other narrations of the hadîth related by Imâm Muslim the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“There is a bone in the human body that will never be decayed by earth; from it (this bone) the human body will be recreated on the Day of Resurrection.”
The Companions asked, ‘Which bone is that, O Messenger of Allah?’ He replied, ‘It is the bone at the end of the coccyx.’”

Scholars said that the coccyx is the hard bone at the base of the spinal cord. The Prophet (PBUH) said in a *hadith* that this bone is as small as the mustard seed, and from which the body will be recreated. The polytheists regard as unlikely that people be recreated to live another life after death, as they deny the Resurrection. Thereupon, Allah, Exalted be He, ordered His Prophet (PBUH) to swear that it will certainly happen. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“But those who disbelieve say, ‘The Hour will not come to us.’ Say, ‘Yes, by my Lord, it will surely come to you. [Allah is] the Knower of the Unseen.’...” (Qur’ân: Saba’: 3)

Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

“And they ask information of you, [O Muḥammad], ‘Is it true?’ Say, ‘Yes, by my Lord. Indeed, it is the truth; and you will not cause failure [to Allah].’” (Qur’ân: Yûnus: 53)

Moreover, Allah says:

“Those who disbelieve have claimed that they will never be resurrected. Say, ‘Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected; then you will surely be informed of what you did. And that, for Allah, is easy.’” (Qur’ân: At-Taghâbun: 7)

In addition to this, Allah, Exalted be He, says that the Day of Resurrection has drawn near as He says:

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two].”
(Qur’ân: Al-Qamar: 1)

And He also says:

“[The time of] their account has approached for the people, while they are in heedlessness turning away.” (Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ’: 1)

Furthermore, Allah, Exalted be He, has dispraised those who deny the Resurrection saying:

“...Those will have lost who denied the meeting with Allah and were not guided.” (Qur’ân: Yûnus: 45)

And also saying:

“...Unquestionably, those who dispute concerning the Hour are in extreme error.” (Qur’ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 18)

Allah, further, says:

“...And We will gather them on the Day of Resurrection [fallen] on their faces – blind, dumb and deaf. Their refuge is Hell; every time it subsides We increase them in blazing fire. That is their recompense because they disbelieved in Our verses and said, ‘When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected [in] a new creation?’ Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and earth, is [the One] Able to create the likes of them? And He has appointed for them a term, about which there is no doubt. But the wrongdoers refuse [anything] except disbelief.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 97-99)

And He says:

“And they say, ‘When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected as a new creation?’ ” (Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 49)

Thereupon, Allah, Exalted be He, replied to them saying:

“Say, ‘Be you stones or iron or [any] creation of that which is great within your breasts.’ And they will say, ‘Who will restore us?’ Say, ‘He Who brought you forth the first time.’ Then they will nod their heads toward you and say, ‘When is that?’ Say, ‘Perhaps it will be soon – on the Day He will call you and you will respond with praise of Him and think that you had not remained [in the world] except for a little.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 50-52)

Commenting on the aforementioned noble verses, the commentator on *At-Tahâwiyyah* said:

“One should contemplate the answer to every question. Firstly, they said, ‘When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected as a new creation?’ (Qur’ân: Al-Isrâ’: 49) The answer to this question was: ‘If you claim that there is no God Who created you or there is no Lord, then can you be creations that cannot be exterminated by death, such as stones and iron and what is greater within your breasts than this?’ If you say, ‘We were created in this nature which is mortal,’ then what forbids your Creator Who originated you from recreating you? The argument can be paraphrased in another way as: If you were stones or iron or a creation which is greater than them, Allah is able to exterminate you and turn your state into another one. Thus, how can the One Who is able to change and exterminate such strong and hard materials find things that are inferior to them difficult for Him? Then,

Allah, Exalted be He, tells us that they asked another question which is **'Who will restore us?'** (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 51) meaning when they die? The answer to this was **'Say, 'He Who brought you forth the first time.'** (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 51) So, when they were utterly defeated by the strong argument, they shifted to another question holding fast to it like a gasping person; they said **'When is that?'** (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 51) and the reply was **'Say, 'Perhaps it will be soon'** (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 51)."

Believing in What Happens on Day of Resurrection

Imâm As-Safârînî said:

*"One should know that the Day of Resurrection involves great terrifying things and grave troubles which cause suffering to people's bodies, make every nursing mother to forget her nursling, and make the children grey-haired. The Day of Resurrection is a true fact confirmed by the Noble Qur'ân, the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) and the consensus of Muslim scholars. Scholars disagree with regard to calling that day 'the Day of Resurrection.' It is said that it is called so because on that Day people are resurrected from their graves. Allah, Exalted be He, says, **'The Day they will emerge from the graves rapidly...'** (Qur'ân: Al-Ma`ârij: 43) It is also said that it is called so because during that Day many things happen such as the Resurrection, standing for account and the like. Moreover, it is said that it is called so because of standing before the Lord of the worlds. Imâm Muslim related in his Sahîh on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said, '(Concerning the verse **'The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?'** (Qur'ân: Al-Mutaffifin: 6), people will stand in their sweat until it reaches the middle of their ears...'"*

Then, Imâm As-Safârînî added that Abû Sa`îd Al-Khudrî (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said (referring to the Day of Resurrection), 'A Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.' It was said to him, 'How long that Day is! The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, it will be made light for the believer so that it will be for him lighter than (the time of) an obligatory prayer.'" (Related by Imâm Ahmad, Abû Ya`lâ, and Ibn Hibbân related it in his Sahîh).*

Moreover, it is said that it is called so because the angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) stand in rows as mentioned in the noble verse, **"The Day that the Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] and the angels will stand in rows..."** (Qur'ân: An-Naba': 38)

After that, **Imâm As-Safârîni** added:

“Al-Bukhârî and Muslim related as a marfû’ hadîth on the authority of Abû Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, ‘People will sweat so profusely on the Day of Resurrection that their sweat will sink seventy cubits deep into the earth, and it will rise up until it reaches the people’s ears.’ The hadîth is related in the Authentic Books of Hadîth with a different wording as ‘...seventy years...’ Also, Imâm Muslim related on the authority of Al-Miqdâd (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, ‘I heard Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) saying, ‘On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will be caused to draw near the people until it will be one or two miles distance. Therefore, the sun will melt them down until they will be submerged in sweat according to their deeds, some up to their heels, some up to the waist and some will be bridled with sweat (i.e., submerged in sweat to the mouth).’”

During the Day of Resurrection, people face hard times and situations such as the accountability, giving records of deeds, weighing deeds and passing over the *Sirât* (a path laid down over the Hellfire):

1) Accountability

In the accountability, Allah, Exalted be He, makes people aware of the reward or the punishment for what they did in the worldly life and reminds them of what they forgot. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allah had enumerated it, while they forgot it...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mujâdilâh: 6)

He also says:

“...And they will say, ‘Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?’ And they will find what they did present [before them]. And your Lord does injustice to no one.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Kahf: 49)

In addition, He says:

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”

(Qur’ân: Az-Zalzalah: 7-8)

In accounting, retribution is executed among people. Thus, the wronged one is to take his right from the wrongdoer. In this regard, it is related in *Sahîh Muslim* and in *Sunan* (the books recording Prophetic Tradition) At-Tirmidhî, on the authority of Abû Hurayrah, that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said:

“The claimants would surely get their claims on the Day of Resurrection so much that the hornless sheep would take its right from the horned sheep.”

Accountability differs as there is a hard accountability and an easy one. **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah, Exalted be He, calls people to account for their deeds; He makes His believing servant admits his sins in privacy, as stated in the Noble Qur`ân and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). As for the disbelievers, their account does not include weighing their good and bad deeds, for they have no good deeds but their deeds are to be counted and they are to admit them.”

The first thing one will be called to account for is one’s prayer. The cases which will be decided first will be the cases of bloodshedding. This is stated in the *hadîth* related by At-Tirmidhî, Abû Dâwûd and Al-Hâkim. It is deemed *hasan* by At-Tirmidhî and deemed *sahîh* by Al-Hâkim. The *hadîth* is related on the authority of Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“The first thing one will be called to account for on the Day of Resurrection is Prayer. Allah, Exalted be He, will say to His angels, ‘Look into the prayer of My servant and see whether he has performed it perfectly or imperfectly.’ If it is perfect, that will be recorded perfect. And if it is defective, He will say, ‘See whether there are some optional prayers performed by My servant or not.’ If there are optional prayers to his credit, He will say, ‘Compensate the obligatory prayer by the optional prayer for My servant.’ Then all the deeds will be considered similarly.”

Also, An-Nasâ’î related on the authority of Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“The first thing one will be called to account for is prayer.”

2) Giving Records of Deeds

Records are the books in which the angels record and count the deeds that everyone has done in this worldly life either by words or deeds. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will encounter spread open. [It will be said], ‘Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant.’”

(Qur`ân: Al-Isrâ’: 13-14)

Scholars said that the phrase **“his fate”** in this verse refers to one’s deeds. Some people will receive their books of deeds by their right hands while others will receive them with their left hands. This is stated in the Qur’anic verses:

**“So as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will say,
‘Here, read my record!’ ”** (Qur’ân: Al-Hâqqah: 19)

Up to the verse:

**“[They will be told], ‘Eat and drink in satisfaction for what you
put forth in the days past.’ ”** (Qur’ân: Al-Hâqqah: 24)

Then, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

**“But as for he who is given his record in his left hand, he will say,
‘Oh, I wish I had not been given my record –”**

Up to the verse:

**“[Allah will say], ‘Seize him and shackle him - then into Hellfire
drive him...’ ”** (Qur’ân: Al-Hâqqah: 25 - 31)

3) Weighing Deeds

Among what happens on this Day is weighing deeds, as Allah, Exalted be He, says:

**“And the weighing [of deeds] that Day will be the truth. So those
whose scales are heavy – it is they who will be the successful.
And those whose scales are light – they are the ones who will lose
themselves for what injustice they were doing toward Our verses.”**

(Qur’ân: Al-A`râf: 8-9)

And He also says:

**“And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no
soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight
of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as
accountant.”** (Qur’ân: Al-Anbiyâ: 47)

Thus, deeds will be weighed by real scales which have an indicator and two scale pans. Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, **“The Scale is the machine by which deeds will be weighed and it is different from justice, as indicated in the Noble Qur’ân and the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition). This is stated in the verse that reads, ‘So those whose scales are heavy [with good deeds],...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Qâri`ah: 6) and the verse ‘And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Qâri`ah: 47)”**

Then, **Ibn Taymiyah** mentioned some *hadiths* which deal with weighing deeds and said, *“These hadiths prove that the deeds will be weighed by scales which will show whether the good deeds or the bad ones will outbalance. Thus, the scales are a means to state justice, for what is meant by weighing is to attain justice as in the scales of the worldly life. However, the nature of these scales is among what we are informed as being from the Unseen ...”*

4) Passing over the Sirât

Among the happenings of the Day of Resurrection is passing over the Sirât, a bridge on the middle of the Hellfire, on which the first and later generations will pass. Each one will pass over it according to one’s deeds. It is narrower than a hair, sharper than a sword and hotter than a firebrand. It has pincers which seize the one whom they have been commanded to seize. People pass over the Sirât according to their deeds in this world; some of them will pass over it like lightening, some like wind, some like a steed, some like a trotting man, some will walk, some will crawl, and some will be grabbed and cast down into the Hellfire. We ask Allah to grant us safety and protection.

As-Safârîni said:

“The majority of scholars agree that the Sirât is an established fact. But the people of truth verify it as being a real bridge which extends on the middle of Hellfire, and which is sharper than a sword and narrower than a hair. Judge ‘Abdul-Jabbâr²³, and many of his followers denied this claiming that the Sirât in such a way cannot be crossed, and if it is crossed, this involves torment and there is no torment for the believers or the righteous people on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, it may mean the path to Paradise that is indicated in Allah’s saying, ‘He will guide them and amend their condition’ (Qur’ân: Muḥammad: 5) and the path to Hellfire as indicated in Allah’s saying, ‘...And guide them in the path of Hellfire.’ (Qur’ân: As-Sâffât: 23) Other scholars interpreted it as the clear evidence, allowed acts and evil deeds, for which one will be called to account. These are allegations of falsehood and superstitions. Crossing the Sirât is not as incredible as walking on water, flying in the air or standing in it. Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) answered the question about the disbeliever’s gathering on his face on the Day of Resurrection saying that Allah’s Power is capable of doing so.”

5) The Prophetic Fountain

Al-Hâfiz As-Siyûtî said, *“The Fountain was mentioned in narrations reported on the authority of more than fifty Companions among whom are the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Oft-Narrating Companions²⁴, and others; may Allah be pleased with them all.”*

Al-Bukhârî, Muslim and other compilers of *Hadîth* related that `Abdullâh Ibn `Amr Ibnul-`Âs (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

"My fountain is (so large that it takes) a month's journey to cross it. Its water is whiter than milk, and its smell is nicer than musk, and its drinking cups are (as numerous) as the (number of) stars of sky; and whosoever drinks from it will never ever be thirsty."

Imâm Muslim related in his *Sahîh* that Anas Ibn Mâlik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

"One day, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) dozed off. He then raised his head smilingly and said, 'A sura has just been revealed to me, and then recited, 'In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], Al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him Alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.' (Qur'ân: Al-Kawthar:1) Then, he (the Prophet) said, 'Do you know what Al-Kawthar is?' They (the Companions) said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'It (Al-Kawthar) is a river which my Lord has endowed me, and there is an abundance of good in it and my nation will come to it on the Day of Resurrection. Its drinking cups are equal to the number of stars. A servant would be turned away from it. Upon this, I would say, 'My Lord, he is one of my nation,' so it would be said to me, 'You do not know what he innovated (in religion) after you.'"

Al-Qurtubî said:

"Our scholars say, 'Whosoever apostatizes from the religion of Allah, or innovates in its matters something which Allah cannot be pleased with and has not permitted, will be one of those who will be turned away from the fountain. The ones who will be thrown out in the severest manner are those who have forsaken the Muslim unity, like Al-Khawârij (Kharijites i.e., the Seceders), Ar-Rawâfiâ²⁵ and Al Mu`tazilah (Mutazilites) with their different sects. Such groups have innovated in religion. The same is applied to oppressors who go too far in trespassing, oppressing, effacing the truth and humiliating its people. This also can be said about those who commit grievous sins in public and consider committing acts of disobedience as not being a serious matter as well as people who deviate from and alter the religion. Turning away from the fountain can be temporary, then such people will be drawn close after being forgiven, if their alteration was in deeds not in beliefs.'"

The Mu'tazilah have deviated, as they claim that the fountain is not a well-established fact, although clear authentic *hadiths* prove it. Whosoever has disagreed regarding its verification is an innovator in religion and it is most likely that he will be turned away from it.

6) Intercession

Linguistically speaking, the word "intercession" means seeking and asking. Technically, it means asking for goodness for others. It is said that it means (in Arabic) "even" which is the opposite of "odd," as if the intercessor joins his request to the request of the person for whom he intercedes.

If its conditions are fulfilled, intercession becomes a right. These conditions involve that it should be endowed by Allah, and that He is pleased with the one interceded for. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves." (Qur'an: An-Najm: 26)

The above verse illustrates that the intercession cannot be useful without attending to two conditions. First, the permission granted by Allah to the intercessor, as intercession belongs to Him entirely; He says:

"Say, 'To Allah belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely...'" (Qur'an: Az-Zumar: 44)

Second, Allah be pleased with the one interceded for; that is, this one believes in the Oneness of Allah. This is because a polytheist can never benefit from intercession, as Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"So there will not benefit them the intercession of [any] intercessors." (Qur'an: Al-Muddaththir: 48)

This proves the falsehood of those who seek intercession from dead people, and try to get near to them through any means:

Concerning their predecessors, Allah says:

"And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah...'" (Qur'an: Yûnus: 18)

Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, also says:

"Or have they taken other than Allah as intercessors? Say, 'Even though they do not possess [power over] anything, nor do they reason?' Say, 'To Allah belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...'" (Qur'an: Az-Zumar: 43-44)

Our Prophet (PBUH) has been granted the right of intercession, so he will intercede for those concerning whom Allah has permitted it. **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The Prophet (PBUH) has three intercessions:

The first intercession is for all the people gathered on the Day of Resurrection to be judged, after the other Prophets such as Âdam (Adam), Nûh (Noah), Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsâ (Moses), ‘Îsâ Ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary) would refuse to intercede.

The second intercession is for the people of Paradise so that they may be admitted to Paradise. These two types of intercession are specific for the Prophet (PBUH) alone.

The third intercession is for those who deserve Hellfire. People are interceded for, so that they may not be cast down into it. Those who have already entered hell are interceded for so that they may be taken out of it. This kind of intercession is given to all prophets, the righteous, and others.”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) added:

“As for the Prophet’s intercession for the people who commit sins from among his nation, it is a matter agreed upon by the Companions, their righteous Successors, the Four Imâms²⁶ of the Muslims, and others. However, it is denied by many innovators like Al-Khawârij (Kharijites), Al Mu‘tazilah (Mutazilites), and Az-Zaydiyyah²⁷. Those sects believe that whosoever is judged to enter the Hellfire cannot be withdrawn from it whether by intercession or anything else. Those also say that whosoever is admitted into Paradise will not be admitted into Hellfire and vice versa. According to their doctrines, reward and punishment cannot be coupled concerning one person.”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah went on illustrating their claims saying:

“Those who deny intercession base their claim on the verse that reads, ‘And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 48), the verse, ‘...Before there comes a Day on which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom] and no friendship and no intercession...’ (Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 254), the verse, ‘...For the

wrongdoers there will be no devoted friend and no intercessor [who is obeyed.] (Qur'ân: Ghâfir: 18) **and the verse, 'So there will not benefit them the intercession of [any] intercessors.'** (Qur'ân: Al-Muddaththir: 48)

To such claims, the Adherents of the Sunnah say that these verses clarify two matters:

Firstly, intercession does not benefit polytheists, as Allah, Exalted be He, says, "[And asking them], 'What put you into Saqar?'²⁸ They will say, 'We were not of those who prayed, nor we used to feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it], and we used to deny the Day of Recompense - until there came to us the certainty [i.e., death].' So there will not benefit them the intercession of [any] intercessors." (Qur'ân: Al-Muddaththir: 42-48) The kind of people intended here will certainly not benefit from the intercession of any intercessors because they have disbelieved.

Secondly, intercession in the aforementioned verses denies what the polytheists allege as well as the innovators among Muslims and the People of the Scripture, who think that some creatures of Allah enjoy a higher rank in His Sight which makes them able to intercede before Him without His permission, the same as people intercede for each other in this world."

7) Paradise and Hellfire

On the Day of Resurrection, there are the two great eternal abodes: Paradise and Hellfire. Paradise is the abode of the righteous, and Hellfire is the abode of the disbelievers. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure, and indeed, the wicked will be in Hellfire." (Qur'ân: Al-Infitâr: 13-14)

Paradise and Hellfire are created and they exist now, for Allah says concerning Paradise:

"...Prepared for the righteous." (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 133)

And concerning Hellfire, He says:

"...Prepared for the disbelievers." (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 24)

There is a considerable number of other texts which prove their current existence. Moreover, Paradise and Hellfire are eternal according to the doctrine of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community.

The commentator on *At-Tahâwiyyah* said:

“It is necessary to know that Allah, Exalted be He, does not withhold reward except if the reason to give it no longer exists; namely, the good deed, for Allah says, ‘But he who does of righteous deeds while he is a believer—he will neither fear injustice nor deprivation.’ (Qur’ân: Tâ-Hâ: 112) Similarly, He does not punish anyone except with the existence of a reason to punish, as Allah, the Exalted, says, ‘And whatever strikes you of disaster – it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.’ (Qur’ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 30)

Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, is the Giver and the Withholder. None can withhold what He gives, and none can give what He withholds.”

Righteous good deeds constitute the reason for being admitted into Paradise while bad deeds are the reason for being admitted into Hellfire.

We ask Allah to admit us into Paradise and we seek refuge with Him from the Hellfire. He is, indeed, the Hearing and the Responsive to invocation.



Endnotes

- 1 The Kharijites (*Al-Khawârij*, i.e. the Seceders): An Islamic radical sect who broke away from the reign of `Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib, the Muslim Caliph then, and murdered him. Their followers believe that the Muslim who commits a major sin is a disbeliever. They also curse and revile the Prophet’s Companions and deem the blood of Muslims violable.
- 2 The *Râfiḍah*: A Shiite group who refused the caliphates of Abû Bakr As-Siddîq and `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb and waged accusations against them and against many of the Prophet’s Companions as well.
- 3 This should be calculated according to the time of Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 A. H.) whose words we have quoted here.
- 4 The Final *Tashahhud*: Reciting, “(All) compliments, prayers and good things are due to Allah; peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings (be upon you). Peace be upon us and upon the pious servants of Allah. I testify that there is no deity (worthy of worship) but Allah, Alone, with no partner, and I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. O Allah! Confer Your blessings upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You conferred Your blessings upon Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable. And bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You blessed Ibrâhîm and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable.”

- 5 The *jizyah*: A tribute or a tax required of non-Muslims living in an Islamic state exempting them from military service and entitling them to the protection of the Islamic state.
- 6 The Group of Compilers of *Hadith*: They are Al-Bukhârî, Muslim, Aḥmad, Abû Dâwûd, At-Tirmidhî, An-Nasâ'î, and Ibn Mâjah.
- 7 Ash-Shâm (the Levant): The region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.)
- 8 *Gharib* (Unfamiliar) *hadith*: A *hadith* reported by just one narrator, even if at only one stage of the chain of transmission.
- 9 *An-Naml*: The Ants. The twenty-seventh Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 10 *Az-Zumar*: The Groups. The thirty-ninth Sura of the Qur'ân.
- 11 *Al-Wâqi'ah*: The Occurrence, literally, "That which befalls," meaning the Resurrection.
- 12 In *Fathul-Bârî*, sleep is defined as a state of partial death in which the soul seems separated from the body, while the actual death implies the end of the life by separating the soul from the body totally.
- 13 *Aṭ-Ṭahâwiyyah* is a book on Islamic Creed written by Imâm Aṭ-Ṭahâwî.
- 14 The *Barzakh*: The Barrier or the place at which souls are gathered until the Day of Resurrection.
- 15 *Muwatta'*: A book of *Hadith* compiled by Imâm Mâlik.
- 16 *Al-Musnad* is a name of a book of *Hadith* compiled by Imâm Aḥmad.
- 17 With the first one blow, Allah will command all the living to die, while with the second He will resurrect all the dead. The period between the two blows is forty years.
- 18 This was mentioned previously in no.4.
- 19 The Sleepers of Ephesus: Read the Sura of *Al-Kahf* (*the Cave*; Sura 18 of the Qur'ân).
- 20 Read the verse 260 in the Sura of *Al-Baqarah* (*the Cow*; Sura 2 of the Qur'ân).
- 21 These are the names of the two angels who call the deceased person to account in the grave.
- 22 Sura 39 of the Qur'ân.
- 23 One of the Mu'tazilah (Mutazilites).
- 24 Scholars of *Hadith* agree to give the title "Oft-Narrating Companions" to anyone who narrates more than thousand *hadiths* from the Prophet (PBUH). It is largely applied to seven Companions: Abû Hurayrah, 'Abdullâh Ibn 'Umar, Anas Ibn Mâlik, 'Â'ishah (Mother of the Believers), 'Abdullâh Ibn 'Abbâs, Jâbir Ibn 'Abdullâh, Abû Sa'id Al-Khudrî.
- 25 A Shiite group who refused the caliphates of Abû Bakr As-Siddîq and 'Umar Ibnul-Khat-tâb and waged accusations against them and against many of the Prophet's Companions as well.
- 26 The Four Imâms are: Imâm Abû Ḥanîfah, Imâm Mâlik, Imâm Ash-Shâfi'î and Imâm Aḥmad.
- 27 *Az-Zaydiyyah*: A sect of the Shiite. It is considered the sect most close to the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community. This is because it is characterized by justice and abstention from extreme ideas. It was named after Zayd Ibn 'Alî Zaynul-Al-'Âbidîn.
- 28 Saqar: One of the names of Hell.

Belief in Al-Qadâ' and Al-Qadar (Divine Decree and Predestination)

Undoubtedly, approving of and believing in Allah's Divine Decree and Predestination are of the greatest fundamental pillars of faith. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Hereafter, and to believe in the Divine Decree, be it good or evil."

(Related by Muslim)

Almighty Allah says:

"Indeed, all things We created with predestination."

(Qur'ân: Al-Qamar: 49)

Al-Qadar is an Arabic verbal noun derived from the Arabic verb '*qadara*,' meaning 'fully encompassed the estimation of something.' Technically, *Al-Qadar* is intended for Allah's foreknowledge of all of His creatures' affairs and the preserved, foreordained decrees He issued. This inevitably necessitates that every act of His creatures does not pass beyond the limits of His Omniscience, Omnipotence and Will.

The doctrine of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community is to believe in Divine Predestination both the good and the evil thereof. Belief in Allah's Divine Predestination encompasses four major grades:

1. Belief in Allah's eternal foreknowledge of everything before its existence. It maintains that Allah has previously known all His servants' deeds before doing them.
2. Belief that Allah has inscribed everything in the Preserved Slate (*Al-Lawh Al-Mahfûz*).
3. Belief in Allah's Comprehensive Will which dominates every event and in His Omnipotence over it.
4. Belief in Allah's creation of all beings, He is, thus, the Sole Creator, whereas all other things are created by Him.

Among the proofs which confirm the first and second grades is Allah's saying:

"Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed that, for Allah, is easy."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hajj: 70)

The third grade may also be proved by Allah's saying:

"And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds."

(Qur'ân: At-Takwîr: 29)

And His saying:

"...Allah does what He intends."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hajj: 14)

The fourth grade is maintained in the Qur'anic verse, which provides:

"Allah is the Creator of all things..."

(Qur'ân: Az-Zumar: 62)

And His saying:

"...And He is the Knowing Creator."

(Qur'ân: Yâsîn: 81)

Allah's Divine Predestination is of Two Categories:

1. The general Predestination of all incidents, which is recorded in the Preserved Slate, where Allah inscribed the fates of everything until the Hour is established. This is maintained in the Prophetic *ḥadīth* related by Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan* on the authority of `Ubādah Ibnus-Sâmit (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that he heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying:

"The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. Allah said to it, 'Write!' It said, 'What should I write?' He said, 'Write the destinies of everything until the Day of Resurrection.'"

The foreordained fates of all creatures come under this category.

2. Detailed Predestination of events that happen to people, which is subcategorized into the following:

A. Divine Predestination of one's life span, it is illustrated in the Prophetic *ḥadīth* narrated on the authority of `Abdullāh Ibn Mas`ūd (may Allah be pleased with him). In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (PBUH) maintains that each person, while being an embryo, is sent an angel whose task is to blow the breath of life into him, write down his means of livelihood, his life span, his actions, and whether fortunate or misfortunate.

B. Divine Predestination of events and incidents occurring annually, this is written down during the Night of Decree (in *Laylatul-Qadr*). Almighty Allah says:

"Therein [i.e., on that night] is made distinct every precise matter."

(Qur'ân: Ad-Dukhân: 4)

C. Divine Predestination regarding events and incidents occurring on a daily basis, it includes deaths, births and other changes of people's affairs, which usually happen in the course of the day. Almighty Allah says:

"...Every day He is in [i.e., bringing about] a matter."

(Qur'ân: Ar-Rahmân: 29)

A Muslim must believe in Allah's general Divine Predestination, and should, moreover, believe in Allah's Predestination of detailed incidents. Whosoever renounces any category of the Divine Predestination is regarded as a disbeliever in Allah's Predestination, then as renouncing one of the indispensable core pillars of a Muslim's faith. Such is the case of the Anti-Fatalists (*Al-Qadriyyah*) who reject Divine Predestination. They are classified into two major groups:

The first group includes extreme Anti-Fatalists who excessively renounce the belief that Allah possesses foreknowledge about the occurrence of incidents. They also deny Allah recorded people's deeds in the Preserved Slate. They maintain that Allah only issues His commands and prohibitions without foreknowledge of who will obey and who will not. His commands are not, thus, foreordained or predestined. This sect has died out so you hardly come across any of them.

The other group, though they believe in Allah's foreknowledge of events and incidents, renounce the concept of foreordained deeds. They, moreover, claim that people's deeds are not created by Allah. Deeds, according to this conviction, are independently created by people themselves with no intervention of the Divine Will. This is the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah (Mutazilites).

There is, however, a third group that excessively approve of Divine Predestination by affirming that Allah has foreordained all things and deeds without the intervention of man's free will. They further believe that all events are predetermined by fate and are therefore unalterable. Thus, they are called Fatalists.

Both those who approve of the doctrine of man's absolute free will and those who negate it are false and refutable, since there are a number of proofs, which contradict their view. Almighty Allah, for instance, says:

"For whoever wills among you to take a right course. And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds."

(Qur'ân: At-Takwîr: 28-29)

Allah's saying, ***"For whoever wills among you to take a right course."*** (Qur'ân: At-Takwîr: 28) contradicts the Fatalists because Allah affirms the existence of man's will. Allah's saying, ***"And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds"*** (Qur'ân: At-Takwîr: 29) refutes the doctrine of the Anti-Fatalists who advocate that man's free will is not constrained by Allah's Will. This doctrine is refutable for Allah made man's will conditional upon the dominating Divine Will.

The Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community have adopted the moderate path by avoiding extravagant negation of Allah's Divine Will as the Anti-Fatalists claim and the excessive conviction of the Fatalists.

The doctrine of the *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) and Imâms is that all deeds of obedience, disobedience, evil or good inevitably occur according to Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree. All people's deeds, whether evil or good, are created by Allah, yet man is not coerced to do them. In addition to being equipped with full competence to do acts, man fully decides for himself.

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Deeds, utterances, acts of obedience and disobedience are initiated by man, i.e. they are offered and done by his own will and through his faculties. They are attributed to him and therefore he will be judged according to them. His deeds, utterances and acts are also attributed to Allah since He created them, while man is the perpetrator and acquirer. This is just as the case of the relation between cause and effect. If we say, for instance, that this fruit is caused by means of such a tree, it means that such a fruit is contingent on the tree. This does not contradict the view that Allah is the Original Creator of the fruit.”

As-Safārīnī said:

“In short, the doctrine of the Salaf and the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community is that Allah has created man’s faculties, will and acts while man is the real perpetrator of his deeds and the genuine originator of his acts. Almighty Allah says, ‘And you do not will except that Allah wills - Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.’ (Qur’ān: Al-Insān: 30) According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, while the will of man is proved, it only operates in conformity with Allah’s Divine Will. This is the expressed doctrine of the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community who advocate man’s will providing it conforms with Allah’s Divine Will.”

I may further add that Allah has endowed man with the faculty to think, determine and choose. Thus, he will not be held accountable for his deeds unless he is equipped with all these faculties. Therefore, the insane, weak-minded or those under coercion are not accountable for their deeds. This indicates that they are neither absolutely free nor coerced to do specific acts.

The Fruits of Believing in Allah’s Divine Predestination and Decree

One of the greatest blessings of belief in Allah’s Divine Predestination and Decree is the perfection of man’s faith by fulfilling the fundamental pillars of faith, since it is considered one of the six pillars of faith according to what is maintained in the Noble Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*.

Similarly, by belief in Divine Predestination and Decree, the heart is calm and enjoys tranquility and peace of mind, particularly when man experiences hardships in his life. When man fully recognizes that what has afflicted him is predestined by Allah, his soul becomes tranquil and his heart turns quiet. A man should then remember the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, which provides:

"...And know well that what happened to you was not to miss you, and what missed you was not to happen to you."

(Related by At-Tabrânî)

Those who do not believe in Divine Predestination and Decree always fall prey to anxiety and distress. They always feel so worried about their life and may commit suicide as commonly witnessed nowadays. Some people kill themselves to escape their miserable conditions or due to apprehension about their future. Due to their disbelief in Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree, such worries and responses have become an inevitable consequence of their corrupt belief.

Almighty Allah says:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy - in order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hadîd: 22-23)

Almighty Allah informed us that He had willed and planned all afflictions striking our souls and all other misfortunes occurring on the earth beforehand. Everything He foreordained and predestined would inevitably happen regardless of whatever measures may be taken for its aversion. The wisdom behind this statement is to relieve our hearts and thus feel tranquil when being stricken with afflictions and not to rejoice at Allah's blessings showing pride to others and turning away from offering thanks to Allah for such blessings. Thus, we should exercise patience at times of hardships and never show despair of Allah's mercy; moreover, we should praise Allah at times of affluence. The Qur'anic verse similarly warns Muslims against feeling secure from the plans of Allah. It also calls Muslims to be close to Allah in both prosperity and adversity.

'Ikrimah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"No one but experiences delight and grief. So, let your delight be a means of praising Allah and let your grief be a means of showing patience."

The Qur'anic verse does not connote that man abandons taking measures guarding him against evil and availing benefit, and relying only on Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree, as misconceived by some ignorant people. Almighty Allah commands us to take all possible measures and forbids us from showing indifference or slackening. In case we have exerted all possible efforts making all affordable measures but results have become frustrated, we

should not feel distressed, for this is Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree and if Allah decrees another thing, surely it will take place. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"Abide by what gives you benefit (in the Hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart. If anything (trouble) comes to you, do not say, 'If I had not done that, it would not have happened such and such,' but say, 'Allah did that which He had ordained to do,' for (saying) 'if' opens the gate for Satan."

(Related by Muslim)

Man should also call himself to account for and always correct his mistakes, for all the afflictions he experiences mainly result from committing sins, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned..."
(Qur'ân: Ash-Shûrâ: 30)

Belief in Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree, further, strengthens man's faith at times of turmoil by inspiring him to receive sufferings with firm belief and unrelenting certitude since he surely ascertains that this life is an abode of trials and fluctuations. Almighty Allah says:

"[He] Who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed ..."
(Qur'ân: Al-Mulk: 2)

He also says:

"And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient, and We will test your affairs."
(Qur'ân: Muḥammad: 31)

The Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) faced tribulations and adversities with firm belief and unrelenting determination. This is by virtue of their belief in Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree. Almighty Allah says:

"Say, 'Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.' And upon Allah let the believers rely."

(Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 51)

Turning turmoil into success and afflictions into rewards is one of the blessings of believing in Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree. Allah, Exalted be He, says,

"No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah - He will guide his heart. And Allah is Knowing of all things."
(Qur'ân: At-Taghâbun: 11)

Interpreting the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, 'Alqamah said, *"It applies to the man who is afflicted with a misfortune but, upon realizing that it is from Allah, he feels content and submits to Allah's Will."*

This Qur'anic verse may be also interpreted that whosoever is afflicted with a tribulation but fully realizes that it only comes in accordance with the Divine Decree and thus shows patience, seeks Allah's reward thereof and submits to His Divine Decree, Allah will guide his heart to belief. In addition, Allah will reward him with guidance and truthful certitude. Allah may provide him with something better than what he has lost. This also applies to natural disasters which are due to Allah's Decree and which man has nothing to do with except that he is the cause of them through his violation of Allah's commands and prohibitions. Man, therefore, should believe in Allah's Divine Predestination and Decree and correct his mistakes that cause such misfortunes.

Some people gravely err by taking the belief in Divine Predestination and Decree as a pretext for committing sins and being indifferent to religious ordinances. They argue that their sins are foreordained! They, moreover, never repent their sins. Their example is that of the polytheists who are reported, according to the Qur'an, to have said:

"...If Allah had willed, we would not have associated [anything] and neither would our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything."
(Qur'an: Al-An'am: 148)

This is a misunderstanding of Allah's Decree and Predestination. Man should not take the Divine Decree and Predestination as a justification for committing sins. Nonetheless, belief in the Divine Decree and Predestination leads the Muslim to show patience over tribulations he may experience. Therefore, taking Allah's Divine Decree and Predestination as a pretext for committing sins is a grave error since it invites people to abandon repentance and good deeds. On the other hand, taking the Divine Decree as an argument for accepting unpleasant fates is a good thing which may exhort one to show patience over such fates while seeking Allah's reward.

Belief in Allah's Divine Decree and Predestination drives man to work, increase production and show strength and magnanimity. A striver in the cause of Allah continuously and enduringly strives without any fear of death which is surely inevitable. Almighty Allah says:

"Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you should be within towers of lofty construction."

(Qur'an: An-Nisâ': 78)

And says:

"...Say, 'Even if you had been inside your houses, those decreed to be killed would have come out to their death beds.'"

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 154)

Hence, when a striver feels all such incitements through his belief in Allah's Divine Decree, he endures striving in Allah's cause until full victory is realized and utter domination of Islam and Muslims is attained.

Similarly, through belief in Allah's Divine Decree and Predestination, production and abundance of resources are secured. A believer, moreover, becomes completely certain that people will never cause harm not predestined by Allah. Furthermore, they will never benefit anyone with other than what Allah predestined for him. If he retains this firm belief, he will never experience laziness or even feel afraid of anyone. He will put his trust in Allah Alone and, thus, turns energetic in order to earn his living. In case he has a setback or fails in fulfilling his aim, he will not turn away from exerting his utmost efforts continually. At times of tribulations, he will not lament his misfortune but he will submit to Allah's Divine Decree by fully relying on Him and putting his full trust in Him. He will, further, correct his mistakes and hold himself accountable for everything he does. In this way, our nation will flourish and all interests will be fulfilled. Almighty Allah says:

"And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent."

(Qur'ân: At-Talâq: 3)

Al-Walâ' and Al-Barâ' (Amity and Enmity)

The focus of the previous chapters have been on giving a brief account of the fundamental principles of the Islamic faith. The focus of the forthcoming chapters is assigned to illustrate the necessity of keeping amity with the believers and enmity towards the enemies of Allah. Therefore, believers must endear those of firm and sincere faith and, meanwhile, have hatred and enmity toward all polytheists.

This principle is one of the fundamentals of the religion of Ibrâhîm (PBUH), which we are commanded to enjoin. Almighty Allah says:

"There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah Alone.'"

(Qur'ân: Al-Mumtahinah: 4)

It is, similarly, one of the principles of the religion with which our Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) was dispatched. Almighty Allah says:

“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 51)

This Qur’anic verse refers to the abhorrence of having amity with the People of the Scripture (the Jews and the Christians) in particular. As for the prohibition of seeking the amity of the disbelievers, in general, the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân provides:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mumtahinah: 1)

Allah prohibits seeking the amity of the disbelievers even though they are of close blood relationship. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“O you who have believed, do not take your fathers or your brothers as allies if they have preferred disbelief over belief. And whoever does so among you - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 23)

And says:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mujâdilah: 22)

Many people are ignorant of this great principle. Thus, it is imperative not to refer to Christians or the Jews as our brothers.

While Allah prohibits seeking the friendship of disbelievers and the enemies of our belief, He also obliges the Muslims to seek the amity and love of the believers. Almighty Allah says:

“Your ally is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give Zakâh, and they bow [in worship]. Whoever is an ally of Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed - indeed, the party of Allah - they will be the predominant.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Mâ’idah: 55-56)

And says:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Fath: 29)

He further says:

“The believers are but brothers...” (Qur’ân: Al-Hujurât: 10)

Believers are brethren in religion and faith even if they keep no blood bonds or reside at remote homelands. Almighty Allah says:

“And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.’ ”

(Qur’ân: Al-Hashr: 10)

Since the beginning of life, believers are held as caring brethren whenever they live and wherever they dwell. The earliest among them are taken as good examples for the later, and they mutually pray for Allah’s forgiveness and blessings on behalf of each other. There are distinctive features of showing amity to the believers and enmity towards the disbelievers.

6.I Aspects of Showing Amity with the Disbelievers:

The aspects of showing amity with the disbelievers are fully elaborated on in the Qur’ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). They include the following:

1. Imitating their ways of dressing, speaking and so forth is a manifestation of retaining love for them. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said, *“Whoever imitates the manners of a people is one of them.”* Thus, it is prohibited to imitate the disbelievers’ manners, customs, ways of devotion and their habits of shaving beards, growing mustaches, using their jargons, except in cases of necessity, as well as imitating their ways of dressing, eating and drinking.
2. Residing in non-Muslim territories permanently without moving to Muslim countries to seek a secure place for practicing Islam. Almighty Allah says:

“Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, ‘In what [condition] were you?’ They will say, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ They [the angels] will say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?’ For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination, except for the oppressed among men, women and

children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way - for those it is expected that Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving.” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 97-99)

According to the aforementioned Qur’anic verse, excuse is only granted to the weak who can only emigrate with hardship and to those who are in charge of religious missions such as those propagating Islam in such countries.

3. Making journeys to the non-Muslim countries for the sake of seeking pleasure and delight is among the prohibited features of seeking the amity of the disbelievers. Traveling to non-Muslim countries is only permissible in cases of necessity such as traveling for medication, trade, acquiring knowledge of rare and beneficial specializations. When the aim of traveling is attained, Muslims must return to their Muslim countries. In order to make such journeys to non-Muslim countries permissible, a Muslim must publicly proclaim his religion and be proud of being a Muslim. He should also avoid all paths leading to evil and be alert against all intrigues and schemes that may be plotted against Muslims in these non-Muslim countries. Taking journeys to their countries becomes obligatory in case of traveling for the sake of propagating Islam.
4. Among the prohibited aspects of showing amity to the unbelievers is giving them support against Muslims, arguing for their positions and applauding their deeds. All such acts are held contradictory to Islam and are preludes to apostasy. We seek Allah’s refuge to guard us against it.
5. Similarly, among the prohibited aspects of keeping amity and friendship with the unbelievers is relying on them, trusting them, using them in critical and confidential posts and taking them as councilors and advisors. Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

“O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves [i.e., believers], for they will not spare you [any] ruin. They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason. Here you are loving them but they are not loving you, while you believe in the Scripture - all of it. And when they meet you, they say, ‘We believe.’ But when they are alone, they bite their fingertips at you in rage. Say, ‘Die in your rage. Indeed, Allah is Knowing of that within the breasts.’ If good touches you, it distresses them; but if harm strikes you, they rejoice at it...” (Qur’ân: Âlu `Imrân: 118-120)

The aforementioned Qur'anic verses explain the inner emotions the unbelievers always hide as well as the evil plots, intrigues and treacheries they always plan. They crave to harm the Muslims and utilize Muslims' trust in order to wrong Islam.

Imâm **Ahmad** related on the authority of Abû Mûsâ Al-Ash`arî (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

"I told `Umar (Ibnul-Khattâb) (may Allah be pleased with him) that I kept a Christian clerk. Thereupon, he said, 'Why did you do so, Allah's anger be on you? Did you not hear Allah's saying, 'O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another...?' (Qur'an: Al-Mâ'idah: 51) Why have you not taken a Muslim instead?' I replied, 'I am only concerned with his clerkship and he will be recompensed for his religion.' He said, 'I will never honor them as long as Allah disgraces them and I will never grant them esteem as long as Allah lowers their rank and I will never draw them closer as long as Allah drives them away.'"

Imâm **Ahmad** and Imâm **Muslim** related:

"The Prophet (PBUH) set out for (the Battle of) Badr. When he reached Al-Harrah (a place four miles from Medina) a man of the polytheists followed him and said, 'I have come so that I may follow you and get a share from the booty.' The Prophet (PBUH) said to him, 'Do you believe in Allah and His Messenger?' He said, 'No.' Thereupon, the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Go back, for I will not seek the help of a polytheist.'"

According to the aforementioned texts, it is prohibited to employ the disbelievers in jobs through which they may reveal the Muslims' secrets and thus inflict harm on them and become empowered to plot against the Muslims.

Nowadays, more than before, the disbelievers are often brought to Muslim countries, particularly the lands of the two Holy Mosques (in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). They are employed as laborers, drivers, servants and housekeepers. Thus, they now mingle easily with Muslim families.

6. Among the aspects of showing affection for the disbelievers is adopting their calendars, particularly those which are related to their belief and religious convictions such as the Gregorian calendar which commemorates the birthday of Jesus (PBUH). This calendar has been innovated by them and has no relation to the religion of Jesus (PBUH). Therefore, using this calendar is a means of reviving their rites and ceremonies.

To avoid this, the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), during the caliphate of `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him), set a calendar different from theirs which was based on the Prophet's immigration to Medina. This indicates the obligation of denying the practices of the disbelievers regarding dates and other practices.

7. Similarly, participating in the disbelievers' festivals, helping them perform their ceremonies, congratulating them on their special occasions and attending their celebrations are among the aspects of befriending the disbelievers. The Qur'anic verse, "***And [they are] those who do not testify to falsehood...***" (Qur'ân: Al-Furqân: 72) was interpreted that the servants of Allah should not witness the ceremonies of the disbelievers.
8. Applauding the disbelievers, highly estimating their civilization, being proud of their manners and skills and overlooking the false convictions they retain, are also among the prohibited practices which a Muslim should not do. Almighty Allah says:

"And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring."

(Qur'ân: Tâ-Hâ: 131)

This Qur'anic verse does not call the Muslims to overlook taking all possible means of strength such as learning advanced industries and applying essential factors for successful and lawful economics and powerful military means. It is a vital necessity for Muslims. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Anfâl: 60)

All natural sources of power should be retained by Muslims. Almighty Allah says:

"Say, 'Who has forbidden the adornment of [i.e. from] Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?' Say, 'They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.'"

(Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 32)

And says:

“And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth - all from Him...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Jâthyiah: 13)

He further says:

“It is He Who created for you all of that which is on the earth...”

(Qur’ân: Al-Baqarah: 29)

Muslims, therefore, must compete in extracting the benefits of nature and utilizing its sources so that they may do without reliance on the disbelievers. They must set up their own factories and promote their own technologies.

9. Adopting the names of the disbelievers is another aspect of showing loyalty to them. A number of Muslims name their children after foreign names while leaving the names of their forefathers and mothers and the common names among their people. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“The best names are ‘Abdullâh (i.e., the servant of Allah) and ‘Abdur-Rahmân (i.e., the servant of the Entirely Merciful).”

Furthermore, a new generation of the Muslims bears foreign names, which may cause division between earlier and later generations.

10. Seeking Allah’s forgiveness and mercy for the disbelievers is another aspect of showing amity to them. Almighty Allah prohibited such a practice in His saying:

“It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire.”

(Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 113)

Such a practice indicates showing love for them. It also implies accepting their false beliefs.

6.2 Aspects of Showing Amity to Believers:

The aspects of showing amity and loyalty to the believers have been highlighted in the Ever-Glorious Qur’ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). They include the following:

1. Immigration to Muslim territories and leaving non-Muslim countries. That is, to leave non-Muslim territories for the sake of securing a safe place for practicing Islam.

Immigration in this sense and for that purpose becomes obligatory until the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (PBUH) disavowed his responsibility for the protection of any Muslim residing among the disbelievers. Therefore, residing in non-Muslim territories is prohibited except for those who cannot emigrate from such lands but with hardship and those who live there for a religious necessity such as propagating Islam. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, ‘In what [condition] were you?’ They will say, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ They [the angels] will say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?’ For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination. Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way - for those it is expected that Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving.” (Qur’ân: An-Nisâ’: 97-99)

2. Supporting Muslims and aiding them with one’s soul, wealth and tongue in whatever they need. Almighty Allah says:

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another...” (Qur’ân: At-Tawbah: 71)

And says:

“And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help, except against a people between yourselves and whom is a treaty.” (Qur’ân: Al-Anfâl: 72)

3. Sharing Muslims’ delight and distress, The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“The similitude of the believers as regards their showing love among themselves, being kind to each other, and being merciful to each other, is the same as one body, so that if any part of the body feels pain, then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”

He (PBUH) is also reported to have said:

“A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other.” The Prophet (PBUH) then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced (while saying that).

4. Being sincere to them and wishing all good for them. A Muslim must not swindle or cheat his Muslim brothers. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"None of you will have (complete) faith until he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself."

He (PBUH) was also reported to have said:

"A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not despise him, desert him (in time of need), or hand him over to an oppressor. It is a serious evil for a Muslim to despise his Muslim brother. All (things) of a Muslim are inviolable for his Muslim brother: his blood, his wealth and his honor."

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Do not hate each other, do not turn away from each other, and do not practice najash¹, and do not enter into a transaction which others have already entered; and O servants of Allah! Be brothers!"

5. Respecting them and regarding them in high esteem . Almighty Allah says:

"O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful." (Qur'ân: Al-Hujurât: 11-12)

6. A Muslim must aid his Muslim brothers at the time of weal and woe, affluence and distress. The hypocrites, on the contrary, show sympathy only to the believers at times of affluence while forsaking them in adversities. Almighty Allah says:

"Those who wait [and watch] you. Then if you gain a victory from Allah, they say, 'Were we not with you?' But if the disbelievers have a success, they say [to them], 'Did we not gain the advantage over you, but we protected you from the believers?'"

(Qur'ân: Alu 'Imrân: 141)

7. Frequently visiting the believers and meeting them. According to the *Qudsî* (Divine) *hadith*², Almighty Allah is reported to have said:

"My affection is due to those who mutually visit each other for My sake."

According to another *hadith*, a man visited a brother of his for Allah's sake. Therefore, Allah appointed an angel to meet him on his way. The angel asked him:

"What is your destination?" He said, "I am going to visit a brother of mine for Allah's sake." Then, the angel said, "Do you have a need which he may fulfill for you?" He said, "No, but I only love him for the sake of Allah." The angel, then, said, "I am the Messenger of Allah to you, to tell you that Allah has loved you as you have loved (your brother) for His sake."

8. A Muslim should fulfill his obligations toward his Muslim brothers. He must not enter into a commercial transaction which has been already concluded between a buyer and a seller and in which the price agreed upon by the two parts has been settled³. A Muslim must not propose marriage to a woman who is already engaged. Also he must not quarrel with his brother over getting a permissible advantage already won by him. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"One should not enter into a transaction which others have already entered nor should one ask for marriage a woman who has already been engaged to another Muslim brother."

It is reported in another narration that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"... And he must not offer a price for a thing for which his (Muslim) brother has already offered a price."

9. A Muslim must treat his weak brothers with kindness and tenderness. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"He is not from us who does not respect the honored person amongst us nor show mercy to the weak amongst us."

The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

"You gain no victory or livelihood except through (the blessings and invocations of) the poor (and weak) amongst you."

Almighty Allah also says:

"And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Kahf: 28)

10. Praying and asking Allah's forgiveness for them. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...And ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women..." (Qur'ân: Muḥammad: 19)

And says:

"...Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith..." (Qur'ân: Al-Ḥashr: 10)

N.B.

Concerning what Almighty Allah says:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly." (Qur'ân: Al-Mumtaḥinah: 8)

This Qur'anic verse may be interpreted that those among the disbelievers who refrained from harming the Muslims, fighting against them or expelling them from their homes, should be dealt with justly in worldly dealings without being endeared by the Muslims. Almighty Allah says:

"...from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them..." (Qur'ân: Al-Mumtaḥinah: 8)

Allah only commands the Muslims to deal justly and kindly with them. He did not command the Muslims to befriend or love them.

With regard to the relations with unbelieving parents, Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, says:

"But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]..." (Qur'ân: Luqmân: 15)

Though being a disbeliever, the mother of Asmâ' Bint Abû Bakr came to her seeking to maintain ties of kinship with her. When Asmâ' sought the Prophet's permission, he allowed her to maintain ties of kinship with her mother saying, "Maintain relations with your mother." Almighty Allah, moreover, says:

"You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Mujâdilah: 22)

Maintaining relations and doing justice are distinct from befriending and paying loyalty to the disbelievers. Maintaining relations may be held as incentives for inviting the disbelievers to accept Islam. Loyalty and friendship may imply acknowledging their convictions and being content with their faith, which is considered a means of not inviting the disbelievers to Islam.

The prohibition of befriending the disbelievers does not entail the prohibition of trading with them, importing beneficial merchandise and industries from them or getting benefits from their experiments and inventions. The Prophet (PBUH) hired Ibn Urayqit Al-Laythî, who was a disbeliever, to guide him during his *Hijrah* (Emigration) to Medina. He also borrowed some materials from some of the Jews. Muslims still import goods and products from non-Muslims. When we purchase their goods, no reminder of their generosity may be felt. It does not imply having friendship with or loyalty to them. Allah enjoined affection among the believers and commanded Muslims to detest the disbelievers and consider them as enemies. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided - they are allies of one another ... And those who disbelieved are allies of one another. If you do not do so [i.e., ally yourselves with other believers], there will be fitnah [i.e., disbelief and oppression] on earth and great corruption.”

(Qur’ân: Al-Anfâl: 72-73)

Al-Hâfiz Ibn Kathîr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The meaning of Allah’s saying ‘If you do not do so [i.e., ally yourselves with other believers], there will be fitnah [i.e., disbelief and oppression] on earth and great corruption’ (Qur’ân: Al-Anfâl: 73), is that if you do not avoid the disbelievers, and befriend the believers instead, a great dissension will inevitably occur among people, since the believers will mingle with the unbelievers and thus mischief may proliferate.”

People to be Befriended or Hated

To classify people who should be befriended or hated, we may mention the following three categories:

The first category stands for those who should be sincerely and fully loved by a Muslim such as the sincere believers, Allah’s Prophets, trustworthy and righteous believers and the martyrs killed in Allah’s cause. First and foremost, the Prophet (PBUH) should be endeared by all Muslims. He should be preferred to one’s soul, dearest son, father and

all people. Then come the Prophet's wives, the mothers of the believers, the Prophet's household and Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) particularly the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the ten Companions granted the glad tidings of entering Paradise. A Muslim should also love the early *Muhâjirûn* (Emigrants) and the *Anşâr* (the Supporters) of the Prophet and the Companions who participated in the battle of Badr as well as those who witnessed *Ar-Ridwân* Pledge of Allegiance and then the rest of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). A Muslim should also endear the righteous succeeding generations who came after the Prophet's era and righteous Muslim *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) and the Four Imâms⁴. Almighty Allah says:

“And [there is a share for those who came after them, saying, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.’”

(Qur'ân: Al-Hashr: 10)

No true Muslim shows hatred towards the Prophet's Companions or our Muslim righteous *Salaf*. Only the deviants, hypocrites and the enemies of Islam such as Ar-Râfidah and the Kharijites (the Seceders) retain hatred of the believers.

The second category involves the people who should be utterly detested by all Muslims. It includes the disbelievers among the polytheists, hypocrites, apostates and atheists with their various sects. Almighty Allah says:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

(Qur'ân: Al-Mujâdilah: 22)

Regarding the Children of Israel, Allah, Exalted be He, dispraises them saying:

“You see many of them becoming allies of those who disbelieved [i.e. the polytheists]. How wretched is that which they have put forth for themselves in that Allah has become angry with them, and in the punishment they will abide eternally. And if they had believed in Allah and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them as allies; but many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 80-81)

The third category includes those who should be liked and disliked. They are the disobedient and sinners among the Muslims. We should love them for the faith they retain and detest them for the sins they perpetrate.

True love for Muslims classified under this category necessitates being sincere and faithful to them and warning them against all sins. We should also enjoin them to do good and forbid them from perpetrating evil. They, moreover, should be penalized and punished for the sins they commit, so that they may be deterred from committing sins and repent them. Such erring Muslims should not be extremely detested as wrongly argued by the Kharijites (the Seceders) who deem a Muslim committing a major sin as a disbeliever. They should not be sincerely loved and supported as deemed by the Murji'ah⁵. They must be treated moderately according to the belief of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community. Love and hatred for the sake of Allah are among the major principles of the Muslim faith. A man will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection with those whom he loves as stated in a *hadith*.

Nowadays, people only love and detest according to the worldly gains they may attain. Those who are in possession of worldly vanities are always loved and respected by others though they may be enemies of Allah, His Messenger (PBUH) and Islam. People, moreover, show enmity to those who are not in possession of such a worldly gain, even if they may be the allies of Allah and His Messenger (PBUH).

‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Whoever likes and dislikes for Allah’s sake, befriends and detests for His cause will obtain the Walâyah (the support) of Allah by this. Although brotherhood is now only held for attaining a worldly vanity, the friends of Allah are not much concerned with such vanities.”

(Related by Ibn Jarîr)

Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said:

“Allah said, ‘I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious servant of Mine...’ ”

(Related by Al-Bukhârî)

The most abominable persons in the sight of Allah are those who show enmity to or belittle the Companions of Allah's Messenger (may Allah be pleased with them). Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"Fear Allah regarding my Companions, and do not make them a target (after I am gone). He who harms them has harmed me, he who harms me has harmed Allah, and he who harms Allah will soon be punished by Him."

Insulting and despising the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) have become a principal tenet of some deviant sects. We seek Allah's refuge from His severe chastisement and we ask Him to keep us safe from all these practices.



Endnotes

- 1 *Najash*: An illegal transaction based on a trick through which the buyer is deceived and ensnared by the artificial outbidding of a fake buyer.
- 2 *Qudsi* (Divine) *hadith*: Divine Words, other than the Glorious Qur'an, revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) from Allah. Unlike the Qur'an, the words of the *Qudsi* (Divine) *hadith* are neither used for worship nor deemed miraculous.
- 3 That is by overbidding to the seller or by persuading the buyer to abrogate the transaction while offering him another similar good at a lower price or a more valuable one at the same price.
- 4 They are Imām Mālik Ibn Anas, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Ash-Shāfi`ī and Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.
- 5 The *Murji'ah*: An Islamic sect that holds the belief that sins do not harm believers and good deeds do not benefit disbelievers. They refer the case of those who commit major sins to Allah in the Hereafter.

Conclusion:

Warning against *Bid`ahs*

Chapter One

Definition of *Bid`ah*, Main Categories and Legal Ruling

1. Definition of *Bid`ah*:

Linguistically, *Bid`ah* in Arabic means 'unprecedented origination.' In the Ever-Glorious Qur`an, we read:

"Originator of the heavens and the earth..."

(Qur`an: Al-Baqarah: 117)

Allah, Exalted be He, further says:

"Say, I am not something original among the messengers..."

(Qur`an: Al-Ahqâf: 9)

The Prophet, according to this verse, is not the first unprecedented Messenger of Allah to humanity; he was preceded by many messengers.

Origination or innovation is of two categories. It may be practiced in people's customs such as the newly advanced inventions. This category is undoubtedly permissible for the basic ruling regarding customs is permissibility.

By contrast, innovation in religion, the second category, is prohibited since the main principle governing our religious practices is to directly and completely receive them intact through Divine Revelation. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"If somebody innovates something which is not in conformity with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected."

According to another narration, he is reported to have said:

"He who does any act which does not conform to the principles of our religion, that act is to be rejected."

2. Categories of *Bid`ahs*:

In matters of religion, *Bid`ahs* are of two types:

1. Verbal, such as the convictions retained by Al-Jahmiyyah, Al-Mu` tazilah, Ar-Râfiḍah and other deviant sects.

2. Ritual practices, such as initiating religious practices not ordained or originated by Allah. Such a category includes a number of examples such as:
 - a. Initiating a ritual act of worship, which was not originally enjoined by Allah such as offering further prayers not enjoined by Allah or recommended by His Prophet, observing fasting, or celebrating feasts not legislated in Islam.
 - b. Adding to an already prescribed ritual act, such as offering five *rak'ahs* (units of prayer) when observing the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer instead of four.
 - c. Offering a religious ritual in a way different from that offered and recommended by the Prophet, such as melodiously hymning Allah's praises in congregation after offering the obligatory prayers, or excessively offering too many acts of worship without following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH).
 - d. Observing a religious ordinance at a time which was not originally assigned by Allah. For example, some people observe fasting particularly on the fifteenth day of *Sha'bân* or offer prayers during its eve. Although fasting and night vigil supererogatory prayer are ordained by Allah, their due and proper time should be substantiated by proof from the *Qur'ân* or the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

3. Legal Ruling on *Bid'ahs* in Religious Ordinances

Every *Bid'ah* is prohibited according to the Prophetic *hadîth* in which the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Be on your guard against Bid'ahs (acts of innovation in religion), for every innovation (in religion) is Bid'ah and every Bid'ah is an error."

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"If somebody innovates something which is not in conformity with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected."

And according to the other narration, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"He who does any act which does not conform to the principles of our religion, that act is to be rejected."

These Prophetic *hadîths* indicate that every innovative affair in religious ordinances is regarded as a *Bid'ah* and every *Bid'ah* is deemed as a rejected falsehood.

Therefore, all *Bid'ahs* in rituals and convictions are prohibited but in various degrees. Some of these *Bid'ahs* are tantamount to disbelief such as circumambulating tombs to solicit the blessings of its dwellers, sacrificing animals and offering vows to the dwellers of such tombs and soliciting their refuge. Such *Bid'ahs* also include the false convictions of Al-Jahmiyyah and Al-Mu'tazilah. Some *Bid'ahs* may be classified as preludes to disbelief such as establishing tombs and offering prayers there.

Some *Bid'ahs* may be regarded as false beliefs such as the convictions of Kharijites, Anti-Fatalists and Al-Murji'ah who hold convictions in contradiction with the established proofs of *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law). Other *bid'ahs* may be regarded as sins such as celibacy, observing fast when standing all the time in the intense heat of the sun, and castration with the intention of getting rid of sexual desire.

It might be worth mentioning, here, that those who classify *bid'ahs* into good and bad are mistaken. Their view contradicts the Prophetic *hadith* in which he (PBUH) says, "... every *bid'ah* is an error." Hence, the Prophet deems every *bid'ah* as a sort of deviation.

In his *Sharh Al-Arba'in* (Commentary on An-Nawawi's Forty Prophetic *Hadiths*), Al-Hâfiz Ibn Rajab said:

"The Prophet's saying, '...every bid'ah is an error' is among the precisely meaningful expressions of the Prophet (PBUH). It is also held as one of the fundamental principles of religion. It is very similar to the Prophet's saying, 'He who does any act which does not conform to the principles of our religion, that act is to be rejected.' Therefore, every innovated matter in religion, which is unjustifiably attached to Islam without any proof, will be held as a falsehood. Our religion renounces such an innovative matter whatever it may be even if it may include convictions, apparent deeds, explicit or implicit sayings."

Those who classify *bid'ahs* into good and bad substantiate their view by 'Umar Ibnul-Khattâb's saying, "What a good innovation!" He said this on the occasion of performing the *Tarâwih* Prayer¹.

They further substantiate their view by arguing that our righteous *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) did not reject some innovated matters such as compiling the Ever-Glorious Qur'an in a book and writing down the Prophetic *hadiths*.

To this, we may say that all these matters have a basis in the *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) and are not, thus, held as *bid'ahs*.

As for the saying of `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he was reported to have said, “*What a good innovation!*”, he meant the linguistic connotation of the word ‘*bid`ah*’ rather than the legal connotation. He, therefore, meant that offering the *Tarâwih* in congregation is something new, yet it is substantiated by legal proofs.

The Prophet (PBUH) occasionally offered the *Tarâwih* some nights. He abandoned observing it in congregation during the last nights of Ramadân lest it should be turned into an obligatory act of worship. The Companions offered it solitarily during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) and after his death. They congregated upon the command of `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him), under the leadership of one *imâm* as they used to do during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) who used to be their *imâm*.

Collecting the Ever-Glorious Qur`ân in one book has a founded proof in *Shari`ah*, since the Prophet (PBUH) commanded the Companions to write down the Qur`ân. However, it was written on scattered materials, the Companions only collected it in one codex to preserve its content.

As for recording the Prophetic *hadiths*, it has its origins in the *Shari`ah*; the Prophet (PBUH) commanded some of his *hadiths* to be written down for some of his Companions when asked to do so. The Prophetic *hadiths* were not collectively recorded during his lifetime lest it should be mixed with the Qur`anic texts. When the Prophet (PBUH) died, the Qur`ân was completely preserved and safeguarded and thus Muslims recorded the Prophetic *hadiths* to safeguard them against omission and deletion.



Chapter Two

The Emergence of *Bid'ahs* in the Muslim History

This section is assigned to highlight where *bid'ahs* started and their origin.

1. Emergence of *Bid'ahs*

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"You should know that most of the innovations in religion and rituals emerged at the end of the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs as the Prophet (PBUH) foretold in his saying, 'Whoever amongst you survives after I am gone will see much difference, so adhere to my tradition and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after me.' The first bid'ah to occur was the heretic views related to Al-Qadar (i.e., Predestination) as well as the emergence of Murji'ah, Shiite and Kharijites. All these bid'ahs originated during the second century while the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were still living. They denied all these heresies.

Then, the Mu'tazilah (Mutazilites) emerged and the dissension among Muslims took place. Consequently, difference of opinions and inclination to innovations and lusts proliferated.

Thereafter, Sufism came into life and tombs were constructed after the termination of the centuries of our righteous Salaf. As time passes, innovations increase and become varied."

2. The Places where *Bid'ahs* Emerged

Islamic countries differ with regard to the emergence of *bid'ahs*.

Shaykul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The major Muslim territories where the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) dwelled and where the knowledge of religion proliferated were five. They are the two cities of the Holy Sanctuaries (i.e., Mecca and Medina), the two centers of Iraq (Kufa and Basra) and Ash-Shâm (the Levant; the region covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine). Sciences of the Qur'ân, Prophetic Hadîth, Jurisprudence and other branches of Muslim religious knowledge proliferated in these centers. Similarly, from these territories, with the exception of Medina, bid'ahs emerged too. In Kufa and then throughout all other Muslim territories, the doctrines of Shiites and Murji'ah proliferated. From Basra, the doctrine of Al-Qadariyyah and Mu'tazilah (Mutazilites) and other false beliefs emerged. From Ash-Shâm, Al-Qadariyyah (Anti-Fatalism)² and An-Nâsibah³ spread. As for Jahmiyyah, it originally emerged in Khurâsân.

The more remote the territories from Medina were, the more widespread bid`ahs were. When the dissension occurred after the murder of `Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with him), Al-Kawârij appeared. Medina remained free from any bid`ahs, for any retainer of a bid`ah used to be despised by its dwellers. No one dared speak or apply such doctrines in Medina. On the contrary, Shiites, Murjia`ah and Mu`tazilah used to be widespread in other territories such as Basra and Kufa. It is authentically proven in the two Saḥiḥs (the Two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim) that the Prophet (PBUH) maintained that the Anti-Christ will never approach Medina.

Authentic religious knowledge remained in Medina until the time of the disciples of Mâlik who lived during the fourth Islamic century. During the first Islamic centuries, Medina did not harbor any bid`ah; no bid`ah emerged from Medina during these three centuries.”



Chapter Three

Causes which Led to the Emergence of *Bid'ahs*

Undoubtedly, keeping hold of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) provides a shield which safeguards a Muslim from *bid'ahs* and going astray. Almighty Allah says:

“And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way...”
(Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 153)

`Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) drew a line for us and said, ‘This is the Way of Allah.’ Then he drew lines on the right and the left of the first line and said, ‘These are ways, on each of them there is a devil inviting to it’ Then the Prophet (PBUH) recited the verse, ‘And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.’ (Qur'an: Al-An`âm: 153)”

Therefore, whosoever renounces the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) will fall prey to innovated matters and deviating sects. The emergence of *bid'ahs* may be related to ignorance of religious matters, following personal desires, bias towards fixed ideas and certain individuals (fanaticism), and imitating the unbelievers. These causes are tackled below in more detail.

1. Ignorance of Religious Matters

As time passes and the influence of the Prophet's message grows lesser, knowledge fades out and ignorance proliferates. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Whosoever amongst you survives after I am gone, will see much difference...”⁴

He is also reported to have said:

“Allah does not take away the knowledge by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the scholars until when none of scholars remains; people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who, when consulted, will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”

Bid`ahs can only be opposed by scholars. When scholars and knowledge diminish, *bid`ahs* subsequently proliferate.

2. Following Personal Desires

Whosoever disregards the Glorious Qur`ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) will consequently follow his overwhelming personal desires and cravings. Almighty Allah says:

“But if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their [own] desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah?”

(Qur`ân: Al-Qaṣas: 50)

And says:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah?”

(Qur`ân: Al-Jâthyiah: 23)

Certainly, *bid`ahs* are natural consequences of following one’s inclinations and desires.

3. Bias towards Fixed Ideas and Certain Individuals

Fanaticism for an adopted view or for a specific group of people may impede a person from following proofs and grasping the truth. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

“And where it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, ‘Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing.’”

(Qur`ân: Al-Baqarah: 170)

This is the state of the followers of Sufism and grave-worshippers who, when being summoned to follow the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet, take hold of their saints and the doctrines of their forefathers.

4. Imitating the Disbelievers

It is one of the most compelling causes leading to *bid`ahs*. According to the Prophetic *ḥadīth* narrated on the authority of Abû Wâqid Al-Laythî, who said:

“We went along with Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) to Hunayn. At that time, we were new to Islam. We passed by a lote tree called Dhâtu Anwât belonging to the polytheists who were intent on devotion to it and they used to hang their arms on it. After that, we passed by a lote tree that we said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Make

this tree be for us Dhâtu Anwât (a tree to hang our arms on) as the disbelievers have Dhâtu Anwât.' The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Allah is the Greatest! (You have followed the evil) traditions (of previous nations). By the One in Whose Hand my life is, you have said the same as the Children of Israel said to Mûsâ (Moses), '...make for us a god just as they have gods.' He said, 'Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly...' (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 138) You will follow the traditions of those (nations) before you.' "

(Related by At-Tirmidhî)

According to the aforementioned Prophetic *hadith*, imitating the practices of the disbelievers drove the Children of Israel and some of the followers of Muḥammad (PBUH) to ask for deities besides Allah to be solicited as a source of blessings.

People nowadays imitate the disbelievers in acting upon *bid`ahs* and other practices of polytheism such as celebrating birthdays and commemorating specific occasions, sculpturing statues and constructing memorials. They also introduce other innovations in funerals.



Chapter Four

Muslim Nation and Innovators

The Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community still refute all the arguments of innovators and reject their *bid`ahs* (acts innovated in religion). They also make it hard for them to practice such *bid`ahs*. The following are but few examples of the Muslims' stances against such innovations:

1. Ummud-Dardâ' reported:

"Abud-Dardâ' entered the house in a rage, so I said to him, 'What makes you angry?' He replied, 'By Allah! I do not find the followers of Muḥammad doing (those good things which they used to do before) except offering of congregational prayer.'"

2. `Amr Ibn Yahyâ reported on the authority of his father that his grandfather (`Amr Ibn Salamah) said:

"We were sitting by the door of `Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd before the Subḥ (Morning) Prayer waiting for him until he would get out that we could walk with him to the mosque. Abû Mûsâ Al-Ash`arî came to us and said, 'Has Abû `Abdur-Raḥmân (meaning `Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd) come to you?' We replied, 'Not yet.' So, he sat with us until `Abdullâh Ibn Mas`ûd got out. When he got out, we all stood and Abû Mûsâ said to him, 'O Abû `Abdur-Raḥmân! I have seen in the mosque something which I disliked, despite the seeming good of what I have seen.' `Abdullâh said, 'What is it?' Abû Mûsâ said, 'If you live, you will see it.' And Abû Mûsâ added, 'I saw in the mosque some people sitting in circles waiting for prayer having pebbles in their hands. In every circle of those circles, there was a man saying to them, 'Say 'Allah is the Greatest' one hundred times' so they would say so. Then, he would say, 'Say 'There is no deity but Allah' one hundred times' so they would say so. After that, he would say, 'Exalt Allah one hundred times' and they would exalt Allah. Thereupon, `Abdullâh said to him, 'Why have you not ordered them to count their evil deeds and guaranteed that nothing of their good deeds will be missed?' Then he (`Abdullâh) went and we went along with him until he reached one of those circles and stood by them and said, 'What is that thing I see you doing?' They replied, 'O Abû `Abdur-Raḥmân! These are pebbles by which we count (the number of utterances) declaring the Greatness of Allah, that there is no deity but Allah, exalting Allah, and praising Allah.' He said to them, 'Then count your evil deeds for I guarantee that nothing of your

good deeds will be missed. Woe unto you, O nation of Muhammad! How rapidly you are going to be ruined! These are his (the Prophet's) Companions who are many; and these are his clothes that have not been tattered yet and his vessels have not been broken yet (he wonders that the Prophet (PBUH) died not long ago and they innovate matters in religion). By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, you either are maintaining a religion that is more guiding than that of Muhammad or you are on a way that leads to going astray!"⁵ They said, 'O Abû 'Abdur-Rahmân! By Allah, we intended nothing but good.' He said, 'Many are those who intend what is good but do not achieve it! Allah's Messenger (PBUH) told us that some people will recite the Qur'ân but it will not exceed their throats (i.e., they will not act on it). By Allah, I think the most of those people may be from amongst you.' Then he ('Abdullâh) left them. 'Amr Ibn Salamah added, 'We saw most of those people (circulating in the mosque) fighting us on the Day of (the Battle of) Nahrawân (a place in Iraq) with the Kharijites,"

(Related by Ad-Dârimi)

3. A man came to Imâm Mâlik Ibn Anas (may Allah have mercy on him) and said, "From where should I commence the state of *ihrâm*?" He said, "You should commence the state of *ihrâm* from the place assigned by the Prophet (PBUH)." The man asked again, "What if I observe *ihrâm* from a remoter place?" Thereupon, Mâlik replied, "I do not agree with that view." Then the man asked, "What is detestable in that?" Mâlik answered, "I am afraid that you may fall into error." The man asked, "What error may be expected if I do more than what is obligatory?" Mâlik said, "Almighty Allah says, '**...So let those beware who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet's] order, lest fitnah strike them or a painful punishment.**' (Qur'ân: An-Nûr: 63) What error may be held graver than innovating an additional good deed not enacted by Allah's Messenger (PBUH)."

These are but a few examples of innovative *bid'ahs* which are always rejected by scholars everywhere and at all times.



Chapter Five

Refuting the Arguments of Innovators: Methodology of the Adherents of the Sunnah and Muslim Community

The methodology of the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community in refuting the arguments of heretics and innovators was mainly based on the Ever-Glorious Qur`ân and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). They usually cite the relevant misconceptions of heretics and innovators and then refute them through proofs derived from the Qur`ân and the *Sunnah*, which necessitate abiding by the acts and practices of the Prophet and abandoning all innovations and heresies.

In addition, the Adherents of the *Sunnah* and Muslim Community authored a number of books on such topics. They also refuted the misconceptions of Shiites, Kharijites, Al-Jahmiyyah, Mutazilites and Ash`ariyyah with regard to the Principles of Faith and Creed. Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hanbal wrote his *Ar-Rad `Ala Al-Jahmiyyah* (*Refutation of Al-Jahmiyyah*). Other prominent scholars such as `Uthmân Ibn Sa`id Ad-Dârimî, Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah and his disciple Ibnul-Qayyim, Shaykh Muhammad Ibn `Abdul-Wahhâb and others confuted the doctrines of such sects in addition to the false tenets of Sufis.

As for treatises written for refuting the views of heretics and innovators, they are numerous and may, for instance, include the following:

1. *Al-I`tisâm* (the Book of Adherence) by Ash-Shâtibî
2. *Iqtidâ` As-Siratul-Mustaqim* (The Indispensable Requisite for the Straight Path) by Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah. He dedicated a large amount of this book for disproving the heretics' views.
3. *Inkâr Al-Hawâdith wal-Bida`* (Renunciation of Fables and *Bid`ahs*) by Ibn Waddâh.
4. *Al-Hawâdith wal-Bida` (Fables and Bid`ahs)* by At-Tartûshî.
5. *Al-Bâ`ith `alâ Inkâr Al-Bida` wal-Hawâdith (Motives for Renouncing Bid`ahs and Fables)* by Abû Shâmah.

There are also a number of modern treatises written for the same purpose such as:

1. *Al-Ibdâ` fi Madâarul-Ibtidâ` (The Perfection in Demonstrating the Evils of Bid`ahs)* by Sheikh `Alî Mahfûz.

2. *As-Sunan wal-Mubtada`ât Al-Muta`aliqah bil-Adhkâr waṣ-Salawât (Practices in the Sunnah and Bid`ahs Related to Words of Remembrance and Prayers)* by Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ash-Shuqirî Al-Hawâmidî.
3. *At-Tahdhîr minal-Bida` (Warning against Bid`ahs)* by Sheikh `Abdul-`Azîz Ibn Bâz.

Muslim scholars still denounce all forms of *bid`ahs* and refute all arguments raised by heretics and innovators through articles published in newspapers and magazines, by speeches broadcasted through radio stations, and by sermons, lectures and symposia. All these means play an influential role in warning people against *bid`ahs* and heretics, and in refuting their views.



Chapter Six

Living Examples of *Bid`ahs* Nowadays

The following are examples of innovated matters proliferating nowadays:

1. Commemorating the Prophet's birthday
2. Seeking blessings at specific monuments and graves of dead persons
3. *Bid`ahs* related to religious ordinances and rituals

Bid`ahs have spread nowadays due to the lack of religious knowledge, proliferation of heretics and innovators, as well as imitation of the disbelievers. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"You will surely follow the ways of those nations who were before you."

1. Commemorating the Prophet's Birthday During the Month of Rabi`ul-Awwal

It is a means of imitating the practices of the Christians who usually celebrate Jesus' birthday. Every year during the month of Rabi`ul-Awwal, the ignorant and deviating scholars among the Muslims celebrate the Prophet's birthday. Some organize celebrations and festivals in the mosques while others celebrate it at homes where a large assembly of lay people gather, thus, imitating the festivals of the Christians in celebrating Christmas.

In such celebrations, in addition to the perpetration of innovated matters, some acts of polytheism and disbelief may be introduced and practised. People may, thus, chant poems which excessively hymn the praise of the Prophet or extravagantly express seeking refuge with him instead of Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised `Isâ Ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary), for I am only a servant (of Allah). So, call me the servant of Allah and His Messenger."

Those people, sometimes, assume the Prophet's presence at their festivals. Among the abominable practices, which accompany these festivals, are the chanted and musically chorused hymns and other Sufi *bid`ahs*. Men may also mingle with women, which may lead to the spread and perpetration of disgraceful acts.

Even if their celebrations were free of all such excessive and obscene deeds; that is, they only include meals and showing joy, as those people claim, it would still be held an innovated *bid`ah* and the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Every innovation (in religion) is bid`ah and every bid`ah is an error.”

Moreover, such practices may turn to other practices in which denounced matters may be committed.

Certainly, such celebrations are but heresies and *bid`ahs* which have no origin in the Qur`ân, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) or the practices of our righteous Muslim *Salaf*. They were introduced during the fourth Islamic century by the Fatimids⁷ who belonged to the Shiites.

Imâm Abu Hafs Tâjud-Dîn Al-Fâkihânî (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As for the frequently raised question of a righteous group of people about the legal ruling of assemblies held by some people during the month of Rabî`ul-Awwal and usually called Al-Mawlid (Birthday), they questioned me whether it has a basis in our religion or not. They further requested me to provide a clear and efficient answer to it. I may, thus, say that such a celebration has no basis either in the Qur`ân or the Sunnah. No one of the scholars of the Muslim nation, who are our living example, is reported to have commemorated it. It is only a bid`ah innovated by wrongdoers and a means of fulfilling the covetous desires of the gluttonous impostors.”

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Similarly, the practices people carry out by either imitating the Christians or excessively adorning the figure of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by celebrating his birthday, are all acts not offered by our righteous Muslim Salaf. Had it been an absolutely good deed, our righteous Muslim Salaf would have celebrated it. In comparison to us, they endeared the Prophet greater than anyone else. They, moreover, were concerned with doing good deeds. Love for the Prophet (PBUH) and exalting him lie in following in his steps, obeying his commands, reviving his practices and spreading his message either by heart, strength or word. This is the practice of the early Muhâjirûn (Emigrants) and Al-Ansâr (the Supporters) and those who followed them.”

A number of old and new treatises have been written by Ibn Taymiyah on denouncing the *bid`ahs* of celebrating the Prophet's birthday. In addition to being a *bid`ah*, celebrating the Prophet's birthday may be taken as a pretext for celebrating the birthdays of saints, scholars and prominent figures. It, thus, may open ways leading to evil.

2. Seeking Blessings from Specific Monuments, Places and Persons:

Continuity and increase of well-being and prosperity are only to be sought from the One who is able to grant such blessings. Allah, Exalted be He, is the One Who can bestow all blessings. Contrarily, creatures can never confer blessings.

Therefore, seeking blessings from monuments, relics or persons, living or dead, is not permissible. Soliciting blessings from such objects and persons is an act of polytheism in case a solicitor claims that such blessings are conferred by such persons or objects. It will lead to polytheism if a man assumes that touching such places or those persons may be an influential reason for conferring the blessings of Allah.

As for the Companions' seeking of blessings through the Prophet's hair and saliva, it is one of the specific features for the Prophet (PBUH); such a practice was only practiced during his lifetime. Therefore, the Companions did not seek blessings through touching or approaching his tomb after his death. They never intended to offer prayers at the places he used to offer prayer or sit. They also never sought blessings from righteous persons such as Abû Bakr, `Umar and others, either during their lifetime or after their death. They never went to the Cave of *Hirâ'* to offer prayers or supplicate Allah there. Also they did not intend to travel to *Aṭ-Ṭûr* (Mount Sinai) where Allah spoke to Mûsa (Moses, PBUH) or offer prayer there. Similarly, the Companions did not approach any mount or place deemed to be a memorial of a prophet to seek blessings.

Likewise, our righteous Muslim *Salaf* (early Muslim scholars) did not approach the places where the Prophet (PBUH) used to offer prayers in order to seek his blessings. Any place where the Prophet (PBUH) stepped was never kissed or approached for blessings. Therefore, another place touched or dwelled by others can never be taken as a source of blessings. Such practices are not held legal or permissible in the *Shari`ah* (Islamic Law).

3. *Bid`ahs* in Religious Ordinances and Rituals

Bid`ahs innovated in religious ordinances and rituals are numerous nowadays. The main principle governing religious ordinances is that they are received intact from Allah and His Messenger. Rituals should never be decreased or increased except according to substantiating proofs. Any act, which lacks substantiating proof, is a *bid`ah*. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

"He who does any act which does not conform to the principles of our religion, that act is to be rejected."

Rituals which are frequently offered nowadays and lack substantiating proofs, are numerous. They include the following:

- To publicly utter the intention in offering prayer, such as commencing one's prayer by saying, "I have intended to pray such and such a prayer." This is held as a *bid' ah*⁸, since it is not stated in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). Almighty Allah says:

"Say, 'Would you acquaint Allah with your religion while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is Knowing of all things?'" (Qur'an: Al-Hujurât: 16)

That is, intention lies in one's heart; hence, it is amongst the deeds of the heart not the verbal ones.

- Congregational hymns which are always offered upon the conclusion of daily obligatory prayers. According to the legislated ordinances, every person should offer such remembrance separately.
- Reciting *Al-Fâtihah* (the Opening Sura of the Qur'an) on special occasions or when asking forgiveness for the dead.
- Holding funeral ceremonies where meals are served and reciters of the Qur'an are hired. Those people claim that such practices are held as a kind of consolation for the people of the deceased person and that they avail him. All such practices are of no avail and are all regarded as *bid' ahs*.
- Celebrating specific religious occasions such as *Al-Isrâ'* and *Al-Mi'râj* (the Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension), his *Hijrah* (Emigration) to Medina and other occasions which have no basis in the religion.
- Special practices offered during the month of Rajab such as offering *'Umrah* (Lesser Pilgrimage), observing voluntary fast and performing additional prayers. The month of Rajab has no advantage over the other months with regard to offering special prayers, fasting or sacrifices.
- Sufi hymns and chants are all *bid' ahs* since they contradict the exemplary words of remembrance in form and time and in how they are offered.
- Offering special prayers during the eve of the fifteenth of Sha'bân or observing fasting on that day. The Prophet (PBUH) was not reported to have done so.
- Constructing buildings over graves, taking them as mosques, visiting them seeking blessings, etc. Additionally, women's regular visits to such places are prohibited since the Prophet (PBUH) cursed the women who recurrently visit graves and those who take tombs as mosques and decorate them with lights.

To conclude, *bid'ahs* are preludes to disbelief. They are usually additions to the religious ordinances enacted by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). *Bid'ahs* are graver than sins. Satan is more pleased with them than he is with a grave sin. A perpetrator of a sin may repent of his sins while being fully convinced that it is an abominable act. On the other hand, an innovator offers a *bid'ah* while being convinced that it is a good deed and a ritual act through which he can draw near to Allah, so he does not repent of it. Moreover, *bid'ahs* may also overwhelm the exemplary practices enacted by the Prophet (PBUH). Moreover, *bid'ahs* cause those believing in them to be bored with following the practices of the Prophet and to hate the Adherents of the *Sunnah*. Furthermore, *bid'ahs* may entail the wrath of Allah and His chastisement. In addition, they cause the deviation and corruption of hearts.



Chapter Seven

How to Treat a Heretic

It is prohibited to visit a heretic or sit with him except for admonishing him and renouncing his acts. Mingling with an innovator or a heretic may lead to corruption and spread of enmity.

Muslims should also warn against their evil if they are not able to deter them from practicing such *bid'ahs*. Also, Muslim scholars and those in authority should prevent and deter them from practicing *bid'ahs*, since their consequence is grave.

Non-Muslim countries encourage *bid'ahs* to proliferate and give them full support in order to spoil Islam and misrepresent its image.

We ask Allah to support His Religion, raise His Word and make His enemies low, and all blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and his family and his Companions.



Endnotes

- 1 The *Tarâwih* Prayer: Supererogatory prayers performed after the 'Ishâ' (Night) Prayer during the month of Ramadân
- 2 *Al-Qadariyah*: A sect that denies the Divine Decree and Predestination and claims that Allah has no foreknowledge of the events and actions of His creatures. It also maintains that man creates his actions and thus such actions are not produced by Allah. Above all, this sect negates Allah's Sublime Attributes.
- 3 The *Nasibah*: it is a straying sect that denies the Caliphate of 'Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib. Moreover, its followers excessively criticize 'Ali for his decision to fight Mu'âwiyah and his followers in *Ṣiffin*
- 4 It is a part of a Prophetic *ḥadīth* related by Abû Dâwûd and At-Tirmidhî. At-Tirmidhî judged it as a *ḥasan* (good) and *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*.
- 5 Abu 'Abdur-Raḥman means that there are only two choices and since their religion could not be better than that of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), so they must be on a way that leads to going astray.
- 6 *Ihrâm*: A state of ritual consecration during *Hajj* or 'Umrah
- 7 A Muslim dynasty that ruled North Africa and parts of Egypt (909-1171).
- 8 This is a controversial issue and the author here is in line with the *Ḥanbalî* School of *Fiqh*.