

# Pearls of ‘Aqīdah

*An Introduction to the Islamic Creed*

Shaykh Dr. El Bachir Mohammed El Hourri

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 [dr.elbachir.elhourri@gmail.com](mailto:dr.elbachir.elhourri@gmail.com)

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## ***Acknowledgement***

*This is dedicated to the souls of those who were the object of my love and affection, to those whose touch my hands miss, to those who were bound to me by blood and responsibility but are no longer with us. To the souls of my father and mother, may Allāh bless them.*

*To my virtuous wives and my children, Umar and Samiha, in whom I hope to kindle the flame of faith and the light of righteousness, may Allāh, blessed and exalted, clothe them in the garment of piety and make them love the faith and adorn it in their hearts.*

*To my brothers and sisters, to my students, and to the teachers, scholars, and preachers in every corner of the earth, I dedicate this book to you in the hope that it will achieve its intended purpose and seek to heal certain aspects of each of our lives. I hope to be the first to benefit from it, Allāh willing, and let every person know that the goodness of his life depends on knowing and following the truth, and his corruption is a certain result of his ignorance of the truth or his rebellion against it, even if he knows it.*

## Transliteration Table

Consonants							
ء	'	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	'	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	g	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y
Vowels:							
Short:	اَ	a	اِ	i	اُ	u	
Long	اَآ	ā	اِآ	ī	اُآ	ū	
Diphthongs:	اَو	aw	اِآ	ay			

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## 1. Biography of the Author

Shaykh Dr. El Bachir Muḥammad El Hourri was born in 1974 in Oujda, a city near the border with Algeria in Morocco. He spent the first 27 years of his life in his native Morocco, then lived for almost a decade each in France and Germany, and also spent some time in Turkey. His language skills include Arabic, Darija (the Moroccan dialect), French, and German.

As the thirteenth of fourteen children, he was raised in the family of Mohammed El Hourri and his wife. His deeply religious parents introduced him to the basics of Islam at an early age. At the age of 16, he began to engage more intensively in religious studies, a passion that continues to this day. In addition to religion, he was also very interested in psychology. He obtained doctorates in Psychology and Hadith Sciences and is currently working on his doctorate in Islamic Law. During his time in France, he also served as an Imām in a mosque.

His Islamic knowledge was not only gained from scholars in Morocco, but also from countries like Mauritania, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. With several hundred Ijāzāt (teaching permissions) in various Islamic disciplines, he now heads the SANAD Institute, where he offers courses in Qur'ān, Arabic, and other Islamic sciences such as 'Aqīdah, Usūl al-Fiqh, Fiqh Mālikī, and many more. He has authored numerous Islamic textbooks in Arabic, English, and German.

## 2. Foreword

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful

All praise belongs to Allāh; we praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil within ourselves and the consequences of our actions. Whom Allāh guides, none can mislead, and whom Allāh lets go astray, none can guide. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, and that He is One and has no partners. And I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.

Āl ‘Imrān 3:102

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُوا إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

„O BELIEVERS! BE MINDFUL OF ALLĀH IN THE WAY HE DESERVES,[[ MEANING, ALWAYS BE CONSCIOUS OF HIM; OBEDIENT AND GRATEFUL TO HIM.]] AND DO NOT DIE EXCEPT IN ‘A STATE OF FULL’ SUBMISSION ‘TO HIM’.[[ LIT., EXCEPT AS MUSLIMS.]]“

An-Nisā’ 4:1

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴾

„O HUMANITY! BE MINDFUL OF YOUR LORD WHO CREATED YOU FROM A SINGLE SOUL, AND FROM IT HE CREATED ITS MATE,[[ I.E., ADAM AND EVE.]] AND THROUGH BOTH HE SPREAD COUNTLESS MEN AND WOMEN. AND BE MINDFUL OF ALLĀH—IN WHOSE NAME YOU

APPEAL TO ONE ANOTHER—AND 'HONOUR' FAMILY TIES. SURELY  
ALLĀH IS EVER WATCHFUL OVER YOU.“

Al-Aḥzāb 33:70-71

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴾ (70)

﴿ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ (71)

(70) O BELIEVERS! BE MINDFUL OF ALLĀH, AND SAY WHAT IS  
RIGHT.

(71) HE WILL BLESS YOUR DEEDS FOR YOU, AND FORGIVE YOUR  
SINS. AND WHOEVER OBEYS ALLĀH AND HIS MESSENGER, HAS TRULY  
ACHIEVED A GREAT TRIUMPH.“

The best speech is the speech of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The worst of matters are the innovations; every innovation is a misguidance, and every misguidance leads to the fire.

### 3. Introduction

Imām Ash-Shāfi‘ī, the founder of the Shāfi‘ī school of jurisprudence, memorably stated:

---

*“All people are dead, except those who have knowledge. The knowledgeable are asleep, except those who do good deeds. The doers of good err, except those who are sincere. The sincere, in turn, are always filled with Taqwā (fear of God).”*

---

Through these striking metaphors, Imām Ash-Shāfi‘ī emphasizes the importance of knowledge, good deeds, and sincerity. He characterizes the ignorant as the living dead, those with knowledge who do not act as sleepers, and well-meaning but insincere people as prisoners of illusion.

His words make it clear: Knowledge forms the foundation of all action, comparable to the roots of a tree. From knowledge, strengthened by good and sincere deeds, grow the trunk and branches. And the fruit of this connection is Taqwā (fear of God).

To achieve this noble goal of true understanding of Islam, which every Muslim should strive for, we must consider how we can implement this endeavour.

Fortunately, it is evident that the pursuit of knowledge among Muslims in the West is continuously growing. However, they often face a dilemma at the beginning of their journey regarding the best approach to take. Before digitalization, the biggest challenge in the West was the lack of information about authentic Islam. Today, however, we face the opposite problem: There is so much information

that the seeker of knowledge is often overwhelmed. This can lead to various scenarios:

The seeker of knowledge...

- ⇒ feels overwhelmed by the abundance of information, not knowing what is authentic and where to start, and becomes frustrated and gives up.
- ⇒ tries to acquire knowledge without a clear structure but fails to connect the information. The result is often a fragmented, superficial understanding.
- ⇒ decides to join a specific group, hoping that its leadership will help filter the knowledge. Unfortunately, some of these groups have proven to be problematic or sectarian in the past.

Another obstacle in the West is access to authentic scholars. Even though there are many scholars in Muslim countries from Morocco to Indonesia, many Muslims in the West face significant language barriers, both in Arabic and in their native languages. This makes direct exchange of knowledge with scholars and access to original sources difficult. Moreover, in the English-speaking world, there are so far only a few scholars, and even those who are deeply engaged in study often do not have the capacity to adequately support all seekers of knowledge.

This work provides an overview of the central themes of ‘Aqīdah and aims to contribute to giving English-speaking seekers of knowledge a guide and to some extent enable them to distinguish between the correct and incorrect ‘Aqīdah. For of all the fields of knowledge in Islam, ‘Aqīdah occupies the central position. It represents the basis of faith of every individual and defines their

belief. The ‘Aqīdah determines whether someone is a Muslim or an disbeliever, with all the resulting consequences.

In the following, we first want to deal with one of the fundamental questions: Why should we strive for knowledge at all?

## 4. Why do we study Islamic Knowledge?

Allāh is Al-Hakīm, the All-Wise. Every one of His actions and every one of His words is a testament to perfect wisdom; nothing happens without reason or significance. Therefore, we start with what Allāh began His revelation to the last Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ with:

Al-‘Alaq 96:1-5

﴿ أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴾ (1)

﴿ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴾ (2)

﴿ أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴾ (3)

﴿ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴾ (4)

﴿ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴾ (5)

(1) READ, 'O PROPHET, ' IN THE NAME OF YOUR LORD WHO  
CREATED—

(2) CREATED HUMANS FROM A CLINGING CLOT. [[ 'ALAQ, MEANING  
THE EMBRYO RESEMBLES A LEECH. ]]

(3) READ! AND YOUR LORD IS THE MOST GENEROUS,

(4) WHO TAUGHT BY THE PEN—

(5) TAUGHT HUMANITY WHAT THEY KNEW NOT.

The fact that the first revelation of the Qur'ān contains the command to read and other concepts associated with knowledge such as writing, teaching, and learning, underscores the high importance

that Allāh places on knowledge. This has a wise reason, which will undoubtedly become clear in the course of this chapter.

There are numerous verses in the Qur'ān and 'Aḥādīth of the Prophet ﷺ in the authentic Sunnah that emphasize the importance of knowledge. We will discuss these here to show that knowledge forms the foundation of faith.

- *Knowledge as the Foundation of Faith:*

The pursuit of knowledge is of fundamental importance. Without knowledge, it is not possible for us to understand or believe. How can one believe in Allāh, His angels, His prophets, His books, the hereafter, and divine predestination without possessing the necessary knowledge? Faith based on ignorance is weak and unstable, while faith founded on knowledge is stable and deeply rooted. It is not faith that leads to knowledge, but knowledge that strengthens faith. Through sincere study of Islam, faith becomes solidified.

Allāh emphasizes in the the proclamation of faith:

Muḥammad 47:19

﴿ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ﴾

„SO, KNOW 'WELL, O PROPHET,' THAT THERE IS NO GOD 'WORTHY OF WORSHIP' EXCEPT ALLĀH.“

Merely possessing knowledge without corresponding understanding does not lead to true belief. Arabic Christians also refer to God as "Allāh". Although they might agree with this verse, most of them interpret their Trinitarian concept. Similarly, their conceptions of angels, prophets, holy books, and the afterlife, although shared by

both Christians and Jews, vary significantly in their interpretation. A correct understanding of these principles of faith is essential, as it determines eternal reward in Paradise or punishment in Hellfire.

- *Knowledge for the Fulfillment of Obligatory Worship:*

Allāh gives another reason for the importance of knowledge in the next verse:

Adh-Dhāriyāt 51:56

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾

„I DID NOT CREATE JINN AND HUMANS EXCEPT TO WORSHIP ME.“

This verse clarifies the main purpose of the creation of Jinn and humans: the worship of Allāh. Acquiring knowledge is an end in itself as a form of worship and a means to an end.

Only with correct knowledge about ritual practices can we worship Allāh in the way He intended and accepts. To properly fulfill our religious duties, such as daily prayers, fasting, or Zakāt, an understanding of Islamic knowledge is indispensable. Without this knowledge, we would not be able to correctly perform these religious rites.

- *Knowledge as a Means to Convey the Truth:*

Learning and disseminating knowledge is the path designated by Allāh to preserve and spread the truth. The Angel Jibrīl received the Qur’ān from Allāh and conveyed it to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet, in

turn, taught his companions, many of whom made great sacrifices to ensure that this knowledge was passed on to us.

The Qur'an even underscores the importance of pursuing knowledge in times of war. It instructs the believers that not all should go to battle, but some should remain to devote themselves to study and the dissemination of knowledge. This ensures that the process of learning and teaching continues even under difficult circumstances and emphasizes the continuous importance of education and knowledge acquisition in Islamic society.

#### At-Tawbah 9:122

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا تَفَرَّ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴾

„HOWEVER, IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE BELIEVERS TO MARCH FORTH ALL AT ONCE. ONLY A PARTY FROM EACH GROUP SHOULD MARCH FORTH, LEAVING THE REST TO GAIN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE THEN ENLIGHTEN THEIR PEOPLE WHEN THEY RETURN TO THEM, SO THAT THEY 'TOO' MAY BEWARE 'OF EVIL' .“

- *Knowledge to Strengthen the Love and Deepen the Reverence for Allāh*

Deep love and reverence for Allāh are attained through understanding what He has revealed about Himself: His nature, His likes and dislikes.

#### Fātir 35:28

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴾

„...OF ALL OF ALLĀH’S SERVANTS, ONLY THE KNOWLEDGEABLE  
‘OF HIS MIGHT’ ARE ‘TRULY’ IN AWE OF HIM. ALLĀH IS INDEED  
ALMIGHTY, ALL-FORGIVING.“

This verse emphasizes that especially those who possess comprehensive knowledge about Allāh and His religion fear Him the most. These believers know Him through His names and attributes, honor and fulfill His commands, and are aware of the consequences of their actions. This is reflected in the immense knowledge of the prophets and messengers, followed by the scholars. The intensity of reverence is directly related to knowledge: the deeper the knowledge, the greater the reverence, and vice versa.

- *Knowledge to Raise One’s Rank with Allāh:*

The status of the knowledgeable as compared to the ignorant is differently valued by Allāh. Allāh proclaims:

Az-Zumar 39:9

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

„SAY, ‘O PROPHET,’ “ARE THOSE WHO KNOW EQUAL TO THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW?” NONE WILL BE MINDFUL ‘OF THIS’ EXCEPT PEOPLE OF REASON.“

This verse from the Qur’ān clearly shows that there is a significant difference between knowledge and ignorance.

Furthermore, Allāh highlights the importance of the knowledgeable in the following verse:

## Al-Mujādilah 58:11

﴿ يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴾

„...ALLĀH WILL ELEVATE THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE FAITHFUL, AND ‘RAISE’ THOSE GIFTED WITH KNOWLEDGE IN RANK. AND ALLĀH IS ALL-AWARE OF WHAT YOU DO.“

A special privilege that Allāh grants to the knowledgeable is that He names them as witnesses of His Oneness alongside Himself and the angels. Allāh says:

## Āl ‘Imrān 3:18

﴿ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَانِتِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴾

„ALLĀH ‘HIMSELF’ IS A WITNESS THAT THERE IS NO GOD ‘WORTHY OF WORSHIP’ EXCEPT HIM—AND SO ARE THE ANGELS AND PEOPLE OF KNOWLEDGE. HE IS THE MAINTAINER OF JUSTICE. THERE IS NO GOD ‘WORTHY OF WORSHIP’ EXCEPT HIM—THE ALMIGHTY, ALL-WISE.“

The prominent role that Allāh assigns to the knowledgeable underscores the immense and blessed significance of the knowledge that He bestows upon those He wishes to reward.

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ: مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

„Whom Allāh wishes to favor, He grants understanding of the religion.“

(Muslim)

- *Knowledge as one of the highest forms of worship*

The pursuit of knowledge is among the noblest forms of worship.

عَنْ عَثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: (خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ) رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

„The best among you are those who learn the  
Qur’ān and teach it.“

(Bukhārī)

- *Knowledge as an Incentive to Compete in Goodness*

Even envy, often perceived as negative, can be considered a positive motivation in the pursuit of noble knowledge.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: (لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَسَلِطَ عَلَيْهِ هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا) أَخْرَجَهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ (1409) ،  
وَمُسْلِمٌ (816).

„There is no envy, except in two cases: a man  
whom Allāh has given wealth and he spends it  
rightly, and a man whom Allāh has given wisdom  
and he judges and teaches with it.“

(Bukhārī)

- *Knowledge as a Form of Jihād*

The pursuit of knowledge is so highly esteemed that it is often regarded as a form of Jihād.

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: (مَنْ دَخَلَ مَسْجِدَنَا هَذَا لِيَتَعَلَّمَ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيُعَلِّمَهُ كَانَ كَالْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ دَخَلَ لِعَيْرِ ذَلِكَ كَانَ كَالتَّاطِرِ إِلَى مَا لَيْسَ لَهُ)، رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَابْنُ مَاجَهَ (69)، وَقَالَ: (هُوَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ التَّاطِرِ إِلَى مَنَاعٍ غَيْرِهِ).

*„Whoever enters our mosque to teach the good or to learn it himself, he is fighting in Jihād on the path of Allāh. Whoever enters it for another reason, sees what does not belong to him.“*

*(Musnad Ahmad)*

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: (مَنْ عَدَا أَوْ زَاحَ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ لَا يُرِيدُ غَيْرَهُ لِيَتَعَلَّمَ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيُعَلِّمَهُ ثُمَّ رَجَعَ إِلَى بَيْتِهِ كَانَ كَالْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ رَجَعًا غَانِمًا) أَخْرَجَهُ الطَّبْرَانِيُّ (7473).

*„Whoever goes to the mosque in the morning, intending to go nowhere else but to teach the good or to learn it himself, and then returns to his house, is like someone who fights in Jihād on the path of Allāh and returns with booty.“*

*(Aṭ-Ṭabarānī)*

وَعَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: (مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ، كَانَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ) رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ (2647)، وَقَالَ: حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ.

*„Whoever goes out to seek knowledge is on the path of Allāh, until he returns.“*

*(At-Tirmidhī)*

- *Knowledge as Ongoing Ṣadaqah (Ṣadaqah al-Jāriyah)*

Knowledge is so significant that it counts among the rare deeds that continue to benefit a person even after their death.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: (إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ) رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

*„When a person dies, their actions cease except for three: a continuing charity, useful knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for them.“*

(Muslim)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: (إِنَّ مِمَّا يَلْحَقُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ وَحَسَنَاتِهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ عِلْمًا عَلَّمَهُ وَنَشَرَهُ وَوَلَدًا صَالِحًا تَرَكَهُ وَمُصْحَفًا وَرَّثَهُ أَوْ مَسْجِدًا بَنَاهُ أَوْ بَيْتًا لِابْنِ السَّبِيلِ بَنَاهُ أَوْ نَهْرًا أَجْرَاهُ أَوْ صَدَقَةً أَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ مَالِهِ فِي صِحَّتِهِ وَحَيَاتِهِ يَلْحَقُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهِ) حَسَنَةُ الْأَبْيَانِي فِي صَحِيحِ ابْنِ مَاجَه (200).

*„Indeed, among the good deeds that will accompany a believer after his death are these: knowledge that he taught and spread, a righteous child that he leaves behind, a copy of the Qur’ān that he leaves as an inheritance, a mosque that he built, a house that he built for travelers, a well that he dug, and charity that he distributed from his wealth while he was alive and well. These deeds will follow him after his death.“*

(Ibn Mājah)

- *Knowledge as a Path to Paradise*

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that knowledge is also a path to Paradise and brings numerous other blessings from Alḥāh.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ كَانَ مِنْ دُعَاءِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ: (وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَعَشِيَتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ).

*„Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Alḥāh will make the path to Paradise easy for him. People do not gather in the houses of Alḥāh to recite the Book of Alḥāh and study it together, except that tranquility descends upon them, they are covered with mercy, angels surround them, and Alḥāh mentions them to those who are with Him.“*

*(Muslim)*

To keep the introductory part concise, we have limited ourselves to a few examples to illustrate why acquiring knowledge is so important. In the next section, we will address the fundamental question: What actually is “knowledge”?

## 5. What is Knowledge?

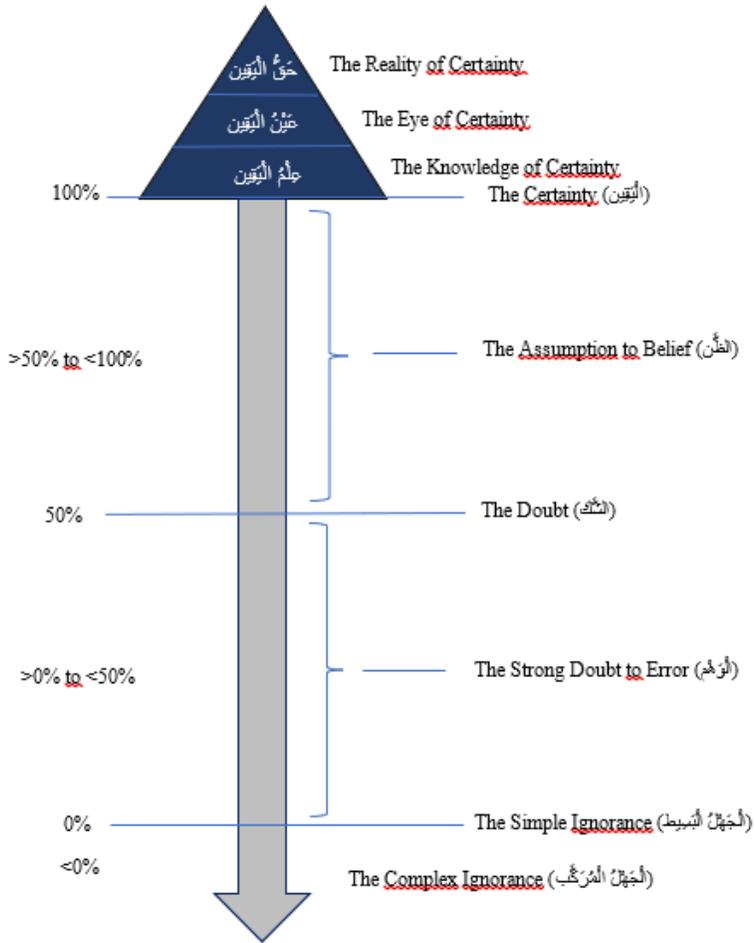
To ensure clarity from the outset and avoid misunderstandings later on, we define “knowledge” as follows:

„Knowledge is a firm belief (= certainty) that corresponds with the reality/truth of a matter.“

In the pursuit of knowledge, the concept of “Yaqīn” (certainty) holds a significant position as it represents the highest level of conviction and understanding. Below Yaqīn, there are lower levels of understanding, which reflect the gradual journey of acquiring and internalizing knowledge.

The following diagram is a general model for levels of knowledge, but in the field of Islamic knowledge, especially in the fundamental principles of faith where there is no disagreement among scholars, absolute certainty without any doubt is required. In this regard, it is insufficient, in the mathematical sense, to believe in the existence of Aļļāh to 99.9%, as even a minimal residual doubt is unacceptable.

- Knowledge in Islam – Yaqīn and Lower Levels of Understanding



## 5.1 Yaqīn: The Summit of Knowledge and Belief

Yaqīn is the absolute certainty about the truth, free from doubts or hesitation. In analogy to mathematics, Yaqīn corresponds to a certainty of 100%.

On the path to religious understanding, especially within Islamic Theology, three key concepts play a crucial role: ‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn (The Knowledge of Certainty), ‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn (The Eye of Certainty), and Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn (The Reality of Certainty). These stages represent the deepening levels of faith and certainty in the heart of a believer.

- *‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn (عِلْمُ الْيَقِينِ): The Knowledge of Certainty*

The first level, ‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn, refers to the certainty that is gained through knowledge. It is the type of certainty obtained when one hears about something or learns about it. For instance, when one hears about the existence of Paradise and Hell, one achieves ‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn. This knowledge is based on faith in the unseen, derived from the teachings of the Qur’ān and the ‘Aḥādīth. It is an intellectual acceptance and recognition of the truth.

Although it forms the foundation of faith, it is not the pinnacle of the pursuit of knowledge. It is comparable to hearing about a distant land without ever having seen it.

- *‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn (عَيْنُ الْيَقِينِ): The Eye of Certainty*

‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn goes a step further. It is the certainty that comes from seeing. Imagine traveling to the distant land one has heard about and seeing it with one’s own eyes. This seeing leads to a higher level of certainty. In the Islamic context, ‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn is comparable to witnessing the signs of Allāh in the universe, experiencing the truth of Islamic teachings in one’s own life, or, as in the previous example,

being granted a vision of the existence of Paradise and Hell in the afterlife.

- *Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn* (حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ): *The Reality of Certainty*

Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn is the highest level of certainty and is comparable to attaining the essence of truth. It is not just about seeing or knowing; it is experiencing and living the truth. In the context of the analogy, it is like becoming a resident of the land one has heard about and seen, or, as in the example of the afterlife, experiencing the reality of Paradise by entering it.

## 5.2 Lower Levels of Understanding

Below Yaqīn, there are several levels of understanding:

- *Az-Zann* (الظَّن) (The Assumption to Belief >50% to <100%): This is the level of knowledge based on assumptions or probabilities. It represents a belief that, depending on its degree, ranges from likely to quite certain, but is not considered absolutely certain.
- *Ash-Shakk* (الشَّكِّ) (The Doubt =50%): This refers to doubtful or uncertain knowledge. At this stage, someone might have contradictory thoughts and is seeking clarity. This person is as sure as they are unsure about the truth.
- *Al-Wahm* (الْوَهْم) (The Strong Doubt to Error >0% to <50%): The stage of misconception or illusion. Here, a person holds beliefs or understands concepts that are contrary to the truth.

### 5.3 Levels of Al-Jahl (Ignorance)

- *Al-Jahl-ul-Basīṭ* (الْجَهْلُ الْبَسِيطُ) ((The Simple Ignorance =0%): Simple ignorance refers to a state of unawareness in which a person is not conscious of their lack of knowledge.

Since this form of ignorance is based simply on a lack of knowledge, it is generally easier to remedy through education and learning. Examples: Lack of knowledge about the details of Islamic rituals or unfamiliarity with certain Islamic laws due to lack of experience or education.

- *Al-Jahl-ul-Murakkab* (الْجَهْلُ الْمُرَكَّبُ) (The Complex Ignorance <0%): Complex ignorance occurs when a person is ignorant but believes and insists that they have knowledge.

This form of ignorance is more difficult to correct as it requires the person first to recognize their incorrect understanding and then to unlearn it. Examples: Misinterpretations of Qur'ān verses or 'Aḥādīth, or adherence to cultural practices that contradict Islamic teachings, believing them to be correct.

To enhance the understanding of this model, we illustrate it with an example:

## 5.4 Example of Yaqīn, Lower Levels of Understanding, and the Levels of Al-Jahl (Ignorance): The Existence of Allāh (from an Islamic perspective)

- ‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn: Through the Qur’ān, we know of the existence of Allāh.
- ‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn: Although we cannot see Allāh in this world, we see the “traces” of His existence. Creation itself is a visible proof of a Creator, and in Paradise, believers will see Allāh with their own eyes.
- Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn: If we are among the inhabitants of Paradise, we will directly experience Allāh’s favor and blessings.
- Az-Zann: This category includes people who are interested in Islam or are close to conversion, before reaching the stage of certainty.
- Ash-Shakk: This includes agnostics who are equally unsure as they are sure about the existence of Allāh. They neither affirm nor deny Allāh’s existence.
- Al-Wahm: This group includes people with a false concept of God, who, however, do not adhere to their misconceptions, unlike those affected by Al-Jahl al-Murakkab. Many non-believers fall into this category. They do not completely rule out the existence of Allāh but consider it unlikely due to other beliefs.

- Al-Jahl-ul-Basīt: Some isolated indigenous peoples, separated from the rest of humanity, may have a concept of God but do not know Aļļāh.
- Al-Jahl-ul-Murakkab: This includes stubborn non-believers convinced of their erroneous conception of God.

### **5.5 How can one achieve the level of Yaqīn?**

As we have seen from the above examples, ‘Ilm-ul-Yaqīn is the foundation of this level. We achieve this through:

- Knowledge acquisition: Continuous learning and acquiring knowledge by studying the Qur’ān, the ‘Aḥādīth, and other Islamic sciences.
- Reflection and contemplation (immersing oneself in the works and words of Aļļāh): Deep thinking and reflecting on the signs of Aļļāh in the universe and in one’s own life.
- Religious practice: Performing acts of worship and refraining from sins to strengthen faith and understanding.

In the further stages of Yaqīn, ‘Ayn-ul-Yaqīn and Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn, especially in the religious context, many aspects relate to the unseen, which will only become visible to the human eye in the hereafter. These include the existence of Paradise and Hell, angels, and other metaphysical entities. What we perceive and experience in this world, however, are the “effects” of the unseen. Examples of this are the existence of creation as proof of a Creator, the Qur’ān as evidence for the existence of the Prophet Muḥammadﷺ, the observable effects of Siḥr (magic) on those affected, and similar phenomena. Through our

own existence and our personal experiences, we experience creation up close.

Having dealt extensively with the topic of “knowledge,” we will now turn to the classification of knowledge in the following section.

## 6. Classification of Knowledge

All knowledge originates from Allāh. He transmits it to angels, prophets, humans, jinn, animals, and all of creation. The knowledge imparted varies significantly among these different creatures and even within these groups. Knowledge is characterized by diverse attributes.

The incomparable absolute knowledge of Allāh, the All-Knowing, is characterised by the following features: It is complete, always true, unchangeable, and independent. It knows neither beginning nor end and has never been affected by ignorance, learning, or forgetting.

In contrast, human knowledge has characteristics such as limitation, incompleteness, and relativity. This knowledge can be further divided into two categories:

**a) Necessary/Instinctive Knowledge (الْعِلْمُ الصَّرْوِيُّ):** This knowledge does not require proof and includes:

- ⇒ Innate, direct knowledge about personal sensations like the feeling of one's own "self/ego," hunger, pain, joy, etc.
- ⇒ Immediate logical insights, such as the principle of non-contradiction, which states that one cannot be dead and alive at the same time.
- ⇒ Sensory perceptions, for example, the knowledge that fire is hot.

**b) Theoretical Knowledge (الْعِلْمُ النَّظَرِيُّ):** This knowledge requires proof and is acquired through effort by means of learning, reflection, research, experimenting, experience, etc.

In our discussion, we primarily focus on theoretical knowledge. Additionally, we consider the judgment of knowledge in jurisprudence.

## 7. The Ruling on Knowledge

In Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is not only encouraged but also considered a fundamental aspect in the life of a Muslim. Permissible knowledge is roughly divided into two types: Farḍ al-‘Ayn (individual obligation) and Farḍ al-Kifayah (communal obligation).

### 7.1 Farḍ al‘Ayn: Individual Obligation

Farḍ al‘Ayn refers to the knowledge that every individual Muslim is obliged to acquire. This includes:

- Basic beliefs of Islam: Understanding the unity of Allāh, the prophets, the angels, the holy books, the Day of Judgment, and divine predestination, etc.
- Acts of worship: Knowledge about how to perform the five daily prayers, fasting in Ramaḍān, giving Zakāt (alms), and performing the Hajj, etc.
- Knowledge of Ḥalāl (permissible) and Ḥarām (forbidden) regarding matters that concern oneself.

The acquisition of Farḍ al-‘Ayn knowledge is considered essential for practicing faith and living according to Islamic principles. Without this knowledge, it would be difficult for a Muslim to fulfill their religious duties correctly.

## 7.2 Farḍ al-Kifāyah: Communal Obligation

Farḍ al-Kifāyah refers to the knowledge that is obligatory for the community as a whole. If a sufficient number of community members acquire this knowledge, the obligation is lifted from the rest. Examples include:

- Advanced religious studies: In-depth knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), Ḥadīth, Tafsīr (interpretation of the Qur'ān), and Islamic theology.
- Secular sciences: Medicine, engineering, social sciences, and other fields necessary for the well-being and progress of society.

The idea behind Farḍ Kifāyah is that the community can function effectively as a whole and contribute to the broader welfare and progress of society when it collectively possesses these skills and knowledge.

## 7.3 Forbidden Knowledge

In Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is highly valued and seen as a noble endeavour. However, not every type of knowledge is permissible. Islam sets boundaries regarding what type of knowledge should be sought and what should be avoided.

Forbidden knowledge in Islam refers to any form of knowledge that is considered harmful to the individual or society, contradicts Islamic principles, or leads one away from the path of Aļļāh.

Examples of Forbidden Knowledge

Several types of knowledge are typically considered forbidden in Islam:

- Sorcery and magic: Learning or practicing magic and sorcery, which involves seeking help through Jinns, is strictly prohibited.
- Divination and astrology: Any practice claiming to predict the future or reveal the hidden, such as astrology, palm reading, or divination, is forbidden.
- Knowledge leading to sin: Acquiring knowledge that promotes sinful activities or leads to moral corruption is considered forbidden.
- Intrusive or harmful knowledge: Intruding into personal affairs of individuals without their consent or acquiring knowledge to harm others is forbidden. Spying on enemies in wartime is an exception to this rule.

With this chapter, we conclude the introduction to the topic of “knowledge” and move on to an essential principle that is indispensable for understanding Islam, especially in terms of ‘Aqīdah (doctrine): the principle of “Naql before ‘Aql”. This means that the tradition (Naql) takes precedence over reason (‘Aql).

## **8. Introduction to the Principle: Naql (Transmitted Knowledge) before ‘Aql (Reason)**

Allāh has endowed us humans, unlike animals that mainly act instinctively, with the gift of ‘Aql (reason). Although ‘Aql enables us to think and rationalize, its abilities are limited. The study of the Qur’ān reveals that both its recipients (the prophets) and the target audience (all of humanity) are called to understand and accept the transmitted message. Allāh urges us in various contexts to use our reason.

This can be divided into four main categories:

1. Allāh calls on disbelievers to reflect and use their ‘Aql.
2. He guides us to reflect on the life of the Prophet ﷺ and use our ‘Aql.
3. To strengthen our faith in Allāh, even if we are already believers.
4. He encourages us to grasp the meanings of the Qur’ān and Sunnah with our ‘Aql.

From the various verses of the Qur’ān, we learn two essential points:

1. We should fully utilize ‘Aql in areas that are accessible to rational investigation.
2. We must accept that some things simply cannot be understood rationally, and attempting to “rationalize” them can lead to Tahrīf (distortion). The Qur’ān and Sunnah allow us to use our ‘Aql within its appropriate framework, but also remind us that

ultimately only Allāh is absolute, and everything else, including human intellectual capabilities, has its limits.

## 8.1 'Aql and Its Limitations

The 'Aql, or reason, has limitations for the following main reasons:

1. The 'Aql relies on the five senses and the thoughts of the individual. Therefore, the 'Aql, which embodies intellectual capacity, cannot function optimally without physical ability. If someone lacks the ability to see, hear, feel, speak, or smell, their 'Aql is restricted and impaired.
2. Even if all senses function flawlessly, they are still limited. The senses require stimuli of a certain intensity to be perceived.

The absolute thresholds of perception are as follows:



The flame of a candle can be seen from a distance of up to 30 miles on a dark, clear night.



The ticking of a clock can be heard from a distance of up to 20 ft in a quiet environment.



A teaspoon of sugar dissolved in water is tasteable up to a maximum water volume of 2.5 gal.



A drop of perfume can be perceived in a room of up to 64 ft<sup>2</sup>.



The touch of a bee wing is still noticeable when it falls on the cheek from a distance of 0.4".

- *The Distinction between the World of the Perceivable and the World of the Unseen*

It is a fundamental principle that the existence of something does not necessarily depend on our ability to perceive it. Not everything that exists is perceivable to us. From this follows that not perceiving something does not automatically mean that it does not exist.

In Islamic teaching, this is illustrated by the distinction between two realms:

- Al-‘Ālam ash-Shahāda (The World of the Perceivable): This realm includes everything that is within our senses and perceptual capabilities.

- Al-‘Ālam al-Ghayb (The World of the Unseen): This refers to everything that is beyond our direct perception and can only be grasped through faith or revelation.

3. If the ‘Aql (reason) alone were sufficient to grasp the concept of Tawḥīd (Monotheism), Allāh would not have sent a revelation (Naql). The fact that Allāh sent down a revelation proves that our ‘Aql has its limits.
4. The ‘Aql is not equally developed in every person, and each cultural context influences thinking in different ways. Over time, our understanding can change, while the revelation (Naql) remains unchanged. It is therefore sensible to rely on the constant Naql, rather than the variable ‘Aql.
5. ‘Iblīs was the first being to decide to place ‘Aql above Naql. His reason could not accept bowing down to a being he

considered inferior. Thus, his ‘Aql led to his disobedience and rebellion.

In summary, the ‘Aql (reason) may guide us to Naql (revelation, consisting of Qur’ān and Sunnah), but it cannot replace its function. Both are interactive and serve different purposes. We use ‘Aql to understand Naql, not to evaluate its validity.

One should not be deceived by the apparent power of one’s own ‘Aql, regardless of how profound the understanding may be. It is inappropriate to use one’s own ‘Aql as a standard and to see the transmitted texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah merely as supplements. In doing so, one should beware of accepting only what corresponds with one’s own ‘Aql, and rejecting or distorting everything else.

Having discussed this fundamental principle, we would like to add a few words of caution to you.

## 9. A Word of Caution

Embarking on the journey of knowledge equates to challenging Shayṭān. While many are familiar with the name Shayṭān, not everyone may know his story, which holds profound lessons. Shayṭān, initially known as 'Iblīs, was among the Jinns, beings created by Allāh from fire. Distinct from his kin, 'Iblīs was esteemed as their progenitor and was a devout worshipper of Allāh. His dedication and depth of knowledge were so extraordinary that Allāh granted him the privilege to reside among the noble angels in heaven.

A pivotal moment in 'Iblīs' existence occurred with the creation of Ādam, the first human. When Allāh commanded all angels, a directive that included 'Iblīs, to prostrate before Ādam as a sign of respect for His creation, all complied except for 'Iblīs. His refusal to prostrate, stemming from a sense of superiority due to his fiery origin compared to Ādam's clay composition, marked his defiance of Allāh's command. This act of rebellion resulted in 'Iblīs' fall from grace and transformation into Shayṭān, becoming the perpetual deceiver and nemesis of humanity.

This narrative serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of arrogance and disobedience, underscoring the importance of humility and submission to Allāh's will.

Al-A'raf 7:11-18

(11) ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ﴾

(12) ﴿قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ﴾

(13) ﴿قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ﴾

(14) ﴿قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

(15) ﴿ قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴾

(16) ﴿ قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لأَقْعَدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴾

(17) ﴿ ثُمَّ لآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴾

(18) ﴿ قَالَ أَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَذْءُومًا مَدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴾

(11) SURELY WE CREATED YOU, ( I.E., YOUR FATHER, ADAM) THEN SHAPED YOU, THEN SAID TO THE ANGELS, “PROSTRATE BEFORE ADAM,” SO THEY ALL DID—BUT NOT IBLÎS, WHO REFUSED TO PROSTRATE WITH THE OTHERS.

(12) ALLĀH ASKED, “WHAT PREVENTED YOU FROM PROSTRATING WHEN I COMMANDED YOU?” HE REPLIED, “I AM BETTER THAN HE IS: YOU CREATED ME FROM FIRE AND HIM FROM CLAY.”

(13) ALLĀH SAID, “THEN GET DOWN FROM PARADISE! IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO BE ARROGANT HERE. SO GET OUT! YOU ARE TRULY ONE OF THE DISGRACED.”

(14) HE APPEALED, “THEN DELAY MY END UNTIL THE DAY OF THEIR RESURRECTION.”

(15) ALLĀH SAID, “YOU ARE DELAYED ‘UNTIL THE APPOINTED DAY.’”[[ SATAN ASKED TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE UNTIL HUMANS ARE RESURRECTED IN ORDER TO ESCAPE DEATH AT THE END OF TIME. HE WAS TOLD HE WAS GOING TO LIVE ONLY UNTIL THE TIME APPOINTED BY ALLĀH ALMIGHTY. ]]

(16) HE SAID, “FOR LEAVING ME TO STRAY I WILL LIE IN AMBUSH FOR THEM ON YOUR STRAIGHT PATH.

(17) I WILL APPROACH THEM FROM THEIR FRONT, THEIR BACK, THEIR RIGHT, THEIR LEFT, AND THEN YOU WILL FIND MOST OF THEM UNGRATEFUL.”

(18) ALLĀH SAID, “GET OUT OF PARADISE! YOU ARE DISGRACED AND REJECTED! I WILL CERTAINLY FILL UP HELL WITH YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS ALL TOGETHER.”

It is perplexing how ʿIblīs, who achieved a distinguished status through his knowledge and piety, to the point of dwelling among angels, could commit such a self-destructive act. The answer lies in the trap of self-deception. Shayṭān, endowed with vast knowledge and righteous deeds, should have been humbled by these blessings from Allāh. Contrarily, he let these divine favors inflate his ego, leading him down a path of arrogance.

His arrogance was so profound that it not only led him to disobey Allāh's command but also to challenge His wisdom and omniscience. Shayṭān rationalized his disobedience with a flawed argument of superiority, claiming his creation from fire was superior to Ādam's creation from clay. This misguided belief made him value his own logic over Allāh's command, displaying a grave lack of submission to Allāh's infinite wisdom.

This story of Shayṭān stands as a stark reminder of the perils of arrogance, illustrating how it can deviate one from the path of righteousness. Prophet Muḥammad has also addressed the detrimental impact of arrogance, warning of its potential to lead believers astray. Shayṭān's fall serves as a critical lesson on the importance of humility and adherence to divine guidance:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ قَالَ رَجُلٌ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ تَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَتَعْلَاهُ حَسَنَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ الْكِبَرُ بَطْرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمَطُ النَّاسِ

*“Abdullah ibn Mas’ud reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “No one who has an atom’s weight of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise.” A man said: “But people like to wear nice clothes and nice shoes.” The Prophet said: “Indeed, Allāh is beautiful and He loves beauty. Arrogance means rejecting the truth and looking down on people.”*

*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 91*

Arrogance is a defining trait of ‘Iblīs and his adherents in this world. It’s crucial to stay alert and actively avoid arrogance, thereby not emulating their example. Walking in the footsteps of arrogance can lead one away from the righteous path. In the divine scripture, Allāh warns us about the pernicious nature of such traits:

Al-Baqarah 2:168

﴿ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴾

„...AND DO NOT FOLLOW SATAN’S FOOTSTEPS. HE IS TRULY YOUR SWORN ENEMY.“

Shayṭān’s animosity is particularly aimed at those in the Muslim community who are endowed with Islamic knowledge. The reason is clear: the more profound one’s knowledge, the stronger the shield against his deceptive schemes. Knowledge thus becomes an invaluable tool in defending against the machinations of Shayṭān and his followers. His strategy involves keeping us in a state of ignorance,

making it easier to lead us astray and towards ruin. Remaining vigilant and prepared to confront this unseen but evident foe is of paramount importance. Shayṭān will endeavor to attack from all directions in an attempt to deviate us from our chosen path.

Moreover, understanding Shayṭān's fate is crucial. Condemned to eternal damnation and continuous punishment in Hell, he is driven by the desire to drag as many souls as possible down with him. This awareness should reinforce our resolve to steadfastly adhere to the path of knowledge and righteousness.

Fātir 35:6

﴿ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴾

„SURELY SATAN IS AN ENEMY TO YOU, SO TAKE HIM AS AN ENEMY. HE ONLY INVITES HIS FOLLOWERS TO BECOME INMATES OF THE BLAZE.“

With a deeper understanding of our adversary, this chapter focuses on exposing the various tactics employed by Shayṭān to derail us from the pursuit of knowledge, create hindrances, or lead us entirely off course. Nevertheless, it's essential to maintain a perspective that does not succumb to fear of Shayṭān. Instead, it's he who should be wary of us, as we are under the protection and guidance of Aļļāh. Aļļāh has equipped us with the necessary tools and strategies for our defense. Shayṭān's influence is limited to mere enticement towards wrongdoing, and his promises are mere illusions.

## 9.1 Navigating the Pitfalls of Shayṭān in Pursuing Knowledge

- *Temptation to Sin*

A frequent tactic of Shayṭān is to entice one into committing sins. ʿImān (faith) is reinforced through righteous actions and diminished by sinful deeds. This strategy of Shayṭān manifests in two primary ways: Firstly, engaging in one sin often leads to another, creating a harmful cycle that progressively weakens ʿImān and shifts focus away from the pursuit of Islamic knowledge. Secondly, even after seeking forgiveness, Shayṭān’s insinuations may induce feelings of unworthiness in acquiring Islamic knowledge, leading to self-doubt and perceived hypocrisy.

To safeguard against these and other snares of Shayṭān, consistently seeking Allāh’s refuge is essential. Protection from sins comes solely from Allāh, not merely through personal willpower or virtue. Recognizing that even the ability to breathe is granted by Allāh underscores the need for His divine protection in all aspects of life.

Consistent practice of ʿIstiʿādhah, the act of seeking refuge in Allāh from Shayṭān, is crucial. This should be done throughout the day and particularly when feeling susceptible to Shayṭān’s influence. Regularly reciting these protective supplications forms a barrier against Shayṭān’s attempts to derail one’s spiritual and educational journey:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

„I seek Allāh’s protection (refuge) from  
Shayṭān, the accursed“

Regularly engaging in the morning and evening 'Adhkār (remembrances) is a potent means provided by Allāh to guard against Shayṭān and his machinations. It is immensely beneficial to incorporate the recitation of these 'Adhkār, along with the protective verses of the Qur'ān, such as the last three chapters and 'Āyat-ul-Kursī, into one's daily routine. Adhering to this practice can bring about a noticeable enhancement in one's spiritual health and resilience.

Fasting emerges as another effective strategy to thwart Shayṭān's deceptive tactics. It fortifies not only the body and mind but also bolsters self-discipline, making it more challenging for Shayṭān to exert his influence.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَجْرَى الدَّمِ

*„Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Indeed, Satan flows through the human being like the flow of blood.”*

*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2174*

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah commented in “Majmū‘ah al-Fatāwā” (246/25):

„Fasting subdues and weakens the Shayṭān. His whispers to the human become weaker and his sins fewer, for Shayṭān flows in the son of Adam like the stream of blood, as the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, said. Through fasting, the channels of Shayṭān are narrowed, he is weakened, and his influence diminishes.”

Thus, fasting acts as a means of liberating and purifying the soul by constricting the pathways through which Shayṭān attempts to

traverse within the human body. Drawing from the Ḥadīth that likens Shayṭān’s movement to the circulation of blood, it’s understood that he can reach all parts of the body, whispering towards negligence in worship and beautifying sins to incite dishonorable actions. Fasting significantly impairs Shayṭān’s mobility and his ability to disseminate these corrupting whispers, thereby aiding in maintaining spiritual integrity and focus.

- *Manipulation of Intention*

Shayṭān is known to exert influence on our intentions, often appealing to our Nafs (ego) to instill a false sense of superiority. This manipulation can lead us to believe we are more important or special than others, possibly envisioning ourselves in esteemed roles like a Shaykh or ‘Ustādh. Such deceptive flattery can alter our true intentions, moving us away from humility and potentially distorting our purpose in seeking knowledge.

The risk also lies in these whisperings planting seeds of doubt about the sincerity of our quest for knowledge. The fear of being hypocritical might become so overwhelming that it deters us from continuing our scholarly pursuits.

The concept of sincerity in Islam is vast and profound. Engaging with scholarly lectures and reading on this topic is highly recommended. A helpful guiding principle is to attribute all good to Allāh and take personal responsibility for shortcomings. This approach aligns with the teachings of Prophet ‘Ibrāhīm:

Ash-Shu‘arā’ 26:78-82

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ﴾ (78)

﴿ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴾ (79)

﴿ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴾ (80)

﴿ وَالَّذِي يُمَيِّتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴾ (81)

﴿ وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴾ (82)

(78) „WHO CREATED ME. IT IS HE WHO GUIDES ME;

(79) HE WHO GIVES ME FOOD AND DRINK;

(80) HE WHO CURES ME WHEN I AM ILL;

(81) HE WHO WILL MAKE ME DIE AND THEN GIVE ME LIFE AGAIN;

(82) AND HE WHO WILL, I HOPE, FORGIVE MY FAULTS ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT.“

He did not attribute illness to Allāh, as he attributed creation, guidance, and provision to Him. He did not say “if Allāh makes me sick,” but attributed the illness to himself and the healing to Allāh.

Applying this principle in daily life, one should credit successes, like memorizing the Qur’ān, to Allāh’s grace, recognizing that any achievement is made possible through His blessings. Conversely, when facing obstacles in learning, it’s constructive to reflect on personal factors like inconsistency or lack of effort as areas for self-improvement. This balanced perspective helps maintain a sincere and humble approach to acquiring knowledge.

- *Procrastination Through Distraction*

Procrastination, the act of delaying urgent and necessary tasks for less important activities, is a common struggle. It often manifests as excuses to defer tasks, leading to a cycle of continuous postponement. Shayṭān capitalizes on this tendency, diverting one's attention to trivial matters, creating the illusion of having insufficient time for more meaningful pursuits like studying.

Using distractions as a substitute for study is a favored strategy of Shayṭān and his allies to derail our quest for knowledge. This can take various forms, from excessive use of social media to lengthy conversations with friends, or suddenly feeling compelled to engage in other activities like cleaning or shopping at the time set aside for study.

Breaking the cycle of procrastination requires persistent effort and determination. The goal is to replace this habit with a consistent pattern of focused behavior. Despite its challenges, overcoming procrastination is crucial for personal development and progress in acquiring knowledge.

- *Poor Prioritization*

In the pursuit of Islamic knowledge, a common refrain is the desire to learn more about Islam, hindered by the excuse of a lack of time. This often reflects either a misalignment of priorities or ineffective organization of daily routines.

Shayṭān may subtly influence those in training or facing uncertain professional or financial situations, persuading them to prioritize these worldly concerns first. He insinuates that one should secure a stable

life before embarking on the journey of acquiring Islamic knowledge. However, experience shows that the anticipated 'peaceful times' for uninterrupted learning rarely materialize. In reality, as time progresses, opportunities and resources that could facilitate achieving Islamic educational goals often diminish, while obstacles tend to multiply.

With age, responsibilities towards oneself and others, such as family or elderly parents, tend to grow, consequently limiting available free time. Additionally, one's physical and mental capacities aren't constant; fatigue sets in more quickly, and recovery takes longer. Furthermore, cognitive abilities may not remain as sharp with advancing age. This is captured by an Arabic proverb illustrating the ease of learning in youth compared to the challenges faced in later years:

الْحِفْظُ فِي الصَّغَرِ كَالنَّشْرِ عَلَى الْحَجَرِ وَالْحِفْظُ فِي الْكِبَرِ كَالْكِتَابَةِ عَلَى الْمَاءِ

*„Memorizing in childhood is like engraving on stone, while memorizing in old age is like writing on water.”*

As one ages, the challenge of learning is often compounded by the increased risk of health issues. Furthermore, the assumption of longevity is uncertain; there is no guarantee of reaching old age.

Shayṭān can exploit this uncertainty in different life stages. In youth, he may instill a false sense of endless time, suggesting there's plenty of opportunity to learn later. Conversely, in later years, he may argue it's too late to start learning. While it's true that learning is feasible at any age, the Prophet ﷺ emphasized the importance of seizing the moment for a reason:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اغْتَنِمُوا قَبْلَ حَمْسَا قَبْلَ حَمْسٍ سَبَابِكُمْ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكُمْ وَصِحَّتِكُمْ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكُمْ وَغَنَاتِكُمْ قَبْلَ فُقْرِكُمْ وَقَرَاعَتِكُمْ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكُمْ وَحَيَاتِكُمْ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكُمْ

*“Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Take advantage of five things before five others come: your youth before your old age, your health before you fall ill, your wealth before you become impoverished, your free time before you become busy, and your life before your death.”*

*Shu'ab al- 'Imān 9767*

The notion of not having enough time for Islamic studies, as often claimed by individuals with heavy responsibilities, such as a single parent with multiple children, is a perilous misconception. Such justifications, while seeming valid, won't hold on the Day of Judgment and are ultimately self-deceptive. Living one's faith should be a Muslim's primary commitment, with other aspects of life being secondary. Indeed, education and career pursuits are crucial, but they are means to support one's Islamic obligations and should not overshadow them. University students, for instance, may dedicate extensive time to their academic studies, yet struggle to allocate time for Islamic learning. This imbalance can lead to succeeding in worldly endeavors while potentially failing in what is life's most significant 'exam.' Hence, it's essential to establish balanced priorities. Allocating time for Islamic duties and knowledge should be integral to one's daily schedule, alongside other responsibilities.

- *Generating Negative Feelings through Impatience and Overwhelm*

Persisting in regular study despite Shayṭān's distractions, he may resort to tactics of inducing impatience. He tempts one to set overly ambitious goals, leading often to a sense of overwhelm and subsequent failure. This cycle can exacerbate feelings of frustration and disappointment. Beyond the discomfort of impatience, not meeting overly ambitious goals can be deeply demotivating and might even lead to abandoning the learning process altogether. Even if one adopts more realistic goals, Shayṭān might stir impatience by suggesting that the efforts are inadequate and goals unattainable, potentially resulting in giving up out of frustration.

However, limited time for study in one's current life situation should not be a source of discouragement. Circumstances evolve. For instance, a single parent with young children may find more time becomes available as the children grow older. It's important to do what is feasible in the present moment, no matter how modest it may seem, as Allāh values even the smallest efforts.

In such situations, it's essential to remember that every bit of knowledge accumulated is valuable, and perseverance in learning, even in small increments, is highly regarded in the eyes of Allāh.

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اكْفُوا مِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا تُطِيفُونَ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْعَمَلِ أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ

*„Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Do as much good as you can, for the best deeds are those that you do regularly, even if they are few.”*

*Sunan Ibn Mājah 4240*

- *Comparison with Other Students of Knowledge*

A subtle ploy of Shayṭān might involve inciting comparisons with fellow students of knowledge. He may highlight how others are progressing more rapidly, potentially inducing feelings of inadequacy or failure. Shayṭān can exploit these emotions to drive one towards an unhealthy form of competition. While striving for excellence in good deeds is inherently beneficial, there's a danger that such competition might evolve into a quest for personal ambition, overshadowing the true purpose of seeking knowledge – which is to do good – with a desire for superiority and recognition.

The intensity of this ambition could lead to two extremes: either outshining everyone or succumbing to overwhelm and giving up. Achieving either of these outcomes signifies Shayṭān's success in corrupting one's intentions, instilling doubts about sincerity, or leading to abandonment of the pursuit of knowledge.

To guard against this, it's crucial to concentrate on personal growth and self-improvement. Challenge yourself to continually expand your knowledge, aiming to learn more with each passing day. Even a small increment in understanding, knowing a bit more today than yesterday, signifies progress and is a step in the right direction.

- *Comparison of Worships*

In evading Shayṭān's snares, one might encounter a subtler form of temptation where Shayṭān insinuates that others are engaging in more physical forms of worship, such as voluntary prayers, thereby implying one is missing out on substantial rewards. This could lead to an internal struggle, making one question if more time should be devoted to additional prayers instead of seeking knowledge. Should

this comparison cause discomfort, contemplating fasting as an alternative is advisable. Fasting, a versatile form of worship, can be seamlessly integrated with other pursuits, including the quest for knowledge, and may even aid in sharpening focus through restraint.

Understanding why Shayṭān would prompt someone to switch between forms of worship requires insight into his tactics. As Ibn al-Qayyim outlines, Shayṭān's approach is hierarchical. His initial objective is to incite disbelief. Failing this, he incites towards religious innovations, then major sins, followed by minor sins. If unsuccessful, he encourages wasting time on permissible acts. Should this not work, he attempts to divert one to less virtuous deeds, knowing that seeking knowledge is among the highest forms of worship. In his final resort, Shayṭān orchestrates a comprehensive attack, often using Jinn to provoke hostility against individuals, aiming to erode their faith. This explains why notable Islamic scholars are sometimes subjected to disparagement – they represent this final level of Shayṭān's desperate efforts.

- *Inducing Doubts in Religion*

For those who have successfully navigated through Shayṭān's various deceptions, he may employ a more cunning strategy that can significantly deter individuals. During the quest for knowledge, it's not uncommon to encounter concepts that are initially challenging to comprehend. In these moments, Shayṭān may capitalize on this uncertainty to instill doubts about Islam. The fear of these doubts can be so overwhelming that some might choose to abandon their pursuit of Islamic knowledge to protect their faith. However, ignoring these doubts is not a constructive approach.

The most effective way to dispel doubts is through seeking accurate and comprehensive knowledge. It's important to recognize the limitations of one's intellect and understand that not comprehending something immediately does not equate to its falsehood. Despite the uncertainties that Shayṭān may provoke, one should remain confident that there are answers to these questions. Patience is key, and it's crucial to acknowledge one's current limits in understanding. Seeking guidance from learned scholars and posing questions to them for clarity is a vital step in overcoming these challenges and strengthening one's faith.

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّمَا شِفَاءُ الْعِيِّ السُّؤَالُ

„Jabir reported: *The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ* said: “Indeed, the only remedy for ignorance is to ask questions.”

*Sunan Abī Dāwūd 336*

After thorough research and seeking understanding, one's faith (ʿImān) is often reinforced with greater certainty, as this process unveils the profound depth and wisdom inherent in Islam. Such an exploration helps to clear doubts and strengthens the connection with one's faith.

This discussion provides just a glimpse into the vast array of tactics employed by Shayṭān, whose sole ambition is to misguide people. His efforts are tirelessly focused on devising ways to lead individuals away from the path of truth.

With these words of caution in mind, we now transition to the core subject of this book: exploring the ʿAqīdah of the ʿAhlu-s-Sunnah, delving into its principles, and understanding its significance in the Islamic faith.

## 10. ‘Aqīdah

The term ‘Aqīdah, derived from Arabic, translates to ‘creed’ or ‘belief system.’

The ‘Aqīdah represents the core beliefs of a Muslim, covering all elements related to ‘Imān (faith) and Kufr (disbelief).

Consequently, ‘Aqīdah plays a critical role in defining one’s Islamic identity, distinguishing between a Muslim and a disbeliever.

Its profound importance mandates that every Muslim aligns with the creed as taught by the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, which enjoys unanimous acceptance among Islamic scholars. Despite this, the reality, particularly in a time rife with various sects, can be quite contrasting.

The Qur’ān specifically cautions against sectarianism within Islam, emphasizing the risks associated with deviating from the universally acknowledged creed.

Āl ‘Imrān 3:103

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

„AND HOLD FIRMLY TO THE ROPE OF ALĀH[[ I.E., ALĀH’S COVENANT.]] AND DO NOT BE DIVIDED...“

The Prophetﷺ explained,

وَأَنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً وَتَفَرَّقَتْ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

*„The Banu Israel split into 72 sects, and my Ummah will split into 73 sects. All but one will end up in the fire.” When Abdullah bin ‘Amr asked, “Which one will that be, O Messenger of Aļļāh?” the Prophet replied, “Those who follow my way and that of my companions.”*

*(Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2641, graded Hasan by Tirmidhi)*

Given the diversity of Islamic sects, it can be challenging to identify the correct ‘Aqīdah (doctrine of faith) in Islam. It is important to emphasize that Muslims should orient themselves in matters of ‘Aqīdah and Fiqh (Islamic law) to the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his companions. These represent the fundamental reference points for understanding Islam.

To firmly adhere to our study of ‘Aqīdah, scholars have formulated the goals of ‘Aqīdah in Islam, which are described below.

## **10.1 The objectives of ‘Aqīdah in Islam**

The objectives of islamic ‘Aqīdah (doctrine of faith) are diverse and noble, based on the adherence to the principles of faith. These include:

1. Sincere devotion and worship of Aļļāh: As Aļļāh is the sole creator without a partner, intention and worship should be exclusively dedicated to Him.
2. Liberation of the mind: The ‘Aqīdah protects the mind from irrationality and confusion that can arise without it. A heart

without 'Aqīdah can either be completely faithless or lost in false beliefs and superstitions.

3. Peace of mind: The 'Aqīdah connects the believer with his creator and ensures inner peace and clarity of mind, as the believer accepts Allāh as his lord and legislating judge.
4. Protection from deviations: The 'Aqīdah encompasses belief in the messengers, which includes adhering to their ways and teachings to protect from deviations in worship and dealings with the created.
5. Determination and seriousness: The 'Aqīdah motivates to seize every opportunity to do good and recoil from evil, based on the belief in the resurrection and the reward of deeds, as mentioned in Al-An'am 6:132.

﴿وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا ۖ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

"EACH PERSON IS ASSIGNED A RANK ACCORDING TO THEIR DEEDS;  
YOUR LORD IS NOT UNAWARE OF WHAT THEY DO."

6. Building a strong Ummah: The 'Aqīdah fosters a community willing to sacrifice for their faith, as described in Al-Hujurat 49:15.

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا ۚ وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ  
الصَّادِقُونَ﴾

THE TRUE BELIEVERS ARE ONLY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN ALLĀH  
AND HIS MESSENGER - WITHOUT DOUBTING - AND STRIVE WITH THEIR  
WEALTH AND THEIR LIVES FOR THE CAUSE OF ALLĀH. THEY ARE THE  
TRUTHFUL IN FAITH.

7. Bliss in this life and the hereafter: The ‘Aqīdah leads to a blessed life and an honorable hereafter, as depicted in An-Nahl 16:97.

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

WHOEVER DOES GOOD, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, AND IS A BELIEVER, WE WILL SURELY BLESS THEM WITH A GOOD LIFE, AND WE WILL SURELY REWARD THEM ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF WHAT THEY DID.

These objectives of the ‘Aqīdah are crucial for personal well-being, social cohesion, and the spiritual fulfilment of a Muslim. They provide comprehensive guidance for a life in accordance with Islamic teachings.

To achieve these objectives, we study ‘Aqīdah, whose core is the oneness of Alḷāh (Tawḥīd). To fully understand and apply this principle, it is crucial to first engage with it. Therefore, our consideration begins with the six pillars of ‘Imān. Here, belief in Alḷāh as the first pillar is foremost, in whose context we will discuss Tawḥīd in detail.

## 11. The Six Pillars of 'Imān

The six pillars of 'Imān are integral to the Islamic faith, forming its foundational principles. These include:

- 1- The belief in Aļļāh,
- 2- His angels,
- 3- His prophets,
- 4- His revealed scriptures,
- 5- The Day of Resurrection, and
- 6- Al-Qadr (divine predestination).

The Prophet ﷺ said:

قَالَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ

*„ 'Imān is to believe in Aļļāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in divine predestination, both the good and the evil thereof.”*

*[Sahih Muslim 8a].*

Each pillar plays a vital role in defining the beliefs of a Muslim. Rejecting any of these core pillars is considered a deviation from the true path of Islam.

At the heart of these principles lies the concept of Tawḥīd, the Oneness of Aļļāh, which is the cornerstone of 'Aqīdah (Islamic creed). Grasping the essence of Tawḥīd and incorporating it into one's life is not just an intellectual exercise but a fundamental aspect of living a life in accordance with Islamic teachings. Therefore, a profound understanding and adherence to Tawḥīd are essential for every Muslim to truly embody the spirit and practice of their faith.

## **11.1 Belief in Aﷻ**

Belief in Aﷻ encompasses four aspects:

1. The existence of Aﷻ
2. Tawhīd Ar-Rubūbiyyah (The Oneness of Aﷻ in Sovereignty)
3. Tawhīd Al-'Ulūhiyyah (The Oneness of Aﷻ in Worship)
4. Tawhīd 'Asmā' wa-ṣ-Ṣifāt (The Oneness of Aﷻ in His Names and Attributes)

### **11.1.1 The Existence of Aﷻ**

The evidence for the existence of Aﷻ is established through:

1. Fiṭrah (natural disposition)
2. Rational Thinking
3. Ash-Sharī'ah (Islamic Legislation)
4. Al-Ḥiss (Sensory perceptions and feelings)

### 11.1.1.1 Fiṭrah (Natural Disposition)

The term ‘Fiṭrah’ originates from Arabic, referring to the ‘natural disposition’ with which every human being is born. It represents an innate understanding embedded within us.

Often, when we witness immoral actions, we experience an inner discomfort. This feeling stems from our Fiṭrah. Intuitively, we are aware of fundamental moral principles and values, like the importance of truth or the rejection of injustice, without having to explicitly learn them.

However, in the Islamic context, Fiṭrah encompasses more than just general moral values. It includes the recognition and acknowledgment of the Creator. An essential aspect of Fiṭrah is the belief in and worship of a higher power. Thus, Allāh created Fiṭrah within us, inherently guiding us towards the worship of Allāh.

Fiṭrah also involves actions considered natural, such as shaving pubic hair, cutting fingernails, and trimming the mustache. Yet, the most critical intersection between Fiṭrah and Islam is Tawḥīd (Monotheism).

Therefore, the concept of Fiṭrah is closely linked with monotheism. In the Qur’ān, Allāh frequently draws a connection between Fiṭrah and the religion of Ibrāhīm (Ḥanīf), as both emphatically emphasize monotheism.

Allāh says:

Ar-Rūm 30:30

﴿ فَاقِمْ وَحَمِّكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَوِيمُ وَلَكِن كَرِهَ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

„SO BE STEADFAST IN FAITH IN ALL UPRIGHTNESS 'O PROPHET'—  
THE NATURAL WAY OF ALLĀH WHICH HE HAS INSTILLED IN 'ALL'  
PEOPLE. LET THERE BE NO CHANGE IN THIS CREATION OF ALLĀH.  
THAT IS THE STRAIGHT WAY, BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW.“

There are no exceptions when it comes to the innate Fiṭrah. Every child is born with a predisposition towards the pure worship of Allāh. However, the child is then converted by the parents to Christianity, Judaism, or another religion, as explained by the Prophet ﷺ when he said,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ  
وَيُشْرِكَانِهِ "

*„No child is born without Fiṭrah. It is his  
parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a  
Polytheist.“*

*Sahih Muslim 2658e*

### **11.1.1.2 Rational Thinking**

The proof of rational thinking comprises five aspects:

1. Logic
2. The ‘Signs’ of Allāh:
  - a) Scientific ‘Signs’
  - b) Natural ‘Signs’
3. Fulfillment of Prophecies
4. The Miracle of the Qur’ān
5. The Sīra (biography) of the Prophet ﷺ

#### **11.1.1.2.1 Logic**

The logical reasoning behind the existence of all creation points towards a Creator who initiated their existence. The concept that entities could self-create is inherently flawed, as it’s logically impossible for anything to bring itself into existence. Additionally, the idea that they could have come into being by chance lacks substantiation. Considering their non-existence prior to creation, the question arises: how could they have possibly initiated their own creation?

The intricate order and precise coordination observed in the universe further refute the notion of accidental existence. Each new occurrence or phenomenon inherently demands an originating cause. The universe’s systematic order, the seamless integration of various elements, and the coherent interplay between causes and their effects all signify a deliberate design, not a random occurrence. Randomness,

by its very nature, lacks any initial orderly pattern, raising the question of how such order and structure could be maintained throughout existence and evolution if it began randomly.

Given these considerations, the conclusion that creatures could neither self-create nor arise from chance is compelling. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer the existence of a Creator, a deliberate and purposeful force behind all creation. This Creator, as identified in Islamic belief, is Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds, underscoring the belief in a higher, organizing intelligence governing the universe:

Aṭ-Ṭūr 52:35-37

﴿ (35) أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴾

﴿ (36) أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

﴿ (37) أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّطُونَ ﴾

„(35) OR WERE THEY CREATED BY NOTHING, OR ARE THEY 'THEIR OWN' CREATORS?

(36) OR DID THEY CREATE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH? IN FACT, THEY HAVE NO FIRM BELIEF 'IN ALLĀH'.

(37) OR DO THEY POSSESS THE TREASURIES OF YOUR LORD, OR ARE THEY IN CONTROL 'OF EVERYTHING'?”

### 11.1.1.2.2 The Signs of Allāh

Allāh mentions the ‘Signs’ of Allāh in numerous verses in the Qur’ān.

These can be differentiated into:

#### a) Scientific ‘Signs’

These refer to scientific discoveries of these ‘Signs’, some of which were only uncovered hundreds or even over a thousand years later in modern times with the aid of measuring instruments. These findings could not have possibly been known or ‘guessed’ by the Prophet ﷺ.

#### b) Natural ‘Signs’

These relate to natural phenomena that humanity is encouraged to reflect upon. With sincere contemplation, one conclusion becomes apparent: that Allāh is their Creator, and they did not emerge from nothing.

#### a) Scientific ‘Signs’

- *Reproduction and Embryology*

The following verse, written over 1400 years ago, describes the different stages and appearances of the embryo and fetus in the mother’s womb:

Al-Hajj 22:5

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِن عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لَّيِّنًا لَّكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنكُمْ مَّن

يَتَوَقَّىٰ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَرُدُّ إِلَىٰ أَوَّلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ  
وَرَبَّتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ نَبَاتٍ ﴿

„O HUMANITY! IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION, THEN ‘KNOW THAT’ WE DID CREATE YOU[[ YOUR FATHER, ADAM.]] FROM DUST, THEN FROM A SPERM-DROP,[[ NUTFAH REFERS TO THE UNION OF MALE AND FEMALE GAMETES (SPERM AND EGG) WHICH RESULTS IN THE ZYGOTE AFTER FERTILIZATION. ]] THEN ‘DEVELOPED YOU INTO’ A CLINGING CLOT ‘OF BLOOD’,[[ ‘ALAQAH, MEANING THE EMBRYO RESEMBLES A LEECH. ]] THEN A LUMP OF FLESH[[ MUḌĠHAH, MEANING IT RESEMBLES A CHEWED MORSEL. ]]— FULLY FORMED OR UNFORMED[[ FULLY FORMED OR DEFECTED, EVOLVING INTO A HEALTHY EMBRYO OR ENDING IN MISCARRIAGE. ]]— IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE ‘OUR POWER’ TO YOU. ‘THEN’ WE SETTLE WHATEVER ‘EMBRYO’ WE WILL IN THE WOMB FOR AN APPOINTED TERM, THEN BRING YOU FORTH AS INFANTS, SO THAT YOU MAY REACH YOUR PRIME. SOME OF YOU ‘MAY’ DIE ‘YOUNG’, WHILE OTHERS ARE LEFT TO REACH THE MOST FEEBLE STAGE OF LIFE SO THAT THEY MAY KNOW NOTHING AFTER HAVING KNOWN MUCH. AND YOU SEE THE EARTH LIFELESS, BUT AS SOON AS WE SEND DOWN RAIN UPON IT, IT BEGINS TO STIR ‘TO LIFE’ AND SWELL, PRODUCING EVERY TYPE OF PLEASANT PLANT.“

Similarly, there is mention of three layers of darkness, which are: the abdomen, the womb, and the amniotic sac.

Az-Zumar 39:6

﴿ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ﴾

„HE CREATES YOU IN THE WOMBS OF YOUR MOTHERS ‘IN STAGES’, ONE DEVELOPMENT AFTER ANOTHER, IN THREE LAYERS OF

DARKNESS.[[ THE THREE LAYERS OF DARKNESS ARE: THE BELLY, THE WOMB, AND THE AMNIOTIC SAC.]].“

- *Supernova*

Iron, one of the most abundant elements on Earth, has been instrumental in the development of entire civilizations and is a primary component of steel, which is vital for many of our modern structures. The origin story of iron is astronomical and begins with its formation in the explosion of stars.

Scientifically, the creation of iron is one of the most immense processes imaginable. A star, known as a Red Giant, first converts all its helium into carbon and oxygen atoms. These atoms then begin transforming into iron atoms, the heaviest type of atoms a star can produce. When most of a star’s atoms have become iron atoms, it turns into what is known as a supernova. It explodes, scattering iron, oxygen, and carbon atoms across space.

From this point, gravity takes over, shaping these atoms into planets like Earth.

As a result of these massive explosions, Earth’s core is likely composed predominantly of molten iron, and its crust contains about 5 percent iron. Life on Earth, from plants to humans, also contains iron. This abundant metal is one of the Earth’s most essential building blocks.

Al-Ḥadīd 57:25

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ﴾

„AND WE SENT DOWN IRON WITH ITS GREAT MIGHT, BENEFITS FOR HUMANITY...“

- *Isostasy*

Mountains are often described as the nails that hold the Earth together, a process known as Isostasy. This is the process of Earth's stabilization through the gravitational pressure exerted by mountains. They play a crucial role in maintaining the Earth's balance.

It's essential to understand that mountains do not just protrude from the ground; they have roots extending deep beneath the sea level. These submarine mountains are vital, as their massive presence contributes to Earth's stabilization. Many of them are also extinct volcanoes.

Deep-sea mountains help distribute the energy of massive megathrust earthquakes by enlarging the affected area. To understand better, one can think of these mountains as a sort of foundation for tectonic plates. This foundation prevents the plates from drifting apart or colliding uncontrollably.

When tectonic plates rub against each other, it can lead to significant earthquakes and resultant landslides. Deep-sea mountains help to fragment these seismic activities, spreading the seismic energy over a larger area. These fragmented quakes are less intense and help to prevent more extensive destruction.

## An-Nahl 16:15

﴿وَالَّذِي فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَّسَى أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ﴾

„HE HAS MADE MOUNTAINS STAND FIRM ON THE EARTH, TO PREVENT IT SHAKING UNDER YOU...“

- *Estuaries*

Estuaries are river mouths where saltwater and freshwater meet and form brackish water. Although the two types of water mix, each retains its own characteristics. Since freshwater is less dense than saltwater, it floats on top of the seawater. This creates a sharp boundary between the water bodies, with the freshwater floating on top and a wedge of saltwater lying below. At the boundary between the two water masses, there is some mixing, but it is generally minimal.

## Al-Furqān 25:53

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَحْجُورًا﴾

„AND HE IS THE ONE WHO MERGES THE TWO BODIES OF WATER: ONE FRESH AND PALATABLE AND THE OTHER SALTY AND BITTER, PLACING BETWEEN THEM A BARRIER THEY CANNOT CROSS.“

- *Underwater Waves*

Underwater waves are barely noticeable at the ocean surface: they raise the water level by only a few centimeters as they pass by. However, underwater, they move tons of water and can reach heights

of up to 170 meters. This becomes evident at the boundary layer between warm, less salty water at the top and cold, saltier water in the depths. This boundary layer bulges more than a hundred meters upward during such an internal wave, with the crest moving at a rate of a few centimeters per second.

An-Nūr 24:40

﴿ أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ ﴾

„OR 'THEIR DEEDS ARE' LIKE THE DARKNESS IN A DEEP SEA, COVERED BY WAVES UPON WAVES,...“

- *The Expansion of the Universe*

The expansion of the universe refers to the increase in the spatial extent of the universe, as derived from observations. This is defined by the continuous increase in distance between objects that are far apart in space.

Ad-Dāriyāt 51:47

﴿ وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴾

„WE BUILT THE UNIVERSE WITH 'GREAT' MIGHT, AND WE ARE CERTAINLY EXPANDING 'IT'.“

There are many more examples in the Qur'ān and also in the Sunnah, but we will leave it at these examples.

## b) Natural ‘Signs’

- *Reflection on the creation of the Earth and its signs*

Āl ‘Imrān 3:190-191

(190) ﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاٰخِثٰلِ لَيْلٍ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآءَايٰتٍ لِّاُولٰٓئِىۡ الۡاَلْبَٰبِ﴾

(191) ﴿الَّذِيۡنَ يَذْكُرُوۡنَ اللّٰهَ قِيٰمًا وَّفُجُوۡدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوۡبِهِمۡ وَيَتَذَكَّرُوۡنَ فِىۡ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾

„(190) INDEED, IN THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND THE ALTERNATION OF THE DAY AND NIGHT THERE ARE SIGNS FOR PEOPLE OF REASON.

(191) ‘THEY ARE’ THOSE WHO REMEMBER ALLĀH WHILE STANDING, SITTING, AND LYING ON THEIR SIDES, AND REFLECT ON THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH ‘AND PRAY’, “OUR LORD! YOU HAVE NOT CREATED ‘ALL OF’ THIS WITHOUT PURPOSE. GLORY BE TO YOU! PROTECT US FROM THE TORMENT OF THE FIRE.“

- *Reflection on how humans are created from two ‘despised’ fluids:*

At-Ṭāriq 86:5

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسٰنُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ﴾

„LET PEOPLE THEN CONSIDER WHAT THEY WERE CREATED FROM!“

As-Sajdah 32:8

﴿مِمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُۥ مِنْ سُلٰلٰتٍ مِّنۡ مَّآءٍ مَّهِينٍ﴾

„THEN HE MADE HIS PROGENY FROM A DROP OF SEMEN, FROM DESPISED WATER.“

- *Reflection on the wondrous nature of food:*

An-Nahl 16:65-69

(65) ﴿ وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴾

(66) ﴿ وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لِنُسْتَفِيكُمْ وَمَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا خَالِصًا سَائِعًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ ﴾

(67) ﴿ وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

(68) ﴿ وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴾

(69) ﴿ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

„(65) AND ALLĀH SENDS DOWN RAIN FROM THE SKY, GIVING LIFE TO THE EARTH AFTER ITS DEATH. SURELY IN THIS IS A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO LISTEN.

(66) AND THERE IS CERTAINLY A LESSON FOR YOU IN CATTLE: WE GIVE YOU TO DRINK OF WHAT IS IN THEIR BELLIES, FROM BETWEEN DIGESTED FOOD AND BLOOD: PURE MILK, PLEASANT TO DRINK.

(67) AND FROM THE FRUITS OF PALM TREES AND GRAPEVINES YOU DERIVE INTOXICANTS AS WELL AS WHOLESOME PROVISION. SURELY IN THIS IS A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND.

(68) AND YOUR LORD INSPIRED THE BEES: “MAKE ‘YOUR’ HOMES IN THE MOUNTAINS, THE TREES, AND IN WHAT PEOPLE CONSTRUCT,

(69) AND FEED FROM ‘THE FLOWER OF’ ANY FRUIT ‘YOU PLEASE’ AND FOLLOW THE WAYS YOUR LORD HAS MADE EASY FOR YOU.” FROM

THEIR BELLIES COMES FORTH LIQUID OF VARYING COLOURS, IN WHICH THERE IS HEALING FOR PEOPLE. SURELY IN THIS IS A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO REFLECT.“

Numerous other examples exist, yet in order to maintain the focus and brevity of this section, we present just a select few.

A classic formulation of this argument for the ‘Signs’ of Allāh is found in the writings of Ibn Kathīr. Once, a desert Arab was asked for evidence of Allāh’s existence, to which he replied:

*“Praised be Allāh! The camel’s dung testifies to the camel’s existence, and the footprint testifies that someone has walked. A sky that holds stars, a land that has tracks, and a sea that has waves? Do not all these testify to the existence of the Most Kind and the Most Knowledgeable?”*

Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Verse 2:21

Ibn Kathīr further comments:

*“Whoever reflects on the flowing rivers that travel from one region to another and bring benefits, who contemplates what Allāh has created on earth; different animals and plants with varied tastes, scents, shapes, and colors, resulting from the unity of land and water. Whoever ponders over all this will realize that these facts testify to the existence of the Creator, His perfect ability, wisdom, mercy, kindness, generosity, and His general compassion for His creation. There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, nor is there any lord other than Him on whom we rely and to whom we turn in repentance.”*

### 11.1.1.2.3 Fulfilling Prophecies

The Qur'ān and Sunnah are replete with prophecies, many of which have already unfolded historically and have been recognized and documented even by those outside the Islamic faith. Additionally, several of these prophecies have found their fulfillment in contemporary times.

The realization of these prophecies serves as dual evidence. Firstly, their actualization suggests that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was endowed with knowledge from Allāh, pointing to a divine source of his prophecies. Secondly, they offer tangible, empirical evidence of their validity, as some of these prophecies have come to pass within our own lifetimes, making us direct witnesses to these momentous events.

The scope of these prophecies is vast, encompassing a wide range of events. While it is impractical to enumerate all of them, some of the most noteworthy examples include:

- *The Byzantine Recovery*

The Qur'ān made a remarkable prediction about events that would unfold between the Persian Empire and Byzantium, from a perspective far removed from the global power struggles of the time. In Surah Ar-Rūm (30:2-4), it is prophesied that the Byzantines, despite a severe defeat, would achieve a victory:

Ar-Rūm 30:2-4

﴿ غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ﴾ (2)

﴿ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَلَيْهِمْ سَيُغْلِبُونَ ﴾ (3)

(4) ﴿ فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

(2) THE BYZANTINES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED

(3) IN A NEARBY LAND. THEY WILL REVERSE THEIR DEFEAT WITH A VICTORY

(4) IN “BID’ (3-9) YEARS - ALLĀH HAS THE COMMAND, FIRST AND LAST. ON THAT DAY THE BELIEVERS WILL REJOICE.

Between 613 and 619 A.D., the Byzantines suffered decisive defeats against the Persian Empire and lost significant territories. Edward Gibbon noted in “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” that at the time of the prophecy, the prospect of its fulfillment seemed unlikely. Byzantium appeared doomed, prompting the Prophet Muḥammad’s opponents, such as ‘Ubay ibn Khalaf, to mock the prediction as absurd.

Against all odds, however, Emperor Heraclius led a successful counterattack against the Persian Empire. This remarkable turnaround fulfilled the Qur’ānic prophecy within six to eight years of its proclamation.

- *The Final State of Abu Lahab*

When Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ announced his public message of Islam, he was vehemently rejected and ridiculed by his uncle Abu Lahab. In defense of the Prophet, Allāh revealed the following verses:

Al-Masad 111:1-3

(1) ﴿ تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴾

(2) ﴿ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴾

(3) ﴿ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ﴾

"(1) MAY THE HANDS OF ABU LAHAB PERISH, AND MAY HE PERISH!

(2) HIS WEALTH AND GAINS WILL NOT EXONERATE HIM.

(3) HE WILL [BURN IN] A FLAMING FIRE,"

Remarkably, even though Abu Lahab was aware of these verses and had the opportunity over a period of nine years until his death to discredit the Qur'ān, he never converted to Islam – not even pretending to do so to refute the prophecy. This could have cast doubt on the authenticity of the revelation. But Aļļāh knew that Abu Lahab would never convert. His refusal to embrace Islam, despite the clear warning in the verses, underscores the divine providence and the truthfulness of the Qur'ān.

- *The Worldwide Spread of Islam*

At a time of intense persecution and oppression of the early Muslim community in Mecca, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ proclaimed with unwavering confidence a divine promise: The message of Islam would spread across the entire world. Tamīm ad-Dārī reports that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ تَمِيمِ الدَّارِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيَبْلُغَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ مَا بَلَغَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَلَا يَتْرُكُ اللَّهُ بَيْتَ مَدْرٍ وَلَا وَبَرٍ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ هَذَا الْبَيْتَ بَعْرَ عَزِينٍ أَوْ يُنْدَلِ ذَلِيلٌ عِزًّا يُعِزُّ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَذُلًّا يُنْدِلُ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْكُفْرَ

*"This matter will surely reach every place touched by night and day. Allāh will leave no house of mud or even of animal skins except that He will make this religion enter into it, through which the honorable are honored and the dishonorable are dishonored. Allāh will honor the honorable with Islam and dishonor the dishonorable with disbelief."*

*Musnad Ahmad 16957*

This prediction was made at a time when the Muslim community was small and seemingly powerless, and the future of Islam appeared uncertain. The idea that Islam would not only survive but spread worldwide was then almost unimaginable.

- *The Martyrdom of 'Umar und 'Uthmān*

Anas ibn Mālik reported that when Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ ascended Mount 'Uḥud with Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, the mountain trembled. The Prophet ﷺ calmed the mountain, saying:

أَنَّ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - حَدَّثَهُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَعِدَ أُحُدًا وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعُثْمَانُ فَرَجَفَ بِهِمْ فَقَالَ " ائْتِثُّ أُحُدُ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ نَبِيٌّ وَصَدِيقٌ وَشَهِيدَانِ "

*"Be firm, 'Uḥud, for nothing but a Prophet, a Ṣiddīq, and two martyrs are upon you."*

This statement by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prophetically hinted at the later martyrdom of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. Both were assassinated during their tenures as Caliphs.

The Prophet ﷺ also made a specific prediction about ‘Uthmān. He said to him:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " يَا عُثْمَانُ إِنَّهُ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَتَّصُكَ قَمِيصًا فَإِنْ أَرَادُوكَ عَلَى خَلْعِهِ فَلَا تَخْلَعْهُ لَهُمْ "

*"O 'Uthmān, Allāh - the Almighty and Majestic - may clothe you with a garment. If the hypocrites want you to take it off, do not take it off until you meet me."*

This prediction came true when ‘Uthmān held the position of Caliph during a time of turmoil and division within the Muslim community. His house was besieged by insurgents, and he was murdered while refusing to relinquish his position – a symbolic "garment" bestowed upon him by Allāh. These events confirm the prophetic prediction and highlight the special status of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān as martyrs in Islamic history.

- *The Inevitability of Ribā (Interest)*

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ predicted that Ribā (interest), one of the most unethical and exploitative practices in finance, would become unavoidable. Abū Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَكَلَ الزَّيْبَ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَأْكُلْهُ أَصَابَهُ مِنْ بُخَارِهِ

*“There will come a time upon people when no one will remain except that they have consumed usury. And if one does not consume it, its dust will reach him.”*

This prediction has been remarkably realized in the modern financial world. Interest clauses permeate almost all financial transactions today, whether in real estate purchases, car buying, or taking loans. The modern banking system, in which nearly everyone is involved, largely operates on the basis of interest. Deposits in checking accounts are used by banks to give out loans and earn interest. Bonuses from credit cards are partially financed by the interest paid by other customers. Even government deficits are often financed through interest-based debts, meaning many public services are indirectly funded through interest.

This prediction is particularly noteworthy considering that during the Middle Ages in Christianity, there was a strict prohibition on interest. The widespread influence of interest in today's economy demonstrates the profoundness of this prophetic prediction and reflects the complexity and pervasiveness of Ribā in the modern world.

- *Increase in Brutality and Killing*

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ spoke of a time of increasing violence and brutality, resulting from human greed and oppression. He warned:

وعن جابر رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: اتقوا الظلم فإن الظلم ظلمات يوم القيامة واتقوا الشح فإن الشح أهلك من كان قبلكم حملهم على أن سفكوا دماءهم واستحلوا محارمهم” ((رواه مسلم)).

*“Beware of oppression, for oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection; and beware*

*of greed, for it has destroyed those who were before you. It has incited them to shed their blood and to regard the unlawful as lawful."*

The 20th century and the early 21st century have witnessed unprecedented atrocities in modern warfare, genocides, abusive police violence, and widespread senseless violence. These developments reflect the prophetic prediction, attributable to selfish interests and a departure from ethical principles.

The Prophet ﷺ also spoke of a time when the reasons for acts of violence would increasingly become unclear:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَدْرِي الْقَاتِلُ فِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ قَتَلَ وَلَا يَدْرِي الْمَمْتُولُ عَلَى أَيِّ شَيْءٍ قُتِلَ " .

*"By Him, in Whose Hand my life is, there will come a time upon people when the murderer will not know why he committed the murder, and the victim will not know why they were killed."*

This prediction suggests a time when violence and chaos will be so widespread that the basic causes and motivations for violent acts appear unclear or irrational. Only Allāh knows whether these predictions are already fully realized or if they are harbingers of even greater violence in the future.

- *Weakening of the Muslim Community*

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prophesied that the Muslim community would be weakened due to their worldly desires and aversion to death. Thawbān reports:

عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يُوشِكُ الْأَمَمُ أَنْ تَدَاعَى عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا تَدَاعَى الْأَكْلَةُ إِلَى قَصْعَتِهَا " . فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ وَمِنْ قَالِهِ حُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ قَالَ " بَلْ أَنْتُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ كَثِيرٌ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ عَتَاءٌ كَعَتَاءِ السَّيْلِ وَلَيَنْزِعَنَّ اللَّهُ مِنْ صُدُورِ عَدُوِّكُمْ الْمَهَابَةَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَيَقْذِفَنَّ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمُ الْوَهْنَ " . فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا الْوَهْنُ قَالَ " حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَاهِيَةُ الْمَوْتِ " .

*"The nations will soon invite each other to devour you, just as guests are invited to a feast." Someone asked, "Will it be because we are few in number at that time?" He said, "No, you will be numerous at that time, but you will be like the froth that is carried away by a torrent. And Allāh will remove fear of you from the hearts of your enemies and cast weakness into your hearts." Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allāh, what is the weakness?" He answered, "Love of this world and hatred of death."*

This prediction was symbolically illustrated in the historical context by events like the Partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884, where European powers divided the continent among themselves. King Leopold of Belgium referred to his colonial ambitions as "this magnificent African cake," similar to the Prophet's metaphor of guests invited to a feast. This division occurred under the assumption that the rich continent would offer no significant resistance.

The examples mentioned here are just a small part of the extensive prophecies found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Besides these, there are other significant predictions, such as the conquests of the Muslims, the rise of selective textualism (Qur'anism), the increasing focus on materialism, and the moral decline of society.

All these predictions point to a deep insight into the development of human civilization. How could a person without divine revelation have foreseen such future events and developments? The accuracy and foresight of these prophecies emphasize the impossibility that they could have come from human prediction. They underline the belief that these predictions were revealed by Aļļāh, and reinforce the faith in the prophetic mission of Muḥammad ﷺ as well as the truth and authenticity of Islamic teachings.

#### 11.1.1.2.4 The Miracle of the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān, with its inherent characteristics, stands as an extraordinary testament to divine preservation and unmatched literary excellence. Foretold by Allāh to remain unchanged, its authenticity has been validated since the era of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, recognized even by numerous Orientalists.

Its linguistic mastery is beyond question. The Qur'ān's impeccable composition, the exactness of every sound, letter, and word, confirms its singularity and defiance of imitation. In an era where Arabic eloquence reached its zenith, no poet, however skilled, could emulate its caliber.

More than its rhythmic and phonetic allure, the Qur'ān impresses with the profundity and precision in its wording. It resonates on a universal scale yet speaks to personal experiences, engaging the intellect and enriching the spirit. This scripture adeptly navigates between vagueness and specificity, ensuring relevance and comprehensibility.

Each surah, or chapter, is thoughtfully themed, with a structure and harmony that showcase the Qur'ān's intricate design. The extensive Tafsīr (interpretations) highlight each verse's layered meanings.

The Qur'ān also delves into the realms of psychology and sociology with remarkable accuracy. It insightfully portrays the mindset of believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites, touching upon emotions like patience, anger, and gratitude. Striking a balance in human complexities, it guides in matters of psychology, politics, economics, social dynamics, and the interplay between faith and reason. These facets establish the Qur'ān as an eternal, all-encompassing guide, unparalleled in wisdom and insight.

### 11.1.1.2.5 The Sīra of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

The Sīra of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ unravels the story of a man of remarkable integrity and profound spirituality. Known as Al-ʿAmīn, the Trustworthy, even before his prophetic mission, this attribute was further solidified during his proclamation on Mount al-Safa. His inability to read or write further accentuates the miraculous nature of the Qurʾān, a scripture so intricate and profound that it remains a subject of admiration and study by scholars to this day. Despite his monumental role, the Prophet led a life characterized by simplicity and abstention from materialistic pursuits.

His companions, intimately familiar with his character, never questioned his honesty, contrasting sharply with figures such as Musaylimah the Liar. In a display of remarkable humility, the Prophet professed that even he could attain Paradise only through Allāh's mercy, a statement one would not expect from a fraudulent prophet. His multifaceted roles as a political leader, military commander, father, husband, teacher, and preacher, all while engaging in intense nightly prayers, reflect his extraordinary discipline and commitment.

The Prophet's relationship with the Qurʾān is distinctive. He consistently refuted claims of authorship, diverging from the norm of a writer typically taking pride in their creation. The Qurʾān itself dares others to replicate its content, an unconventional challenge for any author. It includes verses that critique the Prophet and highlight his human errors, traits not typical of self-written texts. His reliance on divine guidance for understanding certain verses underlines his profound dependence on revelation. Collectively, these elements depict an exceptional individual and a unique revelation that continues to provide spiritual guidance to believers globally.

All these considerations compellingly illustrate that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ could not have authored the Qur'ān. The profound depth, intricate complexity, and the unique circumstances surrounding its revelation are beyond the capacity of human creation.

### 11.1.1.3 Ash-Sharī‘ah (Islamic Legislation)

Islamic legislation stands as a testament to Allāh, as it is perfect and outstanding in every aspect. If this legislation were a product of human creation, it would be marked by injustices, as seen in all constitutions and legal books made by humans.

Islam commands:

- ❖ Tawhīd and prohibits Shirk (associating partners with Allāh)
- ❖ Righteousness and prohibits injustice.
- ❖ Truthfulness and prohibits lying.
- ❖ Justice and prohibits oppression.

(Justice means establishing equality among similar entities and recognizing differences among dissimilar ones. It does not imply absolute equality, as is sometimes mistakenly assumed. Enforcing equality among fundamentally different entities would constitute injustice and hence is not in line with Islamic principles.)

- ❖ Trustworthiness and prohibits deceit.
- ❖ Loyalty and prohibits betrayal.
- ❖ Being kind and dutiful to one’s parents and prohibits being disrespectful towards them.
- ❖ Maintaining kinship ties and prohibits severing them.
- ❖ Having good relations with neighbours and prohibits any form of mistreatment towards them.

In general terms, Islam commands all noble manners and prohibits all bad and reprehensible behaviours.

Behind every command of Allāh, an encouragement to do something, and every prohibition, a directive to refrain from something, lies His immense wisdom. Allāh’s laws are not arbitrary or capricious; He is above such attributes. Scholars throughout the ages have attempted to grasp some of these wisdoms. However, this is only an approximation, as no one can fully comprehend Allāh’s knowledge. This is even impossible, as Allāh states in one of the most famous verses of the Qur’ān, in ‘Āyat-ul-Kursī:

Al-Baqarah 2:255

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ﴾

„...BUT NO ONE CAN GRASP ANY OF HIS KNOWLEDGE—EXCEPT WHAT HE WILLS ‘TO REVEAL’.“

The perspective of Ahlu-s-Sunnah is unequivocal: We embrace all of Allāh’s commands and prohibitions that are grounded in authentic Islamic sources. This acceptance is unconditional, irrespective of our grasp of their underlying wisdom. Our role as Allāh’s servants is obedience, aligning with His guidance for the believers:

Al-Baqarah 2:285

﴿وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا﴾

„AND THEY SAY, “WE HEAR AND OBEY.”“

The pursuit of understanding the rationale behind Allāh’s directives is not to be misinterpreted as skepticism or audacity. Rather, it’s a path towards deepening our connection with Allāh. This pursuit

not only enhances our recognition of Allāh’s magnificence and singularity but also cultivates reverence and affection for Him. Our love deepens as we realize Allāh’s benevolence towards His servants, and our reverence amplifies in acknowledging His boundless greatness and uniqueness.

Allāh’s commands and prohibitions aim at the well-being of His servants. He is self-sufficient and omnipotent, independent of human obedience or defiance.

In light of this, let’s delve deeper into a specific instance to rectify a prevalent misconception related to a well-known Qur’ānic verse about intoxicants – encompassing alcohol and all drugs – as well as gambling, as mentioned in Al-Baqarah 2:219:

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِنَّهُمَا آكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ﴾

„THEY ASK YOU ‘O PROPHET’ ABOUT INTOXICANTS AND GAMBLING. SAY, “THERE IS GREAT EVIL IN BOTH, AS WELL AS SOME BENEFIT FOR PEOPLE—BUT THE EVIL OUTWEIGHS THE BENEFIT.”“

The prevailing misunderstanding about this verse today centers around the alleged health benefits of red wine and other alcoholic drinks. There's a common but erroneous belief that moderate consumption of alcohol can positively impact heart health and even guard against diseases like Type 2 diabetes and gallstones, purportedly backed by scientific evidence. This claim has been echoed repeatedly, leading some Muslims, particularly those engaged in Da‘wah, to adopt and even cite it as proof of the Qur’ān’s authenticity. They assert that this 'scientific discovery' was already mentioned in the Qur’ān over 1400 years ago. However, such a stance stems from a fundamental misunderstanding.

It's essential to understand that the 'certain benefit' referred to in the verse pertains to financial gain, not any alleged scientific health advantage. The alcohol trade is economically profitable, which is a major factor in its widespread availability.

Upon closer inspection, the notion of a 'health benefit' from the verse does not hold up. The verse addresses both intoxicants and gambling, indicating that the 'certain benefit' applies to both. If we were to hypothetically attribute health benefits to alcohol, we must then consider other intoxicants like cannabis and heroin. While some health benefits are ascribed to cannabis in certain studies, what health or overall benefits can be claimed for substances like cocaine, heroin, or even gambling? Rational thought would identify no benefit beyond financial profit in these instances. The immense harm caused by gambling, alcohol, and drug addiction is widely acknowledged, even by non-believers. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated in 'The Lancet Public Health' journal that no amount of alcohol consumption is safe or health risk-free. The article further notes: 'The risk to health starts with the first sip of an alcoholic beverage.'

This underscores the need for caution in using scientific findings as evidence for the Qur'ān. The truth of the Qur'ān is not contingent on scientific validation; rather, the Qur'ān often provides foundations for scientific understanding, as seen in this case.

The objective in addressing this misconception is to highlight that Allāh's commands inherently encompass good, and His prohibitions aim to avert harm. The financial gain mentioned in the verse is merely an objective observation. The business of alcohol, drug trade, and gambling has historically been and remains financially lucrative, often yielding substantial profits for those involved. However, this financial aspect should not be misconstrued as an endorsement of these activities.

### 11.1.1.4 Al-Ḥiss (Sensory Perceptions and Feelings)

The sensory evidence for the existence of Allāh encompasses three aspects:

1. The answering of Du‘a’ (supplication)
2. The miracles of the messengers and prophets
3. The fulfillment of prophecies (This aspect has already been discussed above)

#### 11.1.1.4.1 The Answering of Du‘a’ (Supplication)

The first aspect is that we hear and see Allāh’s response to the call of supplicants, the distressed, and the grieving. This is a clear proof of Allāh’s existence.

He says:

Al-Anfāl 8:9

﴿إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُزَدِّفِينَ﴾

„REMEMBER’ WHEN YOU CRIED OUT TO YOUR LORD FOR HELP, HE ANSWERED, “I WILL REINFORCE YOU WITH A THOUSAND ANGELS— FOLLOWED BY MANY OTHERS.”

And

Al-Anbiyā’ 21:76

﴿وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

„AND ‘REMEMBER’ WHEN NOAH HAD CRIED OUT TO US EARLIER, SO WE RESPONDED TO HIM AND DELIVERED HIM AND HIS FAMILY [[ I.E., THE BELIEVERS IN HIS FAMILY. ]] FROM THE GREAT DISTRESS.“

In Sahīh al-Bukharī, it is reported that Sharīk bin `Abdullah bin Abi Namir said:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو ضَمْرَةَ، أَنَسُ بْنُ عِيَاضٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شَرِيكُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي نَمِرٍ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، يَذْكُرُ أَنَّ رَجُلًا، دَخَلَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ مِنْ بَابِ كَانٍ وَجَاهِ الْجَنَبِ، وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَائِمٌ يَخْطُبُ فَاسْتَقْبَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَائِمًا فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَلَكَتِ الْمَوَاشِي وَانْقَطَعَتِ السُّبُلُ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ يَعْيُنُنَا. قَالَ فَرَفَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ " اللَّهُمَّ اسْقِنَا، اللَّهُمَّ اسْقِنَا ". قَالَ أَنَسُ وَلَا وَاللَّهِ مَا تَرَى فِي السَّمَاءِ مِنْ سَحَابٍ وَلَا قَرَعَةً وَلَا شَيْئًا، وَمَا نَبِّئْنَا وَبَيْنَ سَلْعٍ مِنْ بَيْتٍ وَلَا دَارٍ، قَالَ فَطَلَعْتُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ سَحَابَةٌ مِثْلُ التُّرْبِ، فَلَمَّا تَوَسَّطَتِ السَّمَاءَ انْتَشَرَتْ ثُمَّ أَمْطَرَتْ. قَالَ وَاللَّهِ مَا رَأَيْتَا الشَّمْسَ سِئًا، ثُمَّ دَخَلَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْبَابِ فِي الْجُمُعَةِ الْمُقْبِلَةِ، وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَائِمٌ يَخْطُبُ، فَاسْتَقْبَلَهُ قَائِمًا فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَلَكَتِ الْأَمْوَالُ وَانْقَطَعَتِ السُّبُلُ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ يُسِيكِنَهَا، قَالَ فَرَفَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ " اللَّهُمَّ حَوَالَيْنَا وَلَا عَلَيْنَا، اللَّهُمَّ عَلَى الْأَكَامِ وَالْجِبَالِ وَالْأَجَامِ وَالطَّرَابِ وَالْأَوْدِيَةِ وَمَنَابِتِ الشَّجَرِ . قَالَ فَانْقَطَعَتْ وَخَرَجْنَا تَمْشِي فِي الشَّمْسِ ."

„I heard Anas bin Malik say: ‘On a Friday, a person entered the main mosque through the gate opposite the pulpit, while the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was delivering the Khutbah. The man stood before the Messenger of Allāh and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! The livestock is dying and the roads are cut off; please pray to Allāh for rain.’ Anas added: ‘The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ raised his two hands and said: ‘O Allāh! Bless us with rain! O Allāh! Bless us with rain! O Allāh! Bless us with rain!’ Anas added: ‘By Allāh, we could not see a trace of a cloud in the sky, and there was no building or house between us and the Sila’ Mountain.’ Anas added: ‘A heavy cloud like

*a shield appeared from behind it (the Sila' Mountain). When it reached the middle of the sky, it spread and then rained.' Anas further said: 'By Allāh! We could not see the sun for a week. The next Friday a person entered through the same gate, and at that time the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was delivering the Friday Khutba. The man stood before him and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ! The livestock is dying and the roads are cut off, please pray to Allāh to hold back the rain.' Anas added: 'The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ raised both hands and said: 'O Allāh! Around us and not upon us. O Allāh! On the plains, on the mountains, on the hills, in the valleys and where trees grow.' So the rain stopped, and we walked in the sun... '.*

The answering of the Du'a' (supplication) of those who sincerely turn to Allāh (alone) and fulfill the conditions for the answering of the Du'a' by Allāh is a matter that can still be observed today.

### 11.1.1.4.2 The Miracles of the Messengers and Prophets

The second aspect is that the signs of the prophets, called Mu'jizāt (miracles), which people have seen or heard, are irrefutable proof of the existence of the One who sent them, namely Allāh.

Indeed, these miracles are beyond human capabilities, and Allāh reveals them to help and support His messengers. An example of this is the sign given to Mūsā when Allāh commanded him to strike the sea with his staff. He struck it, and the sea parted into twelve dry roads separated by water, which became like huge mountains.

Allāh says:

Ash-Shu‘arā’ 26:63

﴿ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴾

„SO WE INSPIRED MOSES: “STRIKE THE SEA WITH YOUR STAFF,” AND THE SEA WAS SPLIT, EACH PART WAS LIKE A HUGE MOUNTAIN.“

Another example is the sign given to ‘Īsā (Jesus), through which he could bring the dead back to life with Allāh’s permission.

Allāh spoke about him and said:

Āl ‘Imrān 3:49

﴿ وَأُخِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﴾

„...AND RAISE THE DEAD TO LIFE—BY ALLĀH’S WILL....“

A third example is that of Muḥammad ﷺ, when the tribe of Quraysh asked him for a sign (a miracle as proof of his prophethood), he pointed to the moon, and it (i.e., the moon) split, and people saw it.

About this miracle, Allāh said:

Al-Qamar 54:1-2

(1) ﴿ أَقْرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَأَنشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴾

(2) ﴿ وَإِن يَرَوْا غَايَةَ عَائِيَةٍ يُغْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴾

(1) THE HOUR HAS DRAWN NEAR AND THE MOON WAS SPLIT 'IN TWO'.

(2) YET, WHENEVER THEY SEE A SIGN, THEY TURN AWAY, SAYING, "SAME OLD MAGIC!"

All these physical signs (miracles) that Allāh performs to help and support His messengers are irrefutable proof of His existence. Some readers may wish they had been witnesses to a prophet's miracle, without realizing that we are actually already witnesses to the greatest miracle: the Kalām Allāh, the eternal words of Allāh, manifested in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is the eternal, uncreated, unchangeable, and unique word of Allāh.

In a Ḥadith, collected in Bukharī, the Prophet ﷺ says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَا مِنْ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مَا مِثْلُهُ آمَنَ عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ، وَأَمَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَخِيَا أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ فَأَرْجُو أَنْ أَكُونَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ "

*„Every prophet was given miracles because of which people believed, but what has been given to me is this Revelation which Allāh has sent down to*

*me. So, I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other prophets on the Day of Resurrection.’”*

This Ḥadith provides several important insights:

1. All prophets were endowed with miracles.
  2. The greatest Mu’jiza (miracle) of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the Qur’ān. Its specific mention suggests that he places the Qur’ān above all other miracles.
  3. The Qur’ān is considered the greatest miracle, particularly because the Prophet ﷺ expressed: ‘Therefore, I hope that my followers will be more numerous on the Day of Resurrection than the followers of the other prophets.’ This hope is reflected in the significance of the Qur’ān, as its uniqueness deserves a wide following.
- *Why is the Qur’ān considered the greatest miracle?*
1. While previous miracles were independent of the revelations - like ‘Īsā, who was given the Injīl, but his miracles occurred outside of the Injīl to confirm its truth, as well as with Mūsā - the miracle of the Qur’ān lies in its unity of message and miracle. It does not require external miracles for confirmation; the Qur’ān itself is the miracle.
  2. Other miracles were limited to the lifetime of the respective prophets and impressed most those who were eyewitnesses. For later generations, these miracles might appear as mere

hearsay. The Qur'ān, however, remains a constant, living miracle.

Every messenger presented his people with a miracle that matched the type of knowledge in which they excelled the most. Since the people of Mūsā excelled in magic, he confronted them with a miracle of a magical kind. Thus, it was the magicians who, after experiencing his miracle, became among the first believers. They recognized that behind the miracle was a divine power, not a magical trick.

According to the Sunnah of Allāh, prophets are sent with miracles that are most appreciated by their respective people. The Banī Isrāīl at 'Īsā's time, for example, were skilled in medicine. They boasted of their extensive knowledge in the prevention and cure of diseases. Accordingly, 'Īsā's miracles came from the medical field. These specific miracles, tailored to the understanding and appreciation of his people, enhanced their impact and persuasive power.

The Arabs at the time of the Prophet were distinguished by the Arabic language, poetry, and eloquence. To prove to them that the Prophet was the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh gave him the Qur'ān, which is incomparable.

After discussing the existence of Allāh for the sake of completeness, we now come to Tawhīd, the unity of Allāh, which is the pure monotheism that no other religion represents, even if they claim to do so.

## 11.1.2 Tawḥīd: The Oneness and Uniqueness of Aḷḷāh

Tawḥīd, the acknowledgment of Aḷḷāh’s singular and unique divinity, is the foundational concept of Islam, forming the heart of its creed and its authenticity. The term ‘Tawḥīd’ is derived from the Arabic verb root ‘waḥḥada / yuwaḥḥidu,’ signifying ‘to unify’ or ‘to consider as one entity.’

Central to Tawḥīd is the declaration, known as Kalimah at-Tawḥīd, which states:



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*„I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of  
worship except Aḷḷāh!“*

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This declaration is the first part of the Shahādah, the Islamic profession of faith, affirming the exclusive existence and unparalleled nature of Aḷḷāh’s divinity.

The concept of Tawḥīd is comprehended through a process of negation (Nafī) and affirmation (Ithbāt). Negation involves rejecting any form of divinity other than Aḷḷāh, while affirmation recognizes and asserts the sole divinity of Aḷḷāh.

- **Understanding Ilāh (Deity, God) in Arabic**

In Arabic linguistics, word meanings are intricately tied to their morphological structures. ‘Ilāh’, translating to deity or god, is derived

from a definite noun pattern often used to signify the recipient or object of an action. This grammatical structure is also seen in words like ‘Kitāb’ (book), signifying something that has undergone the process of being written, and ‘Bisāt’ (carpet), representing something spread out. In a similar vein, ‘ilāh’ signifies an entity that is the focus of worship and adoration, symbolizing a focal point for devotion. It encapsulates the intertwining of human emotions, reasoning, and actions in the pursuit of spiritual fulfilment and emotional connection through worship and reverence.

The realm of deities, as contextualized here, is broad and varied, including both animate and inanimate objects—ranging from stones, idols, and trees to natural forces and celestial bodies like the sun, moon, and stars. This category extends to spiritual figures such as angels, prophets, and individuals of moral virtue. In the realm of belief, the veneration of any of these entities as a deity renders it a deity in the believer’s perception, yet this does not equate to its status as a deity in objective reality. Hence, within the domain of tangible reality, any entity revered as a deity, apart from Allāh, is deemed a perceived deity by its devotees, but holds no veritable deity status.

- **Expanding on Comprehensive Negation (Nafi) in ‘Lā ilāha...’**

The expression ‘Lā ilāha...’ is a profound statement of negation or dismissal in Islamic theology. It does not outright reject the existence of other deities acknowledged in diverse religious traditions. Instead, it challenges two critical aspects:

- a) The legitimacy of these entities as true deities deserving of recognition and worship,

- b) The truthfulness (Ḥaqq) and righteousness (‘Adl) associated with their veneration.

The initial segment of this phrase underscores a pivotal Islamic belief: entities revered as deities in various cultures, being creations of human conception, fundamentally lack the intrinsic attributes necessary for being true deities. As such, they are unworthy of worship. This part of the declaration posits that veneration directed towards such entities is not anchored in truth and justice, the essential qualities of legitimate divine worship, but is mired in fallacy and inequity.

- **Affirmation (Ithbāt) through an Exception**

The phrase ‘... illa Allāh’ in the statement serves as a critical exception to the comprehensive negation previously expressed. This part explicitly affirms the exclusive worthiness of Allāh, the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all that lies between, as the singular deity deserving of true worship. Worship dedicated to Allāh is unique in its adherence to principles of truth and justice. This element of the declaration is a powerful testament to the essence of monotheism: a dedicated worship of Allāh alone, coupled with the renunciation of any other beings erroneously venerated as gods, a practice often rooted in ignorance and injustice.

This distinction illuminates the profound significance of ‘Allāh’, a unique name for the Creator: the only entity deserving of worship and the Only One rightfully worshipped with sincerity and truth.

- *Who Categorized Tawḥīd?*

The division of Tawḥīd into three categories serves to facilitate and deepen the comprehensive understanding of the unity of Allāh. This categorization is not explicitly found in the Qur'ān, but was developed by Islamic scholars to clearly define and explain the various aspects of Allāh's uniqueness and sovereignty.

Often, it is heard that it was Ibn Taymiyyah who divided Tawḥīd into three categories. However, there was a scholar who did this before him: Ibn Battah.

Ibn Battah Al 'Ukbarī, a theologian and jurist, was born in the city of 'UkAl-Barā' in present-day Iraq. From a young age, he began acquiring religious knowledge and later became a respected scholar in the fields of Fiqh and 'Aqīdah. He was a follower of the Hanbali school of law and lived during the same era as 'Imām Barbahārī.

According to Ibn Battah, the foundation of 'Imān (faith in Allāh) consists of three elements that all creation must believe in:

The first element is the belief in His sovereignty over all creation (Tawḥīd Ar-Rubūbiyyah). This distinguishes us from the heresies of atheists or agnostics who do not recognize a creator or doubt it.

The second element is the belief in His sole right to worship (Tawḥīd Al-'Ulūhiyyah). Through this belief, we distance ourselves from the heresies of polytheists, who recognize a creator but associate others with Him to be worshipped.

The third element involves the belief that Allāh is described with attributes that are exclusively attributed to Him, such as knowledge ('Ilm), power (Qudrah), wisdom (Ḥikmah), and everything else with which He has described Himself in the Qur'ān (Tawḥīd 'Asmā' wa-ṣ-

Şifāt). With this belief, we particularly distance ourselves from the sects that err regarding the attributes of Aļļāh.

### 11.1.2.1 Tawḥīd Ar-Rubūbiyyah (Alḷāh's Uniqueness in Sovereignty)

This category focuses on the action and work of Alḷāh and includes all acts that can be attributed exclusively to Him. It reflects the belief that Alḷāh is the only creator and owner of everything and exercises unrestricted control over the entire universe. This includes, among other things, that He gives life and takes it, provides healing and provision, and guides and maintains the universe.

To clearly distinguish the actions of Alḷāh from those of the creation, we consider how the exclusivity of Alḷāh's act of creation/ownership/control can be reconciled with the fact that these actions are also attributed to others in certain contexts, as illustrated by the following verse.

Al-Mu'minūn 23:14

﴿فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾

„SO BLESSED IS ALLĀH, THE BEST OF CREATORS!“

- **Creation**

It is essential to understand that only Alḷāh has the ability to truly create, that is, to create things from nothing or to give life. The designation of others as 'creators' merely implies the transformation or alteration of already existing materials. For example, a sculptor forms a statue from wood or stone but does not create the wood or stone itself. A painter transforms a white canvas into a colorful painting, but both the colors and the canvas were already present and are ultimately creations of Alḷāh. Therefore, there is a fundamental

difference between true creation and mere reshaping or designing. The creation from nothing remains exclusively reserved for Allāh.

- **Ownership**

In emphasizing Allāh as the sole owner of all sovereignty: Allāh is the only and absolute owner of everything.

He says:

Al-Anbiyā' 21:19

﴿وَأَلَّهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

„TO HIM BELONG ALL THOSE IN THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH...“

The true and absolute owner and king is therefore exclusively Allāh. When ownership is attributed to others besides Allāh, it refers only to a temporary stewardship or use of things that belong to Allāh's creation. Allāh Himself has confirmed this type of temporary ownership in His revelation:

An-Nūr 24:61

﴿أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ مِمَّا تَحْتَهُ﴾

„...HOUSES YOU HAVE THE KEYS FOR...“

There are also texts indicating that, besides Allāh, humans are attributed a certain degree of ownership. However, this human ownership fundamentally differs from Allāh's ownership. It is limited and specific ownership. For example, a house owned by Zayd does not belong to 'Amr and vice versa. Furthermore, human ownership is

limited in the sense that people can only dispose of their possessions within the limits set by Allāh. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ condemned the wastage of money and Allāh has proclaimed:

An-Nisā' 4:5

﴿ وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴾

„DO NOT ENTRUST THE INCAPABLE 'AMONG YOUR DEPENDANTS' WITH YOUR WEALTH WHICH ALLĀH HAS MADE A MEANS OF SUPPORT FOR YOU—BUT FEED AND CLOTHE THEM FROM IT, AND SPEAK TO THEM KINDLY.“

This illustrates that human ownership is limited and restricted in nature. In contrast, Allāh's ownership is absolute and comprehensive. Allāh acts according to His will with His possessions; He is accountable to no one, unlike humans.

- **Control**

Regarding control over all matters, it is solely Allāh who holds this power. He exercises control over all aspects of creation, including the heavens and the earth. Allāh describes this in His words:

Al-A' rāf 7:54

﴿ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

„THE CREATION AND THE COMMAND BELONG TO HIM 'ALONE'!“

This control is complete and all-encompassing; no force or person can oppose or halt Allāh's decisions. The control that humans exert

over aspects of creation, such as their wealth, children, or servants, is limited and restricted in comparison.

### 11.1.2.2 Tawḥīd Al-Ulūhiyyah (Alḷāh’s Uniqueness in Worship)

This dimension of Tawḥīd delves into the conduct and actions of Alḷāh’s servants, emphasizing exclusive devotion and worship of Alḷāh. This means that every act of worship should be directed solely towards Him. Merely acknowledging Alḷāh as the sole creator with distinct names and attributes is insufficient. A Muslim is required to embrace and embody all facets of Tawḥīd, aligning their practices with what is pleasing to Alḷāh. Understanding the essence of worship is vital to fulfill this aspect of Tawḥīd effectively.

When it comes to defining worship, various interpretations exist. A comprehensive and accessible definition is as follows:

Worship in Islam entails engaging in actions deemed praiseworthy and deliberately abstaining from forbidden or disliked deeds (in alignment with Islamic teachings), as an expression of acknowledgment and devotion in servitude to Alḷāh.

Our explanation will be guided by this definition.

*„Worship in Islam entails engaging in actions deemed praiseworthy and deliberately abstaining from forbidden or disliked deeds...“*

In Islam, every action is subject to a ruling regarding its legality.

#### 11.1.2.2.1 Categories of Islamic Rulings

Islamic legal rulings are classified into five distinct categories:

a) Wājib (obligatory),

- b) *Mustahabb* (recommended),
- c) *Mubāḥ* (permissible),
- d) *Makrūh* (disliked) und
- e) *Ḥarām* (prohibited).

- **Wājib (Obligatory)**

The term ‘Wājib’ denotes actions that are deemed absolutely necessary by Allāh, also known as ‘Farḍ’. Adherence to these obligations is rewarded, while their neglect incurs punishment.

Examples of Wājib acts include the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramaḍān, paying *Zakāt* if required, and undertaking the Ḥajj pilgrimage to Mecca if capable. The Wājib category serves several critical purposes:

1. It delineates the vital actions essential for attaining success in both the earthly life and the hereafter.
2. It aims to cultivate a mindset of submission to Allāh among believers, a key foundation for righteous living.
3. It establishes a structural framework of virtuous acts that guide the lives of the faithful.

- **Mustahabb (Recommended)**

This includes actions that, while not obligatory, are strongly recommended by Allāh. Such actions are also referred to as ‘Sunna,’

‘Mandūb,’ or ‘Nafl.’ Performing these recommended acts is rewarded, but there is no punishment for omitting them.

Examples of Mustahabb include the night prayer (Qiyām-ul-Layl), additional Sunnah prayers alongside the five obligatory prayers, fasting on three days of each month, fasting for six days in the month of Shawwāl, giving charity to the needy, and engaging in Dhikr and devotions.

The purpose of Mustahabb actions is:

1. To identify beneficial deeds that might not be obvious.
2. To create a protective shield of good deeds around the Wājib actions, so that if a believer falters, it is more likely to be in the Mustahabb actions and not the Wājib ones.
3. To build a portfolio of good deeds that can compensate for any deficiencies in obligatory actions.

- **Mubāh (Permissible)**

This pertains to actions that are neither prescribed nor prohibited by Allāh. ‘Mubāh’ refers to the nature of the action itself, though external circumstances can transform it into obligatory or prohibited actions. For example, buying water is generally permissible. However, if this water is needed for the ritual washing before the obligatory prayer, the purchase becomes a duty (wājib), as any obligatory act that can only be accomplished through a specific action becomes obligatory itself. Typical examples of ‘Mubāh’ include eating and drinking, trade and buying, traveling both for pleasure and for job-seeking.

- **Makrūh (Disliked)**

This term refers to actions that, while not explicitly forbidden by Allāh, are nevertheless considered undesirable. Those who refrain from such actions may be rewarded, but there is no punishment for those who perform them.

Examples include: eating and giving with the left hand, following women at funerals, speaking after the night prayer, praying in a single garment without covering the shoulders, voluntary praying after the morning prayer until sunrise and after the afternoon prayer until sunset.

The purpose of Makrūh actions includes:

1. Protection from potentially harmful actions by avoiding them.
2. Promotion of self-control, as avoiding Makrūh facilitates staying away from prohibited actions.
3. Building a barrier between the believer and forbidden actions, so that the person is more likely to commit disliked rather than prohibited actions in times of weakness.

- **Ḥarām (Forbidden)**

Ḥarām refers to actions that have been declared by Allāh as strictly forbidden and must be avoided. Abstaining from such actions is rewarded, whereas their performance leads to punishment.

Examples include adultery, usury (Ribā), alcohol consumption, disrespecting parents, men shaving their beards, and women's provocative behavior or adornment.

The objectives behind prohibiting Ḥarām actions are:

1. To protect individuals and society from extremely harmful influences, both physical and psychological.
2. To test people's faith, distinguishing between true believers, weak believers, and non-believers.
3. To develop consciousness of Allāh, by encouraging people to refrain from certain actions, even if they cannot recognize their harmful effects.

- **Conclusion**

This framework highlights that, in our context, actions deemed commendable include those classified as Wājib (obligatory) and Mustahabb (recommended), and in certain scenarios, Mubāh (permissible) as well.

Key attributes of commendable actions, as delineated in the scriptures, often encompass one or more of the following aspects:

- a) Allāh praises the action.
- b) Allāh praises the person performing the action.
- c) Allāh commands the action.

Avoiding actions categorized as Ḥarām (forbidden) and Makrūh (disliked) is equally commendable, aligning with Allāh's disapproval of these actions.

Indicators of forbidden actions in scriptures are typically marked by elements such as:

- a) Allāh’s disapproval of the action (His love and pleasure lie in abstaining from it).
- b) Allāh’s disapproval of the perpetrator (His affection is for those who refrain from these actions).
- c) Allāh’s prohibition of the action (indicating His love for its avoidance and His pleasure in it).

This distinction emphasizes the intentional and mindful evasion of forbidden actions. Inability to commit a sin due to external circumstances, which one would otherwise willingly engage in, does not equate to worship. It is the conscious choice against sinning that constitutes an act of worship and obedience to Allāh, beyond just the incidental lack of opportunity or ability to sin.

Most actions are categorized as Mubāh (permissible) and do not inherently represent acts of worship.

Hence, the definition intentionally excludes the phrase “permissible acts” in favor of “commendable actions.”

With this understanding of what constitutes worship and what does not, we can now explore the various forms of worship.

### 11.1.2.2.2 Types of Worship

There are various forms of categorizing worship in the numerous works of scholars. We have chosen the following:

- a) Worship as supplication
- b) Worship as states and feelings of the heart
- c) Worship through physical actions

- **Worship as Supplication**

1. Supplication (Du‘a’): Dua can be broadly categorized into two fundamental types based on the nature of the supplication itself. The first type is 'Dua al-Mas'alah', also known as the Dua of Request. The second type is 'Dua al-Ibadah', or the Dua of Worship.

- a) Dua al-Mas'alah (The Dua of Request)*

This form of dua involves directly asking Alḥā for specific needs or desires. It encompasses requests for personal benefits, such as seeking more wealth, health, children, or a better job, as well as protection from harm like the evil eye or illness. Essentially, when a person supplicates for tangible blessings in this life or for the alleviation of difficulties, it is considered Dua al-Mas'alah.

- b) Dua al-Ibadah (The Dua of Worship)*

Dua al-Ibadah represents a more encompassing aspect of dua, as it integrates supplication into every act of worship. Each prayer, each utterance of praise or gratitude, is a form of this dua. For instance, when performing Salah, the intrinsic act of seeking Allāh's acceptance of the prayer is Dua al-Ibadah. Similarly, when concluding a fast, the request for the acceptance of the fast falls under this category. Expressions like 'Alhamdulillah' or 'SubhanAllāh' are also examples of Dua al-Ibadah. This type of dua is embedded in all acts of worship – prayer, zakat, sadaqah, fasting – acknowledging and seeking Allāh's acceptance, recognizing Him as the sole deserving entity of worship.

Dua al-Mas'alah is regarded as one of the most profound forms of worship, supplication harmoniously integrates emotional states like love, hope, and humility with the act of beseeching, capturing the true spirit of worship.

2. Seeking Help ('Isti'ānah): This form of worship is solely directed towards Allāh, the ultimate authority over all avenues and mechanisms of aid. Requesting assistance from others in earthly matters where they possess the ability and means does not fall under the category of worship.
3. Seeking refuge ('Isti'ādah): It involves seeking protection and refuge, originating from the heart and possibly expressed through speech or actions. However, seeking protection in worldly matters from those who are capable does not constitute worship.
4. Seeking Rescue/Relief ('Istigh'āthah): Invoking aid to emerge from severe distress or oppressive situations represents a significant aspect of worship. Conversely, seeking assistance

in worldly circumstances, such as calling for help in a fire from someone capable of aid, does not qualify as worship.

To further elucidate and eliminate any ambiguity: An individual is permitted to seek help, refuge, or rescue from others apart from Allāh, provided specific conditions are met: the helper must be alive (ḥayy), capable of hearing (sami), physically present (ḥāḍir), and able (qadir), signifying their ability to accomplish the requested task.

This distinction is crucial in discerning between allowable mutual support among people and the impermissible act of worshipping entities other than Allāh. Thus, soliciting help, refuge, or rescue from a deceased individual, someone in a distant city unable to hear, or a person lacking capability in the required context, equates to worshipping that entity. Such requests suggest that the entity being called upon for help, refuge, or rescue possesses attributes of divine authority (Rubūbiyyah), such as the ability to hear over vast distances, respond in absence, or exert control over various forces and elements. This is in direct conflict with the belief in the singular sovereignty of Allāh and the inappropriateness of addressing these matters to anyone but Him. Conversely, requesting rescue from someone at an accident scene doesn't constitute worship, as the individual in question meets the criteria of being alive, present, able to hear, and capable in the pertinent situation.

- **Worship as states and feelings of the heart**

In this context, a distinction is made between permanent and situational states of the heart.

Permanent states encompass the deep-rooted faith in one's heart, pertaining to essential doctrines such as belief in Allāh, His prophets,

and divine predestination. These form the foundation of all forms of worship.

Situational heart states encompass:

1. Love (Maḥabbah): This form of love transcends worship when it intertwines with humble submission. Distinct from natural affection found in familial or amicable relationships, worshipful love is dedicated and elevated. However, prioritizing love for others over Allāh, especially if it leads to compromises or neglecting religious obligations, is strictly prohibited.
2. Hope (Rajā’): This involves aspiring for blessings and outcomes solely within Allāh’s domain, like the blessing of offspring or absolution of sins. Aspirations for mundane assistance, such as financial aid from relatives, don’t fall into the worship category.
3. Fear (Khawf): Differentiated into two types, the natural fear of tangible harm like dangers or calamities isn’t considered worship. Conversely, fear rooted in fallacious beliefs, attributing power over harm to entities other than Allāh, such as dread of sickness or destitution, embodies a form of worship. Fear causing deviation from religious duties or compromises in faith is unequivocally forbidden and deemed a grave sin.
4. Trust (Tawakkul): This denotes utilizing available means to achieve an objective, ultimately entrusting the outcome to Allāh, the orchestrator of all causes and effects. This profound trust is reserved for Allāh alone, not to be misplaced in others or one’s own endeavors, as they are merely facilitators in achieving the intended goal.

- **Worship through physical actions**

1. Bowing and Prostrating (Rukū‘, Sujūd): These actions are explicit and unambiguous expressions of worship, reflecting deep-seated humility and reverence that originate from the heart.
2. Ritual Sacrifice (Dhabḥ): This practice symbolizes worship through the act of spilling an animal’s blood, done in humility and respect for the Creator who brought it into existence, endowed it with life, and made it a source of nourishment for humanity. Contrarily, there are instances where individuals, in a state of ignorance, perform animal sacrifices in honor of a saint to prevent misfortune or secure benefits, or to a jinn, seeking to placate it and avert its malice. Such actions represent definitive instances of worship.

These practices are among the most pivotal forms of worship highlighted in the scriptural texts. It is evident that worship manifests through the heart, verbally, and via physical acts.

Delving deeper into the first segment of the definition, we now encounter a stipulation.

The statement elaborates:

*„Worship in Islam entails engaging in actions deemed praiseworthy and deliberately abstaining from forbidden or disliked deeds, (in alignment with Islamic teachings)...“*

### 11.1.2.2.3 First Condition: Adherence to Islamic Revelation Texts

For the performance of commendable deeds and the intentional avoidance of forbidden or disliked actions, adherence to Islamic sources is crucial. This stipulates that such actions have to be grounded in the revelatory texts – the Qur’ān and the authentic Sunnah. Absence of support from these foundational texts renders an act non-worshipful. Beyond these, scholars have extrapolated additional principles to form the basis of jurisprudential judgments. These are often referred to as the underpinnings of Sharī‘ah or the sources of Islamic jurisprudence, namely: Ijmā‘ (consensus of scholars) and Qiyās (analogical deduction).

Historically, there have been efforts to integrate novel worship practices into Islam, termed as Bid‘ah (innovations). Such practices, deviating from the established sources, are generally rejected. This topic is explored in greater depth in the relevant section.

A subsequent condition further narrows down this definition. It asserts:

*“Worship in Islam entails engaging in actions deemed praiseworthy and deliberately abstaining from forbidden or disliked deeds (in alignment with Islamic teachings), as an expression of acknowledgment and devotion in servitude to Allāh.”*

This part underscores the dynamic between us as the servants of Allāh and Allāh as our Sovereign.

### 11.1.2.2.4 Second Condition: The Essence of Servitude

In Arabic, the concept of servitude, [‘Ubūdiyyah], encompasses a spectrum of meanings including humility, devotion, submission, compliance, obedience, and worship.

As conveyed in the Qur’ān, Allāh’s primary purpose for creating humanity is to engage in worship. He has articulated:

Ad-Dāriyāt 51:56

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

„I DID NOT CREATE JINN AND HUMANS EXCEPT TO WORSHIP ME.

The essence of ‘Ubūdiyyah is profound devotion to Allāh, signifying a deep-seated need for Him. It involves liberating oneself from the confines of personal desires and ego to wholeheartedly dedicate oneself to Allāh. This condition recognizes Allāh as the Provident Lord and oneself as a humble, reliant servant, utterly dependent on His grace for everything.

Attaining ‘Ubūdiyyah stems from ma‘rifah – a profound comprehension of Allāh’s splendor and flawlessness. This encompasses acknowledging one’s sins and limitations. In the state of ‘Ubūdiyyah, one perceives oneself as completely powerless, with every facet of existence contingent on Allāh. It’s the recognition that without His support, even momentarily, one would be utterly adrift. Consequently, one incessantly seeks His guidance in all matters, trivial or significant, and relies wholly on Him in every life aspect.

‘Ubūdiyyah is not merely an inner state but also manifests in outward worship practices. The ultimate aim of all physical worship is to cultivate the state of ‘Ubūdiyyah. It signifies absolute submission

to Allāh, surrendering to His will, and holding Him in the highest esteem above all else.

Islam's core objective is to liberate individuals from idolizing others, their cravings, creatures, or celestial entities, steering them towards venerating the Creator over the creation. This paradigm shift epitomizes genuine emancipation.

Every individual serves something or someone, whether it's wealth, authority, fame, indulgence, aesthetics, intellect, other humans, nature, or animals. Yet, these forms of devotion ultimately result in hollow fulfillment.

Genuine liberation, joy, and tranquility are discovered in the submission and worship of Allāh. Ibn Taymiyyah observed that those most devoted to Allāh are the most content. The deeper one's humility before Allāh, the more intimate the bond, fostering greater divine care and affection.

Paradoxically, submission to Allāh cultivates greater freedom. The more profound one's commitment to Allāh, the lesser the dependence on extraneous elements.

Despite the potentially negative connotations of terms like 'servitude,' 'slave,' or 'servant' in historical contexts, servitude towards Allāh is a wellspring of contentment, delight, and solace. It is advantageous and dignified for the servant, rather than Allāh.

All humans, including unbelievers, are inherently servants of Allāh by virtue of His dominion over the cosmos. Everyone conforms to Allāh's will, be it consciously or unconsciously. No entity can counter or act in defiance of His omnipotent will. This universal compliance is termed 'Ibādah Kawniyya, while the deliberate devotion of believers is known as 'Ibādah Shar'īyya.

Believers in Allāh consciously embrace this servitude, acknowledging, worshiping, and willingly submitting to Him. They epitomize His true ‘ibād (servants).

Imām al-Shāṭibī elucidated that Sharī‘ah’s purpose is to emancipate humans from the tyranny of whims, enabling them to willingly submit to Allāh as inherent servants.

In essence, Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah, focusing on Allāh’s exclusivity in worship, underscores a believer’s total dedication and servitude to Allāh. This principle accentuates the critical need for all worship, as sanctioned by Sharī‘ah, to be solely devoted to Allāh.

### **11.1.2.3 Tawḥīd Asmā ' wa-s-Sifāt (Allāh's Uniqueness in His Names and Attributes)**

This category pertains to the unity of Allāh's names and attributes. His names and attributes must not be attributed to any other entity. They provide us with a deeper understanding of Allāh's nature and help us develop a closer connection to Him. Therefore, it is essential for every Muslim to know Allāh's names and attributes.

But how do we understand Allāh's names and attributes?

#### **Correct Understanding of Allāh's Names and Attributes**

The belief of Ahlu-s-Sunnah regarding Allāh's names and attributes is based on accepting and affirming all that is contained in the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah about them. This includes affirming Allāh's attributes where they are mentioned, and negating them where appropriate. Therefore:

1. We refer to Allāh by the names He has given Himself. We neither add to these names nor omit anything from them.
2. We acknowledge Allāh's attributes and describe Him with those attributes that are laid out in His Book or through the words of His Messenger. In doing so, we avoid:
  - Taḥrīf, the distortion or alteration of their meaning,
  - Ta'ṭīl, the denial or negation of these attributes,
  - Tamthīl/Tashbīh, deriving analogies or establishing similarities between Allāh and His creations,

- Takyīf, adding details or specifying these attributes.
3. We negate for Aļļāh what He has negated about Himself in His Book or through the words of His Messenger Muḥammad. This is done with the understanding that every negation implies a portrayal of Aļļāh in a state of perfection. For example, when injustice is negated in relation to Aļļāh, it is because He is characterized by absolute and perfect justice. The reason why the negation of an attribute in Aļļāh leads to the affirmation of a positive, opposite attribute is due to the nature of divine perfection. A mere negation would not be sufficient to praise Aļļāh's essence without the affirmation of a positive attribute. The example of negating oppression illustrates this. While a human who does not oppress may act out of weakness or inability, this is not the case with Aļļāh. He is all-powerful and acts according to His will, but does not oppress and will never oppress, due to His perfect justice. Therefore, the negation of oppression in Aļļāh is an expression of His justice and strength, not a sign of weakness or passivity. This understanding highlights the unique nature of Aļļāh by emphasizing His attributes as expressions of the highest perfection and goodness.

Ahlu-s-Sunnah thus act according to the methodology of the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah; every name or attribute of Aļļāh mentioned in the Qur'ān or in the authentic Sunnah falls under the realm of affirmation, making it obligatory to confirm them.

Regarding negation, this means that all forms of defects and inadequacies that contradict Aļļāh's perfection are rejected. It is a fundamental principle of faith that the opposite of what is negated is affirmed in its most perfect form.

To ensure the correct understanding of Allāh's names and attributes, it is important to comprehend the terms Taḥrīf, Ta'ṭīl, Tamthīl/Tashbīh, and Takyīf, as they are essential for identifying erroneous interpretations in this context:

### **11.1.2.3.1 Taḥrīf**

Taḥrīf refers to the distortion or alteration of texts related to Allāh's names and attributes. This can affect either the actual wording or the intended meaning of these texts.

Taḥrīf can be divided into two main categories:

1. Taḥrīf of the actual wording (Lafz): This includes changes in the physical text. It can manifest in various ways:
  - Adding to the word: Inserting additional words or letters.
  - Omitting from the word: Removing words or letters.
  - Changing a vowel related to 'Irab (grammatical case): Modifying vowel marks that affect the grammatical structure.
  - Changing a vowel not related to 'Irab: Modifying vowel marks that do not directly affect the grammatical structure.
2. Taḥrīf of the meaning (Ma'ānī): This refers to changing the interpretation or understanding of the texts, thereby distorting the original meaning intended by Allāh.

- **Taḥrīf al-Lafz**

The first example is the alteration of the Irab (grammatical case) of Allāh’s speech:

Al-A‘rāf 7:143

﴿ وَكَلَّمَ رَبُّهُ ﴾

„...AND HIS LORD SPOKE TO HIM,..“

In Taḥrīf al-Lafz, the meaning of a verse can be fundamentally changed by altering the grammatical cases of words. An example is the modification of a verse where it originally states that “Allāh spoke to Musa”. However, if the case is changed so that it now reads “Musa spoke to Allāh”, the entire meaning of the verse changes. In this case, an accusative, which identifies Allāh as the speaker, becomes a nominative, identifying Musa as the speaker. Such changes falsify the original text and lead to a wrong interpretation of the divine message.

- **Taḥrīf Al-Ma‘ānī**

This type of Taḥrīf refers to changing the meaning of the text while the actual wording remains unchanged. It distorts the original meaning intended by Allāh, even though the words themselves are not altered.

Some examples of Taḥrīf of meaning include:

1. Changing the meaning of “Istiwā” (to ascend/be exalted):

Ṭā-Hā 20:5

﴿ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ﴾

„THE MOST GRACIOUS (ALLÂH) ROSE OVER (ISTAWÂ) THE (MIGHTY) THRONE (IN A MANNER THAT SUITS HIS MAJESTY).“

The meaning of “Istiwâ” (to ascend/be exalted) is sometimes wrongly interpreted as “to seize” or “to conquer”, which represents a fundamental change of the intended attribute.

2. Reinterpreting the word “Hand” (يَد) as “Blessing” and “Power”:

Al-Mā'idah 5:64

﴿يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ﴾

„NAY, BOTH HIS HANDS ARE WIDELY OUTSTRETCHED. “

Some wrongly interpret the word “Hand” metaphorically as “Blessing” or “Power”, which again deviates from the original, literal meaning.

3. Additional interpretation of “coming”:

Al-Fajr 89:22

﴿وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا﴾

„WHEN YOUR LORD COMES WITH THE ANGELS, RANK UPON RANK,“

It is sometimes added that “the command” of the Lord and not Allāh Himself will come, which is an additional interpretation not present in the original text.

These examples demonstrate how through Taḥrīf of meaning, the original message revealed by Allāh can be altered or misinterpreted. It is important to recognize and avoid such changes to preserve the purity and authenticity of the revelation texts.

### 11.1.2.3.2 Ta‘ṭīl

Ta‘ṭīl in relation to Allāh can be divided into three main categories:

1. Ta‘ṭīl of creation from its Creator and Maker: This form of Ta‘ṭīl occurs among those who deny the existence of a creator of the universe. This is typically the viewpoint of atheists, who deny the existence of a divine creator.
2. Ta‘ṭīl of the worship of Allāh: Here, the fundamental reality of Tawḥīd (Monotheism) and the exclusive worship of Allāh are negated. This form of Ta‘ṭīl is found in individuals who commit Shirk (Polytheism) by directing acts of worship to others besides Allāh.
3. Ta‘ṭīl of Allāh from His sublime perfection: This category refers to the denial of Allāh’s names, attributes, and actions by declaring them null and void. It is this third form of Ta‘ṭīl that is specifically meant here in the context of Allāh’s names and attributes.

In terms of Allāh’s names and attributes, therefore, Ta‘ṭīl means negating some or all of the divine names and attributes and depriving Allāh of these qualities. More specifically, it implies the denial of the existence of these attributes as qualities of the essence of Allāh.

### 11.1.2.3.3 Tamthīl und Tashbīh

Tamthīl und Tashbīh in the islamic context:

- Tamthīl: This is the belief or assumption that the attributes of the Creator (Alḥ) resemble those of the creation. An example of Tamthīl would be the statement: “Alḥ has a hand like my hand and hearing like my hearing.” This implies a direct similarity or equality in every single aspect of the attributes between the Creator and the creation.
- Tashbīh: Although Tamthīl and Tashbīh are often used synonymously, there is a subtle difference. Tashbīh refers to equating the attributes of Alḥ with those of the creation, but not necessarily in every aspect, rather in most aspects. It implies a kind of similarity, but not a complete identity.

It is important to emphasize that both Tamthīl and Tashbīh are rejected by Ahlu-s-Sunnah, as they contradict the fundamental principle of Tawḥīd (Monotheism) and the uniqueness of Alḥ.

This is affirmed by the Qur’ānic verse Ash-Shūrā 42:11:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

„THERE IS NOTHING LIKE HIM: HE IS THE ALL HEARING, THE ALL SEEING,“

which underscores the uniqueness and incomparability of Alḥ. The use of the expression negating Tamthīl is therefore appropriate as it highlights Alḥ’s uniqueness and denies any notion of direct similarity between the Creator and the creation.

### 11.1.2.3.4 Takyīf

Takyīf means ascribing a certain reality to an attribute without specifying its exact nature or the ‘how’. Therefore, Takyīf avoids defining the precise nature or essence of an attribute. It is a more general form of speaking about divine attributes, not establishing a direct similarity with the attributes of creation.

The key difference between Tamthīl and Takyīf lies in how they view divine attributes. While Tamthīl is the belief that a certain divine attribute resembles the attributes of creation, Takyīf implies no such similarity. Any statement containing Tamthīl can be seen as a form of Takyīf, as it assigns a specific reality to an attribute. However, not every form of Takyīf is Tamthīl, as Takyīf can also include statements that do not make comparisons with creation.

Ahlu-s-Sunnah reject any Takyīf that can be grasped by humans, as the true nature of Allāh’s attributes is known only to Him. Their stance is not that they completely reject qualitative descriptions, but that they recognize that the true essence of these qualities is beyond human understanding.

Scholars, referring to Imām Mālik, adhere to the principle: “Al-Istiwā is known, the reality/qualitative description is not known, Imān (faith) in it is obligatory, and to inquire about it is an innovation (Bid‘ah).” This means that the basic idea of Al-Istiwā is known, but the actual nature or the ‘how’ is beyond human knowledge, and thus it is obligatory to believe in it without asking for further details.

The question of why someone might be inclined to pursue concepts like Tahṛīf, Ta‘ṭīl, Tamthīl/Tashbīh, or Takyīf is legitimate and leads to an important discussion in Islamic theology.

A key reason for the misunderstanding or misapplication of these concepts often lies in prioritizing one's own intellect ('Aql) over the transmissions (Naql). This is contrary to the principle of 'Naql before 'Aql', which we have already discussed. This principle emphasizes that the transmissions and teachings of Islam should take precedence over individual understanding or interpretation.

When individuals place their own intellect above the traditional transmissions and authentic sources of Islam, they may tend to misinterpret or distort the attributes of Allāh and the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Such inclinations can arise from various reasons, including the desire to rationalize complex theological concepts or align them with personal beliefs or contemporary understanding. However, it is important to maintain a balance between intellect and transmission and recognize the limits of human understanding, especially regarding matters of 'Aqīdah.

- *Summary:*

The position of Ahlu-s-Sunnah represents a balanced middle path in Islamic theology, steering between two extremes. We affirm Allāh's true names and attributes but reject any similarity of these attributes with those of the creation.

Concretely, this means that Ahlu-s-Sunnah neither claim that Allāh has no hands, face, sight, hearing, life, or power, nor do they say that these attributes are similar to those of His creatures. They understand that Allāh has a true existence and genuine attributes, which are fundamentally different from those of His creation. This understanding includes that, although every existence has a certain

reality, the exact nature or essence of Alḥ̣āh's attributes remains inscrutable to humans, as this knowledge has not been revealed.

This perspective is applied to all of Alḥ̣āh's attributes and aligns with the principles of Ahlu-s-Sunnah regarding Alḥ̣āh's names and attributes.

In an overview of the general principles that Ahlu-s-Sunnah follows concerning Alḥ̣āh's names and attributes, these concepts are summarized and expanded to provide a profound understanding of their theological stance. This balance in their approach helps to avoid misunderstandings and extremism while promoting a deep and respectful understanding of the uniqueness and incomprehensibility of Alḥ̣āh's essence and attributes.

### 11.1.2.3.5 General Principles Regarding the Names and Attributes of Allāh

*The first principle* involves recognizing everything that Allāh has revealed about Himself in His Book and what His Messenger has confirmed about Him. This is done by strictly avoiding any distortion of the wording or meaning (Taḥrīf), any denial of His attributes (Ta'ṭīl), any speculation about the exact nature of these attributes (Takyīf), and any comparison with the creation (Tamthīl).

*The second principle* concerns the rejection of everything that Allāh in His Book, the Qur'ān, or through His Messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, has negated about Himself. This also includes the belief that the perfect opposite of these negations applies to Allāh. Here are some examples:

- Negation of death for Allāh: This involves affirming Allāh's eternal life. By recognizing that Allāh is not subject to death, one simultaneously confirms His infinite and imperishable existence.
- Negation of injustice: The rejection of any form of injustice in relation to Allāh affirms His perfect justice. This means that justice and fairness always prevail in Allāh's actions.
- Negation of sleep: Rejecting the notion that Allāh sleeps testifies to His constant vigilance and complete control over everything. This confirms that Allāh is always active, awake, and capable of guiding and managing the universe.

This rule helps develop a deeper understanding of Allāh's nature by emphasizing that Allāh is free from human weaknesses and limitations and His attributes are perfect and complete. It is about

recognizing and affirming the transcendence and perfection of Allāh by adopting the opposite of what is explicitly negated for Him.

*The third principle* relates to the manner in which Allāh's names are understood and defined. Crucially, Allāh's names are not derived through human reason or intellect but are exclusively established through the scriptures of revelation. These names are Tawqīfiyyah, meaning they must be spoken and understood strictly in accordance with the text of the revelations.

This rule dictates that no attributes or names of Allāh can be affirmed except those that Allāh has confirmed for Himself in His Book, the Qur'ān, or those affirmed by His Messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Simultaneously, nothing is negated in relation to Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, except that which He Himself has negated in His Book or what has been negated by His Messenger.

This approach ensures that the understanding and description of Allāh remain authentic and accurate, free from human interpretations or speculations. It highlights the importance of divine revelation as the primary source of knowledge about Allāh and His attributes, avoiding human misinterpretations or additions.

*The fourth principle* concerns the handling of unclear or ambiguous terms that can neither be conclusively affirmed nor denied. This applies both to their formulation and their meaning. In such cases, restraint is advised, and clarifying explanations are sought. If a term is underpinned by a false understanding, one distances oneself from it in the name of Allāh. However, if the meaning is true and cannot be denied by Allāh, it is accepted, but with the caveat that the correct terminology, as it appears in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, is clarified and preferred.

An example of this is the term 'jihah' (direction). Caution is required when using this term in relation to Allāh. If 'jihah' implies that Allāh exists in a physical space, this notion is rejected. However, if it refers to Allāh's exaltedness without spatial limitations, this can be seen as correct. Nonetheless, it is more appropriate to use formulations like 'Allāh is above the heavens' or 'He is exalted', as these expressions are found in authentic texts. The term 'jihah', in its reference to Allāh, remains unclear and should therefore be avoided.

This rule underscores the importance of precision and caution in theological language and highlights the necessity of relying on authentic and unequivocal terms anchored in the sacred scriptures.

**The fifth principle** states that any hope of fully comprehending the true nature of Allāh's attributes must be abandoned. This is elucidated by Surah Ṭā-Hā 20:110 in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا﴾

„...AND THEY DO NOT ENCOMPASS HIM IN (THEIR) KNOWLEDGE...“

This verse underscores the limitations of human knowledge regarding the immeasurable nature of Allāh's knowledge and attributes.

**The sixth principle** states that Allāh's attributes are affirmed in a specific and detailed manner, while their negation is done in a general form. An example of a specific and detailed affirmation is the recognition of Allāh's ability to hear and see, along with His other attributes. In contrast, there is a general negation of any similarity to Him, as expressed in the Qur'ān, Surah Ash-Shūrā 42:11:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

„THERE IS NOTHING LIKE HIM: HE IS THE ALL HEARING, THE ALL SEEING.“

This verse emphasizes the uniqueness and incomparability of Allāh’s nature and attributes.

*The seventh principle* establishes that every name of Allāh confirmed by Him includes a specific attribute. For instance, the name al-Raḥmān (the Merciful) implies the attribute of mercy, while al-Karīm (the Generous) indicates the attribute of generosity. However, for Allāh’s specific attributes like Irādah (Will), Majī (Coming), or Istawā (Ascending/Exalted), it is not appropriate to derive names such as ‘the Willing’, ‘the Coming’, or ‘the Ascending’. Instead, only the attributes themselves should be named, such as His Will, His Majī (Coming), or His Istawā (Ascending/Exalted).

*The eighth principle* emphasizes that Allāh’s attributes are perfect and devoid of any deficiencies. If an attribute appears perfect in one aspect and deficient in another, it is neither absolutely affirmed nor denied. Instead, a detailed explanation is given: the attribute is affirmed in its perfect aspect and denied in its deficient aspect. An example of this is attributes like “al-Makr” (the Planner) or “al-Khidāa” (the Deceiver).

These attributes are considered perfect when mentioned in response to those who act deceitfully against Allāh or plot against the truth or the believers. This is depicted in various Qur’ānic verses, such as:

Al-Anfāl 8:30

﴿وَأَذِ يَمَكُرْ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُنَبِّئُوكَ أَوْ يَشْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمَكُرُونَ وَيَمَكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ﴾

„AND ‘REMEMBER, O PROPHET,’ WHEN THE DISBELIEVERS CONSPIRED TO CAPTURE, KILL, OR EXILE YOU. THEY PLANNED, BUT ALLĀH ALSO PLANNED. AND ALLĀH IS THE BEST OF PLANNERS.“

At-Ṭāriq 86:15-16

﴿لَهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا﴾ (15)

﴿وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا﴾ (16)

„(15) THEY PLOT AND SCHEME,

(16) BUT SO DO I.“

An-Nisā’ 4:142

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَدِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ﴾

„SURELY THE HYPOCRITES SEEK TO DECEIVE ALLĀH, BUT HE OUTWITS THEM.“

These verses convey that Allāh’s ability to respond to plots and deceptions is an attribute of perfection, as it demonstrates that He is above and surpasses the schemes of the deceivers.

*The ninth principle* states that Allāh’s attributes are divided into two categories: Dhātiyyah, which pertain to His Self, and Fi‘liyyah, which relate to His Actions. For Allāh’s actions, there are neither limits nor an end. This is illustrated by the Qur’ān verse in Ibrāhīm 14:27:

﴿ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴾

„FOR ALLĀH DOES WHAT HE WILLS.“

This verse underscores Allāh’s omnipotence and His infinite capabilities concerning His actions, which are neither restricted nor limited.

*The tenth principle* pertains to the fact that the establishment of an attribute of Allāh in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah can occur in three ways: through a clear statement about the attribute, by including the attribute in one of His names, or through a clear description of an action or state that proves the attribute.

Examples of the first type include Mercy, Power, Strength, His Face, His Hands, and His Fingers. For the second type, names such as al-Basīr (the All-Seeing), which includes the attribute of seeing, and as-Samī’ (the All-Hearing), which includes the attribute of hearing, are examples.

Examples of the third type include:

- Evidence for ‘Istiwā’ (Ascending/Exalted):

In Tā-Hā 20:5 it says

﴿ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ﴾

„THE MOST GRACIOUS (ALLĀH) ROSE OVER (ISTAWĀ) THE (MIGHTY) THRONE (IN A MANNER THAT SUITS HIS MAJESTY).“

- Evidence for Retribution:

In As-Sajdah 32:22 it states,

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴾

„AND WHO DOES MORE WRONG THAN THE ONE WHO IS REMINDED OF ALLĀH’S REVELATIONS THEN TURNS AWAY FROM THEM? WE WILL SURELY INFLICT PUNISHMENT UPON THE WICKED.”

*The eleventh principle* states that it is permissible to seek refuge in the attributes of Allāh, the Almighty and Exalted, and to swear by them. This is illustrated by statements such as ‘I take refuge in Your Favor from Your Wrath and in Your Security from Your Punishment.’ In line with this principle, Imām al-Bukhārī has composed a chapter titled ‘Chapter: Swearing by the Power of Allāh and His Attributes and His Word’ in the Book of Oaths and Vows. This underscores the recognition and significance of the divine attributes.

*The twelfth principle* explains that the discussion about the Sifāt (Attributes) of Allāh is similar to the discussion about His Dhāt (Self). Just as His Dhāt (Self) is real and distinct from others, His Sifāt (Attributes) are also real and unique. Recognizing Allāh’s Dhāt implies affirming His existence, without delving into the ‘how’ of His existence. Similarly, for the attributes: they are affirmed without addressing the ‘how’ of their nature.

*The thirteenth principle* states that the discussion about some of the attributes of Allāh should be conducted analogously to the discussion about the rest of His attributes. This means that someone who affirms Allāh’s attributes like hearing, seeing, and willing must also recognize Allāh’s love, pleasure, wrath, and hatred.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah commented on this topic:

*„Someone who differentiates between one attribute and another, although both are the same regarding the reasons for their literal or metaphorical meaning, contradicts themselves, errs in their position, and resembles those who believe in some parts of the Book while denying others.“*

This highlights the necessity of a consistent and holistic approach in acknowledging the divine attributes.

***The fourteenth principle*** states that anything attributed to Allāh and not separated from Him is to be understood as one of His attributes and not as something created. Conversely, anything attributed to Allāh but separated from Him is to be considered as created. This means not everything attributed to Allāh is necessarily an attribute of Him.

Examples of the first category include Allāh’s hearing, seeing, pleasure, and wrath – these are inherent attributes of Allāh. Examples of the second category are the House of Allāh and the servants of Allāh – these are created entities by Him and thus not part of His essential attributes.

***The fifteenth principle*** establishes that the attributes of Allāh and all other aspects of the ‘Aqīdah (doctrine of faith) are based on what has been authentically transmitted from Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ, even if it is an Āhād transmission (a narration not transmitted through numerous chains). This means that for the affirmation and understanding of divine attributes and principles of faith, the transmitted statements of the Prophet ﷺ play a central role, regardless of how widespread or rare these transmissions are.

***The sixteenth principle*** states that the meaning of Allāh’s attributes, as established in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, is known and

interpreted according to their dhāhir (apparent and literal) meaning, and not their majāz (metaphorical or figurative) meaning. However, the Kayfiyyah (the ‘how’ of their nature) remains unknown. This means that Allāh’s attributes should be accepted and understood as they have been revealed, without attempting to interpret them metaphorically or allegorically or to fathom their exact nature.

*The seventeenth principle* states that everything found in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah is binding for every believer. This includes the obligation to recognize the contents as true statements and to believe in them, even if the believer does not fully understand their meaning. This principle emphasizes the importance of faith and acceptance of divine revelations, regardless of an individual’s ability to fully comprehend their meaning.

*The eighteenth principle* clarifies that no analogies should be drawn between the attributes of Allāh. This means that no analogy should be made between His Sakhaa (Generosity) and His Jūd (Generosity), between His Jalad (Strength) and His Quwwah (Power), between His Istiāa’ah (Capability) and His Qudrah (Force), or between His Riqqah (Compassion) and His Raḥmah (Mercy).

The reason for this is that no conclusions should be drawn about Allāh’s attributes without direct textual evidence, as already established in the third principle. This emphasizes the necessity of strictly adhering to the texts and avoiding speculations or analogical conclusions.

*The nineteenth principle* states that Allāh’s attributes cannot be counted. This is because each of Allāh’s names encompasses an attribute, and Allāh’s names cannot be fully enumerated. Some of these names Allāh has kept in His knowledge of the unseen. This is

underscored by a saying of the Prophet, which states: 'No overwhelming worry or grief befalls a servant, who then says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ

ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ

ابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ

نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ

مَاضٍ فِي حُكْمِكَ

عَدْلٍ فِي قَضَاؤِكَ

أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ

سَمَّيْتَهُ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ

أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ

أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ

أَوْ اسْتَأْذَنْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ

أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رِيحًا قَلْبِي

وَنورَ صَدْرِي

وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي

وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

*“O Aļļāh, I am Your slave,  
and the son of Your male slave,  
and the son of Your female slave.  
My forehead is in Your hand (i.e., You have  
control over me).  
Your judgment upon me is certain,  
and Your decree upon me is just.  
I ask You by every name that You have named  
Yourself with, revealed in Your Book,  
taught any one of Your creation,  
or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the  
unseen that is with You,  
to make the Qur’ān the spring of my heart,  
and the light in my chest,  
the banisher of my sadness,  
and the reliever of my distress.”*

*Ahmad 1/391*

This highlights that the knowledge of Aļļāh’s names and attributes extends beyond human comprehension.

The following chapter will address the question ‘Where is Aļļāh?’ This is a question often interpreted differently by various groups within Islam, which can lead to confusion among Muslims.

### 11.1.2.3.6 Where is Allāh?

At the time of the Prophet and his noble companions, as well as in the first three generations, there was no disagreement on this question. Only with the emergence of various sects did different views develop.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah offer numerous indications regarding this subject, yet the essence or the exact nature of Allāh's existence remains beyond human comprehension. We endeavour to understand this concept while recognizing our limitations in fully grasping the divine nature.

When we think of Allāh, many instinctively look upwards or gesture skyward, a behavior reflecting the Fitrah, an innate inclination to perceive Allāh as transcendent and exalted above all. This instinct aligns with the description of Allāh as the Most High (Al-A'laa).

To clarify, let's consider where Allāh is not:

- Not Everywhere: While Allāh's knowledge encompasses everything, and His power extends over all creation, it is not deemed appropriate that Allāh's Being occupies all spaces. This perspective takes into account the existence of places and states that are in direct contradiction to the majesty and sanctity attributed to Allāh.
- Not Nowhere: The assertion that Allāh exists neither above nor below, nor in any spatial direction, inadvertently attributes the characteristic of non-existence to Allāh. This is, of course, also impossible, and we will explain what is meant by "place." In the course of this chapter.
- Not Below: Given the general preference for higher positions as a symbol of superiority and authority, it is

considered incongruous in Islamic thought to place Allāh in a "lower" position. This belief is supported by numerous references in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, which consistently describe Allāh as exalted and transcendent.

The prevalent view among Ahlu-s-Sunnah (the mainstream Sunni Muslims) is that Allāh is above in a manner befitting His majesty and incomparable nature. This belief is supported by several Hadiths and interpretations of Qur'ānic verses. It is emphasized that Allāh's existence is not bound by the physical laws governing His creation. Thus, Allāh exists in a manner that is suitable to His divine nature, beyond the confines and limitations of the physical world.

- *Proofs from the Qur'ān:*

Allāh has clearly outlined in various verses of the Qur'ān where He is „located“. These verses are crucial for understanding the question of where Allāh is, and are an essential part of the Islamic understanding of faith.

Al-Mulk 67:17

﴿أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنِ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ﴾

"OR DO YOU FEEL SECURE THAT HE WHO IS IN THE HEAVEN WILL NOT SEND AGAINST YOU A STORM OF STONES? THEN YOU WOULD KNOW HOW [SERIOUS] WAS MY WARNING!"

Al-A'raf 7:54

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ﴾

"CERTAINLY, YOUR LORD IS ALLĀH, WHO CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH IN SIX DAYS AND THEN ASCENDED OVER THE THRONE...."

An-Naḥl 16:50

﴿يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿۱﴾﴾

"THEY [THE ANGELS] FEAR THEIR LORD ABOVE THEM AND DO WHAT THEY ARE COMMANDED."

And so there are many more verses that describe where Allāh is. He is not everywhere and also not nowhere.

- *Proofs from the Sunnah:*

In the Aḥādīth, we see that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ describes where Allāh is. The Aḥādīth on this topic are very numerous.

1. The Prophet ﷺ said:

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي قَابُوسَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ

*"The merciful are shown mercy by Ar-Rahman. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens. The womb is named after Ar-Rahman, so whoever connects it, Allāh connects him, and whoever severs it, Allāh severs him."*

[Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1924 (Sahih)]

## 2. The Prophet asked a slave girl (in a longer Hadith): "Where is Allāh?"

قَالَ وَكَانَتْ لِي جَارِيَةٌ تَرْعَى عَنَّمَا لِي قَبْلَ أُحُدٍ وَالْجَوَابِيَّةِ فَاطَّلَعْتُ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ فَإِذَا الدَّبِيبُ قَدْ ذَهَبَ بِشَاؤٍ مِنْ عَنَمِهَا وَأَنَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ آسَفٌ كَمَا يَأْسَفُونَ لِكَيْفِي صَكَّكُنَّهَا صَكَّةً فَأَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَعَظَّمْتُ ذَلِكَ عَلَيَّ فُلَّتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفْلا أَعْتَبُهَا قَالَ " أَتَيْتِي بِهَا " . فَأَتَيْتُهُ بِهَا فَقَالَ لَهَا " أَيْنَ اللَّهُ " . قَالَتْ فِي السَّمَاءِ . قَالَ " مَنْ أَنَا " . قَالَتْ أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ . قَالَ " أَعْتَبُهَا فَإِنَّمَا مُؤْمِنَةٌ " .

*"I had a maid-servant who tended goats by the side of Uhud and Jawwaniya. One day I happened to pass that way and found that a wolf had carried a goat from her flock. I am after all a man from the posterity of Adam. I felt sorry as they (human beings) feel sorry. So I slapped her. I came to the Messenger of Allāh ( ﷺ) and felt (this act of mine) as something grievous I said: Messenger of Allāh, should I not grant her freedom? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Bring her to me. So I brought her to him. He said to her: Where is Allāh? She said: He is in the heaven. He said: Who am I? She said: Thou art the Messenger of Allāh. He said: Grant her freedom, she is a believing woman.*

*Sahih Muslim 537a*

- *Statements of the Salaf Saliheen*

The pious predecessors of Islam have clarified where Allāh is. This corresponds to the correct understanding of the verses and Aḥadīth on this matter.

Below are some statements of Islamic scholars that every Muslim should take as a reference in this matter. They understand it better than later scholars and accurately represent where Allāh is.

Imām Malik said:

*"Allāh is above His Throne, and His knowledge is everywhere."*

[Masail Abu Dawud page 263]

Abdullah ibn MuAl-Barā'k said:

*"Allāh is above the seventh heaven, above His Throne, and we do not say, as the Jahmiyyah say, 'He is here on Earth.'"*

[Ar-Radd 'Alal Jahmiyyah page 50 of Daarimie]

Yazid ibn Harun said:

*"Anyone who understands 'Allāh ascended above His Throne' differently than a layman is a Jahmi (follower of the Jahmiyyah sect)."*

[Khalq Afaal Al 'Ibaad page 36 by Bukhari]

Al-Muzani said:

*"Allāh is high above His Throne in His Majesty with His Being. And He is close to His creation with His Knowledge. His knowledge encompasses all things, and He has imposed the Qadr."*

*[And He is the Merciful, the Forgiving, and He knows the deception of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal." (Ghafir 40:19)*

[Sharh As-Sunnah pages 79-82 by Al-Muzani]

Abu 'Eesa Al-Tirmidhi said:

*"Alḷāh's Knowledge, His Power, and His Sovereignty are everywhere, and He is on the Throne, as He has described Himself."*

[Sunan Tirmidhi 3298]

Daarimee said:

*"And the Muslims are unanimous that Alḷāh is above His Throne and above His heavens."*

[Ar-Rad 'alaa Al-Jahmiyyah page 39 by Daarimee]

Ibn Abi Shaybah said:

*"He (Alḷāh) is above the heavens and above the Throne with His Being, free from His creation, separate from them. He has knowledge of His creation, and nothing can escape His knowledge."*

[Al-Arsh wama Ruwiyah Fihi pages 291-292 by Ibn Abi Shaybah]

Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the significant Islamic scholars, has presented the following analysis on this question:

Three scenarios are considered:

1. Allāh would have created the universe within Himself and then separated it from Himself. This is impossible because Allāh is exalted above any impurity and contact with other things.
2. Allāh would have created the universe outside of Himself and then entered into it. This too is impossible, as Allāh is exalted above entering His creation. Among Muslims, there is a consensus that these two scenarios are impossible.
3. Allāh created the universe outside of Himself, without entering into it. This is the truth and the only scenario that corresponds to the majesty of Allāh.

(Quoted from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa, Volume 5, page 152)

Ibn Taymiyya clarifies that the term “direction” in this context is neither affirmed nor denied, but emphasizes Allāh’s exaltation and superiority. Those who reject the notion of a direction should consider that Allāh is not encompassed by His creation. However, if the notion of a direction refers to what lies beyond the universe, then Allāh is indeed above the universe and distinct from His creation.

(Quoted from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa, Volume 3, pages 41-42)

As the leading scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah confirm, Allāh is above His heavens and His throne, separate from His creation.

In response to the statement that Allāh is above the heavens and His throne, some sects object that the Ahlu-s-Sunnah would thereby limit Allāh to a “place,” while Allāh exists beyond time and place.

Although this claim is true, it is often misleadingly used, as the Ahlu-s-Sunnah never claim to limit Allāh to a physical place.

The following is a debate between Sheikh Al-Albaani and a Sheikh from the Azhar University, in which the Sheikh of Azhar accuses the Ahlus Sunnah of limiting Allāh to a place.

This discussion serves as a refutation of the view that the Ahlus-Sunnah would limit Allāh to a place. It clarifies that the Ahlu-s-Sunnah view Allāh as above the heavens and His throne, without spatially limiting Him, in accordance with their understanding of divine exaltation and transcendence.

- **Debate between Shaykh Al-Albāni and a Shaykh from Azhar University (Transcript)**

A questioner: Who are the Kurūbiyūn angels?

Al-Albāni: Who are the Kurūbiyūn angels? To my knowledge, there is no Hadith in which this name of the angels, "the Kurūbiyūn angels," is mentioned. In fact, I had not come across this name in the Hadiths, which I read over thirty years in hundreds, if not thousands of books, most of them manuscripts, until I finally heard of them during the Hajj in Mina.

I was sitting on a quiet, beautiful evening during the days of Muna and chatting with some of our Egyptian, Syrian, and other brothers from Ansār as-Sunnah, when a Shaykh came in, greeted with the peace greeting, sat down, and listened. After I had been silent for a while, he joined in the discussion and began to speak.

From what he said, it was clear that he was one of those who had studied at Azhar University and had an aversion to the Salafī Da'wah or the Da'wah to Tawheed, and that he was influenced by some of the false claims attributed to the Da'wah to Tawhīd in all Muslim countries, whether here, in Egypt, Syria, or elsewhere.

He began the attack by saying that the Wahābi Da'wah was a good call, but the problem was that they compared Alḷāh with the creation.

I asked him: "How so?"

He replied that they say that Alḷāh the Exalted - Subhaanallaah, he has declared the Qur'ān to be false, without knowing it - ascended above the Throne.

I said: "Is that their statement or that of the Lord of the Worlds?"

He corrected himself and said that they interpret the verse to mean that Allāh sits on His Throne.

I said to him: "My brother, the difference between them and those who are against them is not that they compare the Lord of the Worlds with the creation, because they agree that this is wrong. The difference rather lies in whether it is correct to interpret 'istiwa' [ascended over] as 'isteelaa' [conquered], or if the correct interpretation is that 'istiwa' means 'ista'laa' [rose over]. So, I have spoken a lot on this subject.

And of course, the essence of belief in this question is that Allāh has the attribute of being above all [fawqiyah].

He took this as an opportunity to say: "Is it possible to believe that Allāh the Exalted is above the Throne? That would mean that we attribute a place to Him."

So I said to him: "No, that is a misunderstanding on your part, and we distance ourselves from a belief that restricts Allāh the Exalted to a place, while He is the Most High, the Greatest."

Then I began to argue with him in a certain way and said to him: Do you believe that Allāh existed and that there was nothing that existed with Him?

The Azhari Shaykh: Of course.

Al-Albani: Was the Throne there when Allāh was?

The Azhari Sheikh: No.

Al-Albani: So, Allāh was alone and then He created the Throne?

The Azhari Shaykh: Yes.

I continued with him in this manner and then said: We are now on the earth, what is above us?

The Azhari Sheikh: The sky.

Al-Albani: And then?

The Azhari Sheikh: The second (sky).

And so we continued until we reached the seventh (sky).

Then I asked him: "What is above the seventh (sky)?"

The Azhari Sheikh: The Throne.

I said - and this is the crux of the matter - what is above the Throne?

The Azhari Sheikh: The Kurūbiyūn angels.

That was the first time in thirty years that I heard this name.

I said: "What? The Kurūbiyūn angels are above the Throne?" We know that the Creator of the Throne ascended over the Throne, according to the aforementioned verse and the interpretation of the Salaf. And as the trustworthy scholars say:

The Lord of the Throne is above the Throne, but without describing Him at a place or [connecting Him with the Throne].

Allāh is thus not dependent on the worlds, but now I hear for the first time that the Kurūbiyūn angels are above the Throne. Do you have a verse that confirms the existence of the Kurūbiyūn angels?

Azhari Sheikh: No.

Al-Albani: Good. Do you have a Hadith that mentions them by this name?

The Azhari Sheikh: No.

Al-Albani: Then where did you get this Aqida that above the Throne are the Kurūbiyūn angels?

The Azhari Sheikh: This is what our Sheikhs at the noble Azhar University taught us.

Then I said, how strange. I know that the Azhari scholars teach their students in their lectures on the principles of 'Aqīdah and Usūl al-Fiqh that "matters of 'Aqīdah are not established by authentic Aahaad Hadith." How then could they teach a matter of 'Aqīdah that is mentioned neither in the Qur'ān nor in the Sunnah? How could you believe that?

He was speechless.

I continued and said to him: "Imagine these angels that you call the Kurūbiyūn are above the [mighty] Throne - what is above them?"

Then he paused. Confused.

And I had already spoken with him about...

And I had already spoken with him that Allāh exists and nothing is with Him... so there was nothing [with Him], and then He said: "Be," and creation was there. If we come to the conclusion that we have not yet reached the Throne, and you say that these angels are above the Throne, what is then above the Throne? Nothing or an existence?

The Azhari Sheikh: No, nothing.

[I said, because we agreed that nothing existed before Allāh, the Blessed and the Most High, created the heavens and the earth... Allāh was and nothing was with Him... If the Salafis say that Allaah the Blessed and Most High ascended over the Throne, why do you accuse them of restricting Allaah the Mighty and Exalted to a place in His universe, when there is no universe?]

Because the universe is limited and confined, and in our view, the end of the universe and its highest part is the Throne, and according to your view, it is the Throne and then above it the "Kurūbiyūn angels," and after that, nothing more.

The correct Aqīda, both according to reason and the text, is indeed that of the pious predecessors - for they did not say that Allāh is in a place, as you [erroneously] assume, for there is no "place" beyond the Throne, only total and complete non-existence [of everything] except Allāh, the Blessed and the Most High.

But what about you, when you flee from what you accuse the Salafis of, from which they [actually] are free - for [we say that] Allaah is not in a place, because there is no universe or place after the [mighty] Throne, over which Allaah ascended - but what about you, when you flee from affirming this attribute for Allaah the Blessed and Most High, namely, the attribute of declaring Him completely free from any likeness to His creation and not attributing to Him the characteristics of creation [tanzeeh], because He is not in the universe.

How can you then say that He is everywhere, when you attach Him to His universe, which He created after it did not exist?

So, you are the Mushabbihah (Those who make Tashbih) and you are the Mujassimah [Anthropomorphists].

And we Salafis are nothing but those who follow what Allāh the Most High has said: "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing," [Qur'ān 42:11] and in this verse, in [the meaning in] its beginning and its end, we declare Him, the Most High, completely and absolutely free from any likeness to His creation and do not attribute to Him the characteristics of creation, while we [affirm] His attributes as befits His Majesty and Exaltation.

With this clarification on the attributes of Allāh, we conclude the chapter on Tawḥīd Asmā wa-s-Sifāt with the following chapter on the names of Allāh.

### 11.1.2.3.7 The Names of Allāh

Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا مِائَةٌ إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ ".

*"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "Allāh has ninety-nine Names, one-hundred less one; and whoever memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise."*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 7392*

Memorizing the ninety-nine Names of Allāh means to know them, to be able to recite them, to understand them, to believe in them, to heed them well, and to pray to Allāh through them. The Hadith, therefore, signifies that whoever memorizes these Names, reflects on their meaning, respects them, behaves according to them, and sanctifies their Owner, will certainly be rewarded with the Gardens of Paradise.

The scholars agree that the Names of Allāh are not limited to the number mentioned by the Prophet. The Prophet's statement merely indicates that a Muslim who rightly believes in these ninety-nine Names and applies them will surely enter Al-Jannah. He does not deny the existence of other names for the Almighty. The Prophet spoke about entering Al-Jannah, not about the total number of Allāh's Names.

The evidence that there are further names that the Creator has not revealed to us is the following Hadith of the Prophet:

“No overwhelming concern nor grief befalls a servant, whereupon he says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ

ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ

ابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ

نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ

مَاضٍ فِي حُكْمِكَ

عَدْلٍ فِي قَضَاؤِكَ

أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ

سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ

أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ

أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ

أَوْ اسْتَأْذَنْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ

أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَيْعَ قَلْبِي

وَنورَ صَدْرِي

وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي

وَذَهَابَ هَوْنِي

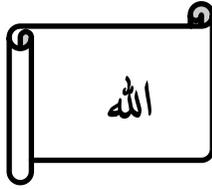
*“O Allāh, I am Your slave,  
and the son of Your male slave,  
and the son of Your female slave.  
My forehead is in Your hand (i.e., You have  
control over me).  
Your judgment upon me is certain,  
and Your decree upon me is just.  
I ask You by every name that You have named  
Yourself with, revealed in Your Book,  
taught any one of Your creation,  
or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the  
unseen that is with You,  
to make the Qur’ān the spring of my heart,  
and the light in my chest,  
the banisher of my sadness,  
and the reliever of my distress.”*

*Ahmad 1/391*

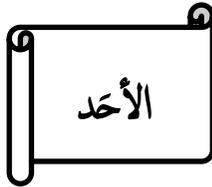
The words “which You have kept to Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You” indicate that there are beautiful names of Allāh that are unknown to any of His creation. This means that there are more than ninety-nine names.

Following are the Names of Allāh mentioned in the Qur’ān and Sunnah:

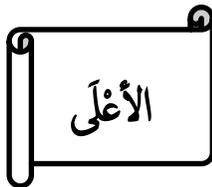
- **The Names of Allāh from the Qur'ān**



1. Allah: This name refers to the one who is worthy of worship and represents the ultimate object of reverence and submission. It embodies the attributes of divinity, perfection, and the qualities implied by all the beautiful names.

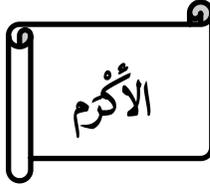


2. Al-Ahad (The One): This name emphasizes the uniqueness of Allah, His incomparability, and the absence of any partners or resemblances within creation. It highlights His unparalleled singularity and exclusivity.

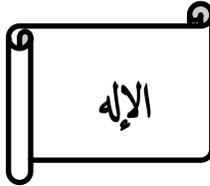


3. Al-A'la (The Most High): This name refers to the sublime superiority and unparalleled exaltedness of Allah over all that exists. The prefix "Al" emphasizes the perfection and completeness of this attribute. Al-A'la designates Allah as the absolutely Highest,

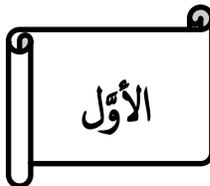
surpassing all others in status and attributes, and being the supremely exalted one over His entire creation.



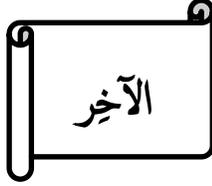
4. Al-Akram (The Most Generous): This name symbolizes Allah's boundless generosity and unlimited kindness towards His creation. It highlights His immeasurable benevolence and charity.



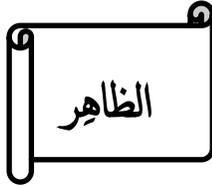
5. Al-Ilah (The Deity): This name signifies the one who is most worthy of reverence and worship, holding a divine position in the highest regard.



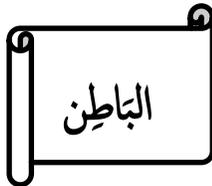
6. Al-Awwal (The First): This name symbolizes that Allah is the origin (First) of all things, without a beginning and without any existence preceding Him. It underscores His timeless and eternal existence.



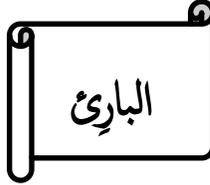
7. Al-Akhir (The Last): This name means that Allah is the eternally Last, without an end and without any existence that comes after Him. It emphasizes His infinite and enduring presence.



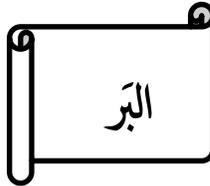
8. Az-Zahir (The Evident): This name indicates that Allah is manifest and recognizable through His creation and signs. It points to His ubiquitous presence and prevailing dominion over all things.



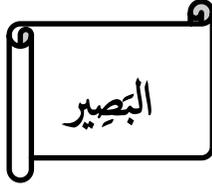
9. Al-Batin (The Hidden): This name signifies that Allah encompasses the hidden and the unseen, knowing the deepest secrets. It refers to His comprehensive knowledge and understanding of everything, both the visible and the concealed.



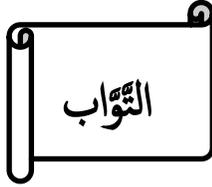
10. Al-Bari' (The Creator): Al-Bari' designates Allah as the one who, with His boundless power, has brought forth and shaped the entire creation. This term implies the act of creating, bringing into existence, and emphasizes that everything created is a result of Allah's creative activity.



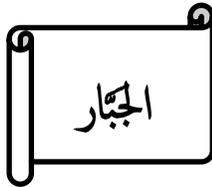
11. Al-Barr (The Source of Goodness): This name describes Allah as the source of boundless goodness and benevolence towards His creation. His goodness and benevolence encompass all beings, regardless of whether they show gratitude or not.



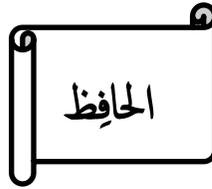
12. Al-Basir (The All-Seeing): This name signifies that Allah is omniscient, perceiving both the apparent and the hidden aspects of everything. He is aware of every occurrence, regardless of whether it is visible to humans or remains concealed.



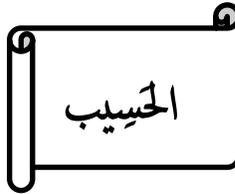
13. At-Tawwab (The Acceptor of Repentance): This name refers to Allah as the One who ceaselessly accepts the repentance of His servants and aids them in returning to Him. At-Tawwab indicates that Allah is always ready to accept repentance and forgive those who sincerely turn to Him seeking forgiveness.



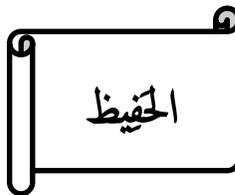
14. Al-Jabbar (The Almighty): This name depicts Allah's absolute power and authority, where His will is inevitable and supreme.



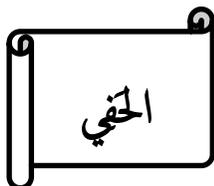
15. Al-Hafiz (The Preserver, The Protector): This name identifies Allah as the Preserver, protecting His creation from harm, misfortune, and decay. Al-Hafiz elucidates that Allah preserves and protects whatever He chooses.



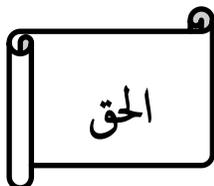
16. Al-Hasib (The Reckoner, The Accountant): Al-Hasib characterizes Allah as the One who keeps precise account of every action of His servants. This name implies that Allah meticulously calculates and records every deed, no matter how small or large.



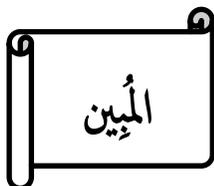
17. Al-Hafizh (The Guardian): Al-Hafizh refers to Allah's role in maintaining the existence and stability of the heavens and the earth, as well as everything within them. He ensures the continuity and preservation of the universe.



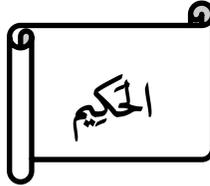
18. Al-Hafee (The Kind, The Merciful): Al-Hafee describes Allah's attribute of kindness and mercy.



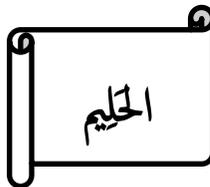
19. Al-Haqq (The Truth, The Reality): Al-Haqq identifies Allah as the ultimate truth and the definitive reality. This name clarifies that His existence is absolute and indisputable, and everything in the universe bears witness to His reality.



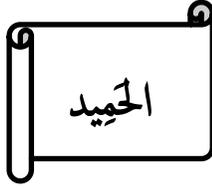
20. Al-Mubin (The Clarifier, The Evident): Al-Mubin depicts Allah as the One who makes things clear and apparent to His servants. This name emphasizes His role in guiding humanity by distinguishing the path of guidance from the path of misguidance. He has sent messengers and revealed scriptures to elucidate and manifest the truth, providing His creations with clear instructions.



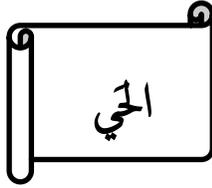
21. Al-Hakim (The Wise): Al-Hakim refers to Allah as perfect in His wisdom. This name implies that every action, decision, and decree of Allah is characterized by profound wisdom. His judgments and directives are based on ultimate wisdom and justice.



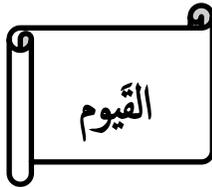
22. Al-Halim (The Forbearing, The Gentle): Al-Halim denotes Allah's attribute of patience and His restraint from rushing to punishment. This name highlights His forbearance and restraint in the face of disobedience and sin. Allah allows time for repentance and refrains from immediate punishment for wrongdoing, demonstrating mercy and patience.



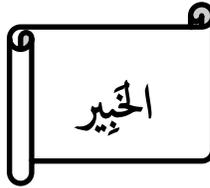
23. Al-Hamid (The Praiseworthy): Al-Hamid depicts Allah as deserving of all praise and gratitude. This name signifies that Allah, due to His perfection, kindness, and blessings in all His actions and attributes, is worthy of every form of praise and gratitude.



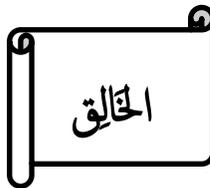
24. Al-Hayy (The Ever-Living): This name designates Allah as eternally living. Al-Hayy indicates that Allah possesses a perfect and eternal life, not subject to death, decay, or any form of cessation. He is the source of all life and existence.



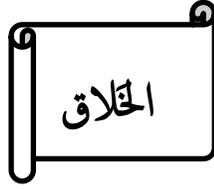
25. Al-Qayyum (The Sustainer of All Existence): Al-Qayyum refers to Allah as completely self-sufficient and independent of anyone or anything else for His existence. This name highlights His role in maintaining and sustaining the entire creation. He is the one upon whom everything else depends, while He depends on nothing.



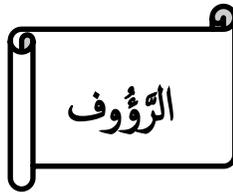
26. Al-Khabir (The All-Knowing, The Well-Informed): Al-Khabir represents Allah's comprehensive and perfect knowledge of all things. He is aware of even the most hidden and minute details of everything. Nothing escapes His knowledge, and He is completely informed about every aspect of His creation.



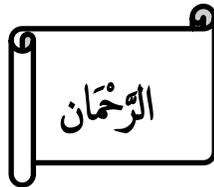
27. Al-Khaliq (The Creator): This name designates Allah as the Creator of all things from nothingness. It emphasizes His role in the creation of everything that exists.



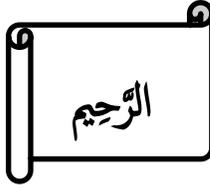
28. Al-Khallaq (The Creator, The Maker): This name identifies Allah as the One who creates in abundance and with a remarkable diversity of forms, colors, sizes, and quantities. Al-Khallaq highlights His ability to create in vast amounts and with extensive diversity.



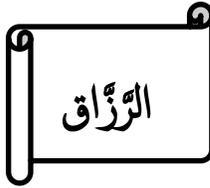
29. Ar-Ra'uf (The Kind, The Merciful): Ar-Ra'uf represents Allah's immense kindness and deep mercy towards His creation. This name emphasizes His gentle, caring, and compassionate nature.



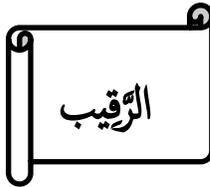
30. Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful): This name highlights Allah's extensive and comprehensive mercy towards His creation.



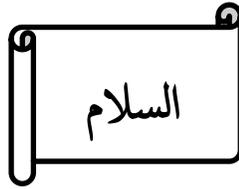
31. Ar-Rahim (The Most Compassionate): This name reflects Allah's continuous and specific mercy and grace, which He bestows particularly upon His believers.



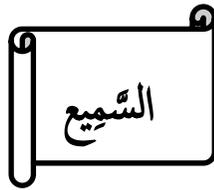
32. Ar-Razzaq (The Provider): Ar-Razzaq designates Allah as the Provider who caters to the needs of all His creatures. His provision is abundant and encompasses every being.



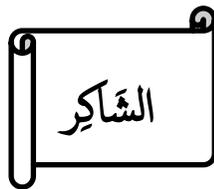
33. Ar-Raqib (The Vigilant): Ar-Raqib describes Allah as the ever-vigilant and attentive Guardian. He observes everything, both significant and minor, and nothing escapes His scrutiny.



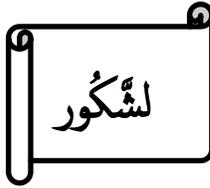
34. As-Salam (The Source of Peace): This name refers to Allah as the embodiment of peace and tranquility, free from any flaws or imperfections.



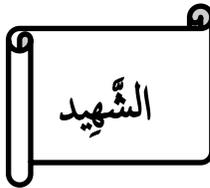
35. As-Sami' (The All-Hearing): This name characterizes Allah as all-hearing, which means that nothing in the heavens or on the earth is hidden from Him. Every sound, voice, whisper, or thought falls within His hearing range.



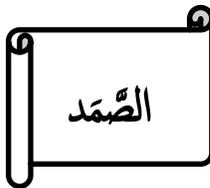
36. Ash-Shakir (The Appreciative): Ash-Shakir refers to Allah as the one who acknowledges even the smallest actions of His servants and rewards them generously. His appreciation is manifested in the form of forgiveness and manifold rewards.



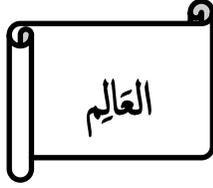
37. Ash-Shakur (The Most Grateful, The Acknowledger): This name signifies that Allah highly values the efforts of His servants and rewards them abundantly. Ash-Shakur indicates that Allah responds with great recompense and forgiveness to even the smallest, good deeds performed by His servants. He multiplies the rewards for their actions and appreciates their devotion and obedience.



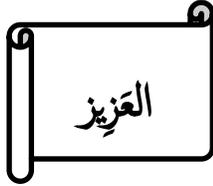
38. Ash-Shahid (The Omnipresent Witness): Ash-Shahid refers to Allah as the witness of all events and occurrences. This name emphasizes that nothing is hidden from His knowledge and nothing escapes His attention.



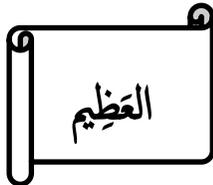
39. Al-Samad (The Eternal Refuge): This name represents Allah as the one to whom one turns for all needs and seeks help in all situations of life.



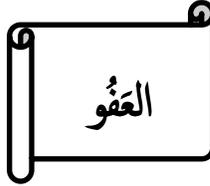
40. Al-'Alim (The All-Knowing): Al-'Alim refers to Allah as the one who possesses complete knowledge of everything. This name illustrates that nothing, no matter how minor or hidden, escapes His knowledge. As the Creator, He is aware of every detail of His creation.



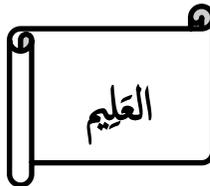
41. Al-Aziz (The Mighty): Al-Aziz represents Allah's immense power and strength, signifying that He is invincible and dominates over all things.



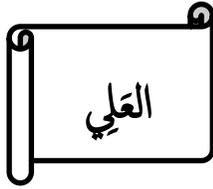
42. Al-'Azim (The Sublime, The Most High): Al-'Azim refers to Allah's boundless greatness and majesty. This name emphasizes that there is nothing comparable to Him in any respect. His sublimity goes beyond human comprehension and is unmatched by anything in existence.



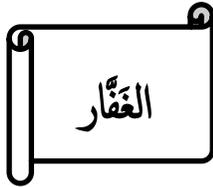
43. Al-'Afuw (The Forgiving): Al-'Afuw signifies Allah as the one who not only forgives and pardons but also overlooks and erases sins. He grants His servants a forgiveness that goes beyond mere pardoning by completely eliminating all traces of committed errors.



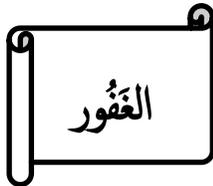
44. Al-'Alim (The All-Knowing): Al-'Alim represents Allah's comprehensive and perfect knowledge. This name conveys that Allah is fully informed about every detail, whether visible or invisible, past, present, or future. No aspect of creation can escape His awareness, and He possesses complete insight into all that exists.



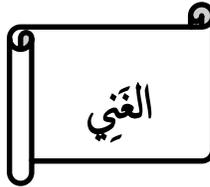
45. Al-'Ali (The Most High, The Sublime): Al-'Ali identifies Allah as the highest in His essence and status. This name emphasizes that Allah stands above and beyond all of creation in every aspect – whether it be in His attributes, His authority, or His power.



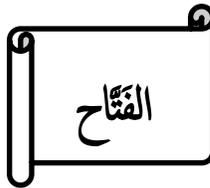
46. Al-Ghaffar (The All-Forgiving): Al-Ghaffar represents Allah's attribute of granting generous and comprehensive forgiveness. This name reflects His constant and abundant willingness to forgive. It signifies the tireless readiness to offer forgiveness time and again.



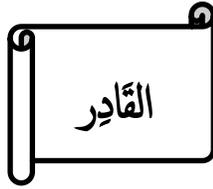
47. Al-Ghafur (The All-Forgiving): This name identifies Allah as extraordinarily forgiving. Al-Ghafur means that Allah extends extensive forgiveness to those who seek His pardon for their sins. He is not only forgiving but also deeply loving towards those who seek His forgiveness.



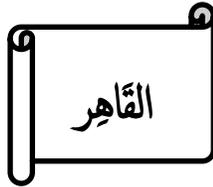
48. Al-Ghani (The Rich, The Self-Sufficient): This name symbolizes Allah as completely self-sufficient and independent of any need or anyone else. Al-Ghani highlights that Allah is free from all needs and deficiencies, and the entire creation is dependent on Him.



49. Al-Fattah (The Opener, The Victor): This name presents Allah as the one who opens the gates to opportunities and provides solutions for His creation. Al-Fattah symbolizes His role in easing difficulties and granting success and victory.



50. Al-Qadir (The Powerful, The Capable): Al-Qadir represents Allah's attribute of absolute power and capability. This name illustrates that there is no weakness or incapacity in Him and that He can accomplish anything. Nothing is beyond His reach or abilities.



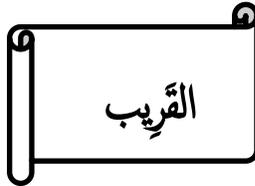
51. Al-Qahhar (The Irresistible, The Dominator): Al-Qahhar refers to Allah's supreme power over all creation. This name implies that everything in existence is subject to His dominion and control and that He is overwhelming and unparalleled in His authority.



52. Al-Quddūs (The Holy): Al-Quddus signifies that Allah is pure and free from any imperfections or flaws.



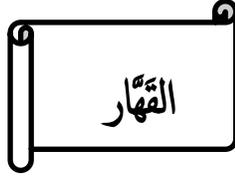
53. Al-Qadīr (The Almighty): This name represents Allah's total and absolute power. His abilities are perfect and unrestricted, free from any weakness or deficiency. Al-Qadir is capable of doing anything, and there are no limits to his power.



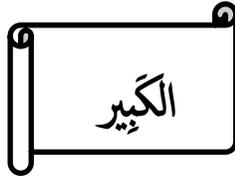
54. Al-Qarīb (The Near, The Almost): This name designates Allah as close to His creation, connected through His knowledge and consciousness. Al-Qareeb symbolizes that Allah is near to each of His servants, aware of their states, thoughts, and needs.



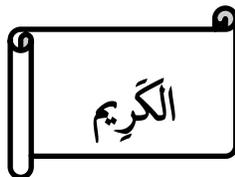
55. Al-Qawī (The Strong): This name refers to Allāh as immensely strong and powerful. Al-Qawī means that Allāh possesses absolute and unparalleled strength.



56. Al-Qahhār (The Subduer): This name denotes Allāh as the overwhelming Subduer who rules over His creation. Al-Qahhar means that Allāh rules over all His creation with His power and authority.



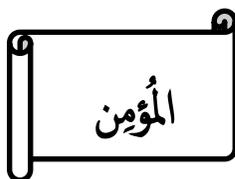
57. Al-Kabīr (The Great): This name reflects Allah's greatness in His characteristics and deeds. Al-Kabīr highlights that Allah possesses attributes of majesty and sublimity, surpassing everything else in greatness and significance.



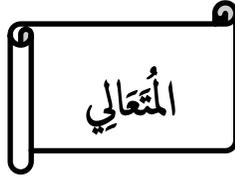
58. Al-Karim (The Generous, The Noble): Al-Karim refers to Allāh as exceptionally generous and bountiful. This name indicates His immense generosity and His constant giving and providing for His creation without expecting anything in return.



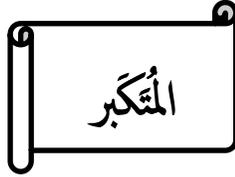
59. Al-Latif (The Gentle, The Kind): This name describes Allāh as gentle, kind, and gracious to His servants. Al-Latif refers to His gentle and subtle handling of affairs, His kindness in managing the smallest details in the lives of His creatures, and His provision of blessings in often hidden or not immediately recognisable ways.



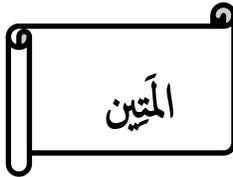
60. Al-Mu'min (The Guarantor of Security): Al-Mu'min refers to the one who affirms and grants security and faith to His servants. The Believer: This pertains to the belief in Allah Himself in His unity and attributes, the belief in His messengers and prophets, and the belief in His faithful servants on the Day of Judgment. On that day, He will confirm their faith and deny the unbelieving tyrants and the unjust.



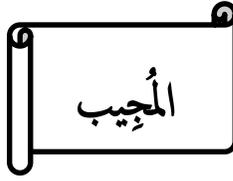
61. Al-Muta'al (The Most High, The Exalted): Al-Muta'al refers to Allāh's exalted status as being high above and beyond all others. It emphasises his transcendence and superiority over everything, especially over any falsehood attributed to him.



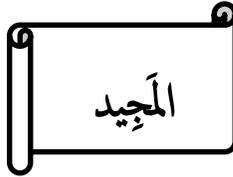
62. Al-Mutakabbir (The Exalted): Al-Mutakabbir means the one who is above all creation in greatness and majesty.



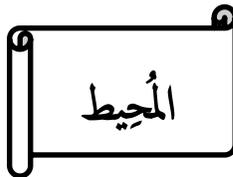
63. Al-Matin (The Firm, The Steadfast): Al-Matin describes Allāh as extremely firm and steadfast. This name refers to his strength and firmness in his actions and decisions.



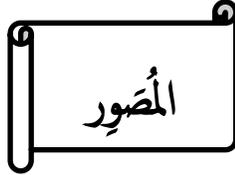
64. Al-Mujib (The Listener): This name refers to Allāh as the One who answers the prayers and supplications of His servants. Al-Mujib means that Allāh hears and answers the calls of those who turn to Him.



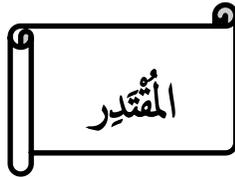
65. Al-Majīd (The Glorious): This name reflects Allah's immense generosity and high stature. Al-Majīd represents His noble and generous essence, as well as His majestic greatness and exalted rank.



66. Al-Muhīt (The All-Inclusive): Al-Muhīt refers to Allāh as the One who encompasses everything in His knowledge, power, mercy and control. This name indicates that nothing is beyond His understanding or reach.



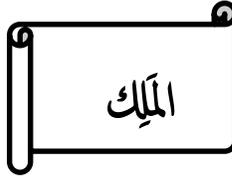
67. Al-Musawwir (The Shaper): This name indicates that Allāh is the One who has given each creation its unique form and characteristics, making each different from the others.



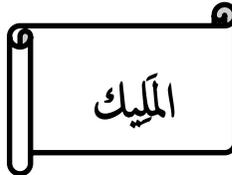
68. Al-Muqtadir (The Almighty, The Mighty): Al-Muqtadir refers to Allāh as the One who possesses absolute power and ability. This name indicates that nothing is beyond His ability or control. He can do His will without any obstacle or resistance.



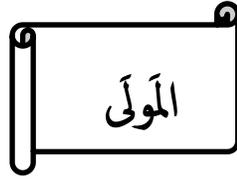
69. Al-Muqit (The Nurturer, The Provider): Al-Muqit refers to Aļļāh as the Nurturer and Provider who ensures the growth and sustenance of His creation. He takes care of all needs and provides food and sustenance.



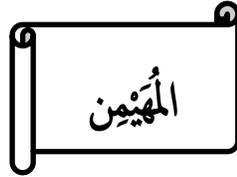
70. Al-Malik (The Sovereign): This name designates Aļļāh as the absolute ruler and owner of all creation and the Last Judgment.



71. Al-Malik (The Sovereign, The King): This name denotes Aļļāh as the One who is independent in His essence and attributes and does not need anything from His creation, while everything in existence needs Him. Al-Malik is the supreme ruler who manages and controls the entire creation effortlessly and without restrictions. He is the One who controls life and death and resurrection and has complete authority and dominion over the entire universe.



72. Al-Mawla (The Protector or Guardian): This name refers to Allāh as the guardian and protector of his believing servants. It encompasses his role in caring for, feeding, and managing the affairs of his believers. Al-Mawla is the one who provides support and guidance and ensures the well-being and growth of those under his care.

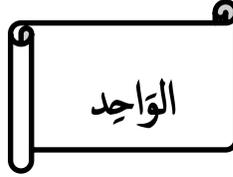


73. Al-Muhaymin (The Protector): This name indicates that Allāh is the Overseer and Guardian of everything and ensures the well-being of His creation.

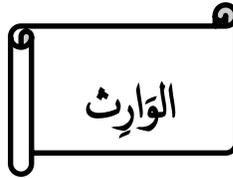


74. An-Nasir (The Helper): The name An-Nasir means Allāh as the Helper and Supporter, especially for those who turn to Him in times

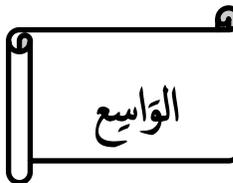
of need. He helps and supports His servants and offers help and salvation in difficulties.



75. Al-Wahid (The One): This name means that Alḥāh is unique and has no partner. Al-Wahid emphasises His uniqueness in essence and attributes, and stresses that there is no one like Him in any aspect.



76. Al-Warith (The Heir, The Successor): Al-Warith refers to Alḥāh as the ultimate heir of all things. This name shows that Alḥāh remains as the eternal and everlasting one after the disappearance of all creation. He is the one who inherits the earth and everything in it.



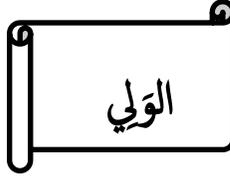
77. Al-Wasi' (The All-Inclusive, The Boundless): Al-Wasi' refers to Allāh as boundless in His provision and mercy. This name indicates that His generosity, mercy and provision extend to all things and are boundless. His grace and kindness are far-reaching and encompass all that exists.



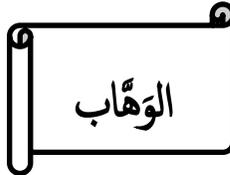
78. Al-Wadud (The Loving): Al-Wadud refers to Allāh as the One who loves His righteous servants. This name indicates that Allāh shows His love by being pleased with them and accepting their good deeds. It emphasises Allāh's loving relationship with those who are devoted to Him.



79. Al-Wakil (The Trustee, The Administrator): Al-Wakil refers to Allāh as the one who looks after the affairs and needs of His servants. He is the trustee and guardian who can be relied upon.



80. Al-Wali (The Protector, The Guardian): This name identifies Allah as the Protector and Supporter who aids His faithful servants. Al-Wali illustrates that Allah provides support and victory for His servants, especially the prophets and their followers. The term implies that those under His guardianship will ultimately achieve a commendable end due to His support and protection.



81. Al-Wahhāb (The Bestower, The Giver): Al-Wahhāb portrays Allah as the generous bestower, who freely distributes His gifts and blessings to all of creation. This name emphasizes His essence of ceaselessly granting gifts and blessings, both apparent and concealed.

- **The Names of Allāh from the Sunnah**

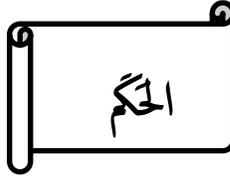


82. Al-Jamil (The Beautiful): Allāh is beautiful in His essence, His names, His attributes, and His actions. No creation can express even a fraction of His beauty. Even the people in Paradise, in the midst of their eternal bliss, joy, pleasure, and happiness that cannot be measured, when they see their Lord and enjoy His beauty, will forget the happiness they are in or their happiness will fade away.

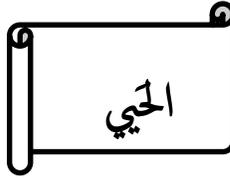
They will wish for this state to continue and will gain beauty from His light to add to their own beauty. Their hearts will always long for the sight of their Lord, and they will rejoice in the Day of Increase, a joy that almost makes the heart fly. He is also beautiful in His name, for all are most beautiful and excellent.



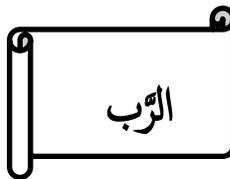
83. Al-Jawad (The Generous): He who is overly generous and gives without being asked and seeks nothing in return.



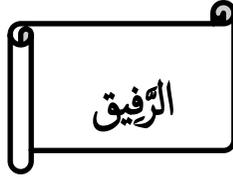
84. Al-Hakam (The Judge, The Arbitrator): Al-Hakam refers to Allāh as the Supreme Judge who decides and judges between His creation. This name indicates His role as the ultimate and just arbiter on the Day of Judgment, with no judgement except His own.



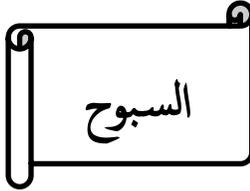
85. Al-Hayyiyu: The one who honourably despises everything that does not correspond to his mercy and generosity.



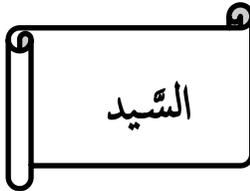
86. Ar-Rabb (The Lord): The Master and Owner. The term "Ar-Rabb" with "the" (Alif-Lam in Arabic) is used exclusively for Allāh.



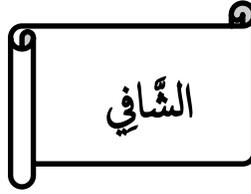
87. Ar-Rafīq (The Gentle): This name portrays Allah as characterized by gentleness, forbearance, patience, kindness, mercy, softness, and compassion. Ar-Rafiq embodies gentleness and kindness in His decisions.



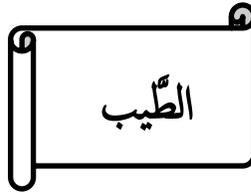
88. As-Subūh (The Pure and Perfect): This name denotes the one who is far removed from any imperfection or deficiency. As-Subūh refers to Allah as the Pure, Glorified, and Praised, free from any attributes of created beings. He is the one who is worshipped in glorification, and every being in heaven and on earth glorifies and sanctifies Him.



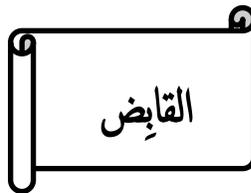
89. As-Sayyid (The Master): This name emphasizes that Allah is the owner of all creation, and all creatures are His servants.



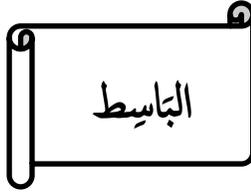
90. Ash-Shāfi (The Healer): This name emphasizes that Allah is the ultimate healer. There is no cure except through Him. He alone has the power to heal and remove any kind of illness, whether it is physical or psychological.



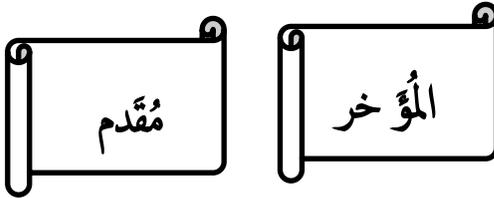
91 At-Tayyib (The Pure): The Holy One, free from all imperfections and defects. Allāh has always been, and will always be, perfect in His essence, His attributes, His actions, and His statements that come from His perfection. He acts in a manner befitting His perfection.



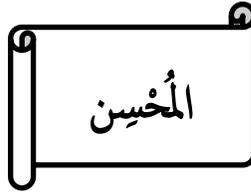
92. Al-Qabid (The Narrowing One): He Who measures provision according to His wisdom.



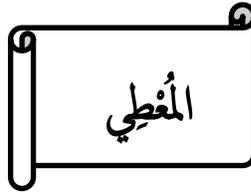
93. Al-Basit (The Expansive): The One Who extends provision through His generosity and kindness.



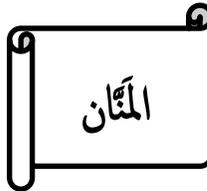
94. and 95. Al-Muqaddim (The Advancer) and Al-Mu'akhkhir (The Delayer): Al-Muqaddim symbolizes the one who advances events according to His will, while Al-Mu'akhkhir, the opposite of Al-Muqaddim, represents the one who delays events as per His will. Allah brings forth what He wishes and postpones what He desires. No one can bring forth what He withholds or delay what He advances. These names, Al-Muqaddim and Al-Mu'akhkhir, emphasize Allah's supreme authority in the governance of the universe and demonstrate how He controls the flow of events and determines the positions and ranks within His creation.



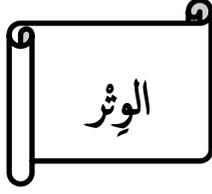
96. Al-Muhsin (The Benefactor): The generous and noble one who loves acts of kindness.



97. Al-Mu'ati (The Giver): The One Who has given His creation to everyone and takes care of their affairs and their provision in this world and the Hereafter.



98. Al-Mannan (The Giver of Favour): Allāh is generous to His servants with His kindness, blessings, and provision. This means that He gives and bestows abundantly.



99. Al-Witr (The Odd, The Unique): The One, without partner, and nothing like Him.

## 11.2 Belief in the Angels

The angels are a creation from the world of al-Ghayb (the Unseen), who worship Allāh and possess none of the divine attributes of Rubūbiyyah and Ulūhiyyah. Allāh created them from light and bestowed upon them complete submission to His command and the ability to carry it out.

Allāh said:

Al-Anbiyā' 21:19-20

(19) ﴿وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖۗ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُوْنَ﴾

(20) ﴿يُسَبِّحُوْنَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُوْنَ﴾

(19) TO HIM BELONG ALL THOSE IN THE HEAVENS AND ON EARTH. AND THOSE WHO ARE NEAR HIM (I.E., THE ANGELS) ARE NOT TOO PROUD TO WORSHIP HIM, NOR DO THEY TIRE (OF WORSHIPPING HIM).

(20) THEY (I.E., THE ANGELS) GLORIFY HIM NIGHT AND DAY; THEY DO NOT SLACKEN (IN THEIR DUTIES).

They are very numerous, and no one knows their number except Allāh. According to the Hadith of Anas in his narration of the events of al-Mi'raaj, the Prophet said:

فَرَفَعَ لِي الْبَيْتَ الْمُعْمُورَ، فَسَأَلْتُ جِبْرِيلَ فَقَالَ هَذَا الْبَيْتُ الْمُعْمُورُ يُصَلِّي فِيهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ، إِذَا خَرَجُوا لَمْ يَعُودُوا إِلَيْهِ آخِرَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ

*"...I was shown Al-Bait-al-Ma'moor (i.e., Allāh's House). I asked Gabriel about it, and he said, 'This is Al-Bait-al-Ma'moor where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily, and when they leave,*

*they never return to it (but always a new group comes to it daily)."*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 3207*

• ***Belief in the angels encompasses four aspects:***

1. Belief in their existence.
2. Belief in those whose names we know, such as Jibrīl, and general belief in those whose names we do not know.
3. Belief in what we know about their attributes, like Jibrīl, whom the Prophet saw in his true form, created with six hundred wings, covering the entire horizon.

The angel can take on the form of a human at the command of Allāh, as was the case with Jibrīl when Allāh sent him to Maryam, where he appeared to her in every way in human form. Also, when he came to the Prophet while he was sitting in the company of his Sahaabah, Jibrīl appeared in the form of a man, dressed in very white garments and with very black hair; there was no sign of travel on him, and none of the Sahaabah knew him. He sat next to the Prophet, leaned his knees against his and placed his palms on his thighs. Then he asked the Prophet about Islam, Iman, Ihsan, the Hour (i.e., the Day of Resurrection), and its signs. The Prophet answered his questions and then he (Jibrīl) left. Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said:

فإنه جبريل أتاكم يعلمكم أمر دينكم

*“That was Jibrīl, who came to teach you your religion.”*

Similarly, the angels whom Allāh sent to Ibrahim and Lut appeared in human form.

4. We believe in what we know of their actions which they perform according to the command of Allāh, the Exalted, such as their Tasbeeh and their worship of Allāh day and night without boredom or negligence.

#### Some Angels Have Specific Tasks

Some examples:

- Jibrīl: Al-'Amin (the Trustworthy) with the Revelation of Allāh. He sends it to the Prophets and Messengers.
- Mika'il: He is responsible for al-Qatr, i.e., rain and vegetation.
- Israfil: He is charged with blowing the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection of the creation.
- Malakul Maut (Angel of Death): He is responsible for extracting the souls at the time of death.
- The Angels for the womb: When the embryo has completed four months in the womb, Allāh sends an angel to it and commands him to write down his provision, his lifespan, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed (in the Hereafter).

- The Angels who watch over the deeds of the children of Adam and keep a record: one on the right and one on the left of each person.
- The Angels who are tasked with questioning the dead when they are buried. Two angels come and question him about his Rabb (Alļāh), his religion, and his Prophet.

Some of those who have gone astray deny that angels are real beings. They claim that they represent the force of potential good in creation. This view contradicts the Book of Alļāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and the general consensus of Muslims.

Alļāh says:

Fāṭir 35:1

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولَىٰ أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

“PRAISE BE TO ALļĀH, THE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, WHO MADE THE ANGELS MESSENGERS WITH WINGS - TWO, THREE, OR FOUR. HE ADDS TO THE CREATION AS HE WILLS. INDEED, ALļĀH IS CAPABLE OF ALL THINGS.”

Alļāh also said about the inhabitants of al-Jannah:

Ar-Ra’d 13:23-24

﴿جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ ءَابَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ﴾ (23)

(24) ﴿سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ﴾

(23) THE GARDENS OF ETERNITY, WHICH THEY WILL ENTER ALONG WITH THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THEIR PARENTS, SPOUSES, AND DESCENDANTS. AND THE ANGELS WILL ENTER UPON THEM FROM EVERY GATE, ' SAYING, '

(24) "PEACE BE UPON YOU FOR YOUR PERSEVERANCE. HOW EXCELLENT IS THE ULTIMATE ABODE!"

The Prophet said in the Hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah and collected in Sahih al-Bukhari:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَقَفَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى بَابِ الْمَسْجِدِ يَكْتُبُونَ الْأَوَّلَ فَالْأَوَّلَ، وَمِثْلُ الْمُهَاجِرِ كَمِثْلِ الْبَدَنِيِّ يُهْدِي بَدَنَةً، ثُمَّ كَالَّذِي يُهْدِي بَقْرَةً، ثُمَّ كَالَّذِي يُهْدِي دَجَاجَةً، ثُمَّ بَيْضَةً، فَإِذَا خَرَجَ الْإِمَامُ طَوَّأُوا صُحُفَهُمْ، وَيَسْتَمِعُونَ الذِّكْرَ ".

*"The Prophet said, "When it is a Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like one offering a cow and then a ram and then a chicken and then an egg respectively. When the Imām comes out (for Jumua prayer) they (i.e. angels) fold their papers and listen to the Khutba."*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 929*

From the above texts, it is clear that angels are real beings (of creation) and not moral forces, as claimed by those who have strayed. The general Muslim consensus agrees with these texts.

### 11.3 Belief in the Books

The Books that Allāh sent down to His messengers as a mercy and guidance for people so that they may achieve happiness in this world and the Hereafter.

- *Belief in the Books encompasses four aspects:*

1. To believe that the Books have indeed been sent down by Allāh.
2. To believe in the Books whose names we know, each according to its name, such as the Qur'ān, which was revealed to Muḥammad, At-Taurat, which was revealed to Musa, Injil, which was sent down to Isa, and Az-Zabur, which was given to Dawud. As for the books whose names we do not know, we believe in them in general.
3. To attest to their authenticity as the messages conveyed in the Qur'ān and (or) in the ancient scriptures, as long as they have not been altered or changed.
4. To act according to the un-abrogated laws of the Qur'ān, to accept them and to submit to them, whether we recognize the wisdom behind them or not. The Qur'ān abrogates all previous holy scriptures.

Allāh says:

Al-Mā'idah 5:48

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ ﴾

“WE HAVE SENT DOWN TO YOU THE BOOK IN TRUTH,  
CONFIRMING WHAT WAS BEFORE IT OF THE BOOK AND AS A  
GUARDIAN OVER IT.”

Therefore, the Qur’ān is a judge over all previous scriptures, and accordingly, it is forbidden to act according to any of the laws of the previous scriptures, except for what is confirmed and recognized by the Qur’ān.

## 11.4 Belief in the Messengers

The Messengers are created human beings who do not possess any of the attributes of Rubūbiyyah or Ulūhiyyah. Allāh spoke about His Prophet Muḥammad, who is the noblest of the Messengers and the highest among them in honor before Allāh:

Al-A‘rāf 7:188

﴿ قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءَ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

“SAY: 'I HAVE NO POWER TO BENEFIT MYSELF OR PROTECT MYSELF EXCEPT AS ALLĀH WILLS. HAD I KNOWN THE UNSEEN, I WOULD HAVE GAINED MUCH GOOD, AND NO HARM WOULD HAVE TOUCHED ME. I AM ONLY A WARNER AND A BRINGER OF GOOD NEWS TO PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE.'”

He also said [about the Prophet]:

Al-Jinn 72:21-22

﴿ (21) قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴾

﴿ (22) قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴾

“(21) SAY: 'IT IS NOT IN MY POWER TO CAUSE YOU HARM OR TO BRING YOU TO THE RIGHT PATH.'

(22) SAY: 'NO ONE CAN PROTECT ME FROM ALLĀH IF I DISOBEY HIM, NOR CAN I FIND ANY REFUGE APART FROM HIM.'”

Human characteristics such as illness, death, the need for food and drink, etc., affect them. Allāh said about the Prophet Ibrahim, as he described his Rabb (Allāh):

Ash-Shu‘arā’ 26:79-81

﴿ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴾ (79)

﴿ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴾ (80)

﴿ وَالَّذِي يُمَيِّتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴾ (81)

“(79) ‘HE WHO FEEDS ME AND GIVES ME DRINK.

(80) AND WHEN I AM ILL, IT IS HE WHO CURES ME.

(81) AND HE WHO WILL CAUSE ME TO DIE, AND THEN TO LIFE (AGAIN).”

The Prophet said:

وَلَكِنْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ، أَنَسَى كَمَا تَنْسَوْنَ، فَإِذَا نَسِيتُ فَذَكِّرُونِي،

“I am a human being like you and liable to forget like you. So if I forget remind me...”

*Sahih al-Bukhari 401*

Messengers are chosen men, known for their honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness among their people, and receive a Shar'a (a divine law) from Allāh with the mission to convey it. The first of the messengers was Nuh, and the last is Muḥammad. Allāh said:

An-Nisā' 4:163

﴿ إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ﴾

“INDEED, WE HAVE REVEALED TO YOU, AS WE REVEALED TO NOAH AND THE PROPHETS AFTER HIM. AND WE REVEALED TO ABRAHAM, ISHMAEL, ISAAC, JACOB, AND THE DESCENDANTS, TO JESUS, JOB, JONAH, AARON, AND SOLOMON, AND TO DAVID WE GAVE THE PSALMS.”

• ***Belief in the Messengers includes four aspects:***

1. To believe that their message is a true message from Allāh. Thus, whoever does not believe in the message of any one of them, denies them all, as Allāh says:

Ash-Shu‘arā’ 26:105

﴿ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾

“THE PEOPLE OF NOAH DENIED THE MESSENGERS.”

Allāh made them deny all the messengers, although there was no messenger other than Noah when they denied him. Consequently, the Christians who denied the Prophet Muḥammad and did not follow him also denied Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus) and are therefore not his followers, especially since he brought them the good news of Muḥammad. The good news is meaningless unless he (Muḥammad) is a messenger for them, through whom Allāh saves them from misguidance and leads them to the straight path.

2. To believe in those among them whose names we know, each according to his name: Examples, Muḥammad, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, Nuh, etc. As for those of them whose names we do not know, we believe in them all (as true messengers from Alḷāh). He said:

Ġāfir 40:78

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِن مِّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ﴾

“WE SENT MESSENGERS BEFORE YOU. SOME OF THEM WE HAVE TOLD YOU THEIR STORIES, AND SOME WE HAVE NOT TOLD YOU.”

3. To believe in what is authentically reported about them.

4. To act according to the Shari'ah of the Messenger Muḥammad, the last (and the seal) of the messengers (and prophets), who was sent to mankind. Alḷāh said:

An-Nisā' 4:65

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾

“BUT NO, BY YOUR LORD, THEY WILL NOT (TRULY) BELIEVE UNTIL THEY MAKE YOU, THE PROPHET, JUDGE IN WHAT DISPUTES ARISE BETWEEN THEM, THEN FIND NO DISCOMFORT WITHIN THEMSELVES FROM WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED AND SUBMIT IN FULL SUBMISSION.”

## 11.5 Belief in the Last Day

The Last Day is the Day of Resurrection when people will rise to receive recompense and reckoning. It is called so because there is no day after it. On this day, people will settle in Al-Jannah in their abodes, and those in An-Naar (Hell) will reside in theirs.

- ***Belief in the Last Day encompasses three things:***

1. Belief in the Resurrection, i.e., the revival of the dead on the day when the trumpet will be blown for the second time and people will stand before the Lord of Al-'Aalameen (humankind, Jinn, and all that exists). They will be barefooted, naked, and uncircumcised. Allāh said:

Al-Anbiyā' 21:104

﴿يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِ لِلْكِتَابِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعَدَا عَلَيْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ﴾

"ON THE DAY WE WILL FOLD THE HEAVENS LIKE THE FOLDING OF A SCROLL FOR WRITINGS. AS WE BEGAN THE FIRST CREATION, WE WILL REPEAT IT. THAT IS A PROMISE BINDING UPON US. INDEED, WE WILL DO IT."

Al-Ba'th (Resurrection) is a confirmed fact, proven by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the Ijmaa' (consensus) of Muslims. Allaah said:

Al-Mu'minūn 23:15-16

﴿ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَعِينُونَ﴾ (15)

﴿ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُنْعَمُونَ﴾ (16)

“(15) THEN, INDEED YOU, AFTER THAT, WILL DIE.

(16) THEN INDEED YOU, ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION, WILL BE RAISED UP.”

The Muslims are unanimous in their certainty of the Day of Resurrection, and this is what wisdom necessarily presupposes: Allāh has prepared for His creation a ma'aad (a place of return) to reward them for the obligation He imposed upon them through the tongue of His Messengers. Allāh said:

Al-Mu'minūn 23:115

﴿ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

“DID YOU THINK THAT WE HAD CREATED YOU IN PLAY (WITHOUT ANY PURPOSE), AND THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE BROUGHT BACK TO US?”

2. Belief in recompense and accounting. The servant will be rewarded or punished for his deeds. This is proven through the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the Ijmaa' of the Muslims. Allaah said:

Al-Ghashiyah 88:25-26

﴿ (25) إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابُهُمْ ﴾

﴿ (26) ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴾

“(25) INDEED, TO US IS THEIR RETURN,

(26) THEN INDEED, UPON US IS THEIR ACCOUNT.”

He also said:

Al-An'am 6:160

﴿ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴾

“WHOEVER COMES [ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT] WITH A GOOD DEED WILL HAVE TEN TIMES THE LIKE THEREOF [TO HIS CREDIT], AND WHOEVER COMES WITH AN EVIL DEED WILL NOT BE RECOMPENSED EXCEPT THE LIKE THEREOF; AND THEY WILL NOT BE WRONGED.”

Al-Anbiya 21:47

﴿ وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقَائِمَةَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ حَرْدَلٍ آتَيْنَاهَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَلِيسِينَ ﴾

“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.”

The Muslims are unanimous in the certainty that there will be accounting and reward, and this is what wisdom necessarily presupposes. Indeed, Alḥāh has sent down the Books and sent the Messengers and obligated creation to accept the message they brought and to act according to what is prescribed in it. If there were no reckoning and no reward, then all this would have been in vain. Alḥāh, the All-Knowing, is far from such a thing. He made this certainty (of reckoning and balancing) clear in His verse:

Al-A'raf 7:6-7

﴿(6) فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾

(7) ﴿ فَلَنُفَصِّرَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴾

“(6) THEN WE WILL SURELY QUESTION THOSE TO WHOM [OUR MESSAGE] WAS SENT, AND WE WILL SURELY QUESTION THE MESSENGERS.

(7) THEN WE WILL SURELY RELATE [THEIR DEEDS] TO THEM WITH KNOWLEDGE, AND WE WERE NOT [AT ALL] ABSENT.”“

3. Belief in Al-Jannah (Paradise) and An-Naar (Hell) and that they are the final and eternal abodes of creation. Al-Jannah is the place of bliss prepared by Allāh for the righteous believers who believe in what Allāh has obligated them to, and obey Allāh and His Messenger by sincerely believing in Him and following His Messenger. Allāh has prepared in Al-Jannah all kinds of bliss that "no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no one has ever imagined." Allāh says:

Al-Bayyinah 98:7-8

(7) ﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴾

(8) ﴿ جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ﴾

“(7) INDEED, THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND DO RIGHTEOUS DEEDS - THEY ARE THE BEST OF CREATURES.

(8) THEIR REWARD WITH THEIR LORD WILL BE GARDENS OF ETERNITY BENEATH WHICH RIVERS FLOW, WHEREIN THEY WILL ABIDE FOREVER, ALLĀH BEING PLEASED WITH THEM AND THEY WITH HIM. THAT IS FOR WHOEVER HAS FEARED HIS LORD.”

He also says:

### As-Sajdah 32:17

﴿ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

“NO SOUL KNOWS WHAT HAS BEEN HIDDEN FOR THEM OF COMFORT FOR EYES AS REWARD FOR WHAT THEY USED TO DO.”

As for An-Naar (Hell), it is the place of torment prepared by Allāh for the disbelievers, hypocrites, sinners, etc. In it are types of punishments and torments beyond imagination. Allāh said:

### Āl ‘Imrān 3:131

﴿ وَأَتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

“AND FEAR THE FIRE, WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE DISBELIEVERS.”

### Al-Kahf 18:29

﴿ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَمَن شَاء فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاء فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَخَاطَ بِهَا سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِن يَسْتَعِينُوا بِعَمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَقًا ﴾

“SAY, "THE TRUTH IS FROM YOUR LORD, SO WHOEVER WILLS - LET HIM BELIEVE; AND WHOEVER WILLS - LET HIM DISBELIEVE." INDEED, WE HAVE PREPARED FOR THE WRONGDOERS A FIRE WHOSE WALLS WILL SURROUND THEM. AND IF THEY CALL FOR RELIEF, THEY WILL BE RELIEVED WITH WATER LIKE MURKY OIL, WHICH SCALDS FACES. WHAT A DREADFUL DRINK AND A BAD RESTING PLACE!”

Al-Ahzab 33:64-66

﴿(64) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيْرًا﴾

﴿(65) خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا اَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُوْنَ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيْرًا﴾

﴿(66) يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يَا لَيْتَنَا اَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَاَطَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلًا﴾

“(64) INDEED, ALLĀH HAS CURSED THE DISBELIEVERS AND PREPARED FOR THEM A BLAZE.

(65) THEY WILL ABIDE THEREIN FOREVER. THEY WILL FIND NO PROTECTOR OR HELPER.

(66) ON THE DAY THEIR FACES WILL BE TURNED OVER IN THE FIRE, THEY WILL SAY, "OH, WOULD THAT WE HAD OBEYED ALLĀH AND OBEYED THE MESSENGER.””

One aspect of belief in the Hereafter is belief in what happens after death:

A) Fitnatul Qabr ("The Trial of the Grave"), i.e., the questioning of the deceased (in the grave) by two angels about his Lord (Rabb), his faith, and his prophet. Allāh will strengthen the believers with the word that remains. He (the believer) will say: "My Lord is Allāh, my religion is Islam, and my prophet is Muḥammad. As for the disbelievers, Allāh will lead them astray, and they will say: "Ha! Ha! I do not know." The hypocrite (or doubter) will say: "I do not know; I heard the people say something, and I said it (too)."

B) The Torments and Joys of the Grave: The torment will be inflicted upon the disbelievers and hypocrites. Allāh said:

## Al-An'am 6:93

﴿ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرِجُوا أَنفُسَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ عِبْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴾

"IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE WHEN THE WRONGDOERS ARE IN THE THROES 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 ALLĀH OTHER THAN THE TRUTH AND [THAT] YOU WERE, TOWARD HIS VERSES, BEING ARROGANT.'"

The bliss of the grave is only for the true believers. Allāh said:

## Fussilat 41:30

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴾

"INDEED, THOSE WHO HAVE SAID, 'OUR LORD IS ALLĀH' AND THEN REMAINED ON A RIGHT COURSE - THE ANGELS WILL DESCEND UPON THEM, [SAYING], 'DO NOT FEAR AND DO NOT GRIEVE BUT RECEIVE GOOD TIDINGS OF PARADISE, WHICH YOU WERE PROMISED.'"

Al-Al-Barā'a' bin 'Aazib reported that the Prophet indicated the believer's answer to the two angels' questions in the grave:

فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ : أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقَ عَبْدِي فَأَفْرِشُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَافْتَحُوا لَهُ بَابًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَاللَّبْسُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ " . قَالَ : " فَيَأْتِيهِ مِنْ رَوْحِهَا وَطِيْبِهَا " . قَالَ : " وَيُفْتَحُ لَهُ فِيهَا مَدَدَ بَصَرِهِ "

*"Then a caller will call from Heaven: 'My servant has spoken the truth, so make him a bed from Paradise, open for him a door to Paradise, and clothe him from Paradise.' So its breeze and*

*fragrance will come to him, and a space will be made for him as far as the eye can see."*

*Sunan Abi Dawud 4753*

Some people who have deviated from the truth have gone astray and denied the torments and bliss of the grave by claiming that it contradicts reality. They said that when the deceased is placed in his grave, he is found in the same state he was in (immediately before his burial), and that neither a change in the width nor the narrowness of the grave has taken place.

Firstly, it is not permissible to set such refutable doubts against what Ash-Shar'a has brought (i.e., authentic reports and evidence).

Secondly, the states in Barzakh are matters of Al-Ghayb (the Unseen), which cannot be understood by the senses. If they were perceivable by the senses, then the benefit of believing in Al-Ghayb would be missed, and the believers in Al-Ghayb would be like those who deny the testimony of its truth!

Thirdly, the torments and bliss, the width and narrowness of the grave are only perceived by the deceased and no one else. It is the same as when a person sees himself in a narrow and frightening place or in a wide and beautiful place in his sleep. From the perspective of others, his place has not changed during sleep. He is still in his room, between his bed and his blanket.

Also, the Prophet was inspired while among his companions: He heard the revelation while his companions did not hear it. Sometimes the angel (Jibrīl) took the form of a man who spoke to the Prophet, and the Sahabah did not see or hear him.

And fourthly, the ability of the creation to comprehend is limited to what Aļļāh has allowed it to comprehend. It is impossible for it to understand everything that exists. And since creation cannot understand everything that exists, it is not allowed to deny what has been confirmed in the matters of Al-Ghayb.

## 11.6 Belief in the Divine Decree (Al-Qadr)

Al-Qadar is Allāh's divine decree of beings according to His foreknowledge and as His wisdom requires.

Belief in Al-Qadar includes four aspects:

1- Believing that Allāh knows everything in whole and in detail, what has happened in the past, what will happen in the future and will happen forever, whether it relates to His actions or the actions of His creatures.

2- Believing that Allāh has written (everything that pertains to His knowledge) in Al-Lauh Al-Mahfudh (The Preserved Tablet). Regarding these two aspects (knowledge and writing), Allāh says:

Al-Hajj 22:70

﴿ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴾

"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT ALLĀH KNOWS WHAT IS IN THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH? INDEED, THAT IS IN A RECORD. INDEED THAT, FOR ALLĀH, IS EASY."

3- Believing that everything created only arises by the will of Allāh, no matter whether it concerns His action or the action of creatures. Allāh spoke about what belongs to His action:

Al-Qasas 28:68

﴿ وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ﴾

"YOUR LORD CREATES WHAT HE WILLS AND CHOOSES."

Ibrahim 14:27

﴿ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴾

"AND ALLĀH DOES WHAT HE WILLS."

Regarding the actions of creatures, Allāh says:

An-Nisa 4:90

﴿ وَأَلُو شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتِلُوكُمْ ﴾

"IF ALLĀH HAD WILLED, HE COULD HAVE GIVEN THEM POWER OVER YOU, AND THEY WOULD HAVE FOUGHT YOU."

Al-An'am 6:137

﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ ﴾

"HAD ALLĀH WILLED, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT."

4- Believing that all beings were created by Allāh, including their selves, their attributes, and their actions. Allāh said:

Az-Zumar 39:62

﴿ اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴾

"ALLĀH IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS, AND HE IS, OVER ALL THINGS, DISPOSER OF AFFAIRS."

Al-Furqan 25:2

﴿ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا ﴾

"AND HE CREATED EVERYTHING AND DETERMINED IT MOST EXACTLY."

### 11.6.1 Al-Qadar as Justification?

The above-described belief in Al-Qadar does not negate that humans have their own will and the ability (Quwah) to perform voluntary actions. Both Ash-Shar'ia (the divine legislation) and the experienced reality provide evidence confirming the existence of these human attributes.

As for Ash-Shar'a, Allāh said about the will of the servants:

An-Naba 78:39

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ﴾

"THAT DAY IS THE TRUTH. SO WHOEVER WILLS MAY TAKE TO HIS LORD A [WAY OF] RETURN."

Allāh said about the Qudrah (the ability of man):

At-Taghabun 64:16

﴿ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا ﴾

"SO FEAR ALLĀH AS MUCH AS YOU ARE ABLE AND LISTEN AND OBEY..."

Al-Baqarah 2:286

﴿ يَكْفِ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وَسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ﴾

"ALLĀH DOES NOT BURDEN A SOUL BEYOND THAT IT CAN BEAR. IT WILL HAVE [THE CONSEQUENCE OF] WHAT [GOOD] IT HAS GAINED, AND IT WILL BEAR [THE CONSEQUENCE OF] WHAT [EVIL] IT HAS EARNED."

Regarding reality, every human being intuitively knows that they have a will and capabilities that enable them to act or refrain from actions. They can distinguish between voluntary actions, like walking, and involuntary reactions, like trembling. However, it is essential to emphasize that the human will and capabilities are enabled only through Allāh's will and capabilities. Allāh has said that the entire universe belongs to Him, and thus nothing happens in His domain without His will. He said:

At-Takwir 81:28-29

﴿لِمَن شَاءَ مِنكُمُ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ﴾ (28)

﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (29)

“(28) FOR WHOEVER WILLS AMONG YOU TO TAKE A RIGHT COURSE.

(29) AND YOU DO NOT WILL EXCEPT THAT ALLĀH WILLS - LORD OF THE WORLDS.”

Nevertheless, belief in Al-Qadar, as previously explained, does not provide a human being with justification for neglecting obligatory actions or for committing acts of disobedience. Therefore, it is not permissible to use Al-Qadar as an excuse for one's own wrongdoing, as the following explanations show:

**Firstly:** As Allāh says:

Al-An'am 6:148

﴿ سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ  
 حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تُخْرِصُونَ ﴾

“THE POLYTHEISTS WILL SAY, 'HAD ALLĀH WILLED, WE WOULD NOT HAVE ASSOCIATED ANYTHING WITH HIM, NOR WOULD OUR FATHERS, NOR WOULD WE HAVE PROHIBITED ANYTHING.' LIKEWISE, THOSE BEFORE THEM DENIED UNTIL THEY TASTED OUR PUNISHMENT. SAY, 'DO YOU HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU CAN PRODUCE FOR US? YOU FOLLOW ONLY ASSUMPTION, AND YOU ARE ONLY CONJECTURING.'”

Had there been an excuse through Al-Qadar, Allāh would not have punished them.

**Secondly:** As Allāh says:

An-Nisa 4:165

﴿ رُسُلًا مُبْتَلِيْنَ وَمُنذِرِيْنَ لِيَقُلَ الْبَاطِلُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ﴾

“MESSENGERS AS BRINGERS OF GOOD TIDINGS AND WARNERS SO THAT MANKIND WILL HAVE NO ARGUMENT AGAINST ALLĀH AFTER THE MESSENGERS. AND EVER IS ALLĀH EXALTED IN MIGHT AND WISE.”

If Al-Qadar was a valid excuse for those who oppose the messengers, then their mere sending alone would not be sufficient to eliminate the opposition. For the opposition to the messengers also occurs by Allāh's will, even after their sending.

**Thirdly:** The Hadith narrated by Ali bin Abi Talib and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, in which the Prophet said:

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ كُنَّا جُلُوسًا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَعَهُ عُوذٌ يَنْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَقَالَ " مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا قَدْ كَتَبَ مَقْعَدُهُ مِنَ النَّارِ أَوْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ". فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ أَلَا تَشْكُلُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " لَا أَعْمَلُوا فَكُلُّ مُبْتَسِرٍ " ثُمَّ قَرَأَ

(5) فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

(6) وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

(7) فَسَنِيبُنَا لَهُ لِلْغُصْنَى

(8) وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى

(9) وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى

(10) فَسَنِيبُنَا لَهُ لِلْغُصْنَى

*While we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) who had a stick with which he was scraping the earth, he lowered his head and said, "There is none of you but has his place assigned either in the Fire or in Paradise." Thereupon a man from the people said, "Shall we not depend upon this, O Allāh's Apostle?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "No, but carry on and do your deeds, for everybody finds it easy to do such deeds (as will lead him to his place)." The Prophet (ﷺ) then recited the Verses:*

*(5) As for the one who is charitable, mindful `of Allāh`,*

*(6) and `firmly` believes in the finest reward,*

*(7) We will facilitate for them the Way of Ease.*

*(8) And as for the one who is stingy, indifferent `to Allāh`,*

*(9) and `staunchly` denies the finest reward,*

(10) *We will facilitate for them the path of hardship.”*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 6605*

The Prophet commanded good deeds and prohibited dependence on al-Qadar.

**Fourthly:** Allāh commands His servants to do what is permissible and forbids them what is impermissible. He only holds them accountable for what they are capable of. Allāh says:

At-Taghabun 64:16

﴿ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ ﴾

“SO FEAR ALLĀH AS MUCH AS YOU ARE ABLE.”

Al-Baqarah 2:286

﴿ لَا يَكْفِيكَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

“ALLĀH DOES NOT BURDEN A SOUL BEYOND THAT IT CAN BEAR...”

If man were compelled to act, he would be burdened with the inevitable. Therefore, he is not sinning if he does something bad by mistake, ignorance, or under compulsion, as he is excused in these cases.

**Fifthly:** Al-Qadr remains a hidden secret that is only revealed with the occurrence of the predestined. The intention of the servant to perform an action precedes it and is not based on his knowledge of Allāh's Qadr. Therefore, his invocation of Al-Qadr as an excuse is negated, for one cannot cite as justification something that is not the basis of the decision made.

**Sixthly:** We observe that man is always eager to acquire what is useful to him in worldly matters. He does not blame Al-Qadr for not pursuing what is useless. Why then, in matters of his faith, would he choose what is harmful and justify it with Al-Qadr? Shouldn't the approach to both be consistent?

An example of this is the choice between two paths: one leading to a city full of chaos and danger, the other to a city of order and safety. Surely, a sensible person would choose the path to the safe city and not invoke Al-Qadr to choose the dangerous path. Why then, when it comes to the Hereafter, do people choose the path to hell instead of to Al-Jannah and cite Al-Qadr?

Another example: A patient who must take unpleasant medication or abstain from harmful food follows these instructions to protect his health. He would never invoke Al-Qadr to refuse the medication or consume harmful food. Why then do people ignore the commands of Allāh and His messenger or commit prohibitions and then cite Al-Qadr?

**Seventhly:** If someone uses Al-Qadr as a justification for neglecting his duties (Al-Waajibaat) or committing sins, and then is attacked by someone who steals his property or violates his honor, he will certainly not accept the argument of the attacker who says: "Do not blame me! My attack on you was determined by Allāh's Qadr." Why does he then reject Al-Qadr as a justification for another's aggression against himself, but use it to justify his own disregard for Allāh's rights?

It is reported that Ameer Al-Mu'mineen Umar bin Al-Khattaab ordered the hand of a thief to be cut off, on whom the judgment (Sharee'ah) was rightly applied. The thief said: "Wait, O Leader of the Faithful! I committed the theft because of Qadar Allāh (i.e., he blames

Al-Qadar)." Umar replied: "And we cut (the hand) certainly not by anything other than the Qadar Allāh."

It should be noted that many who use this justification often do not do so out of genuine conviction, but are based on whims, desires, and stubbornness.

A scholar once said to such a person: "In matters of obedience, you consider yourself as Qadari and in matters of sin as Jabari; you follow the path that suits your desires" (Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 8/107).

In other words: When he performs an act of worship, he attributes it to himself and denies that Allāh has predestined it; but when he sins, he uses Al-Qadr as an excuse.

One can invoke Al-Qadr when afflicted with misfortune, such as poverty, illness, loss of a loved one, destruction of crops, or loss of wealth. This shows that one fully accepts Allāh as his Lord. In such cases, invoking Al-Qadr is only justified in misfortunes, not in one's own mistakes. Blessed is he who asks for forgiveness for his mistakes and remains patient in the face of misfortune, as Allāh says:

Ġāfir 40:55

﴿ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴾

"SO BE PATIENT. INDEED, ALLĀH'S PROMISE IS TRUE. AND ASK FORGIVENESS FOR YOUR SIN AND PRAISE YOUR LORD IN THE EVENING AND THE EARLY MORNING."

The key point is that a person's actions and decisions cannot be justified with reference to Al-Qadr. However, everything that is beyond their will and control can be attributed to Al-Qadr.

## 12. Shirk

Shirk originates from the Arabic verb "Scharaka," which means "to share." It denotes the ascription of partners to Allāh and is considered the most grave sin in Islam. This sin can be so severe that it can lead to the exclusion of a Muslim from the community of Islam.

Just as Tawḥīd (Monotheism) is divided into various categories, Shirk is also categorized. There are two main forms: the lesser Shirk (Shirk Asghar) and the greater Shirk (Shirk Akbar).

Committing the lesser Shirk does not necessarily lead to exclusion from Islam, but it does pose the danger of paving the way for the greater Shirk. The greater Shirk, on the other hand, leads not only to exclusion from Islam but also, if no sincere repentance occurs, to eternal punishment in hell.

Given these serious consequences, it is of great importance to be aware of and understand the nature and various forms of Shirk.

### 12.1 Lesser Shirk (Shirk Asghar)

The lesser Shirk, also known as Shirk Asghar, is often underestimated. Although it appears less severe than the greater Shirk, it is still more serious in the eyes of Allāh than many other sins, such as murder or alcohol consumption. Therefore, it is crucial to understand this type of Shirk and be aware of the potential dangers.

Some of the most common examples of lesser Shirk are Ar-Riyaa ("showing off"), where acts of worship are performed to be seen and praised by others, and swearing by someone other than Allāh.

The Prophet ﷺ expressed his concern about this with the words:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ لَبِيدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ أَخْوَفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ قَالُوا  
 وَمَا الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ الزِّيَاءُ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِذَا جُرِيَ النَّاسُ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ أَذْهَبُوا إِلَى  
 الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُرَاءَوْنَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَاَنْظُرُوا هَلْ تَجِدُونَ عِنْدَهُمْ جَزَاءً

*“Verily, my greatest fear for you is the lesser idolatry.” They said, “What is the lesser idolatry, O Messenger of Allāh?” The Prophet said, “It is ostentation. Allāh Almighty will say to them on the Day of Resurrection, when people are being recompensed for their deeds: Go to those for whom you made a show in the world and look, do you find any reward with them?”*

*Source: Musnad Ahmad 23636*

It is important to emphasize that acts of worship performed exclusively for showing off to others can fall into the category of the greater Shirk.

Moreover, it is not uncommon nowadays for people to swear by someone other than Allāh, be it their mother or a prophet.

The Prophet ﷺ warned against this with the words:

قَالَ سَمِعَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ، رَجُلًا يَخْلِفُ لَا وَالْكَعْبَةَ فَقَالَ لَهُ ابْنُ عُمَرَ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ  
 "مَنْ خَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ."

*Ibn Umar heard a man swearing: No, I swear by the Ka'bah. Ibn Umar said to him: I heard the Messenger of Allāh say: “Whoever swears by anything other than Allāh is committing shirk.”*

## 12.2 Major Shirk (Shirk Akbar)

The major Shirk, known as Shirk Akbar, occurs when someone associates partners with Allāh. This can concern His dominion, worship, names, and attributes, and stands in direct contradiction to Tawhīd, the belief in Allāh's uniqueness.

Examples of Shirk Akbar:

- *Shirk in Rubūbiyyah (Dominion):*

This includes any belief, statement, or action that partially or completely attributes Allāh's deeds to another entity, such as claiming there is another creator besides Allāh or someone else with power over creation.

- *Shirk in Ulūhiyyah (Worship):*

This refers to the performance of acts of worship for someone other than Allāh, such as directing prayers to someone else or loving another entity on the same level or more than Allāh.

- *Shirk in Asma wa Sifat (Names and Attributes):*

This falls under attributing Allāh's names and attributes to someone else, like calling someone other than Ar-Rahman or claiming that there is someone who, like Allāh, has no beginning.

The Qur'ān makes it clear that Shirk is the most severe offense in Islam. A Muslim who commits Shirk is considered an apostate (Murtad) and idolater (Mushrik). It is a sin of such gravity that, if no sincere repentance occurs, it is not forgiven.

An-Nisā' 4:48

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

"VERILY, ALLĀH FORGIVES NOT THAT PARTNERS SHOULD BE SET UP WITH HIM, BUT HE FORGIVES ANYTHING ELSE, TO WHOM HE PLEASES; AND WHOEVER SETS UP PARTNERS WITH ALLĀH, HAS DEVISED A TREMENDOUS SIN."

## 13. Takfīr

Takfīr is the act of declaring a person as a non-Muslim, which is synonymous with their excommunication from Islam. The distinction between a Muslim and a Kafir (unbeliever) is of great importance in Islamic doctrine. Therefore, Takfīr is seen as an essential component in the correct application and understanding of 'Aqīdah (fundamentals of faith).

### 13.1 Criteria and Limits of Takfīr According to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah

The followers of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah follow a methodology carefully defined by Sharia in the application of Takfīr. They affirm those actions that are clearly designated as acts of disbelief by religious scriptures. However, no one is hastily declared an unbeliever without considering all the associated conditions and barriers ("obstacles"). This serves to avoid mistakes, premature judgments, and negligence in declaring an apostate, especially when it is not justified.

- *The criteria for Takfīr are divided into three main areas:*

1. Conditions regarding actions, statements, or beliefs that indicate disbelief:

- It must be conclusively proven by clear evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunnah that the statement, action, or belief expresses disbelief.
- The statement or action indicating disbelief must be unambiguous in meaning. If a statement is ambiguous or an

action can be interpreted both as disbelief and otherwise, it should not be hastily judged as an expression of disbelief.

2. The unequivocal identification of the person accused of disbelief:

- Such a determination can be made either by a confession or by valid religious evidence. Mere assumptions or uncertain assumptions are not sufficient.

3. The absence of barriers that could prevent Takfīr ("obstacles"):

- Incapacity: Only legally accountable persons (mukallaf) can be held responsible for their actions. Children, mentally impaired individuals, or persons whose judgment is impaired by unconsciousness, sleep, or drugs cannot be declared unbelievers.
- Ignorance: Persons who express or practice disbelief out of ignorance of the Islamic prohibition should not be immediately regarded as unbelievers.
- Error: The statement or action must be intentional. Accidental or involuntary actions are not considered grounds for Takfīr.
- Coercion: An action or statement must be made freely. Those under duress are not considered unbelievers, as long as they preserve their faith internally. It is a mercy of Allāh not to hold such people responsible for circumstances they cannot control. To ensure that no one lightly commits impermissible acts, scholars have established certain criteria for permissible coercion:

- a. The threat must be serious and harmful, e.g., death, mutilation, captivity, beatings, etc.
  - b. The coercer must actually be able to implement his threat.
  - c. The coerced person must have no other way out, such as self-defense, other forms of resistance, escape, or seeking help, etc.
  - d. The coerced person must truly believe that the threat will be carried out if they do not comply.
- Misinterpretation: The person must understand the scope and significance of their action or statement, i.e., recognize that it constitutes disbelief or sin. It may be that they are confused and make a misinterpretation, which they adhere to because they believe it to be evidence of their faith, or because they are unable to properly understand and comprehend the evidence of Sharia. Therefore, it is not permitted to condemn someone as an unbeliever unless they intentionally violate Sharia and know that they are in error. The one who follows his whims and desires and does not seek the truth, speaking without knowledge, is a disobedient sinner and may be a Faasiq, but he may have some good deeds that outweigh his bad deeds.

The aforementioned criteria underscore the caution applied in Islamic law to ensure that someone has indeed become apostate. It is an important reminder of the need to practice Takfir with understanding and prudence.

## 14. Nifāq

Nifāq, known in Islam as hypocrisy, describes the phenomenon where a person's words and actions do not match, and their secret intentions differ from their public demeanour.

In the context of Islamic law, hypocrisy refers to pretending to be virtuous and righteous while harboring the opposite in the heart.

Nifāq can be divided into two main categories:

1. Hypocrisy in faith, also referred to as "major hypocrisy," and
2. Hypocrisy in actions, also known as "minor hypocrisy."

### 14.1 Major Hypocrisy or Hypocrisy in Faith

This type of hypocrisy refers to individuals who outwardly profess belief in Aļļāh and the fundamental principles of Islam but internally reject, contradict, or only partially accept this belief. Characteristic here is the discrepancy between public confession and actual belief. This form of hypocrisy was already known during the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. It results in all good deeds of such a person being invalid, and their state is judged more harshly in Islam than that of a non-believer. The Qur'ān vehemently condemns this type of hypocrisy, emphasizing that the hypocrites will occupy the lowest rank in hell. True faith (Iman) and "major hypocrisy" cannot coexist in the same heart.

Examples of characteristics of "major hypocrisy" include:

1- Internal denial of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), even if there is an outward confession to him. This denial can refer to the entirety or parts of his message:

#### Al-Munāfiqūn 63:1

﴿ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ، وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴾

"WHEN THE HYPOCRITES COME TO YOU, [O MUḤAMMAD], THEY SAY, 'WE TESTIFY THAT YOU ARE THE MESSENGER OF ALLĀH.' AND ALLĀH KNOWS THAT YOU ARE HIS MESSENGER, AND ALLĀH TESTIFIES THAT THE HYPOCRITES ARE LIARS."

2- Commanding evil and forbidding good:

#### At-Tauwbah 9:67

﴿ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴾

"THE HYPOCRITE MEN AND HYPOCRITE WOMEN ARE OF ONE ANOTHER. THEY ENJOIN WHAT IS WRONG AND FORBID WHAT IS RIGHT AND CLOSE THEIR HANDS. THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN ALLĀH, SO HE HAS FORGOTTEN THEM [ACCORDINGLY]. INDEED, THE HYPOCRITES ARE THE DISOBEDIENT."

3- Pretending faith to mislead believers:

#### Al-Baqarah 2:8-9

﴿ (8) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَأْتِيهِمْ آلٌ ءَاخِرٌ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

﴿ (9) يُخَدِّعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَدِّعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴾

“(8) AND THERE ARE SOME WHO SAY, 'WE BELIEVE IN ALLĀH AND THE LAST DAY,' BUT THEY ARE NOT TRUE BELIEVERS.

(9) THEY TRY TO DECEIVE ALLĀH AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE, BUT THEY DECEIVE ONLY THEMSELVES, AND THEY DO NOT REALIZE IT.”

#### 4- Indifference to prayer:

An-Nisā' 4:142

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَدِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَدِيعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

“INDEED, THE HYPOCRITES TRY TO DECEIVE ALLĀH, BUT HE OUTWITS THEM. WHEN THEY STAND FOR PRAYER, THEY DO SO LAZILY, ONLY TO BE SEEN BY PEOPLE, AND THEY HARDLY REMEMBER ALLĀH.”

#### 5- Mocking faith, the believers, and the verses of Allāh:

At-Tauwbah 9:64-65

﴿(64) يَخْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ نُنزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةً تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ أَسْتَهْزِئُوكُمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَا تَخْذَرُونَ﴾

﴿(65) وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَءَايَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ﴾

“(64) THE HYPOCRITES FEAR THAT A SURAH MAY BE REVEALED ABOUT THEM, SHOWING WHAT IS IN THEIR HEARTS. SAY, 'MOCK ON! ALLĀH WILL SURELY BRING TO LIGHT WHAT YOU FEAR.'

(65) AND IF YOU ASK THEM, THEY WILL SURELY SAY, 'WE WERE ONLY TALKING IDLY AND JOKING.' SAY, 'WAS IT ALLĀH, HIS REVELATIONS, AND HIS MESSENGER THAT YOU WERE MOCKING?'"

6- Disease of the heart due to doubt, desires, and arrogance:

Al-Munāfiqūn 63:5

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ﴾

“WHEN IT IS SAID TO THEM, ‘COME, THE MESSENGER OF ALLĀH WILL PRAY FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS,’ THEY TURN THEIR HEADS ASIDE, AND YOU SEE THEM TURNING AWAY IN ARROGANCE.”

7- Alliances with the enemies of Islam and their vigilance against the believers

An-Nisā’ 4:141

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْتَعُكُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا﴾

"THE HYPOCRITES ARE THOSE WHO WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU. IF ALLĀH GRANTS YOU VICTORY, THEY SAY TO YOU: 'WERE WE NOT WITH YOU?' BUT IF THE UNBELIEVERS GAIN A SHARE, THEY SAY: 'DID WE NOT GAIN MASTERY OVER YOU AND PROTECT YOU FROM THE BELIEVERS?' ALLĀH WILL JUDGE BETWEEN YOU ALL ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION. AND ALLĀH WILL NEVER GRANT THE UNBELIEVERS ANY WAY OVER THE BELIEVERS."

Al-Baqarah 2:14

﴿وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامِنُوا وَإِذَا حَلُّوا إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ﴾

"WHEN THEY MEET THOSE WHO BELIEVE, THEY SAY: 'WE BELIEVE,' BUT WHEN THEY ARE ALONE WITH THEIR EVIL ONES, THEY SAY: 'WE ARE REALLY WITH YOU, WE WERE ONLY MOCKING.'"

8- Wavering and hesitating between belief and disbelief:

An-Nisā' 4:143

﴿مُذَبِّبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا﴾

"VACILLATING BETWEEN THIS AND THAT, BELONGING NEITHER TO THESE NOR TO THOSE. AND HE WHOM ALLĀH SENDS ASTRAY, YOU WILL NOT FIND FOR HIM A WAY."

9- Joy over the defeats of Muslims and sorrow over their victories:

At-Tawbah 9:50

﴿إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَبِتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ﴾

"IF A GOOD THING BEFALLS YOU, IT GRIEVES THEM; AND IF A CALAMITY BEFALLS YOU, THEY SAY: 'WE TOOK OUR PRECAUTION BEFOREHAND,' AND THEY TURN AWAY REJOICING."

## 14.2 Lesser Hypocrisy or Hypocrisy in Actions

This type of hypocrisy refers to individuals who outwardly display righteousness and piety but harbor opposite attitudes or behaviors internally. It also includes publicly following religious rituals that are neglected in private settings. Such an individual is termed a "hypocrite" because they primarily aim to project a positive image in front of others to gain recognition or praise for their apparent piety. The main issue lies in the discrepancy between public appearance and private behavior.

Although this form of hypocrisy is not regarded as apostasy (falling away from faith), it is still a serious sin, especially if the person still

holds faith in their heart. Such a person is not automatically condemned to eternal damnation in hell. Allāh may forgive them, or, if He deems it appropriate, punish them. However, if this type of hypocrisy becomes deeply rooted in the heart, it can lead to "major hypocrisy."

Examples of minor hypocrisy include not keeping promises, betraying trust, and similar hypocritical behaviors. Someone might, for instance, pretend to live in poverty to evoke pity, or display kindness while actually feeling hostility.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُرَّةَ، عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَتْ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنْهُنَّ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنَ التَّقَاتِ حَتَّى يَدْعَهَا إِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ وَإِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ وَإِذَا عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ، وَإِذَا خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ ". تَابَعَهُ شُعْبَةُ عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ.

*"Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up.*

- 1. Whenever he is entrusted, he betrays.*
- 2. Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie.*
- 3. Whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous.*
- 4. Whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner."*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 34*

## 15. The Five Pillars of Islam

Adhering to the five pillars of Islam is essential for maintaining correct 'Aqīdah, as in certain situations, the abandonment of one or more pillars of Islam can lead to disbelief.

However, before addressing the abandonment of actions, it's important to note that anyone who denies one of the five pillars of Islam commits disbelief and becomes an apostate.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا عَاصِمٌ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ زَيْدٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ - عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ شَهَادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَإِقَامُ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءُ الزَّكَاةِ وَحَجُّ الْبَيْتِ وَصَوْمُ رَمَضَانَ " .

*"(The superstructure of) al-Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifying (the fact) that there is no god but Allāh, that Muḥammad is His bondsman and messenger, and the establishment of prayer, payment of Zakat, Pilgrimage to the House (Ka'ba) and the fast of Ramadan."*

*(Sahih Muslim 16c)*

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ likened Islam to a house. The structural integrity of this house is based on five fundamental pillars. Without these five pillars, the house essentially loses its essence. While other aspects of Islam serve as additions or supplements that contribute to the completeness of the house, they are not the core. The absence of these additional aspects might make the house incomplete, but it will still stand. However, without all five primary pillars, the house would cease to exist or stand. Particularly if the central pillar is missing, the

house cannot maintain its stature, a perspective unanimously recognized by all scholars.

This analogy may seem confusing since the four mentioned actions are based on the first pillar of Shahādah. It is obvious that without the first pillar, the subsequent actions lose their value. This raises a question: Can a foundation also serve as a basis for other fundamental pillars? It is possible that components are built upon each other, eventually forming a single, integral structure with multiple support pillars. An illustrative example scholars provide is that of a tent made of leather or fur, supported by five pillars. The central, most important pillar holds the tent, while the other four pillars surround and stabilize it. If the central pillar were to collapse, regardless of the presence of the other four, the tent would not stand. In totality, all five pillars are fundamental, yet the additional four remain dependent on the stability of the central pillar. Essentially, the first pillar forms the intrinsic foundation for the subsequent pillars and directs their practical realization. A stronger foundation in the first pillar naturally strengthens the remaining pillars. For true harmony, these pillars must coexist and function synergistically.

Secondly, the declaration of faith is the fundamental pillar, without which none of the actions are accepted. The prerequisite for the validity of someone's Islam is the declaration of faith, which we will discuss in more detail.

## 15.1 The First Pillar: The Declaration of Faith (Shahada)

The first pillar of Islam is the Shahada - the dual declaration of faith:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

---

*"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger."*

---

The meaning of **the first part of the declaration of faith** has already been explained in the chapter on Tawḥīd.

**The second part of the declaration of faith** involves recognizing Muhammad as the messenger of Allah and entails an acknowledgment of specific rights and responsibilities associated with his messengership. These encompass:

- a) Belief in Muḥammad as the final prophet for all humanity and jinn, acknowledging his truthfulness in all matters, whether concerning the visible or invisible world, the past, present, or future. This includes his teachings about the Day of Judgment, Paradise, Hellfire, past prophets, and previous nations.

At-Taḡābun 64:8

﴿ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴾

"SO BELIEVE IN ALLĀH AND HIS MESSENGER AND IN THE LIGHT [OF GUIDANCE] WHICH WE HAVE REVEALED [TO HIM]."

- b) Worshiping Allāh according to Muḥammad's guidance, adhering to his commands and prohibitions. This includes avoiding actions he disapproved of, as such disobedience is equivalent to disobeying Allāh. Followers should adhere strictly to his teachings and resolve disputes based on his guidance.

Al-Ḥaṣhr 59:7

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ﴾

"WHATEVER THE MESSENGER COMMANDS YOU, TAKE IT [AND ABIDE BY IT] AND WHATEVER HE PROHIBITS YOU FROM, REFRAIN FROM IT."

- c) Respecting and venerating Muḥammad appropriately, given his esteemed status. This respect involves honoring him, speaking of him with reverence, supporting him, and defending him from any harm or disrespect.

Al-A'raf 7:157

﴿ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

"SO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM, HONOUR HIM, HELP HIM, AND FOLLOW THE LIGHT (THE QUR'ĀN) WHICH HAS BEEN SENT DOWN WITH HIM, IT IS THEY WHO WILL BE SUCCESSFUL."

- d) Loving Muḥammad more than any other being, including one's own family and humanity. This love stems from his role as a source of mercy and guidance, bringing greater benefits than any other relationship. However, this love should not reach the levels of deification or the extreme veneration often seen with religious figures in other traditions, like the

deification of Jesus in Christianity or the idolization of saints and righteous individuals.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَلَدِهِ  
وَوَالِدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

*"None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his own father, his son and all of mankind."*

*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 15, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 44*

- e) Respecting Muḥammad's True Position: Recognizing Muḥammad as an esteemed prophet and the best of humankind yet maintaining his status as a humble servant of Allāh. Avoiding extremes of exaggeration or diminishment is crucial. He is a messenger without knowledge of the unseen or power to independently control harm or benefit, as he himself stated in the Qur'ān.

Al-A'raf 7:188

﴿ قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءَ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

"SAY [O MUḤAMMAD]: 'I POSSESS NO POWER OF BENEFIT OR HURT TO MYSELF EXCEPT AS ALLĀH WILLS. IF I HAD THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNSEEN, I SHOULD HAVE SECURED FOR MYSELF AN ABUNDANCE OF WEALTH, AND NO EVIL SHOULD HAVE TOUCHED ME. I AM BUT A WARNER, AND A BRINGER OF GLAD TIDINGS TO PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE'."

f) Honoring His Companions and Family: Respecting the Prophet's companions, wives, and household is integral. Reviling them is seen as an offense against the Prophet himself. Belittling these individuals, or accusing them of misguidance or disbelief, is considered a serious transgression in Islam. Esteemed Islamic scholars have noted that disparaging the Prophet's companions undermines one's faith in Islam. This respect extends to the close followers of all prophets, including Moses and Jesus; similarly, genuine belief in Muḥammad necessitates respect for those closest to him.

The great Muslim scholar, Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855) said:

*"When you see a man mentioning the Companions of Aḷḷāh's Messenger with evil, suspect his Islam."*

In conclusion, respecting and fulfilling the rights of the Messenger is essential for a Muslim, as it directly correlates with fulfilling the rights of Aḷḷāh. The principles of Tawḥīd (Islamic monotheism) and messengership are inextricably linked. Rejecting even a single messenger equates to a rejection of the entire concept of messengership and, by extension, Tawḥīd itself. This is why the rejection of Muḥammad by the People of the Book is viewed as a rejection of all previous scriptures, messengers, and the concept of Tawḥīd.

These two statements together form the declaration of faith that a Muslim must make. The Shahada is more than just a verbal affirmation; it requires a deep conviction of the uniqueness of Aḷḷāh and an unwavering devotion to His worship, His attributes, and the monotheistic principles they represent. Additionally, it requires acknowledging Muḥammad as Aḷḷāh's messenger and following his teachings.

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized the importance of the Shahada in a Hadith reported by Anas bin Malik:

قَالَ " مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ ."

*"There is none who testifies sincerely that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and Muḥammad is his Apostle, except that Allāh will save him from the Hell-fire."*

### 15.1.1 The Seven (Eight) Conditions of the Declaration of Faith

The declaration of faith, "la ilaha illa Allāh, Muḥammad ar-rasul Allāh" (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh), is the key to Paradise.

It forms the foundation of Islam and the starting point of faith. This declaration, however, is more than just a statement; it is the origin of virtues and a path to bliss in the hereafter for those who implement its true meaning.

According to a Hadith, narrated by Uthman, Prophet Muḥammad said:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

*"One who dies knowing that there is no god but Allāh will enter Paradise."*

*Sahih Muslim 26, Grade: Sahih*

This knowledge about Allāh implies more than just acknowledging His existence – an acknowledgment even Satan possesses. It encompasses understanding and implementing the resulting obligations, duties, and virtues.

Like a key requiring specific grooves to unlock a lock, the declaration of faith has certain conditions that must be met for it to pave the way to Paradise. Islamic scholars have identified seven or eight such conditions, which must be fulfilled for the testimony of faith to benefit the declarant in this life and the hereafter. These conditions must be internalized and consistently followed; merely uttering the words or memorizing them is not enough.

The seven (eight) conditions of the declaration of faith are:

1-Knowledge

2-Certainty

3-Sincerity

4-Trithfulness

5-Love

6-Compliance

7-Acceptance

8-Disbelief in Taghut

### 15.1.1.1 Knowledge (الْعِلْمُ)

The first condition of the Islamic declaration of faith is 'knowledge', which negates ignorance. It includes understanding the meaning of the declaration of faith and knowing what it affirms and negates.

In Allāh's words,

Muḥammad 47: 19

﴿ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ﴾

“KNOW THAT THERE IS NO DEITY WORTHY OF WORSHIP EXCEPT ALLĀH”

there is a call for knowledge that Allāh is the only deity. This is also reinforced in another verse:

Aal 'Imran 3: 18

﴿ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴾

“ALLĀH BEARS WITNESS THAT THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM, AND SO DO THE ANGELS AND THOSE OF KNOWLEDGE, UPHOLDING JUSTICE. THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM, THE ALMIGHTY, THE WISE.”

This knowledge is therefore not just an acknowledgment of Allāh's existence but also an understanding of the fundamental teachings of Islam and the declaration of faith.

### 15.1.1.2 Certainty (الْيَقِينُ)

The second condition of the profession of faith is 'certainty', which excludes any room for doubt. This means that the statement of the profession of faith must be carried by absolute certainty and conviction, based on sound knowledge.

Allāh, the Almighty, emphasizes the importance of certainty in the following Ayah:

al-Hujurat 49: 15

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الصَّادِقُونَ ﴾

“THE BELIEVERS ARE ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN ALLĀH AND HIS MESSENGER AND THEN DOUBT NOT BUT STRIVE WITH THEIR WEALTH AND THEIR LIVES FOR THE CAUSE OF ALLĀH. THOSE ARE THE TRUTHFUL.”

Allāh makes it clear that true faith (Iman) exists without any doubt. Doubts are a characteristic of hypocrisy. Allāh speaks about the hypocrites in the following Ayah:

al-Tawbah 9: 45

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴾

“ONLY THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN ALLĀH AND THE LAST DAY ASK YOUR PERMISSION, WHOSE HEARTS ARE IN DOUBT, AND THEY IN THEIR DOUBT ARE WAVERING.”

Abu Hurayrah narrates a Hadith in which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ says:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، لَا يَلْقَى اللَّهُ مِمَّا عَبْدٌ غَيْرَ شَاكٍ فِيهِمَا إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

*"I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship but Allāh, and that I am the Messenger of Allāh; no servant meets Allāh with these two, without doubting them, except that he will enter Paradise."*

*Reported by Muslim (44/27)*

Certainty is thus a crucial prerequisite for true faith in Islam and excludes any doubt about the unity of Allāh and the message of the Prophet.

### 15.1.1.3 Sincerity (الإخلاص)

The third condition of the profession of faith is 'sincerity', which excludes any form of polytheism (Shirk), hypocrisy, and ostentation. In the Islamic context, sincerity means performing actions solely with the intention of seeking Allāh's pleasure, without any admixture of intentions that serve other beings or goals.

Allāh, the Most High, emphasizes the importance of sincerity:

al-Zumar 39: 2

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴾

"WE HAVE SENT DOWN TO YOU THE BOOK IN TRUTH, SO WORSHIP ALLĀH, BEING SINCERE TO HIM IN RELIGION."

And in another Ayah:

al-Bayyinah 98: 5

﴿ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ خُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ﴾

"AND THEY WERE NOT COMMANDED EXCEPT TO WORSHIP ALLĀH, [BEING] SINCERE TO HIM IN RELIGION, INCLINING TO TRUTH, AND TO ESTABLISH PRAYER AND TO GIVE ZAKAH; AND THAT IS THE CORRECT RELIGION."

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

أَسْعُدُ النَّاسَ بِشَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، خَالِصًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ

*"The happiest of people with my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who said 'La ilaha ill Allāh' sincerely from his heart."*

*Reported by al-Bukhari (No. 99).*

'Itban b. Malik also reports from the Prophet Muḥammad:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ النَّارَ مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَتَّبِعِي بِذَلِكَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ

*"Indeed, Allāh has forbidden the Fire to one who says 'La ilaha ill Allāh' seeking thereby the Face of Allāh."*

*Reported by al-Bukhari (No. 5401) and Muslim (between No. 657 and 658, No. 263).*

Sincerity is thus an essential part of faith, where actions and words are performed exclusively for Allāh, without any ulterior motives or pretense.

### 15.1.1.4 Truthfulness (الصِدْقُ)

The fourth condition of the profession of faith is 'truthfulness', the complete opposite of lying. This condition demands that the statement of the profession of faith comes not only from the tongue but also sincerely and honestly from the heart. The absence of inner truthfulness categorizes one among the hypocritical liars.

Allāh, the Most High, speaks about the importance of truthfulness in faith:

al-'Ankabut 29: 1-3

(1) ﴿الم﴾

(2) ﴿أَحْسِبَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يَبْرُكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ﴾

(3) ﴿وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾

"ALIF LAM MIM. DO PEOPLE THINK THAT THEY WILL BE LEFT TO SAY, 'WE BELIEVE,' AND THEY WILL NOT BE TRIED? WE HAVE CERTAINLY TRIED THOSE BEFORE THEM. AND ALLĀH WILL SURELY MAKE EVIDENT THOSE WHO ARE TRUTHFUL, AND WILL SURELY MAKE EVIDENT THE LIARS."

And in another verse:

al-Baqarah 2: 8-10

(8) ﴿وَمَنْ النَّاسُ مَنِ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

(9) ﴿يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

(10) ﴿فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ﴾

"AND OF THE PEOPLE ARE SOME WHO SAY, 'WE BELIEVE IN ALLĀH AND THE LAST DAY,' BUT THEY ARE NOT BELIEVERS. THEY DECEIVE ALLĀH AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE, BUT THEY DECEIVE NOT EXCEPT THEMSELVES AND PERCEIVE [IT] NOT. IN THEIR HEARTS IS A DISEASE, SO ALLĀH HAS INCREASED THEIR DISEASE; AND FOR THEM IS A PAINFUL PUNISHMENT BECAUSE THEY [HABITUALLY] USED TO LIE."

Anas reported that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ، إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ

*"No one who testifies that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, truthfully from his heart, except that Allāh will forbid him to the Fire."*

*al-Bukhari (No. 128) and Muslim (No. 32)*

Therefore, truthfulness in the profession of faith requires deep, honest conviction that goes beyond mere lip service and is reflected in sincere belief and action.

### 15.1.1.5 Love (الْحَبَّةُ)

The fifth condition of the profession of faith is 'love', which refers to the deep affection for this meaningful and blessed statement, as well as for what it demands and entails. It also includes love for those who live according to this profession of faith and adhere to its conditions, and the rejection of everything that negates it.

Allāh, the Most High, speaks about the importance of love for Him:

al-Baqarah 2: 165

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ﴾

"AND OF MANKIND ARE SOME WHO TAKE (FOR WORSHIP) OTHERS BESIDES ALLĀH AS RIVALS (TO ALLĀH). THEY LOVE THEM AS THEY LOVE ALLĀH. BUT THOSE WHO BELIEVE, LOVE ALLĀH MORE (THAN ANYTHING ELSE)."

Allāh also mentions:

al-Ma'idah 5: 54

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ﴾

"O YOU WHO BELIEVE! WHOEVER FROM AMONG YOU TURNS BACK FROM HIS RELIGION (ISLAM), ALLĀH WILL BRING A PEOPLE WHOM HE WILL LOVE AND THEY WILL LOVE HIM."

Anas ibn Malik narrated from the Prophet Muḥammad:

ثَلَاثٌ مِّنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ : أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا ، وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ، وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقَدَّفَ فِي النَّارِ

*"Three qualities, whoever has them, will taste the sweetness of faith: to love Allāh and His Messenger more than anyone else; to love a person and to love him only for Allāh's sake; and to hate to return to disbelief after Allāh has saved him from it as he hates to be thrown into the fire."*

*al-Bukhari (No. 16) and Muslim (No. 43).*

Al-Al-Barā' ibn 'Azib also narrated from the Prophet Muḥammad:

إِنَّ أَوْثَقَ عَزَى الْإِيمَانِ: أَنْ تُحِبَّ فِي اللَّهِ، وَتُبْغِضَ فِي اللَّهِ

*"The strongest bond of faith is to love for the sake of Allāh and to hate for the sake of Allāh."*

*Ahmad (No. 18524)*

Therefore, love in the profession of faith demands an exclusive and sincere love for Allāh, stronger than any other affection. The love for Allāh and His Messenger should be above all other loves and reflected in the way of life and actions of the believers.

### 15.1.1.6 Compliance (الإِْتِيَادُ)

The sixth condition of the profession of faith is 'compliance', which means adhering to the requirements and regulations of the faith. It is the exact opposite of negligence or abandonment in following religious commands.

Allāh, the Most High, underscores the importance of compliance and submission:

Luqman 31: 22

﴿ وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴾

"AND WHOEVER SUBMITS HIS FACE TO ALLĀH WHILE HE IS A DOER OF GOOD, THEN HE HAS GRASPED THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY HANDHOLD. AND TO ALLĀH IS THE OUTCOME OF ALL MATTERS."

Allāh further states:

al-Zumar 39: 54

﴿ وَأَنْبِئُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴾

"AND TURN IN REPENTANCE TO YOUR LORD AND SUBMIT TO HIM BEFORE THE PUNISHMENT COMES UPON YOU; THEN YOU WILL NOT BE HELPED."

This condition entails actively following the teachings and commands of Islam, not just in words, but also in deeds and beliefs. It means submitting oneself in all aspects of life to the will of Allāh and consistently adhering to the directives of Islam in both word and action.

### 15.1.1.7 Acceptance (القبول)

The seventh condition of the profession of faith is 'acceptance', which entails fully embracing with heart and tongue all that the profession of faith demands and signifies. The opposite of this would be rejection or refusal.

Allāh, the Most High, clarifies the consequences of rejecting the profession of faith:

al-Saffat 37: 35

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ﴾

"INDEED, THEY USED TO BE ARROGANT WHEN IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'THERE IS NO DEITY EXCEPT ALLĀH'."

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari narrated a saying of the Prophet Muḥammad:

مَثَلُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْعِلْمِ كَمَثَلِ الْغَيْثِ الْكَثِيرِ ... وَمَثَلُ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْفَعْ بِذَلِكَ رَأْسًا وَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ هُدَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ ...

*"The example of what Allāh has sent me with of guidance and knowledge is like abundant rain ... And the example of the person who does not care about it and does not accept the guidance of Allāh which I have been sent with, is ..."*

*Bukhari (No. 79)*

This condition implies that the acceptance of the profession of faith is not merely a formal or superficial matter, but a profound and sincere embrace of all the principles and teachings of Islam. It means wholeheartedly taking the faith into the heart and acting accordingly, without hesitation or rejection.

### 15.1.1.8 Disbelief in Taghut (الكُفْرُ بِالطَّاغُوتِ)

Some Islamic scholars consider 'disbelief in Taghut' as an eighth condition of the profession of faith. 'Taghut' refers to anything that is worshipped besides Allāh, and can include various forms of idols, false gods, or authorities.

Rejecting Taghut means to refuse all forms of worship or veneration other than the worship of Allāh. It entails relying solely on Allāh as the sole Creator and the Only One worthy of true worship.

Allāh explains the importance of disbelief in Taghut:

al-Baqarah 2: 256

﴿ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

"THE RIGHT COURSE HAS BECOME CLEAR FROM THE WRONG. SO WHOEVER DISBELIEVES IN TAGHUT AND BELIEVES IN ALLĀH HAS GRASPED THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY HANDHOLD WITH NO BREAK IN IT. AND ALLĀH IS HEARING, KNOWING."

Tariq ibn Ashim narrates from Prophet Muḥammad:

مَنْ وَخَدَ اللَّهَ ، وَكَفَرَ بِمَا يُعْبَدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حُرِّمَ مَالُهُ وَدَمُهُ وَجَسَابَتُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ

*"Whoever says 'La ilaha ill Allāh' and disbelieves in what is worshipped besides Allāh, his property and life are sacred, and his reckoning is with Allāh."*

*Muslim (No. 23) and Ahmad (3:472)*

This condition emphasizes the necessity of a complete turn away from any form of worship or reverence that is not directed towards Allāh. It highlights that true devotion and belief belong exclusively to Allāh, thereby rejecting all forms of Shirk (polytheism) and Taghut.

## 15.2 The Second Pillar: Prayer

After the Shahada comes the daily prayer. Each prayer begins with the Takbir ("Allāhu Akbar", meaning "God is the Greatest") and ends with the Salam (peace greeting). Between these, there are recitations, bowings, and prostrations. These prayers symbolize a deep connection between the believer and his Lord, promoting humility, devotion, supplication, and recitation of the Holy Qur'ān. The Prophet ﷺ emphasized the crucial role of prayer with the words:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ " .

*"It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin Buraidah that his father said:*

*"The Messenger of Allāh said: 'The covenant that stands between us and them is the Salah; whoever abandons it, he has committed disbelief.'"*

*(Al-Nasai 463)*

The obligation of the five daily prayers was established during the Prophet's ascension to heaven. Initially, fifty daily prayers were prescribed, but Allāh reduced the burden to five daily prayers, each retaining the reward value of ten:

1. Fajr prayer (two units)
2. Dhuhr prayer (four units)
3. Asr prayer (four units)
4. Maghrib prayer (three units)

## 5. Isha prayer (four units)

These prayers play a central role in the daily life of a practicing Muslim.

Shahada and prayer, the first two pillars of Islam, are unique in that they are obligatory for all believing Muslims regardless of their life situation. Unlike Zakat and Hajj, which can be excused if unable, the profession of faith and prayer are lifelong commitments.

The significance of prayer is illustrated by a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, in which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ compares the effect of the five daily prayers to bathing five times in a river, leaving no dirt behind.

He ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَفِي حَدِيثٍ بَكَرٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَنَّ نَهْرًا بِيَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ يَغْتَسِلُ مِنْهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسَ مَرَّاتٍ هَلْ يَبْقَى مِنْ دَرَنِهِ شَيْءٌ؟ " . قَالُوا لَا يَبْقَى مِنْ دَرَنِهِ شَيْءٌ . قَالَ " فَذَلِكَ مِثْلُ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسِ يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِنَّ الْخَطَايَا "

*He heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying: just see, can anything of his filthiness remain (on the body of) any one of you if there were a river at his door in which he washed himself five times daily? They, said: Nothing of his filthiness will remain (on his body). He said: That is like the five prayers by which Allāh obliterates sins."*

(Muslim 667)

Prayer is thus a means of spiritual purification; it cleanses the soul of a Muslim from sins and misdeeds. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ

emphasized the importance of prayer by referring to it as the pillar of Islam, saying:

قَالَ "رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلَاةُ"

*"The head of the matter is Islam, and its pillar  
is the prayer,"*

*(Al-Tirmidhi 2616)*

### **15.2.1 The Ruling on Abandoning Prayer**

Among Islamic scholars, there are differing opinions on whether someone who neglects prayer is considered an unbeliever (Kaafir) or "merely" a sinner (Fasiq).

Those who explicitly reject prayer, knowing that it is a duty imposed by Allāh, are unanimously regarded as unbelievers and apostates by the Islamic community (Ummah).

On the other hand, someone who does not perform prayer out of ignorance, such as a new convert, is not regarded as an unbeliever. In such cases, it is important to educate and guide the person towards prayer.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, an Islamic scholar, stated:

*"The Muslims are unanimous that someone who denies the obligation of prayer is considered an unbeliever and should be sentenced to death if he does not recant his disbelief. However, they disagree about someone who recognizes prayer as an obligation but still does not perform it."*

(Al-Istidhkaar, 2/149)

Regarding individuals who neglect prayer out of negligence or indifference, there are different views among scholars. Some consider these individuals as unbelievers, others do not; some believe that complete abandonment of prayer signifies disbelief, while occasional praying does not.

The Maliki and Shafi'i schools of thought hold the view that someone who neglects prayer out of laziness and not because of denying its obligation should be executed after a three-day grace period if they continue to refuse to pray. After their death, however, they should be treated like other Muslims: washed, a funeral prayer said, and buried in the Muslim cemetery.

The Hanbali school believes that someone who neglects prayer out of laziness should be executed after a three-day period of admonition but is considered an unbeliever in the event of refusal. Therefore, after the execution, they should not be washed, no funeral prayer said, and not be buried in the Muslim cemetery.

Regardless of the particular legal opinion, neglecting prayer is a serious matter with far-reaching consequences in this world and the hereafter. In the "best" case, one dies as a sinner (Fasiq), in the worst case as an unbeliever (Kaafir).

### 15.3 The Third Pillar: Zakat (Almsgiving)

Zakat, the third pillar of Islam, refers to the obligatory portion of wealth that Muslims must give to the needy and poor. This obligation arises when the wealth reaches a certain minimum (Nisab) and has been in the possession of the believer for a full lunar year. Zakat is a form of wealth redistribution aimed at alleviating poverty, reducing social inequalities, and strengthening community bonds. It lessens the gap between the rich and the poor.

The significance of Zakat is underscored by its frequent mention in the Qur’ān. An example is the verse:

Al-Baqarah 2:277

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“THOSE WHO BELIEVE, DO GOOD DEEDS, ESTABLISH PRAYER, AND GIVE THE ZAKAT WILL HAVE THEIR REWARD WITH THEIR LORD; THERE WILL BE NO FEAR FOR THEM, NOR WILL THEY GRIEVE.”

This connection was so strongly emphasized that Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq vowed to fight any attempt to separate prayer and Zakat.

Contrary to the popular belief that expenditures diminish wealth, Zakat and other forms of charity are exceptions to this rule. They are believed not to decrease but to increase wealth.

This belief is based on the verse:

Al-Layl 92:5-7

﴿(5) فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى﴾

(6) ﴿وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى﴾

(7) ﴿فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِيُسْرَى﴾

“(5) AS FOR THE ONE WHO GIVES AND FEARS ALLĀH

(6) AND BELIEVES IN THE BEST [REWARD],

(7) WE WILL MAKE SMOOTH FOR HIM THE PATH OF EASE.”

And is affirmed by the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلَّا عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ " .

*'Charity does not decrease wealth, no one forgives another except that Allāh increases his honor, and no one humbles himself for the sake of Allāh except that Allāh raises his status.'*

(Muslim 2588)

## 15.4 The Fourth Pillar: Fasting in the Month of Ramadan

Fasting in the holy month of Ramadan is a duty prescribed in the Qur'an:

Al-Baqarah 2:183

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

"O YOU WHO HAVE BELIEVED, FASTING IS PRESCRIBED FOR YOU AS IT WAS PRESCRIBED FOR THOSE BEFORE YOU THAT YOU MAY BECOME RIGHTEOUS."

It requires adult Muslims to abstain from eating, drinking, and intimate relations from dawn until sunset, as stated in the verse:

Al-Baqarah 2:187

﴿ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَبَيِّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ ﴾

"EAT AND DRINK UNTIL THE WHITE THREAD OF DAWN BECOMES DISTINCT TO YOU FROM THE BLACK THREAD [OF NIGHT]. THEN COMPLETE THE FAST UNTIL THE NIGHT."

The annual fasting in Ramadan promotes empathy among the wealthy for the hunger of the less fortunate and strengthens gratitude for Allāh's blessings.

The special significance of fasting is highlighted in the Hadith Qudsi, in which Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَهُ، إِلَّا الصَّوْمَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي، وَأَنَا أَجْرِي بِهِ، وَلَخُلُوفٌ فِيهِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ ".

*'(Allāh said), 'Every good deed of Adam's son is for him except fasting; it is for Me. and I shall reward (the fasting person) for it.' Verily, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allāh than the smell of musk.'"*

*(Al-Bukhari 5927)*

Fasting is a private act between the believer and Allāh and remains invisible to others. It thus becomes a testimony to the Muslim's sincerity towards Allāh.

Fasting in Ramadan is particularly meritorious as it is associated with a special reward in the hereafter. This was emphasized by Prophet Muḥammad in a hadith:

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " فِي الْجَنَّةِ ثَمَانِيَةُ أَبْوَابٍ، فِيهَا بَاب يُسَمَّى الرَّيَّانَ لَا يَدْخُلُهُ إِلَّا الصَّائِمُونَ "

*'Paradise has eight gates, and one of them is called Ar-Raiyan through which none will enter but those who observe fasting.'"*

*(Al-Bukhari 3257)*

Indeed, fasting in Ramadan is an expression of sincere faith and is firmly entrenched as the fourth pillar of Islam.

## 15.5 The Fifth Pillar: The Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The last pillar of Islam, the Hajj, requires both physical and financial efforts. It denotes the pilgrimage to the holy Kaaba in Mecca, performed during the designated Hajj months. The rituals include staying at Arafah, Tawaf (circumambulating the Kaaba), Sa'i (walking between Safa and Marwa), stoning the Jamarat (symbolic devil stoning), and offering animal sacrifices. The Qur'ān establishes this duty, stating:

Āl 'Imrān 3:97

﴿وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا﴾

“THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOUSE IS A DUTY TO ALLĀH FOR MANKIND, FOR THOSE WHO CAN FIND A WAY THERE.”

The importance of Hajj is emphasized in a conversation between Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Aisha, the Mother of the Believers. When she asked the Prophet about the virtue of Jihad, he replied:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تَرَى الْجِهَادَ أَفْضَلَ الْعَمَلِ، أَفَلَا نُجَاهِدُ قَالَ " لَكِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْجِهَادِ حِجٌّ مَبْرُورٌ ".

*(She said), 'O Messenger of Allāh! We consider Jihad as the best deed. Should we not fight in Allāh's Cause?' He said, 'The best Jihad (for women) is Hajj Mabruur (a Hajj accepted by Allāh).'"*

*(Al-Bukhari 2784)*

The Prophet continued to emphasize the value of Hajj, saying:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " الْعُمْرَةُ إِلَى الْعُمْرَةِ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُمَا، وَالْحَجُّ الْمَبْرُورُ لَيْسَ لَهُ جَزَاءٌ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةُ " .

*(The performance of) `Umra is an expiation for the sins committed (between it and the previous one). And the reward of Hajj Mabrur (the one accepted by Allāh) is nothing except Paradise."*

*(Al-Bukhari 1773)*

Hajj serves as a profound spiritual cleansing, freeing the soul from sins and leading the Muslim to eternal salvation and attaining Paradise. This is expressed in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَنْ حَجَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ، فَلَمْ يَرُفْشْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ، رَجَعَ كَمَا وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ " .

*'Whoever performs Hajj to this House (Ka`ba) and does not approach his wife for sexual relations nor commits sins (while performing Hajj), he will come out as sinless as a newly born child. (Just delivered by his mother)."*

*(Al-Bukhari 1819)*

Therefore, Hajj, when performed with full sincerity and according to the prescribed rules, promises a rebirth in spiritual purity.

## **15.6 The Ruling on a Person Who Abandons All Duties (Tark jism al Amal)**

It is acknowledged that the declaration of faith (Shahada) forms the foundation of Islam. Without this declaration, there is no Islam in a person. Regarding the neglect of prayer, the second pillar of Islam, scholars are divided on whether this leads to exclusion from Islam. However, if someone knowingly and with mental, physical, and financial capability consistently abandons all prescribed Islamic acts – namely prayer, fasting, Zakat, and the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) – this is seen by the majority of scholars as disbelief (Kufr).

This judgment is based on the understanding that performing these acts represents fundamental aspects of the Muslim faith. Their conscious and intentional neglect, despite the ability to perform them, is interpreted as a rejection of the duties imposed by Islam. This behavior is seen by most scholars as an indication that the concerned person does not accept Islamic teachings and principles, which is considered a departure from faith.

## 16. Explanation of the Terms Islam, Iman, and Ihsan

The terms Islam, Iman, and Ihsan play a central role in Islamic faith and are sometimes used synonymously depending on the context, though they highlight different aspects of the faith.

Islam is divided into three levels: Islam, Iman, and Ihsan

• *The first level is Islam:*

In Arabic, Islam means "submission". In the terminology of Shariah, the word "Islam" can have various meanings depending on the context:

1- When "Islam" is used alone and not accompanied by "Iman", it refers to the religion in its entirety.

Āl ‘Imrān 3:19

﴿إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ﴾

"INDEED, THE RELIGION WITH ALLĀH IS ISLAM."

Al-Mā'idah 5:3

﴿وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

"AND I HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOU ISLAM AS YOUR RELIGION."

Āl ‘Imrān 3:85

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

"WHOEVER SEEKS A RELIGION OTHER THAN ISLAM, IT WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED OF HIM, AND IN THE HEREAFTER HE WILL BE ONE OF THE LOSERS."

2- When "Islam" is used together with "Iman", it refers to external actions and words. An example of this can be found in the Qur'ān, where Allāh says:

Al-Hujurāt 49:14

﴿ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ نُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ﴾

"THE BEDOUINS SAY, 'WE BELIEVE.' SAY, 'YOU DO NOT BELIEVE. BUT SAY, 'WE HAVE SUBMITTED,' FOR FAITH HAS NOT YET ENTERED YOUR HEARTS."

• *The second stage is the 'Imān:*

'Imān means "faith" in Arabic, which is expressed through submission. In Islamic terminology, "'Imān" can have different meanings depending on the context:

1- When "'Imān" is used alone and not accompanied by "Islam," it refers to the religion in its entirety, as in the verses where Allāh says:

Al-Baqarah 2:257

﴿ اللَّهُ وَرَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ﴾

"ALLĀH IS THE PROTECTOR OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE, HE LEADS THEM FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT."

Al-Mā'idah 5:23

﴿ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

"TRUST IN ALLĀH, IF YOU ARE TRULY BELIEVERS."

2- When "'Imān" is used in conjunction with "Islam," it refers to the internal beliefs and contents of faith.

Summary:

When "'Imān" or "Islam" is used alone, there is no difference between them; both terms then refer to the entire religion. However, when used together, "Islam" refers to the external, physical actions (e.g., the five pillars of Islam), while "'Imān" represents the internal actions of the heart (e.g., the six pillars of 'Imān).

• *The third stage is 'Ihsān:*

'Ihsān means to do something well, perfectly, and with sincerity. In Islamic terminology, "'Ihsān" can have different meanings depending on the context:

1- When used alone and not in connection with "Islam" or "'Imān," it refers to the religion as a whole.

2- In connection with one or both of the words "Islam" and "'Imān," "'Ihsān" means the perfection of external and internal actions. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ explained:

الإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ."

*"Ihsan is to worship Allāh as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allāh sees you."*

*al-Bukhari 4777*

This is the highest stage of Islam. Those who reach this stage are the first to do good, and they will be closest to Allāh in the highest degree of Paradise.

Although these terms can sometimes be used synonymously, as they all represent aspects of the Muslim faith, they differ in their specific focus: Islam as the practical exercise, 'Imān as the belief conviction, and 'Iḥsān as the spiritual perfection. These three dimensions together form a comprehensive picture of Islamic faith life.

### **16.1 'Imān according to Ahlu-s-Sunnah**

While it is accurate to associate "'Imān" with its six pillars, a deeper understanding reveals that the term, when used independently, encompasses the entirety of the religion. As delineated by Ahlu-s-Sunnah, 'Imān is multifaceted, encompassing both declarations and actions, and is dynamic in nature, strengthening with obedience and diminishing with disobedience.

To elucidate what is meant by "statements and actions" in the context of 'Imān:

*1- Statements of the Heart:* This aspect involves the heart's internal belief in Allāh and the other fundamental elements of 'Imān: belief in angels, holy scriptures, prophets, predestination (Qadr), and the Day of Judgment. It encompasses not just awareness but also a deep-rooted conviction in these principles.

*2- Statements of the Tongue:* This refers to the external articulation of the heart's beliefs. For instance, when a person declares, "I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, uniquely

without any partners, and I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger," it is an affirmation of the heart's belief.

In summary, the "statements" of 'Imān involve both an understanding and a detailed acknowledgment of faith. This includes not only the correct belief in Aļļāh but also faith in the unseen elements of the religion, such as hellfire, paradise, the bridge over hellfire, and so on. It's about the heart's conviction and the tongue's affirmation of these beliefs and principles.

'Imān encompasses a broad range of actions and beliefs, which can be categorized into three primary areas:

*1- Actions of the Heart:* These include a diverse array of emotional and spiritual states such as love, fear, hope, sincerity, trust, and devotion. The heart is more than just a vessel of knowledge and belief; it's a dynamic center of emotions and feelings that play a crucial role in worship. This emotional and spiritual engagement is referred to as the actions of the heart.

*2- Actions of the Tongue:* This area covers practices like Dhikr, which is the remembrance of Aļļāh, along with commanding good and forbidding evil, and seeking forgiveness from Aļļāh. These verbal expressions are not mere utterances; they are considered acts of worship and are integral to expressing and reinforcing one's faith.

*3- Actions of the Limbs:* This pertains to the physical performance of actions prescribed in Islam, such as prayer (Salāt), fasting (Şawm), almsgiving (Zakāt), and other mandated acts. It also involves abstaining from prohibited actions like lying, cheating, stealing, slander, and disobedience to parents.

The dynamic nature of 'Imān is evident in its capacity to strengthen or weaken, depending on a multitude of factors and actions. The

strength of an individual's faith is in constant flux, influenced by daily practices, thoughts, and behaviors. This fluctuation in faith is manifested through love, fear, and hope towards Allāh, sincerity in worship, frequency of remembrance, asking for forgiveness, adhering to the principles of good and avoiding evil, perfection in prayer, engaging in voluntary good deeds, and the ability to resist sin.

It's crucial to understand this dynamic nature of 'Imān, as there are sects with differing interpretations. Some argue that 'Imān is solely about belief in the heart and does not fluctuate. However, this perspective contrasts significantly with the understanding of 'Imān by Ahlu-s-Sunnah and the teachings of the Ḥadīth, which highlight that 'Imān is a comprehensive concept encompassing belief, physical actions, and character traits.

A pertinent Ḥadīth in this context is:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ أَوْ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ شُعْبَةً فَأَفْضَلُهَا قَوْلُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَدْنَاهَا إِمَاطَةُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الصَّرِيقِ وَالْحَبَاءِ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

*Abū Huraiyrah reported: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Faith has sixty to seventy branches, of which the highest is the declaration that there is no god but Allāh, the simplest is removing harm from the path, and modesty is an integral branch of faith."*

*(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 9, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 35)*

This Ḥadīth encompasses various dimensions of 'Imān, illustrating that it is not limited to internal belief but also includes physical deeds and moral characteristics. Each Muslim's personal journey reaffirms that faith is bolstered by acts of worship and diminished by sin."

## 17. The Ten Nullifiers of Islam

There are various factors that can lead someone to leave Islam and fall into severe disbelief (Kufr). Islam is based on devotion to Allāh through monotheism (Tawhīd), submission to Allāh with complete obedience, and the rejection of polytheism (Shirk) as well as turning away from those who practice polytheistic rituals.

Although there can be many causes for apostasy from Islam, some of the most dangerous and common are:

1. **Statements:** These include insulting Allāh, the Prophet Muḥammad, or the religion of Islam.
2. **Actions:** Practices such as performing magic or other acts that explicitly contravene the teachings of Islam.
3. **Beliefs:** Believing that other systems or laws (such as democracy) are superior to Sharia can be understood as turning away from Islam.
4. **Doubts:** Doubting fundamental Islamic teachings, such as the disbelief of Jews and Christians who have received the prophetic message but do not believe in it.

## 17.1 The first Nullifier: Shirk

Shirk (polytheism), i.e., the association of partners with Allāh, is considered one of the gravest nullifiers of Islam. Allāh, the Exalted, speaks clearly in the Qur'ān about the unforgivability of Shirk:

In An-Nisā' 4:116 it says:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴾

"ALLĀH DOES NOT FORGIVE THAT PARTNERS SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH HIM; BUT HE FORGIVES ANYTHING ELSE, TO WHOM HE PLEASES; TO ASSOCIATE PARTNERS WITH ALLĀH IS TO STRAY FAR INDEED."

In Al-Mā'idah 5:72 it states:

﴿ إِنَّهُمْ مَنِ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴾

"INDEED, HE WHO ASSOCIATES OTHERS WITH ALLĀH - ALLĀH HAS FORBIDDEN PARADISE TO HIM, AND HIS ABODE IS THE FIRE. AND THERE ARE NOT FOR THE WRONGDOERS ANY HELPERS."

Practices such as calling upon the dead, seeking help from them, sacrificing, or making vows for them are forms of Shirk.

Major Shirk, which includes believing in other beings as controllers of the universe or as capable of causing good or averting evil, has grave consequences:

1. It removes the believer from the Islamic community.
2. It invalidates good deeds.
3. It can lead to the death penalty and confiscation of property.
4. It leads to eternal punishment in Hellfire.
5. It is defined in Sharia as severe disbelief.

6. The definite article alif and lām before Shirk or Kufr in the sacred text indicates major Shirk.

- *Is Major Shirk forgivable?*

Major Shirk is not forgiven if one dies in this state. However, repentance, as long as it occurs before death or the onset of the Day of Judgment, opens the possibility of forgiveness. In Az-Zumar 39:53 it says:

﴿ قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ  
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴾

"SAY: O MY SERVANTS WHO HAVE TRANSGRESSED AGAINST THEIR SOULS! DESPAIR NOT OF THE MERCY OF ALLĀH: FOR ALLĀH FORGIVES ALL SINS: FOR HE IS OFT-FORGIVING, MOST MERCIFUL."

The possibility of repentance remains until the sun rises from the west or until approaching death. An-Nisā' 4:18 clarifies:

﴿ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ اَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرٰى اِثْمًا عَظِيْمًا ﴾

"BUT THE REPENTANCE ACCEPTED BY ALLĀH IS ONLY FOR THOSE WHO DO WRONG IN IGNORANCE [OR CARELESSNESS] AND THEN REPENT SOON AFTER. IT IS THOSE TO WHOM ALLĀH WILL TURN IN FORGIVENESS, AND ALLĀH IS EVER KNOWING AND WISE."

## **17.2 The second Nullifier of Islam: The Impermissible Use of Intermediaries (Tawassul)**

Setting up impermissible intermediaries between oneself and Allāh, calling upon them, asking them for intercession (Shafa'ah) or relying on them (Tawakkul), is considered disbelief (Kufr) by Islamic consensus.

- *What is Tawassul:*

Tawassul means seeking nearness to Allāh through a means.

There are two types of Tawassul:

- Permissible Tawassul
- Forbidden Tawassul

### **17.2.1 Permissible Tawassul**

Permissible Tawassul is seeking nearness to Allāh through a means that is mentioned in the Qur'ān or in an authentic Hadith.

There are six different types:

#### **1- Intercession through Allāh's Names and Attributes:**

The first type is interceding with Allāh using one of His beautiful names or sublime attributes.

Allāh says:

Al-A'rāf 7:180

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

"ALLĀH HAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL NAMES, SO CALL UPON HIM BY THEM,.."

And He says:

Al-Mā'idah 5:35

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ﴾

"O YOU WHO HAVE BELIEVED, FEAR ALLĀH AND SEEK THE MEANS OF APPROACH TO HIM..."

For example, a Muslim in his supplication can say: "O Allāh, I ask You by virtue of the fact that You are The Gracious, The Merciful, The All-Wise, The All-Knowing, to heal me", or he can say: "O Allāh, I ask You by Your mercy that encompasses all things, to have mercy on me and to forgive me."

## 2- The Intercession through Good Deeds

Abdullah bin Omar narrated that the Messenger of Allāh told a story of three people who sought shelter in a cave during a journey. A rockslide closed the entrance, and they realized that only sincere supplication to Allāh through their good deeds could save them.

The first said: "O Allāh, I always cared for my elderly parents first. One evening I came home late, found them asleep, and waited all night

until they woke up to give them milk. If this was pleasing to You, please ease our situation." The rock moved partially, but the exit remained blocked.

The second said: "O Alḥāh, I was deeply in love with my cousin. Once, she asked me for money in a desperate situation. I gave her 120 dinars, on the condition that she submits to me. When she agreed, but asked me to do it only if it was lawful, I withdrew and let her keep the money. If I did this in Your pleasure, then please free us from this situation." The rock moved further, but they still could not leave the cave.

The third said: "O Alḥāh, I had workers, one of whom left without taking his wages. I invested his wages, which grew. Years later, he returned asking for his wage, and I gave him all the accumulated wealth. If this was in Your pleasure, then please free us."

Finally, the rock moved enough for them to leave the cave.

- *Conditions for Accepting Good Deeds:*

For Alḥāh, the Exalted, to accept good deeds, two essential conditions must be met:

1. The act must be pure and sincere for Alḥāh alone.
2. It must be in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Alḥāh says:

Al-Kahf 18:110

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

"THEN WHOEVER HOPES FOR THE MEETING WITH HIS LORD, LET HIM DO RIGHTEOUS WORK AND NOT ASSOCIATE ANYONE IN THE WORSHIP OF HIS LORD."

### 3- Requesting Intercession through the Supplication of a Servant of Allāh

According to a narration from Uthman ibn Hanif, a blind man came to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and asked him to pray to Allāh for his healing. The Prophet advised him to be patient but said he could pray for him if he wished. The blind man requested this, and the Prophet advised him to purify himself and say the following supplication:

*"O Allāh, I turn to You in my need through Your Prophet Muḥammad the Prophet of Mercy. O Allāh, accept his intercession for me."*

Additional example: 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab asked Al-Abbas ibn 'Abdul Muttalib to pray for rain during a drought. He said:

*"O Allāh, we used to ask our Prophet to pray for rain, and You blessed us. Now, we ask his uncle to pray for us. O Allāh, bless us with rain." And then it rained.*

This practice shows that intercession through living persons who are held in high esteem by Allāh is possible. The four conditions for valid intercession are:

- The intercessor must be present.
- The intercessor must be alive.
- The intercessor must have the ability to intercede.

- The intercessor is used merely as a means.

#### 4- The Request for Intercession by Mentioning One's Own Situation

This means asking for intercession by mentioning the situation of the supplicant, indicating his great need or urgency.

An example of this is Moses (peace be upon him), after he had given water to the two women in Midian. Allāh says about Moses:

al-Qasas 28:24

﴿ فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ ﴾

"THEN HE WATERED (THEIR FLOCKS) FOR THEM, THEN TURNED BACK TO THE SHADE, AND SAID: 'MY LORD, I AM IN NEED OF WHATEVER GOOD YOU WOULD SEND DOWN TO ME.'

#### 5- The Intercession through Belief in Allāh and Belief in His Messenger (peace be upon him)

In Āl 'Imrān 3:193 Allāh says:

﴿ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴾

"OUR LORD! WE HAVE HEARD A CALLER CALLING TO FAITH, SAYING: 'BELIEVE IN YOUR LORD,' AND WE HAVE BELIEVED. OUR LORD! THEREFORE FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND REMIT FROM US OUR EVIL DEEDS, AND MAKE US DIE THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS."

This shows that the request for intercession through belief in Allāh and His Messenger can occur. The faith itself serves as a basis for the request for forgiveness and mercy.

6- The intercession to Allāh by expressing one's need for Him, acknowledging His favors, and admitting one's faults

An example would be as in the main form of asking for forgiveness: "I acknowledge Your favors and I admit my sins."

### 17.2.2 Forbidden Tawassul

Forbidden Tawassul occurs when a servant tries to approach Allāh through methods not established in the Qur'ān or authentic Hadiths as valid means of intercession. Depending on its severity, this can range from grave sin to major disbelief.

1- Polytheistic Tawassul:

This involves acts of worship directed to others besides Allāh, such as uttering supplications, sacrifices, or vows, believing that these beings can intercede with Allāh. Allāh says in Az-Zumar 39:3:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ﴾

"THOSE WHO TAKE PROTECTORS BESIDES HIM [SAY], 'WE ONLY WORSHIP THEM THAT THEY MAY BRING US NEARER TO ALLĀH IN POSITION.'"

He also says in Yūnus 10:18:

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعْنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَلَئِنْ آتَيْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَسُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"THEY WORSHIP BESIDES ALLĀH THAT WHICH NEITHER HARMS THEM NOR BENEFITS THEM, AND THEY SAY, 'THESE ARE OUR INTERCESSORS WITH ALLĀH.' SAY, 'DO YOU INFORM ALLĀH OF SOMETHING HE DOES NOT KNOW IN THE HEAVENS OR ON THE EARTH?' EXALTED IS HE AND HIGH ABOVE WHAT THEY ASSOCIATE WITH HIM."

An example is asking for intercession at a grave. If someone prays to the inhabitant of a grave or directs any form of worship to them, it is polytheistic Tawassul. If one targets the place or person believing that it will lead to the acceptance of the supplication, or if one believes that the prayers are thus answered, then it is an innovation (Bid'ah) in Tawassul. These are some of its manifestations.

## 2- Innovation (Bid'ah) in Tawassul:

Bid'ah in Tawassul refers to methods of intercession considered invalid in Islamic teaching, such as:

- a) Asking for intercession with Allāh through the being of a created being.

Example: A person saying, "O Allāh, I ask You through Your Prophet Muḥammad," referring to the being of the Prophet.

- b) Asking for intercession with Allāh through the status or rights of a created being.

Example: Someone saying, "O Allāh, I ask You through the status or rights of Your Prophet to assist me with my issue."

- c) Appealing to a deceased being to intercede on their behalf with Allāh.

Example: Visiting the grave of a prophet or a pious person with the request, "Please ask Aļļāh for me, to assist me with my issue."

- d) Asking Aļļāh for something by invoking a prophet or a saint.

Example: The statement, "O Aļļāh, I ask You by Your Prophet so-and-so, to assist me."

These forms of intercession are prohibited as there is no solid evidence for their validity and they can lead to polytheistic practices.

### **17.2.3 Categories of Intercession**

A) What the creation can accomplish:

This category is valid under four conditions:

1. The intercessor must be present.
2. The intercessor must be alive.
3. The intercessor must have the ability to intercede.
4. The intercessor serves only as a means.

B) What only Aļļāh can do:

- Confirmed:

This includes intercessions that Allāh has reserved for Himself. They can only be requested from Him and must fulfill the following conditions:

1. Permission for intercession is granted by Allāh.
2. Allāh is pleased with the intercessor.
3. Allāh is pleased with those for whom intercession is made.

- Rejected:

This type of intercession is negated in the Qur'ān. It refers to intercessions sought from others than Allāh, for which only Allāh is capable. This constitutes major Shirk.

### 17.3 The third Nullifier: Denying or Doubting the Disbelief of Disbelievers

The third nullifier of Islam is the denial or doubt of the disbelief (Kufr) of the polytheists (Mushrikūn). Whoever does not recognize that polytheists are disbelievers, doubts their disbelief, or deems their faith correct, commits disbelief (Kufr).

- *The Ruling on Polytheists:*

According to Islam, anyone who receives the message of the Prophet Muḥammad and still rejects it is considered a disbeliever. Allāh says in Āl ‘Imrān 3:85:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ عَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي آءِخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

"BUT WHOEVER DESIRES A RELIGION OTHER THAN ISLAM, IT WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED OF HIM, AND IN THE HEREAFTER, HE WILL BE AMONG THE LOSERS."

- *Are Jews and Christians Polytheists?*

Yes, Jews and Christians who do not believe in the Prophet Muḥammad are considered polytheists. The Prophet Muḥammad said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ

*"Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muḥammad, none from this nation of Jews and Christians hears of me, and then dies without having faith in my*

*message, but that he will be an inhabitant of  
Hellfire."*

*Şahîh Muslim 153*

## 17.4 The fourth Nullifier: Preferring Another Guidance over that of the Prophet

The fourth nullifier of Islam is the belief that another guidance or judgment is more perfect or better than that of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ or preferring the judgment of the transgressors (ṭawāgīt) over the prophetic judgment. Such a conviction is considered major disbelief (Kufr).

*Categories regarding judging with something other than what Allāh has revealed:*

1- The first category includes those who prefer the legal system of the ṭawāgīt over Allāh's legal system because they believe it is better, equivalent, or more suitable for modern times. This also applies to the rejection of Islamic punishments and the allowance of actions prohibited in Islam. Such views are considered major disbelief (Al Kufr al-Akbar), leading to exclusion from the Muslim community.

At-Tawbah 9:31 criticizes this behavior:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُمْ وَرُءُوسَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءًا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ﴾

"THEY HAVE TAKEN THEIR SCHOLARS AND MONKS AS LORDS BESIDES ALLĀH."

2- A second category includes those who recognize Allāh's legal system but prefer the ṭawāgīt due to personal inclinations or the pursuit of power. This lesser disbelief (Kufr Dūna Kufr or Kufr Al Asghar) is considered sinful. If it violates the rights of other Muslims, the person risks falling into major disbelief (Kufr Al-Akbar) and thus straying from Islam.

In these cases, it is important to fully and correctly understand Islam and its teachings and to steer clear of views that contradict the fundamental principles of Islam. Recognizing the superiority of the prophetic guidance is central to a Muslim's faith and practice.

## 17.5 The fifth Nullifier: Hatred towards the Sharīah

The fifth nullifier of Islam is hatred or dissatisfaction with what the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, brought, even if one acts upon it. This constitutes disbelief (Kufr), as stated in Muḥammad 47:9:

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنزِلَ اللَّهُ فَأَخْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴾

"THIS IS BECAUSE THEY DISLIKE WHAT ALLĀH HAS REVEALED, SO HE HAS RENDERED THEIR DEEDS VOID."

- *Loving and Hating for the sake of Allāh (Al-Wala' wal-Al-Barā')*:

Loving and hating for the sake of Allāh is among the fundamental aspects of the religion.

One is obligated to love for the sake of Allāh:

1. Every action that pleases Allāh and is prescribed by the Sharia, like Tawḥīd.
2. Persons who gain Allāh's favor, like prophets, messengers, angels, companions, and every follower of Tawḥīd.
3. Special times loved by Allāh, like the 'Night of Decree' and the last third of the night.
4. Special places loved by Allāh, like Makkah and Madinah.

One is obligated to hate for the sake of Allāh:

1. Every action that Allāh hates and prohibits, like Shirk.

2. Persons who displease Allāh, like polytheists, hypocrites, and demons.
3. Certain times disfavored by Allāh, like times of sun worship.
4. Certain places disfavored by Allāh, like places of Shirk.

- *Hating for the sake of Allāh towards disbelievers*

Hating for the sake of Allāh towards non-believers is not synonymous with hostility, oppression, mistreatment, or acts of violence. Just as our love for believers varies - for example, our love for the Prophet surpasses that for all others - so our aversion or rejection is not the same towards all non-believers. For instance, the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, who supported the Muslims in their most difficult times and protected the Prophet ﷺ, cannot be equated with the hostile and contemptible Abu Jahl. The Prophet's approach clearly shows that he treated non-believers who did not fight against Islam well.

This principle is based on the Qur'ān:

Al-Mumtaḥinah 60:8

﴿لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُواكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾

"ALLĀH 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, ALLĀH LOVES THOSE WHO ACT JUSTLY."

Additionally, Islam emphasizes the importance of treating neighbors well regardless of their religion - a principle especially relevant for many Muslims in the West:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَا زَالَ يُوصِينِي جِبْرِيلُ بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورِثُهُ

*Aisha reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, emphasized the importance of treating neighbors well so much that I thought he might include them in inheritance.*

*(Source: Sahih al-Bukhari 6014, Sahih Muslim 2624)*

These examples underscore that hating for the sake of Allāh towards non-believers should not be misunderstood as a justification to harm them or violate their rights established in Islam.

- *Women and the Rejection of Polygyny:*

If a woman rejects polygyny, it does not necessarily mean disbelief, but she may have difficulty accepting this practice. This is comparable to the discomfort some men felt with the introduction of Jihad, as described in Al-Baqarah 2:216:

﴿ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“FIGHTING HAS BEEN MADE OBLIGATORY UPON YOU ‘BELIEVERS’, THOUGH YOU DISLIKE IT. PERHAPS YOU DISLIKE SOMETHING WHICH IS GOOD FOR YOU AND LIKE SOMETHING WHICH IS BAD FOR YOU. ALLĀH KNOWS AND YOU DO NOT KNOW.”

It is important to distinguish between hatred of Allāh's laws themselves, which constitutes disbelief, and personal difficulty or discomfort with certain aspects of Sharia, which does not necessarily mean Kufr. The central element is the inner attitude towards the Sharia and recognizing its divine authority and perfection.

## 17.6 The sixth Nullifier: Mocking the Religion

The sixth nullifier of Islam is mocking any aspect of the religion of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, including its rewards or punishments. This is considered disbelief (Kufr), based on Allāh's statement in At-Tawbah 9:65-66:

(65) ﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَعَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ﴾

(66) ﴿لَا تَعْتَدُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِن تَعْفُ عَنْ طَآئِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ تُعَذِّبْ طَآئِفَةٌ بِآيَاتِهِمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ﴾

"(65) AND IF YOU ASK THEM, THEY WILL SURELY SAY, 'WE WERE ONLY CONVERSING AND PLAYING.' SAY, 'IS IT ALLĀH, HIS VERSES, OR HIS MESSENGER THAT YOU WERE MOCKING?'

(66) MAKE NO EXCUSE; YOU HAVE DISBELIEVED AFTER YOUR BELIEF..."

- *Meaning and Ruling:*

Mockery is ridiculing or insulting the religion, and whoever does so is considered a disbeliever and an enemy. This constitutes major disbelief (Al-Kufr al-Akbar), which leads one out of Islam and to eternal punishment in Hellfire. Whoever witnesses such mockery should condemn it or leave the gathering. Failure to do so is regarded as equivalent to the mockers. This is supported by An-Nisā' 4:140:

﴿وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَتَعَدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا﴾

"AND IT HAS ALREADY COME DOWN TO YOU IN THE BOOK THAT WHEN YOU HEAR THE VERSES OF ALLĀH [BEING] DENIED AND RIDICULED, THEN DO NOT SIT WITH THEM UNTIL THEY ENTER INTO ANOTHER CONVERSATION. INDEED, YOU WOULD THEN BE LIKE THEM.

INDEED, ALLĀH WILL GATHER THE HYPOCRITES AND DISBELIEVERS IN HELL ALL TOGETHER."

This teaching emphasizes the importance of respecting the dignity and sanctity of the religious teachings of Islam and staying away from actions or statements that degrade or mock them in any way.

## 17.7 The seventh Nullifier: Magic

Magic includes the sorcery of driving away (separating human relationships) and affection (love spells). Whoever does this or is content with it (accepts it), has committed disbelief. The proof is His, exalted be He, statement:

Al-Baqarah 2:102

﴿وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ﴾

"AND THEY (BOTH) TAUGHT NO ONE (IN MAGIC) UNTIL THEY SAID, 'WE ARE ONLY A TRIAL, SO DO NOT DISBELIEVE.'"

- *The signs of a magician:*
  1. Violation of the rules of 'Ruqyah Ash Shar'iyah' ('Permitted Healing'), which includes the following conditions:
    - Only the words and names of Allāh may be used.
    - Only the Arabic language should be used.
    - Belief that ruqyah works only by the will of Allāh.
  2. The use of disconnected words or incomprehensible language.
  3. Reading stars, palms, or tea leaves.
  4. Blowing on knots.
  5. Sowing discord and affection.

6. Commanding the sick to do something against Sharia, such as committing forbidden acts or not praying or not mentioning the name of Allāh when an animal is sacrificed.
7. Asking for the name of one's own mother.
8. Claiming to have knowledge of the unseen.

- *Visiting a magician and its ruling:*

Seeking a magician means seeking his advice, either by visiting him personally or sending someone in his name or [through other means of communication], such as messages, emails, etc.

Also, watching television shows, viewing websites, reading magazines with horoscopes, reading palms, or coffee grounds are included.

And the ruling on one who seeks advice from magicians is that his prayers will not be accepted for 40 days, as mentioned in the Hadith.

نُ صَفِيَّةُ، عَنْ بَعْضِ، أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَنْ أَتَى عَزَافًا فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ لَهُ صَلَاةٌ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً " .

*He who visits a diviner ('Arraf) and asks him about anything, his prayers extending to forty nights will not be accepted.*

*Muslim 2230*

As for the one who goes to a soothsayer and believes in him, the Prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - .... كَاهِنًا فَصَدَّقَهُ بِمَا يَقُولُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ . "

*"Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes in him, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad."*

*Sunan Ibn Majah 639*

Except for those who go to him to expose him, provided that they are able to do so.

- *Al Nushrah (Removing Magic from the Afflicted)*

- 1- Allowed: Ruqyah Ash Shar'iyah ("permitted healing"), supplications, or permitted medicines.
- 2- Forbidden: Anything that consists of any kind of magic.

The Prophet said:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ سَخَّلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ النَّشْرَةِ فَقَالَ " هُوَ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ " .

*Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah:*

*The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was asked about a charm for one who is possessed (nashrah). He replied: It pertains to the work of the devil.*

*Sunan Abi Dawud 3868*

- *Refutation of those who claim that magic can be cured by magic:*
  1. Eliminating magic through magic contradicts the Qur'ān, the Sunna, and what the companions and righteous predecessors (may Allāh be pleased with them all) followed.
  2. It weakens the resolve to use the Qur'ān and the authentic supplications reported in the prophetic tradition.
  3. It strengthens the position of magicians and magic in the eyes of laypeople.
  4. It prevents certainty in seeking healing through the Qur'ān and authentic supplications, and replaces it with the superstition of magic.
  5. To remove magic from the afflicted, both the practitioner and the afflicted must indulge in what pleases Shayṭan.
  6. If the one afflicted by magic is patient, he will be rewarded with Jannah, as mentioned by the Prophet.
  7. Healing through magic increases the power of the magician over the afflicted.
  8. When the Messenger of Allāh was afflicted by magic, he never sought healing through magic, but applied Ruqyah Ash Shar'iyyah (permitted healing).

## 17.8 The eighth Nullifier: Supporting the Disbelievers against the Muslims

Offering support and assistance to polytheists (idolaters) against Muslims is considered one of the nullifiers of Islam. This is based on the Qur'ānic verse Al-Mā'idah 5:51:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذْهُم مِّنكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ مِّنْهُمْ ﴾

"AND WHOEVER AMONGST YOU TAKES THEM AS PROTECTORS, THEN INDEED, HE IS ONE OF THEM."

- *Supporting the Disbelievers over the Believers:*

Every Muslim must distance themselves from polytheists and their religion and instead support their own religion and the followers of Monotheism (Tawhīd). However, supporting disbelief and aiding polytheists against Muslims constitutes major disbelief (Al Kufr al-Akbar), which excludes one from the Islamic community.

The support of polytheists against Muslims can be categorized as follows:

- 1- Disbelief that invalidates one's Islam:

This is the case when someone acts out of love for polytheists and hatred towards Muslims, hoping that the polytheists gain the upper hand.

- 2- Disbelief that does not invalidate one's Islam:

This is the case when the support is not out of love for the polytheists or hatred towards the Muslims, but rather for worldly gain motives.

## 17.9 The ninth Nullifier: Belief in the Legitimacy of Acting Outside of Muḥammad's Legislation

Whoever believes that it is permissible for certain people to act outside of the Islamic legislation (Shari'a), which was delivered by the Prophet Muḥammad, commits disbelief (Kufr). An example of this would be the belief that Al-Khidr acted independently of Moses' legislation.

Allāh says in Al-A'raf 7:158:

﴿ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا ﴾

"SAY: O MANKIND, INDEED I AM THE MESSENGER OF ALLĀH TO YOU ALL..."

Additionally, the Prophet Muḥammad stated:

*"If my brother Musa were alive today, he would have no choice but to follow me."*

This also refers to the People of the Book. It is important to note that there are no authentic proofs that Al-Khidr turned away from Moses' Shari'a. Even if such proofs existed, it could be that Al-Khidr was not part of the community to which Moses was sent. Prophets were each sent to their own people, whereas Prophet Muḥammad was sent to the entire mankind. Therefore, no one can legitimately deviate from his Shari'a.

## 17.10 The tenth Nullifier: Turning Away from the Religion of Allāh and Neither Learning nor Acting Upon It

Whoever deliberately turns away from the religion of Allāh by neither learning nor acting upon it, commits an act of disbelief (Kufr). This is supported by the following statement of Allāh in As-Sajdah 32:22:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴾

"AND WHO IS MORE UNJUST THAN ONE WHO IS REMINDED OF THE SIGNS OF HIS LORD BUT THEN TURNS AWAY FROM THEM? INDEED, WE FROM THE CRIMINALS WILL TAKE RETRIBUTION."

- *The Ruling on Neglecting to Learn the Religion:*

Someone who completely distances themselves from the religion of Allāh, showing neither belief nor disbelief towards the Messenger of Allāh and being neither loyal nor hostile, is considered a disbeliever. This disbelief (Kufr) is severe (Al-Kufr al-Akbar) and leads to exclusion from the Muslim community.

Allāh says in An-Nisā' 4:61:

﴿ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴾

"AND WHEN IT IS SAID TO THEM, 'COME TO WHAT ALLĀH HAS REVEALED AND TO THE MESSENGER,' YOU SEE THE HYPOCRITES TURNING AWAY FROM YOU IN AVERSION."

And in Al-Jinn 72:17:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴾

"AND WHOEVER TURNS AWAY FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS LORD, HE WILL ADMIT HIM INTO AN INCREASINGLY SEVERE PUNISHMENT."

The deliberate ignorance and rejection of the teachings of Islam is a clear violation of the foundations of faith and can have serious consequences both in this world and the hereafter.

## 18. Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah - The Saved Sect of the Ummah

The term "Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah" refers to the group within the Islamic Ummah that adheres to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ according to the understanding of his companions. They are known for their loyalty to the teachings of the Prophet and his companions.

The terms "Ahlu Sunnah" and "Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah" refer to the same group, considered the "saved community" of the Ummah, following the path of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions. This is based on a Hadith in which the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

وَأَنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِائَةً وَتَفَرَّقَتْ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِائَةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِائَةً  
وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

*"The Banu Israel split into 72 sects and my Ummah will split into 73 sects. All except one will be in the Fire." When Abdullah bin 'Amr asked, "Which one will that be, O Messenger of Allāh?", the Prophet replied, "Those who follow my way and that of my companions."*

*(Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2641, classified as Hasan by Tirmidhi).*

Other names for Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah include:

- Ahl Hadith (the group that follows the Hadiths)

- Ahl Athaar (the group adhering to the traditions of the righteous predecessors)
- Al-Firaqatu An-Naadjiyyah (the saved group)
- At-Taaifa Al-Mansoorah (the victorious group)

Those who follow the teachings and Sunnah according to the understanding of the companions of the Prophet belong to Ahlu Sunnah. In this context, the term "Sunnah" primarily refers to 'Aqīdah (creed). The followers of Ahlu-s-Sunnah are called Sunnis, who remain faithful to the traditions of the Prophet and practice Islam in its original and traditional form.

It is important to distinguish between mere self-identification and actual practice. One cannot be considered a follower of Ahlu Sunnah if they do not live according to their teachings.

The followers of the Salaf al-Salihin, i.e., the companions of the Prophet, their students (Tabi'een), and the students of the students (Atba Tabi'een), serve as the model for Ahlu Sunnah. Their understanding and interpretation of Islamic teachings are of central importance in Sunnism.

### **18.1 Origin of the Term "Ahlu Sunnah"**

After the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, innovations and deviations from the original teachings emerged within the Islamic community (Ummah), leading to the formation of various groups and sects such as the Khawarij, Shia, Murjiah, and others.

In response to these developments and the increasing neglect of the truth, the companions of the Prophet and their successors strived to

remain faithful to the original teachings. They and their students distanced themselves from those who indulged in innovations.

These pious predecessors were careful about their associations and identified themselves with terms like "Ahl Sunnah" and "Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah" to emphasize their adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet and their distance from innovations.

The term "Ahl Sunnah" was used, among others, by the companion of the Prophet, Ibn 'Abbas, as evident from books on 'Aqīdah (creed).

Ibn 'Abbas suggested that those whose faces will be bright on the Day of Judgment belong to Ahlu Sunnah, while those with dark faces will be attributed to Ahl Bid'ah/Ahl Dalala (Dalala = error).

(Sharh Usūl I'tiqād 1/72 by Imām Lalikae)

This historical development illustrates how the term "Ahl Sunnah" originated in the context of preserving the original Islamic teachings and practices and how it was used to distinguish from various innovations and divisions within the Ummah.

## **18.2 What are the Teachings of Ahlu Sunnah?**

Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah, a significant group within Islam, bases its teachings on the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his companions. Their teachings are documented in the writings of the pious predecessors (Salaf al-Salih) and have been transmitted by the companions, their students (Tabi'in), and the students of these students (Atba Tabi'in).

Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah is characterized by a moderate and balanced approach in Islam and rejects extremist views. They follow

the authentic teachings of Islam and avoid bid'ah (innovations in faith).

Despite their smaller proportion of the total Muslim Ummah, they originally represented the majority before various sects emerged. Today, due to the numerous Islamic directions, they constitute a minority.

Awza'ee, a student of the Tabi'in, said:

*"Islam will not disappear, but the Ahlu Sunnah will become fewer until in every country only one remains."*

(Sharh Usūl I'tiqaad #19 by Imām Lalikae)

Sufyan ath-Thawri, also a student of the Tabi'in, said:

*"Treat the followers of Ahlu Sunnah well, for they are strangers. The number of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah is small."*

(Sharh Usūl I'tiqaad 1/64 by Imām Lalikae)

It is true that Islam does not focus on numbers. A person can stand alone on the truth. The Jama'ah (community of believers) following the truth does not have to consist of a large number of people.

Ibn Mas'ud said:

*"The Jama'ah is where the Haqq (truth) is, even if you are alone."*

(Sharh Usūl I'tiqaad 1/122 Nr.160)

Nu'aym ibn Hammad said:

*"When the community is corrupted, you must hold on to the practice before it was corrupted. Even if you are alone, you are the Jama'ah."*

(Sunan Tirmidhi 4/467)

Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah defines itself by its adherence to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, based on the understanding of the earliest Muslim generations. Central to their teachings is Tawḥīd, the belief in the unity and uniqueness of Allāh, and a strict rejection of any form of Shirk (polytheism).

Belonging to this group does not depend on formal membership but on following their teachings in personal belief and life. It is about faithfully following the path of the Prophet and his companions and preserving the original values of Islam.

The concept of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah is not meant to exclude or condemn other Muslims but serves as a guideline for preserving and following the original teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his companions.

### 18.3 Notable Scholars of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah

The pious predecessors, also known as Salaf al-Salih, made significant contributions to preserving the right path of Islam and warding off innovations in the religion. They were scholars who played a crucial role in preserving the correct understanding of Islam and transmitting prophetic traditions from generation to generation.

Notable scholars who represented the teachings of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah include:

- ❖ Malik bin Anas (Imām Malik), founder of the Maliki school of jurisprudence
- ❖ Muḥammad ibn Idris Al-Shafi'i (Imām Shafi'i), founder of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence
- ❖ Abu Hanifa an-Numan ibn Thabit (Imām Abu Hanifa), founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence
- ❖ Ahmad bin Hanbal (Imām Ahmad), founder of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence
- ❖ Al-Awzaa'ee, a significant early Islamic jurist
- ❖ Sufyan Al-Thawri, a renowned Hadith scholar
- ❖ Sufyan ibn Uyaynah, a distinguished Hadith expert
- ❖ Abdullah ibn MuAl-Barā'k, a well-known scholar in Hadith and Fiqh
- ❖ Fudhayl ibn Iyaadh, an influential early scholar of Islam
- ❖ Al-Qasim bin Sallam, a notable Hadith scholar

- ❖ Ishaq ibn Rahawayh, an expert in Islamic law and Hadith
- ❖ Muḥammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (Imām Bukhari), author of Sahih Bukhari
- ❖ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (Imām Muslim), author of Sahih Muslim
- ❖ Abu Dawud as-Sijistani (Imām Abu Dawud), author of Sunan Abu Dawud
- ❖ Abu 'Isah Al-Tirmidhi (Imām Tirmidhi), author of Jami' at-Tirmidhi

These and many other scholars significantly contributed to the preservation and dissemination of authentic Islamic teachings. Their works in 'Aqīdah (creed) and Fiqh (Islamic law) remain central to understanding Islam today. According to Sahih Bukhari, the first three generations of Islam are considered the best generations, emphasizing the reliability and purity of their knowledge and practices.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ نَحْبِيءٌ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَوْمٌ تَسْبِقُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ وَأَيْمَانُهُمْ شَهَادَتُهُمْ ".

*Narrated by `Abdullah:*

*The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The best people are those of my generation, and then those who will come after them (the next generation), and then those who will come after them (i.e. the next generation), and then after them, there will come people whose witness will precede their oaths, and whose oaths will precede their witness."*

*Sahih al-Bukhari 6429*

## 19. Sects

Knowledge of this topic from ‘Aqīdah can be seen as supplementary, but it is of utmost importance in today's time when sects are spreading. It enables us to recognize and identify deviations. This topic must not be underestimated, for the deviations can be so severe that some sects even position themselves outside of Islam, and their followers thus do not count as Muslims.

Allāh, the Almighty, condemns divisions and disagreements in Islam and forbids all paths and means that lead to them. Evidence from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet warns against division and disunity and points to the serious consequences of such actions.

Āl ‘Imrān 3:105-107

(105) ﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

(106) ﴿يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾

(107) ﴿وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَنفى رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾

“(105) AND DO NOT BE LIKE THOSE WHO BECAME DIVIDED AND DISPUTED AFTER CLEAR PROOFS HAD COME TO THEM. FOR THEM, THERE WILL BE A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT.

(106) ON THE DAY WHEN SOME FACES WILL BECOME BRIGHT AND SOME FACES WILL BECOME DARK. TO THOSE WHOSE FACES HAVE BECOME DARK, (IT WILL BE SAID), 'DID YOU DISBELIEVE AFTER YOUR BELIEF? THEN TASTE THE PUNISHMENT FOR WHAT YOU USED TO REJECT.'

(107) BUT AS FOR THOSE WHOSE FACES WILL BECOME BRIGHT, THEY WILL BE IN ALLĀH'S MERCY, IN WHICH THEY WILL ABIDE ETERNALLY.”

Al-An‘ām 6:159

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شَيْعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

“INDEED, THOSE WHO HAVE DIVIDED THEIR RELIGION AND BECOME SECTS, YOU ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THEM IN ANYTHING. THEIR AFFAIR IS ONLY TO ALLĀH; THEN HE WILL INFORM THEM ABOUT WHAT THEY USED TO DO.”

Muslims have one religion, and they should be one nation.

Al-Mu‘minūn 23:52-53

﴿ وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴾ (52)

﴿ فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴾ (53)

“(52) INDEED, THIS, YOUR RELIGION, IS ONE RELIGION, AND I AM YOUR LORD, SO FEAR ME.

(53) BUT THEY HAVE BROKEN THEIR RELIGION AMONG THEM INTO SECTS, EACH FACTION REJOICING IN WHAT THEY HAVE.”

Allāh commanded all nations to base their faith on what was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and not to divide. He made it clear that divisions among people, despite the presence of knowledge, arise from desire and injustice.

Ash-Shūrā 42:13-14

﴿ (13) نَزَّلْنَا نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقْبِلُوا إِلَيْهِ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا فِيهِ كِبْرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴾

(14) ﴿ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى لَفُضِّىَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿

“(13) HE HAS ORDAINED FOR YOU THE RELIGION WHICH HE ENJOINED UPON NOAH, AND THAT WHICH WE HAVE REVEALED TO YOU, O MUHAMMAD, AND THAT WHICH WE ENJOINED UPON ABRAHAM, MOSES, AND JESUS, SAYING, ‘ESTABLISH THE RELIGION AND DO NOT DIVIDE IN IT.’ DIFFICULT FOR THE POLYTHEISTS IS THAT WHICH YOU CALL THEM TO. ALĀH CHOOSES FOR HIMSELF WHOM HE WILLS AND GUIDES TO HIMSELF WHO TURNS BACK [TO HIM].

(14) THEY DID NOT DIVIDE UNTIL AFTER THE KNOWLEDGE CAME TO THEM, OUT OF JEALOUS ANIMOSITY AMONG THEMSELVES. AND HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR A WORD THAT PRECEDED FROM YOUR LORD [FOR A SPECIFIED TERM], IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SETTLED AMONG THEM. AND INDEED, THOSE WHO WERE GRANTED INHERITANCE OF THE SCRIPTURE AFTER THEM ARE [NOW] IN DOUBT CONCERNING IT.”

These numerous disputes are a testimony to the word of AlĀh, the Exalted:

Hūd 11:118-119

(118) ﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿

(119) ﴿ إِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَإِنَّكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿

“(118) IF YOUR LORD HAD WILLED, HE COULD HAVE MADE MANKIND INTO A SINGLE COMMUNITY, BUT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THEIR DIFFERENCES.

(119) EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHOM YOUR LORD HAS MERCY UPON, FOR THAT IS HOW HE CREATED THEM, AND THE WORD OF YOUR LORD HAS

BEEN FULFILLED: 'I WILL SURELY FILL HELL WITH JINN AND PEOPLE ALL TOGETHER.'

The Prophet ﷺ informed us about the occurrence of numerous disputes in his Ummah (Nation) and showed us the way to their resolution by following the noble Qur'ān and his Sunnah (Tradition). In a Hadith narrated by Hudhayfah, the Prophet ﷺ advised him to learn the Qur'ān and follow it in times of trial. He ﷺ said:

فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الشَّرِّ خَيْرٌ قَالَ " يَا حُدَيْفَةُ تَعَلَّمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا فِيهِ " . ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ . قَالَ فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الشَّرِّ خَيْرٌ قَالَ " هُدُنَّةٌ عَلَى دَخَنِ وَجَمَاعَةٌ عَلَى أَقْدَاءٍ فِيهَا أَوْ فِيهِمْ " . فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الْهُدُنَّةُ عَلَى الدَّخَنِ مَا هِيَ قَالَ " لَا تَرْتَجِعُ قُلُوبُ أَقْوَامٍ عَلَى الَّذِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ " . قَالَ فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَبْعُدُ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ شَرٌّ قَالَ " فِتْنَةٌ عَمِيَاءَ سَمَاءٍ عَلَيْهَا دُعَاةٌ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ النَّارِ فَإِذَا فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الشَّرِّ قَالَ " فِتْنَةٌ وَشَرٌّ " . قَالَ فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الشَّرِّ خَيْرٌ قَالَ " يَا حُدَيْفَةُ تَعَلَّمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا فِيهِ " . ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ . قَالَ فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الشَّرِّ خَيْرٌ قَالَ " هُدُنَّةٌ عَلَى دَخَنِ وَجَمَاعَةٌ عَلَى أَقْدَاءٍ فِيهَا أَوْ فِيهِمْ " . فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الْهُدُنَّةُ عَلَى الدَّخَنِ مَا هِيَ قَالَ " لَا تَرْتَجِعُ قُلُوبُ أَقْوَامٍ عَلَى الَّذِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ " . قَالَ فُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَبْعُدُ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ شَرٌّ قَالَ " فِتْنَةٌ عَمِيَاءَ سَمَاءٍ عَلَيْهَا دُعَاةٌ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ النَّارِ فَإِنْ تَمَّتْ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْتَ غَائِبٌ عَلَى جِدْلِ خَيْرٍ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ تَتَّبِعَ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ "

*I asked: Messenger of Allāh, will there be evil after this good?*

*He replied: There will be trial (fitnah) and evil.*

*I asked: Messenger of Allāh, will there be good after this evil? He replied: Learn the Book of Allāh, Hudhayfah, and adhere to its contents. He said it three times.*

*I asked: Messenger of Allāh, will there be good after this evil? He replied: An illusory truce and a community with specks in its eye. I asked:*

*Messenger of Allāh, what do you mean by an  
illusory community?*

*He replied: The hearts of the people will not  
return to their former condition. I asked:  
Messenger of Allāh, will there be evil after this  
good? He replied: There will be wrong belief  
which will blind and deafen men to the truth in  
which there will be summoners at the gates of  
Hell. If you, Hudhayfah, die adhering to a stump, it  
will be better for you than following any of them.*

*(Musnad Ahmad 23282 und Sunan Abi Dawood  
4246)*

He repeated three times, "O Hudhayfah, learn the Book of Allāh and follow what is in it," and this advice applies to the entire Ummah. Indeed, the Qur'ān leads to the straight path, and whoever learns it, reflects on it, and follows it, will be rightly guided.

In an authentic Hadith from Al-Irbad ibn Sariyah, he رضي الله عنه says:

فَقَالَ الْعُرْبَاؤُ صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا فَوَعظَنَا مَوْعِظَةً بليغَةً ذَرَفَتْ  
مِنْهَا الْعَيْونُ وَوَجِلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَأَنَّ هَذِهِ مَوْعِظَةٌ مُودِعٌ فَمَاذَا تَعْمَدُ إِلَيْنَا فَقَالَ " أَوْصِيكُمْ  
بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدِي فَسَبْرِي اخْتِلافاً كَثِيراً فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ  
الْخُلَفَاءِ الْمُهَدِّدِينَ الرَّاشِدِينَ تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَصُوا عَلَيْنَا بِالتَّوَّاجِدِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ وَكُلَّ  
بَدْعَةٍ ضَالَّةٌ " .

*"Al-Irbad said: One day the Messenger of  
Allāh led us in prayer, then faced us and gave us a  
lengthy exhortation at which the eyes shed tears  
and the hearts were afraid.*

*A man said: 'Messenger of Allāh! It seems as if it were a farewell exhortation, so what injunction do you give us?'*

*He then said: 'I enjoin you to fear Allāh, and to hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian slave, for those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my sunnah and that of the rightly-guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is an error.'"*

These numerous disputes are among the greatest trials with which Allāh tests His servants.

#### Al-An‘ām 6:116-117

﴿(116) وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ﴾

﴿(117) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾

"(116) AND IF YOU OBEY MOST OF THOSE ON EARTH, THEY WILL MISLEAD YOU FROM THE WAY OF ALLĀH. THEY FOLLOW NOTHING BUT CONJECTURE, AND THEY ARE ONLY LYING.

(117) INDEED, YOUR LORD IS MOST KNOWING OF WHO STRAYS FROM HIS WAY, AND HE IS MOST KNOWING OF WHO IS GUIDED."

Allāh has commanded us to avoid innovations and to follow the straight path for which we must ask Allāh for guidance in every prayer.

## Al-An‘ām 6:153

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصْنُكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

"INDEED, THIS IS MY PATH, STRAIGHT, SO FOLLOW IT; AND DO NOT FOLLOW OTHER WAYS, FOR YOU WILL BE SEPARATED FROM HIS WAY. THIS HE HAS INSTRUCTED YOU, THAT YOU MAY BECOME RIGHTEOUS."

The straight path is Islam, which Allāh has ordained for His servants. It is the clear path that allows no deviations. It is the path that the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions walked. We must say in every unit of prayer:

## Al-Fātiḥah 1:6-7

﴿(6) أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

﴿(7) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

"(6) GUIDE US ON THE STRAIGHT PATH,

(7) THE PATH OF THOSE UPON WHOM YOU HAVE BESTOWED FAVOR, NOT OF THOSE WHO HAVE EVOKED [YOUR] ANGER OR OF THOSE WHO ARE ASTRAY."

Despite these divine commands, most people have deviated from the right path and followed innovations, doubts, and desires, thus straying from Allāh's way.

There are various sects that claim to be based on Islam. In the upcoming chapter, we will explore various well-known sects within Islam.

## **19.1 Ar-Raafidah (Shiites)**

This sect places the members of Ali's family (fourth rightly-guided Caliph, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet) at the center of their veneration. Those Companions who opposed Ali are considered unbelievers or accused of misconduct (Fisq). The Ar-Raafidah is divided into several subgroups, including extremists who claim that Ali is divine. They first appeared during the caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib.

This group has different views on the attributes of Aļļāh. Some adopt the approach of Tashbih or Ta'til, while others share the correct understanding of the attributes. The name Raafidah arose because they rejected Zayd bin Ali Ibnul-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib when he expressed his respect for Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

They called themselves Shia (Party) because they claimed to support the Ali Bait (Family of Ali) and claimed their right to the Imāmate (leadership).

## **19.2 Al-Khawaarij**

The Khawaarij were a sect whose goal was to kill Ali bin Abi Talib. They advocated rebellion against 'Uthman and 'Ali, rejected the Imām if he deviated from the Sunnah in their opinion, and declared anyone who committed a major sin to be an unbeliever. They believe that such people will remain in Hell forever. The Khawaarij are divided into numerous subgroups.

### **19.3 Al-Murji'ah**

This sect considers deeds as separate from Iman (faith). They are not part of Iman in their opinion. Iman for them is only the obedience of the heart. Consequently, they regard sinners as believers with complete Iman, regardless of the number or severity of their sins. They share this view with the Jahmiyyah.

### **19.4 Al-Qadariyyah**

The followers of this direction reject Qadr (predestination) in relation to the actions of the servant and claim that his will and ability are independent of Allāh's will and ability. The first to publicly proclaim this view was Mu'bad Al-Juhnee at the end of the era of the Sahabah (Companions). He learned it from a Zoroastrian in Al-Basrah.

This sect is divided into two groups, an extreme and a non-extreme. The extreme group denies Allāh's attributes of knowledge, will, power, and creation in favor of the actions of the servant. This type of person is extinct or on the verge of extinction. Those who are not extreme believe that Allāh is aware of the actions of the servant, but reject the idea that they are due to His will, His power, and His creation.

### **19.5 Al-Jahmiyyah**

They trace themselves back to Al-Jahm bin Safwaan, who was killed by Saalim or Salim bin Ahwaz in the year 121H. Their views on the attributes of Allāh consist of Ta'til (denial) and Nafi (negation). Regarding al-Qadr, they believe that people are forced into actions (al-jabr).

Their view of Iman is that of the Murji'ah, i.e., they believe that Iman is only the affirmation of the heart and that words and actions do not belong to Iman. Someone who commits a major sin is, in their view, a believer with complete Iman (i.e., the Iman neither increases nor decreases).

### **19.6 Al-Mu'atazilah**

They were the followers of Waasil bin Ataa', who withdrew from the assembly of Al-Hasan Al-Basree ('Itizaa). He held the view that the sinner is at a level between two levels. So he is neither a believer nor an unbeliever, yet he will remain forever in Hellfire. Amr bin 'Ubaid followed him in this, and their views on the attributes of Allāh are based on Ta'til, like the Jahmiyyah, and on Al-Qadr, like the Qadariyyah.

### **19.7 Al-Ash'ariyyah**

These are the followers of Abul-Hasan 'Ali bin Ismaa'eel Al-Ash'ari. Initially, he followed the views of the Mu'tazilah sect until his fortieth year. Then he publicly announced his repentance and exposed the falsehood of the Mu'tazilah. Thus, he joined the doctrine of Ahl Sunnah, may Allāh be merciful to him.

Those who refer to him have remained with a particular methodology known as the Ash'ariyyah sect. They acknowledge only seven attributes of Allāh, which they believe can be proven by reason. They reinterpret the other attributes.

The seven attributes are:

- Life
- Knowledge

- Power
- Speech
- Will
- Hearing
- Seeing

## 20. Innovations (Bid'ah)

The Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah strictly adhere to the teachings of the Messenger of Allāh in all aspects of their faith and practice. Their beliefs and interpretations are firmly rooted in what is established in his Sunnah, demonstrating their conviction that he holds ultimate authority. This profound respect, love, and veneration for the Messenger set them apart from other groups. In contrast, followers of innovations often elevate other sources above the Messenger's teachings, despite claiming to follow him out of love and obedience. This discrepancy becomes particularly apparent in their interpretation of Bid'ah.

- *Linguistic Definition of Bid'ah:*

The term Bid'ah linguistically means "something newly invented without any preceding example."

This notion of Bid'ah encompasses all novel things, irrespective of their religious context or moral value. The term fundamentally signifies anything without a historical precedent.

- *Application by Some Salaf:*

It's important to note that some Salaf have applied the term Bid'ah in specific contexts, focusing on its linguistic rather than Shariah implications. This has occasionally led to misconceptions about the nature of innovation as intended in the Shariah.

- *Shariah vs. Linguistic Definitions:*

The Shariah definitions often modify the original linguistic meanings of words by adding, limiting, or qualifying them to convey a specific conceptual meaning within the Shariah framework. This is evident in terms such as Salah (prayer), Iman (faith) and Zakat (almsgiving), which carry distinct implications in Shariah compared to their basic linguistic roots.

The belief that the Qur’ān can be comprehensively understood solely through linguistic interpretation is a misconception. Understanding the Qur’ān necessitates a deeper grasp of both its linguistic and Shariah contexts.

The Sharia definition of bid'ah is grounded in five statements of the Messenger, with Aisha's hadith serving as a pivotal basis for defining bid'ah within Sharia:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَخَذَتْ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

*"Whoever introduces into this affair of ours (religion) something that is not part of it, it is to be rejected."*

*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2697, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1718*

This hadith is significant as it encapsulates three critical conditions or limitations that uniquely shape the concept of bid'ah in Sharia. These conditions are essential for determining whether an act qualifies as bid'ah in the Sharia context.

The three conditions are:

1. The introduction of something entirely new (الإحداث)
2. Attributing it to the realm of religion (الإضافة)
3. The absence of a Sharia-based proof for the newly introduced matter, either in general or in a specific context. (عدم الدليل الشرعي)

The hadith itself presents these criteria:

Firstly, the phrase (مَنْ أَحَدَثَ) by the Prophet ﷺ emphasizes the introduction of a novel entity without any historical precedent. This could encompass all forms of new inventions, irrespective of their moral or religious value.

Secondly, the Prophet ﷺ narrows the scope by adding, (فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا) thereby specifically linking the new invention to religious matters. This categorization excludes worldly affairs and customs unrelated to religion, as well as sinful or disobedient actions prohibited in Sharia.

Thirdly, to further refine the definition, he said, (مَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ) indicating that there is no backing for such an invention in Sharia, either as a general principle or a specific directive. For instance, compiling the Qur'ān into a single book (mushaf) is not considered bid'ah, as it aligns with the general Sharia principle of preserving religion. Similarly, the practice of Tarawih prayers in congregation, initiated by Umar ibn al-Khattaab, finds its legitimacy in specific evidence (the Prophet leading communal Tarawih prayers for three nights in Ramadan), thereby excluding it from the realm of bid'ah.

In essence, any religious practice that revives a forgotten or neglected Sunnah is not regarded as bid'ah in Sharia. While some

scholars might term these practices as "good innovations" from a linguistic standpoint, they are essentially revivals of a forgotten Sunnah. This aligns with Umar's statement, "What an excellent innovation this is," in reference to reintroducing the Tarawih prayer in congregation.

## **20.1 The two types of innovation: Haqiqiyyah and Idāfiyyah**

The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have identified two distinct types of innovation in religious practices: Haqiqiyyah and Idāfiyyah.

- a) *Haqiqiyyah* refers to absolute innovation, with no grounding in Shari'a. It denotes practices introduced to seek Allāh's pleasure but are entirely absent from the original teachings of the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu aleyhi wa sallam). Examples include celebrating birthdays, or engaging in dancing and music as acts of worship, which are innovations with no basis in Islamic tradition.
- b) *Idāfiyyah*, or relative innovation, occurs when an act fundamentally based on Shari'a is altered or expanded upon in a way not prescribed. This deviation can be categorized into six areas:
  1. al-kam (number): Altering the prescribed number in rituals, like performing four Rakahs for Maghrib instead of the stipulated three, or changing the number of times certain Adhkaar are recited beyond what is established in the Sunnah.

2. al-kayf (form): Modifying the form of worship, such as reversing the order of rituals in Umrah, or changing the sequence in Wudhu.
3. al-jins (type): Changing the type of entity used in worship, for instance, sacrificing an animal not specified in Shari'a during religious rituals.
4. al-sabab (reason, cause): Performing acts of worship for reasons or on occasions not sanctioned in Shari'a, like offering special prayers for non-Islamic events or associating specific worship practices with dates not recognized in Islamic tradition.
5. al-makan (place): Conducting religious activities in places not designated for them, such as performing I'tikaf outside of a mosque or observing Hajj rituals in locations other than those prescribed.
6. al-zaman (time): Observing religious duties at times other than those specified, like fasting or animal sacrifice outside the designated Islamic dates.

These distinctions are critical in understanding the nature of innovations in Islam and discerning practices aligned with the traditional teachings from those that represent deviations.

## **20.2 The Stance of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah towards "good" Innovations (Bid'ah Hasanah)?**

In the Islamic theology of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah, there is a clear position regarding innovations (Bid'ah) in matters of religion: There

are no good innovations. This stance is based on several fundamental principles:

1- The statements of Prophet Muḥammad (Peace and blessings be upon him): In his hadiths, such as the one frequently cited in Khutbas (sermons), he clearly states that the worst matters in religion are those that are newly invented. Every innovation is seen as a misguided path leading to Hellfire. This clear rejection of all forms of Bid'ah by the Prophet leaves no room for the concept of a "good" innovation (Bid'ah Hasanah):

إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُخَدَّنَاتُهَا وَكُلُّ مُخَدَّنَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ  
بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

*"...The most truthful speech is the Book of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad. The worst things in religion are those that are newly invented, for every newly invented thing is an innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in Hellfire."*

2-The Hadith of Aisha: The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) emphasized that anything newly introduced into the religion that is not part of it is rejected. This underscores the stance that no innovation in the realm of religious practices is acceptable:

مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

*"Whoever introduces into this, our matter (religion), something that is not part of it, it is to be rejected."*

3-The completeness of Islam: Introducing new practices or beliefs into the religion implies that Islam is incomplete. This contradicts the verse in the Qur'ān:

Al-Mā'idah 5:3

﴿ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ﴾

"...TODAY, I HAVE PERFECTED YOUR RELIGION FOR YOU, COMPLETED MY FAVOR UPON YOU, AND HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOU ISLAM AS YOUR RELIGION..."

This verse affirms that Allāh has perfected Islam as a faith for mankind. Any addition or alteration would imply that Islam has remained incomplete since the Prophet's time until the "innovator" introduced their own ideas.

4- Implications regarding the Prophet: The notion of a "good innovation" would imply that the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) was either unaware of this innovation or deliberately concealed it. Both contradict the notion of his perfection and his role as the conveyor of Allāh's complete message.

5- Omission of early generations: The idea of a "good innovation" implies that the Prophet, his Companions, and the early Muslim generations missed out on the rewards of such a practice. This view contradicts the Islamic teaching that these early generations were the best examples in implementing Islam.

6- Opening the door for subjective interpretations: Accepting Bid'ah as something positive opens the door for subjective opinions and interpretations that could alter the religion. This leads us to consider who would be the authority to endorse a so-called "good innovation." The ultimate authority was the Prophet, and his authority

was rooted in his inspiration from Allāh. Following his passing, there is no longer an authoritative figure to validate new practices in the religion. This absence of an authoritative figure indicates that no new practices should be introduced into the religion. If individuals were to assume such authority and begin introducing "good" innovations, Islam could rapidly undergo transformations similar to those seen in Christianity. The experience of Christianity serves as a cautionary tale; even with potentially good intentions, the introduction of newly invented practices into a religion will ultimately lead to its corruption. Thus, preserving the original teachings and practices of Islam as established by the Prophet is essential to maintaining the integrity of the faith.

7- Displacement of Sunnah practices: The practice of Bid'ah can lead to the neglect or even obliteration of authentic Sunnah practices. History shows that the rise of innovations often coincides with a decline in following the Sunnah. Preserving the Sunnah and avoiding innovations are crucial for maintaining the authenticity of the Islamic faith.

### **20.3 The Ruling on a Person who Practices Innovations**

Islamic scholars have determined that, although every innovation is considered misguidance, the degree of sinfulness of such actions varies depending on the deviation from Islamic teachings. Innovations can be categorized into different types:

- Some innovations constitute clear disbelief.
- Other innovations are considered sinful but not necessarily disbelief.

- Some innovations are recognized as sinful but not classified as disbelief, such as practicing celibacy, fasting in the sun, or castration to suppress sexual desires.
- Other innovations are viewed as disapproved, like fasting immediately after Ramadan or reciting the Qur'ān aloud in a group.
- The ruling of a person who practices innovations depends on various factors:
  - Whether the person considers themselves qualified for Ijtihad (independent judgment) or simply follows someone else in their innovation.
  - Whether the innovation is associated with necessary, beneficial, or minor aspects of Islamic teachings.
  - Whether the innovation is practiced openly, kept secret, propagated, or used to rebel against authorities.
  - Whether it introduces an entirely new act of worship or adds something to an existing practice that deviates from the prescribed methods.
  - The clarity or ambiguity of the innovation and whether it is considered disbelief.
  - The persistence in the innovation.

These factors determine the degree of sinfulness resulting from the innovation. It is important to note that in Islam, the emphasis is on preserving the original teachings and practices. Innovations are therefore critically viewed, especially when they alter or undermine the foundations of faith and worship.

## 20.4 Causes of Innovations

There are numerous causes for the emergence and spread of innovations. The main causes include:

### 20.4.1 Ignorance

Ignorance about religion is a primary cause of the emergence of innovations. It lies at the center of disregard for religious commandments, encompassing disbelief, innovation, and sin. Ignorance can be multifaceted: not knowing religious texts, their role, their meanings, the objectives of Sharia, or the basic principles of scholarship.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah emphasize the dangers of ignorance and highlight the importance of acquiring knowledge.

Al-A'raf 7:33

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالنَّبَغَىٰ وَالْبَغَىٰ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

"SAY: 'MY LORD ONLY FORBIDS INDECENCIES, THOSE OF THEM THAT ARE APPARENT AS WELL AS THOSE THAT ARE CONCEALED, AND SIN AND UNJUST OPPRESSION, AND THAT YOU ASSOCIATE WITH ALLĀH THAT FOR WHICH HE HAS NOT SENT DOWN AUTHORITY, AND THAT YOU SAY ABOUT ALLĀH THAT WHICH YOU DO NOT KNOW.'"

It is forbidden to speak without sufficient knowledge about Allāh, His attributes, and the Sharia, as this distorts and harms the religion.

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allāh be merciful to him, said:

*"As for speaking about Allāh without knowledge, it is the worst prohibition and the greatest sin. It is the foundation of polytheism and disbelief, and upon it are founded innovations and misguidance. Every misleading innovation in the religion is based on speaking about Allāh without knowledge."*

Madarij al-Salikin, (1/ 372).

Allāh also says:

Al-Isrā' 17:36

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾

"AND DO NOT PURSUE THAT OF WHICH YOU HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE. INDEED, THE HEARING, THE SIGHT, AND THE HEART - ABOUT ALL THOSE [ONE] WILL BE QUESTIONED."

## 20.4.2 Consequences of Following Desires

Following desires instead of the Sunnah leads to the emergence and spread of innovations. The Qur'an and Sunnah strongly warn against and criticize such behavior.

Al-Kahf 18:28

﴿وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾

"AND OBEY NOT HIM WHOSE HEART WE HAVE MADE HEEDLESS OF OUR REMEMBRANCE, WHO FOLLOWS HIS OWN LUSTS AND WHOSE AFFAIR (DEEDS) HAS BEEN LOST."

Those who do not follow Sharia are in fact acting on their desires, as Allāh, the Almighty, has divided things into two categories, and there is no third: following what the Messenger ﷺ has commanded, or following one's own inclinations.

Al-Jathiyah 45:23

﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَصْلَاهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

"HAVE YOU SEEN HIM WHO TAKES HIS OWN LUST (VAIN DESIRES) AS HIS GOD, AND ALLĀH KNOWING (HIM AS SUCH), LEFT HIM ASTRAY, AND SEALED HIS HEARING AND HIS HEART, AND PUT A COVER ON HIS EYES. WHO THEN WILL GUIDE HIM AFTER ALLĀH? WILL YOU NOT THEN REMEMBER?"

This means that there are individuals who indulge in their desires and stray from the right path of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

### 20.4.3 Preference for Opinions of Others Over Religious Texts

Overvaluing the opinions of respected or elder individuals in opposition to religious texts promotes innovations. Nowadays, people tend to prioritize the opinions of their elders or their community over the established teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The Qur'ān warns us against blindly relying on traditions. Just because predecessors followed a certain path does not mean it is correct, especially if they were ignorant and misguided. Mere imitation of their forefathers without understanding is not only a weak argument but also shows their turning away from the truth.

## Al-Mā'idah 5:104

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلُوكَانَ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ﴾

"WHEN IT IS SAID TO THEM: 'COME TO WHAT ALLĀH HAS REVEALED AND TO THE MESSENGER,' THEY SAY: 'ENOUGH FOR US IS WHAT WE FOUND OUR FATHERS DOING.' EVEN THOUGH THEIR FATHERS KNEW NOTHING AND WERE NOT GUIDED?"

### 20.4.4 Preference of One's Own Intellect Over Tradition (Aql over Naql)

Allāh has honored humans and endowed them with intellect. However, many have not given the intellect the position Allāh intended. Instead, they divide it into two viewpoints: One view undervalues the intellect, assigning it little importance. The other view elevates it, considering it the basis of legislation, placing intellect over the traditions.

Allāh, the Exalted, commands us to submit unreservedly to His judgment and the judgment of His Messenger. He cautions us against using intellect as the sole basis for legislation, not to place it above sacred texts, and not to evaluate texts based on our intellect before submitting to them, as He expresses in His words:

## An-Nisā' 4:65

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحْكُمَكَ فِيمَا شِجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾

"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."

### 20.4.5 Insistence on Doubtful and Mistaken Matters

A primary cause of misinterpretations is the insistence on doubtful and erroneous matters instead of recognizing clear facts. This characterizes the proponents of innovations in every era. Followers of the Sunnah rely on clear Qur'ānic verses and authentic traditions. They accept ambiguous statements but turn to scholars for clarification in uncertainties. In contrast, the followers of heresies focus on ambiguities and neglect the clear. The Prophet warned against those who concentrate on ambiguous verses to lead others astray.

Āl 'Imrān 3:7

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

"HE IS THE ONE WHO HAS REVEALED TO YOU, [O MUHAMMAD], THE BOOK; SOME OF ITS VERSES ARE DEFINITIVE - THEY ARE THE FOUNDATION OF THE BOOK - WHILE OTHERS ARE ALLEGORICAL. THOSE IN WHOSE HEARTS IS DEVIATION FOLLOW THE ALLEGORICAL PARTS SEEKING DISCORD AND SEEKING AN INTERPRETATION [SUITABLE TO THEM]. AND NO ONE KNOWS ITS [TRUE] INTERPRETATION EXCEPT ALLĀH AND THOSE FIRMLY GROUNDED IN KNOWLEDGE SAY, 'WE BELIEVE IN IT; ALL [OF IT] IS FROM OUR LORD.' AND NONE WILL BE REMINDED EXCEPT THOSE OF UNDERSTANDING."

## 20.4.6 Associating with Proponents of Innovations

One of the main causes of the rise of innovations is how people associate with proponents of innovations. They often embellish the untruths they tell their fellow humans so much that these untruths are mistaken for truths. It can even happen that someone participates in their falsehoods and innovations, whether it be without conviction, out of flattery, or for fear of their mockery and criticism. Therefore, the Qur'ān and Sunnah explicitly forbid associating with people of innovation and disobedience, for fear of being influenced by their innovations and misguidance and then suffering the punishments they expect in this world and the hereafter.

Al-An'ām 6:68

﴿وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَأَمَّا يُنْسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَتَّبِعْهُ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

"WHEN YOU SEE THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN [OFFENSIVE] DISCOURSE CONCERNING OUR VERSES, THEN TURN AWAY FROM THEM UNTIL THEY ENTER INTO ANOTHER CONVERSATION. AND IF SATAN CAUSES YOU TO FORGET, THEN DO NOT SIT AFTER THE REMINDER WITH THE WRONGDOING PEOPLE."

Thus, we see that associating with people who follow deviations and heresies poses a great danger to those who possess true faith. Morality and behaviors can be transmitted from the sick to the healthy, just as with apparent diseases. Although the Qur'ān forbids a Muslim to associate with disbelievers, this prohibition has expanded with the "abolition" of time and place. Harmful ideas aiming to question our faith principles and the Sunnah of our Prophet have penetrated our homes through various media and social networks. They use all kinds of auditory and visual means, relying on extensive and profound

knowledge of media sciences and psychology, as well as their influence on steering and misleading public opinion. These people fall under the command to avoid associating with the misguided, and therefore we should completely reject their harmful programs. Those who listen to them should not be deceived by the idea that they do so only to see what they have to say. They bring only deception and destruction. Therefore, it is better to avoid them and stay away from them.

### **20.4.7 Reliance on Fabricated and Weak Traditions**

One of the main reasons for the emergence and spread of heresies is the reliance on unreliable and concocted texts and deriving judgments based on these. Often, misguiders rely on weak or even fabricated hadiths to support and propagate their views. Such hadiths find no favor with scholars. Ironically, those who propagate innovations tend to reject authentic and recognized traditions of the Prophet ﷺ if they contradict their views.

### **20.4.8 Exaggeration in Religion**

Exaggeration in religion is one of the main causes of the spread of polytheism, heresies, inclinations, and deviations. The forms of exaggeration are diverse: it can occur with respect to the prophets, such as the wrongful seeking of Allāh's proximity through the Prophet or claiming to see the Prophet ﷺ in a waking state. It can also refer to individuals, e.g., glorifying Imāms and saints by elevating them above their status and worshiping them instead of Allāh. Exaggeration can also involve adding to what Allāh has prescribed, or being overly strict

and unjustifiably labeling others as unbelievers. There are numerous texts in Sharia that warn against exaggerations:

An-Nisā' 4:171

﴿ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْفَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ مِنْهُ فَآمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴾

"O PEOPLE OF THE SCRIPTURE, DO NOT COMMIT EXCESS IN YOUR RELIGION OR SAY ABOUT ALLĀH EXCEPT THE TRUTH. THE MESSIAH, JESUS, THE SON OF MARY, WAS BUT A MESSENGER OF ALLĀH AND HIS WORD WHICH HE DIRECTED TO MARY AND A SPIRIT [CREATED AT A COMMAND] FROM HIM. SO BELIEVE IN ALLĀH AND HIS MESSENGERS. AND DO NOT SAY, 'THREE'; DESIST - IT IS BETTER FOR YOU. INDEED, ALLĀH IS BUT ONE GOD. EXALTED IS HE ABOVE HAVING A SON. TO HIM BELONGS WHATEVER IS IN THE HEAVENS AND WHATEVER IS ON THE EARTH. AND SUFFICIENT IS ALLĀH AS DISPOSER OF AFFAIRS."

The Prophet ﷺ warned against excessive praise that could lead to an elevation of his noble character. He ﷺ said:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، سَمِعَ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمُنْبَرِ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " لَا تُطْرُونِي كَمَا أَطْرَبَ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ " .

Narrated `Umar:

*I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, "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 Allāh and His Apostle."*

(Sahih al-Bukhari 3445)

## 20.4.9 Appointment of False Scholars

The Prophet ﷺ warned about the danger of false scholars and said:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِرَاعًا، يَنْتَرِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقِ عَالِمًا، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ زُءُوسًا جَهَالًا فَسُئِلُوا، فَأَقْتَنُوا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا ".

*Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr bin Al-`As:*

*I heard Alḷāh's Messenger saying, "Alḷāh 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 religious learned men till when none of the (religious learned men) 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."*

*(Bukhari #100)*

## 21. Al-Walā' Wal-Barā'

Al-Walā' Wal-Barā' represents a vast and significant domain of Islamic knowledge, too extensive to be comprehensively addressed in an introductory text. This subject demands dedicated and thorough study due to its depth and complexity. The aim here is merely to provide a basic understanding and an overview of the fundamental concepts it encompasses.

Al-Walā' Wal-Barā', which signifies “Loyalty and Disavowal” (sometimes referred to as Loving and Hating for the sake of Allāh), embodies the commitment of Muslims to adhere to Islamic principles in their allegiances and oppositions. It is a concept that shapes the Muslim identity, dictating the nature of relationships both within and outside the Islamic community.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah provide the primary sources for Al-Walā' Wal-Barā'. It is not merely a social or political stance but a religious duty. For instance, Qur'ān 3:28 cautions believers against taking non-believers as allies over believers.

﴿ يَخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكُفْرِيْنَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً وَيُخَذِرْكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾

“BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT TAKE DISBELIEVERS AS GUARDIANS INSTEAD OF THE BELIEVERS—AND WHOEVER DOES SO WILL HAVE NOTHING TO HOPE FOR FROM ALLĀH—UNLESS IT IS A PRECAUTION AGAINST THEIR TYRANNY. AND ALLĀH WARNS YOU ABOUT HIMSELF. AND TO ALLĀH IS THE FINAL RETURN.”

## 21.1 Al-Walā' (Loyalty)

- Al-Walā' encompasses several aspects:

1- *Devotion to Allāh and His Commands*: The highest form of loyalty is to Allāh, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the teachings of Islam. This includes adherence to the Five Pillars of Islam, commitment to monotheism, and following the guidelines laid out in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

2- *Solidarity with Fellow Muslims*: Al-Walā' encourages unity within the Muslim Ummah. It promotes brotherhood, mutual support, and empathy among Muslims, emphasizing the communal aspect of the faith.

3- *Love for Righteous Deeds*: This includes an affinity towards acts of worship, good deeds, and behavior that align with Islamic teachings.

## 21.2 Al-Barā' (Disavowal)

- Al-Barā' involves:

1- *Rejection of Everything Opposed to Islam*: This includes disbelief, idolatry, and practices that contradict Islamic teachings. It's a stance against sin and immorality.

2- *Distancing from Opponents of Islam*: Al-Barā' implies avoiding alliances or relationships that could compromise a Muslim's faith, including avoiding environments or activities that encourage sin or disbelief.

3- *Safeguarding Islamic Identity*: Ensuring that one's lifestyle, including social and economic actions, aligns with Islamic values and does not dilute one's religious identity.

## 21.3 Implementing Al-Walā' Wal-Barā'

- Implementing this concept requires discernment:

1- Contextual Understanding: Understanding the nuances of Al-Walā' Wal-Barā' is crucial, particularly in a pluralistic society. It involves distinguishing between legitimate loyalty/disavowal and extremism.

2-Wisdom in Relationships: Muslims must navigate their interactions with non-Muslims wisely, ensuring that these relationships do not compromise their faith but also reflect the Islamic values of kindness and justice.

3- Avoiding Extremism: The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ warned against extremism in religion. Hence, Al-Walā' Wal-Barā' should not lead to unjust behavior or attitudes that contradict the essence of Islam.

# END

Oh *Allah*. grant us sincerity and honesty. show us the truth as truth and grant us the ability to follow it. and show us falsehood as falsehood and grant us the ability to avoid it. Guide us on the straight path. guide whom You will through Your grace and mercy. and protect us from the evil in our souls. and lead us from darkness into light through Your mercy. O Most Merciful.

AMIN