

Imām Abū Ja'far al-Ṭahāwī

Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah

A Commentary on the Creed of Imām al-Ṭahāwī

شرح العقيدة الطحاوية

Commentary by
Shaykh Sāliḥ al-Fawzān



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In the name of Allah, the all Merciful, the most Merciful. All praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds. Peace and prayers be upon Muhammad, his family, his Companions and all those who follow in their footsteps until the last day.

Before you is the English translation of Sharh al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwīyah by Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān. This is an explanation of the renowned treatise on the Islamic creed entitled al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwīyah (The Creed of Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī). The author of this treatise is Imām Abū Ja'far al-Ṭaḥāwī ؓ (239-321 A.H.), one of the leading authorities on the Ḥanafī madhab. The period Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī lived in was the zenith of the dissemination of the Islamic sciences and he was just one of the giants that this era produced. To illustrate this: his teachers included Imām Isma'il ibn Yahya al-Muzani (a major student of Imām al-Shāfi'i), those he collected hadith from included Imām al-Nasai (author of 'Sunan al-Nasai', one of the 'Sahih Sittah') and his students included the great muhaddith Imām al-Tabarani.

The purpose of his treatise was to state the creed of the early scholars of the Ḥanafī madhab and to indicate its correlation with the views of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah in general. As Shaykh al-Fawzān states in his explanation: "This entails a refutation against those who associate themselves with the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh* in modern or recent times: They associate themselves with the Ḥanafī school but contradict Abū Ḥanīfah ؓ in creed; rather they only follow his views in jurisprudence. They adopt the creed of those who profess *kalām* (theological dialectic) and the logicians."

Differing in the tenets of creed is considered impermissible due to the hate and disunion it causes. It also leads to the rise of deviant sects such as the Khawārij, Mu'tazilah, Shī'ah, Jahmiyyah etc (as prophesised by al-Mustafa ؓ in the hadith of the '73 sects'). Differing in secondary matters i.e. jurisprudence is permissible as long as it does not cause enmity. The noble Companions and the pious predecessors (including the four Imāms) differed in matters of *fiqh*, yet they were brothers. The tenets of creed are derived from the primary sources of Islām and not from the personal judgements of men. In light of this, we hope that this book will provide benefit to the Muslims in terms of us attaining unity upon the correct creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

The author of the explanation, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al- Fawzān is one of the foremost scholars of the Muslim world in this era. His works and explanations of classical texts are available in print and audio (a number of these have been translated into the English language). May Allah reward him for his great efforts towards His cause.

May Allah reward all those who helped in the preparation and publication of this work.

Dar al-Arqam Publishing

A COMMENTARY ON THE CREED OF IMĀM AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ

The great scholar, Ḥujjat al-Islām, Abū Ja'far al-Ṭaḥāwī¹ ؓ said in Egypt:

This is a declaration of the 'aqidah (creed) of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah according to the view of the jurists of this religion, Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit al-Kūfī, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, and Abū Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī ؓ, and the principles of faith in which they believed and with which they sought the pleasure of Allah ؓ.

In the name of Allah, the all Merciful, the most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May Allah confer blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and companions.

Creed is the basis of religion. It is the substance of the first pillar of Islam, the testimony that there is no god but Allah ؓ and Muhammad ؓ is the Messenger of Allah.² Therefore much focus has to be given to it. It has to be learned, and so does that which infringes it, so that we can discern [right from wrong] and possess the correct belief. Because if someone's faith is based on a correct foundation, it is valued and accepted by Allah ؓ; but if it is based on shaky and precarious beliefs, or on incorrect beliefs, then it is not correct and has no foundation. This is why the scholars gave such precedence to creed and why they never slackened in teaching it during their lessons and on special occasions. And the later generations related it from the earlier ones.

The Companions did not possess doubts regarding any part of the Qur'ān or any part of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ؓ. Therefore their creed was

¹ The imām, the great *ḥāfiṭh*, the *muḥaddith* and mufti of Egypt. He was prominent in the study of ḥadīth and *fiqh* - both a compiler and author. He was *thiqah thabt* (highly reliable), a jurist and a man of intelligence. Anyone who observes his writings would know the level and breadth of his knowledge. He died 321 A.H. May Allah have mercy on him. See Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 15, p. 27-33.

² According to a ḥadīth related by ibn 'Umar ؓ: The Messenger of Allah ؓ said: "Islam is based on five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. 2. To offer the ṣalāt dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay zakat. 4. To observe the fast during the month of Ramadan 5. To perform the Ḥajj if one is able." Al-Bukhārī, no. 8 and Muslim no. 16.

based upon these two sources. Whatever Allah ﷻ said and whatever His Messenger ﷺ said, they believed and took as their religion; and so they found no need to write books, because the matter was accepted and certain for them. Their disciples, the *Tābi'ūn* (Successors), learned from them and thus followed the same path. There was no give and take with creed. It was an accepted matter, and their reference was the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

As time passed, the sects and disagreements appeared, and Islām was accepted by those in whose hearts the creed was not firmly grounded, or by those who had deviant ideas, and some new Muslims did not refer to the Qur'ān and Sunnah for matters of creed, instead referring to theories and methodologies that the people of error founded on their own accord. The rise of these occurrences created the need for the Muslim imāms to teach and revise the correct creed as well as record it and narrate it from the learned ones of the Ummah. Therefore they wrote literature on creed and were very much concerned with it. This literature became a reference for the Muslims who would come later, right until the coming of the Hour.

This is from Allah's ﷻ preservation and care for this religion, that He sent trusted bearers of it to convey it according to what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ said, and to reject the interpretations of those who sought falsehood, and to reject the analogies of those who made them. They also began inheriting this creed, generation after generation.

Among the righteous Salaf (predecessors), who followed the established creed of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his Companions, and the *Tābi'ūn* (the generation that met the companions but didn't meet the Prophet ﷺ) were the 'four imāms': Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Imām al-Shāfi'ī, and Imām Aḥmad, as well as other imāms who defended and revised this creed, explained it and taught it to their students.

The followers of the four imāms maintained this creed, they studied it and dictated it to their students. And they wrote a number of books according to the methodology of the Qur'ān and Sunnah and the way of the Muṣṭafā ﷺ and the Companions and the *Tābi'ūn*, and they responded to the false and deviant doctrines, clarifying the falsity and incorrectness of them. This was the way of the imāms of ḥadīth, such as the likes of Ishāq ibn Rāhawiyah ؒ, al-Bukhārī ؒ, Muslim ؒ, Imām ibn Khuzaymah ؒ, Imām ibn Qutaybah ؒ; and the imāms of *tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), such as Imām al-Ṭabarī ؒ, Imām ibn Kathīr ؒ, Imām al-Baghawī ؒ amongst others.

They wrote 'the books of the Sunnah' (*kutub al-Sunnah*), such as *Kitāb al-Sunnah* by ibn Abū 'Āṣim ؓ, *Kitāb al-Sunnah* by 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ؓ, *al-Sunnah* by al-Khallāl ؓ, *al-Sharī'ah* by al-Ājurri ؓ, and so on.

Among these imāms who wrote about the creed of the Salaf was Imām Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Azdī al-Ṭaḥāwī ؓ, who was a scholar from the third century in Egypt. He was called 'al-Ṭaḥāwī' in relation to the town of his birth in Egypt. Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī' ؓ wrote this beneficial summarized creed and about seven commentaries were written on it.

However, these commentaries are not void of errors because the authors used the methodologies of the later generations, so they are not free of views and observations that are contradictory to the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī except for one, (as far as we know) and that is the commentary of al-'Izz ibn Abu'l-'Izz³ ؓ which is popularly known as 'The Commentary of al-Ṭaḥāwīyah'. He was evidently one of the students of ibn Kathīr. His commentary contains several citations from the literature of Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, and also from the literature of the imāms, so it is a comprehensive commentary. The scholars have relied on it and paid special attention to it, because of its clarity and the correctness of the information in it. So, it is a great reference of creed.

Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī ؓ, as mentioned, wrote this creed according to the views of *Ahl al-Sunnah* in general, such as Imām Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit al-Kūfī ؓ, who was the earliest of the four imāms and met the Tābi'ūn and related from them, as well as his two associates: Abū Yūsuf ؓ and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī ؓ and the imāms of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence.

He states their creed and how it is in agreement with the views of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah*. This entails a refutation against those who associate themselves with the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh* in modern or recent times: They associate themselves with the Ḥanafī school but contradict Abū Ḥanīfah ؓ in creed; rather they only follow his views in jurisprudence. They adopt the creed of those who profess *kalām* (theological dialectic) and the logicians. The same thing happened with the Shāfi'ī scholars of later years: they oppose Imām al-Shāfi'ī ؓ in creed and only associate themselves with him when it comes to jurisprudence. Similarly, many of the Mālikī scholars of later years

³ He was the imām and great scholar, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Alā'u'l-Dīn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū'l-'Izz al-Ḥanafī al-Adhru'ī al-Ṣāliḥī. He came from a family of eminence and repute and was student of Ḥafīz ibn Kathīr and supported the statements of ibn Taymiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim - may Allah have mercy on them.

do not follow the creed of Imām Mālik ؒ, but they adopt his views in jurisprudence only; as for creed, they follow the views of later generations.

So this statement of creed entails a response to these people who associate themselves with the imāms and adopt their *mathāhib* (doctrines) in jurisprudence and oppose them in creed, such as the Ash'arīs: they associate themselves with Imām Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī ؒ when it comes to his prior doctrines and leave the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, which he adopted and settled upon later in life. So their associations are incorrect, because if they followed the doctrines of the imāms, they would have also followed their creed.

(1) With the help of Allah ﷻ, we say about our belief in *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allah ﷻ): Allah ﷻ is one and He has no partner.

The author says: “With the help of Allah, we...” ‘We’ indicates Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, “say about our belief in *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allah): Allah is one and He has no partner.”

Creed and *tawḥīd* have the same meaning, regardless of whether it is called creed, or *tawḥīd*, or faith. It is one meaning with different names.

The author says: “...with the help of Allah...” This is an expression of submission and supplication to Allah ﷻ, and a denouncement of one's own ability and strength. A person should not ascribe deeds to his own self, but should instead say that it is “with Allah's help”, “by Allah's will” or “by Allah's Might” that a deed is performed. This is the manner of the learned ones, may Allah have mercy on them.

“Allah is one and He has no partner.” This is *tawḥīd*. He is one in His Lordship, one in His Worship, and one in His Names and Attributes.

“*Tawḥīd*” is literally the infinitive form of ‘to take as one’. In Islām, *tawḥīd* is to single out Allah ﷻ with worship and to leave the worship of anything else.

There are three parts of *tawḥīd*, as derived from the Book of Allah ﷻ and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This is what has been adopted in the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah; so if someone were to add a fourth or fifth part, it would be an addition from their own accord, because the imāms

divided *tawḥīd* into three parts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. All of the āyāt of the Qur'ān and ḥadīths concerning faith do not depart from these three parts.

The first part: *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah* (Oneness of Lordship), this is to take Allah ﷻ as one in His actions, such as creating, providing, giving life, bringing death, and handling the affairs of the universe. There is no lord besides Him ﷻ, He is the Lord of the Worlds.

The second part: *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah* (Oneness of Worship), worshipping Allah ﷻ; by loving Him, fearing Him and having hope in Him; as well as obeying His commands and leaving what He has forbidden. So, it is for someone to single Allah ﷻ out with the acts of worship that Allah ﷻ has sanctioned for them.

The third part: *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt* (Oneness of Names and Attributes). It is to affirm the Names and Attributes that Allah ﷻ has affirmed for Himself and that His Messenger ﷺ affirmed for Him, and to assert that Allah ﷻ is transcendent above all of the flaws and imperfections that He has denied and that His Messenger ﷺ denied.

All of the āyāt (verses) that talk about the acts of Allah ﷻ have to do with *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah* (Oneness of Lordship); and all of the āyāt that talk about, command, and advocate worship have to do with *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah* (Oneness of Worship); and all of the āyāt that talk about the Names and Attributes of Allah the Almighty have to do with *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt* (Oneness of the Names and Attributes).

The one that we will focus on is *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah*, because this branch of *tawḥīd* is what the Messengers preached and the reason the Qur'ān was revealed, and *jihād* in the path of Allah ﷻ has been prescribed for its sake, so that nothing would be worshipped besides Allah ﷻ alone, and the worship of anything else besides Him would be left.

As regards to *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah*, which includes *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt*, no one denied it. Allah the Almighty mentions this in many āyāt, and He mentioned that the disbelievers acknowledge that Allah ﷻ is the Creator and Provider, He who gives life, He who brings death, and He who has control; the disbelievers did not go against this. A person does not accept Islām through the acceptance of *al-Rubūbiyah* alone, because the Prophet ﷺ fought against people who acknowledged *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah*; he declared their blood and wealth as lawful.

If *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah* sufficed, the Messenger ﷺ would not have fought them. In fact, there would be no need for the Messengers to be sent. This indicates that what is intended and desired is *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah*.

Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah, however, is evidence and a sign for *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah*. Therefore, when Allah ﷻ commands that He be worshipped, He mentions that He created the heavens and earth and handles the affairs of His creatures as a proof for the oneness of His worship and to present a compelling argument against the disbelievers, idolaters and those who acknowledge the lordship of Allah ﷻ but deny His worship. When the Prophet ﷺ commanded them to say 'There is no god but Allah', they said:

“Has he made the gods [only] one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing.”⁴ [Qur’ān 38:5]

Allah the Almighty also says:

“And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but when those [worshipped] other than Him are mentioned, immediately they rejoice.” [Qur’ān 39:45]

Allah also says:

“Indeed they, when it was said to them, ‘There is no deity but Allah,’ were arrogant, and were saying, ‘Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?’” [Qur’ān 37:35-36]

Here, they do not want *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah* (Oneness of Worship) but rather multiple gods and that each person worships what he or she wants.

⁴ It is related that Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said: “Abū Ṭālib fell sick, so some people from Quraysh came to visit him; and the Prophet ﷺ came to visit him as well. There was only enough space for one man to sit close to Abū Ṭālib. So, Abū Jahl stood up to stop the Prophet ﷺ from sitting there, and they complained to Abū Ṭālib about the Prophet ﷺ. So Abū Ṭālib said: ‘O my nephew, what do you want from your people?’ The Prophet ﷺ replied: ‘I want them to say one word by which the Arabs will follow them and the non-Arabs will pay *jizyah* (a tax paid by non-Muslims who live under the protection of the Muslim state) to them.’ Abū Ṭālib said: ‘One word?’ The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘One word.’ He said: ‘O uncle, the word is that there is no god but Allah.’ So, they said: ‘One God! We have not heard this in the religion of the later days. This is not but a fabrication.’” He said: “And so the Qur’ān descended concerning them: ‘*Sad. By the Qur’an containing reminder...*’ through **‘This is not but a fabrication.’** Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 1/228; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan: Kitāb al-tafsīr: wa min sūrat ṣād*, no. 3232; al-Tirmidhī said: ‘*ḥadīth ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*’. Sh. Aḥmad Shākir also said it was authentic (no. 2008).

This has to be known, because the members of the deviant sects, new and old, focus on the *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah*. According to their viewpoint, if someone acknowledges that Allah ﷻ is the Creator and Provider, he is considered a Muslim. Also, their declarations of faith are written according to this. Everyone who professes the doctrines of the *kalām* (theological dialectic) only discusses *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyah* and the evidence for it.

This is not enough, but rather *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah* is needed. Allah ﷻ says:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allah and avoid Taghut.’” [Qur’ān 16:36]

They commanded people to worship Allah ﷻ, which is *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyah*.

“And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, ‘There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.’” [Qur’ān 21:25]

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him.” [Qur’ān 4:36]

All of these *āyāt* command and preach the oneness of worship and all of the Messengers preached and enjoined it upon their people and they forbade them from idolatry. This is what is required and what is ultimately meant by *tawḥīd*. As regards to the oneness of Allah’s Names and Attributes, it has been denied by heretics such as the Jahmites, the Mu’tazilites, and the Ash’arites to varying extents.

(2) There is nothing like Him.

This is derived from the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“There is nothing like unto Him...” [Qur’ān 42:11]

The Most High also says:

“Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” [Qur’ān 112:4]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].” [Qur’ān 2:22]

These āyāt can be summarised by saying: do not attribute any likenesses to Allah ﷻ or associate anything as a rival to Allah ﷻ.

The Most High also says:

“Do you know of any similarity to Him?” [Qur’ān 19:65]

Meaning, nothing is equal to or shares one of the names of the Most High. There are no similarities or likenesses to Allah ﷻ.

None of His creatures are like Him. What is obligatory in regards to this is as follows: to confirm and believe whatever Allah has said about Himself and not to assimilate Him to or liken Him with anything from His creation. This is a response to the Mushabbihah sect, who believe that Allah ﷻ is like the creation and do not differentiate between the Creator and the created and this is evidently a false doctrine.

Opposite to this deviant viewpoint is the doctrine of the Mu’aṭṭilah, who go to great excess in their sanctification of Allah’s ﷻ names, to the extent that they deny the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, purportedly in order to avoid making analogies.

Both of these sects have gone to excess. The Mu’aṭṭilah have gone to excesses in the sanctification of Allah ﷻ and negation of analogy, and the Mushabbihah have gone to excess in confirmation of Allah’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah take a middle course: they confirm what Allah ﷻ has said about Himself in a manner that is in accord with His holiness, without comparing or negating, because Allah ﷻ says:

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

His saying: **“There is nothing like unto Him”** negates all comparisons, and His saying: **“...and He is the Hearing, the Seeing”** negates the act of negation (*ta’ṭīl*). This is the doctrine adopted by Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah.

Hence it is said that a Mu’aṭṭīl worships naught, a Mushabbih worships an idol, and a person of *tawḥīd* worships the One True Self-Sufficient Master.

(3) There is nothing that can overwhelm Him.

This is to affirm the complete omnipotence of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“And He is over all things able.” [Qur’ān 5:120]

“And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability.” [Qur’ān 18:45]

“Indeed, He is ever Knowing and Competent.” [Qur’ān 35:44]

The Omnipotent (al-Qadīr) means that He has the greatest extent of ability. Allah’s ﷻ omnipotence is that there is nothing of which He is incapable. If He wants something, He only says "be" and it is.

This is an affirmation of Allah’s ﷻ omnipotence and affirmation of its totality and inclusive nature.

As regards the statement of some researchers that "He is able to do *as He wills*", it is a mistake, because Allah ﷻ never limited His ability to His will, but rather said that He is able to do all things, therefore we should state the same as what Allah ﷻ has said about Himself. But this occurs as such in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And He, for gathering them when He wills, is competent.” [Qur’ān 42:29]

That is because the *gathering* has a specific time in the future, and He is able to gather them (the dwellers of heaven and earth) at that time. Allah ﷻ says:

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and what He has dispersed throughout them of creatures. And He, for gathering them when He wills, is competent.” [Qur’ān 42:29]

(4) There is no god but Him.

This is *Tawhīd al-Ulūhiyah*. "There is no god..." i.e. nothing has the right to be worshipped besides Him. However if we say 'Nothing is worshipped besides Him', it would be incorrect, because evidently there are many things that are worshipped besides Allah the Almighty. And if we say 'There is nothing worshipped but Allah', then that means that everything that is worshipped is Allah ﷻ. This is the doctrine of the pantheists (proponents of *waḥdat al-wujūd*). If the person who says this actually believes in it, then he is a pantheist; but if he does not believe in it and only says it in imitation of others, then it is wrong and he has to rectify that. Some people commence their prayers [in an erroneous manner] by saying, 'There is nothing worshipped besides You.' Yet Allah ﷻ has the sole right to be worshipped, and the worship of all other things is in vain. Allah ﷻ says:

“That is because Allah is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because Allah is the Most High, the Grand.” [Qur’ān 22:62]

(5) He is eternal, without beginning; Everlasting and endless.

Allah ﷻ says:

“He is the First and the Last.” [Qur’ān 57:3]

Also, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“You are the First, there is nothing before You; and You are the Last, there is nothing after You.”⁵

However, the word ‘eternal’ (*qadīm*) does not denote Allah ﷻ unless it is only to inform about Him. When it comes to the names of Allah ﷻ, ‘the eternal’ (*al-qadīm*) is not one of His good names. Rather, one of His names is the First (*al-Awwal*). The First is not the same as ‘the eternal’, because something eternal may have had something preceding it, but there is nothing before the First. The Prophet ﷺ said: “You are the First, there is nothing before You.”

However, the author was careful to say: “eternal without beginning”. If, however, he had only said ‘eternal’, then the meaning would not be correct.

(6) He neither perishes nor dies.

‘To perish’ (*fanā*) and ‘to die’ (*bayd*) have the same meaning. Allah ﷻ has the quality of everlasting life. Allah ﷻ says:

“**And rely upon the Ever-Living who does not die...**” [Qur’ān 25: 58]

So, Allah ﷻ does not perish. The Most High says:

“**Everything will be destroyed except His Face.**” [Qur’ān 28:88]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“**Everyone upon the earth will perish, and there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour.**” [Qur’ān 55:26-27]

⁵ Muslim, no. 2713.

So, Allah ﷻ is everlasting, and created beings die and are then resurrected. They were non-existent until Allah ﷻ created them and Allah the Almighty will raise them from the dead.

In short, Allah the Almighty has no beginning and no end.

(7) Nothing takes place except that which He wills.

This is an affirmation of *Qadar* (predestination) and the will of Allah ﷻ. This means that nothing resides in His kingdom and no incident occurs or object arises in it unless Allah ﷻ wills so, as part of His universal will (*al-irādah al-kawnīyah*).

“His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.” [Qur’ān 36:82]

Every good and bad thing is by the universal will of Allah ﷻ. Nothing is outside of His will. This is a response to the Qadarīyah sect, who deny Allah's ﷻ predestination and contend that people themselves create their own actions and cause them to exist. This is to attribute inability to Allah ﷻ and to say that something that He does not want exists in His creation, and is thus an ascription of deficiency to Him. Far is such a thing from Allah ﷻ. Everything that exists, whether good or bad, its existence is because Allah ﷻ wanted it. Both good and bad are created out of his wisdom. We say about the bad, from the aspect that it is He who created it; it is not bad because it occurs due to a greater wisdom and purpose, namely, to test people and to separate the evil from the good and to recompense them both for their good deeds as well as their bad deeds. The Most High is wise in doing so. He has not created in vain.

(8) He cannot be perceived by the imagination nor comprehended by any understanding.

Allah the Almighty cannot be fully comprehended. He is greater than everything.

“Allah knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, but they do not encompass it in knowledge.” [Qur’ān 20:110]

Allah ﷻ is known, but not fully comprehended. Allah ﷻ is greater than all things. No one can perceive Him, and it is not permissible for anyone to say something about Allah ﷻ besides what the Almighty has said about Himself or what His Messenger ﷺ said about Him.

(9) He does not resemble any created being (*anām*).

This is similar to what was said previously, that there is nothing like Him. *Anām* means the creation. Allah ﷻ transcends resembling the creation.

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

“Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” [Qur’ān 112:4]

Allah ﷻ is transcendent and thus does not resemble the creation, although He has names and attributes that are common with the names and attributes of the creation. However they are only common in wording and meaning, but as far as reality and their exact nature, there is no similarity between them.

(10) He is living and will never die;

His life is absolute and is not subject to deficiency or sleep.

“Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep.” [Qur’ān 2:255]

“And rely upon the Ever-Living who does not die...” [Qur’ān 25:58]

Here, He negates drowsiness for Himself, which is a light form of sleep, as well as deep sleep.⁶ He also negates death for himself, due to the completeness of His life.⁷ Sleep, drowsiness, and death detract from the totality of life. These are the qualities of created beings, and the life of created beings is deficient as they sleep and they die.

Sleep is perfection when it comes to created beings and a deficiency when it comes to the Creator, because a created being that does not sleep is lacking in health. This demonstrates the difference between the qualities of the Creator and those of the created. ‘The Living (al-Ḥayy)’ and ‘the All-Sustaining (al-Qayyūm)’: These are two qualities derived from the verse:

“Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence.” [Qur’ān 2:255]

The Living is He who has absolute life, and the All-Sustaining (al-Qayyūm) is a form used for emphasis.

⁶ It is related that Abū Mūsā ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up amongst us and said five words: 'Allah the Almighty does not sleep and it does not befit Him to sleep...'" (Muslim, no. 179)

⁷ It is related from ibn ‘Abbās ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to say: "O Allah, it is to You I surrender, in You I have faith, in You I trust, to You I repent, through You I fight my adversaries. O Allah, I take refuge in Your might – there is no god but You – from being led astray. You are the Living who does not die, and jinn and men die." Muslim, no. 2717.

(11) He is al-Qayyūm (the All-Sustaining) and does not sleep;

The All-Sustaining (al-Qayyūm) is the one who is self-sustaining and who sustains everything else. He is self-sustaining and so is not in need of anything; and as He sustains everything else, everything is in need of Him.

If it were not for the fact that Allah ﷻ sustains the heavens, the earth, and all created beings, they would be destroyed and would have perished. However, Allah ﷻ sustains and preserves them and provides them with what they need.

All creation is in need of Him.

“Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease. And if they should cease, no one could hold them [in place] after Him.” [Qur'ān 35: 41]

(12) He is a Creator without a need from His creation; a Provider without subsistence;

It is He who created the creations without needing them; He created them only to worship Him,

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” [Qur'ān 51:56]

So, He created them not for any need of aid, help, or to protect Him (far be it from Him). He created them only to worship (*ya'budu*, or serve) Him, and they are the ones who are in need of worship to bring them closer to Allah ﷻ and to connect them with their Lord. Worship is the link between people and their Lord, it draws them near to Allah ﷻ and they attain reward for it. So, worship is a need of the creation and not a need of Allah the Almighty.

“If you should disbelieve, you and whoever is on the earth entirely – indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.”
[Qur'ān 14:8]

“If you disbelieve – indeed, Allah is Free from need of you.”
[Qur'ān 39:7]

"A Provider without subsistence." He is the one who provides for His slaves, and that does not diminish anything from what He possesses.

(13) He brings death without fear;

He brings death to the living when their terms are complete, not because He is afraid of them but rather out of His wisdom. This is because life in the world has an end, but there is no end to the life of the hereafter. So, He does not bring death to them for fear of them or to get rid of them, even if they disbelieve in him, as He is not harmed by their disbelief; in fact, they only harm themselves. However, Allah ﷻ rejoices over their repentance, because He loves and wants what is good for them, so he rejoices when they repent. He is not in need of them but rather that is only out of his grace and kindness.

(14) He resurrects without difficulty.

This is one of the wonders of His omnipotence: He brings death to His creatures and causes them to perish so that they decompose, becoming dust and residue. He tells us this so that no ignorant person can argue that it is impossible to return back to life. Nevertheless, Allah ﷻ once again brings people to life and once again gives them their physical form, and He has no difficulty in doing so. Allah ﷻ says:

“Your creation and your resurrection will not be but as that of a single soul.” [Qur'ān 31:28]

“And it is He who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him. To Him belongs the highest attribute in the heavens and earth. And He is The Exalted in Might, the Wise.” [Qur'ān 30:27]

Here, the idolaters denied resurrection because they found it implausible as Allah ﷻ says about them:

“He says, ‘Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?’” [Qur'ān 36:78]

Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘He will give them life who produced them the first time...’” [Qur'ān 36:79]

The first time, the bones did not exist at all yet the Almighty brought them about from nothing. And so, He who created them from nothing is able to bring them back with even more certainty. This is an argument from the aspect of their reasoning. Otherwise, Allah ﷻ is not to be compared with His creatures. This is only to offer a parable.

“To Him belongs the highest attribute...” [Qur'ān 30:27]

This is a response to this disbeliever. Allah says:

“And he presents for Us an example and forgets his [own] creation.” [Qur'ān 36:78]

Meaning that he forgets that in the beginning he was nothing and did not exist at all.

“Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?” [Qur’ān 76:1]

He forgets that Allah ﷻ brought him about from nothing.

He brings together those scattered bones, the torn flesh, the decomposed dust, and the scattered hair and returns it to how it was.

“And of His signs is that the heaven and earth remain by His command. Then when He calls you with a [single] call from the earth, immediately you will come forth.” [Qur’ān 30:25]

“And the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will fall dead except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on.” [Qur’ān 39:68]

This is when the Horn blows for the Resurrection. The first blow is the blow of shock and death, and the second is the blow of resurrection.

“And the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten. They will say, ‘O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place?’ [The reply will be], ‘This is what the Most Merciful had promised, and the Messengers told the truth.’” [Qur’ān 36:51-52]

Allah ﷻ is able to do all things. This is a response to the disbelievers who challenge Allah's ﷻ ability to bring the dead back to life and return them to how they were. Allah says:

“Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Yes. [We are] Able [even] to proportion his fingertips.” [Qur’ān 75:3-4]

“The Day they will emerge from the graves rapidly as if they were, toward an erected idol, hastening.” [Qur’ān 70:43]

This is the omnipotence and will of Allah ﷻ. There is nothing he is incapable of. Nevertheless, some people compare Allah ﷻ to the creation and find the Resurrection implausible, because it is impossible according to their reasoning. They do not give consideration to Allah's ﷻ omnipotence and they do not have just appreciation for Allah ﷻ. This is out of their ignorance about Allah ﷻ.

(15) He, along with His attributes, is eternal, existing before His creation.

The author said earlier: "Eternal without beginning". Nothing came before the Most High. This means that Allah ﷻ has the attributes of perfection. His attributes are eternal, with neither a beginning nor an end. Just as He is the First, without beginning, so are His attributes, as they are intrinsic to Him. They are first as Allah ﷻ is First. He was not the First without attributes, with His attributes occurring later (as the people of misguidance say). They say that He did not possess His attributes from eternity, because they claim that would have a necessary consequence of multiple gods or multiple eternal beings, and the names and attributes sharing divinity with Allah ﷻ. We say in response (far be it from Allah ﷻ) that this would retract from Allah's ﷻ transcendence for one period and that He then acquired attributes by which He would become transcendent. The fact that Allah's ﷻ attributes are eternal does not necessitate that created beings are also eternal, because Allah's ﷻ attributes are not an external entity but rather attributes of a single being, not something separate from that being. If someone says, for example, that someone has hearing, sight, knowledge, and is also a jurist and a linguist, does that mean that that person is in fact several entities? Multiplicity of being is not a necessary consequence of multiplicity of attributes, as people of misguidance claim.

The attributes of the Most High have no beginning just as Allah ﷻ Himself has no beginning. Therefore, Allah ﷻ has the attribute of being the Creator forever and always.

Regarding His actions, they are eternal in kind and recur as instances.

Allah ﷻ had the attribute of speech before any instance of speaking, and He was the Creator before any instance of creating. His attributes of speech and creation are thus recurring actions and so on.

(16) Bringing the creation into existence did not add anything to His attributes that was not there already.

This means that Allah ﷻ created all creations and we do not say that He became the Creator only after creating them but rather that His name was the Creator from eternity, without beginning; He creates in recurring instances.

(17) His attributes are eternal without a beginning or an end.

As there was no beginning to His attributes, then so are His attributes intrinsic to Him in the future. With His attributes, Allah ﷻ is eternal without end. The Prophet ﷺ said: "You are the Last, nothing is after You", that goes for His names and attributes. It must not be said that these attributes will be separate from Him in the future. Rather, they are essential to Allah the Most High.

(18) It was not only after the point of creation that He could be considered al-Khaliq (the Creator).

This is further explanation and repetition of the aforementioned.

(19) Nor was it only after the point of origination that He could be considered al-Bari (the Originator).

One of Allah's ﷻ names is *Al-Bārī*. It means the Originator. To originate the creation (*bari'a*) means to create it. Allah is *Al-Bārī*. This name is intrinsic to the nature of Allah ﷻ Himself and has no beginning.

(20) He was always al-Rabb (the Lord), even if there were no subjects; and always al-Khaliq (the Creator), even if there was no creation.

In addition, He was the Lord before any of His subjects existed. The Lord (*Rabb*) means the king, disposer, keeper, and master. These attributes are intrinsic to the nature of Allah ﷻ Himself. Allah ﷻ has the attribute of Lord without beginning or end, before the existence of any subjects and after the subjects perish.

(21) As He is al-Muḥyī (the Giver of life) to the dead after having given them life, He possessed this name before giving life to anything; similarly, He is worthy of the name al-Khaliq (the Creator) before He created them.

Allah ﷻ has had the attribute of being the Giver of life to the dead from eternity, and that He gives life and brings death. Allah ﷻ has had this attribute for eternity, so it does not correlate with or diminish based on His giving of life to the dead. Nonetheless, His giving of life to the dead is something that recurs. Allah ﷻ gave life and gives it as He wills.

(22) This is because He is capable of doing all things;

This is an eternal attribute. It should not be said that He acquired omnipotence only after creating the creation. Rather, omnipotence is an eternal attribute. The fact that He created all of the creation is a resulting effect of Him being able to do all things.

It is Allah ﷻ Himself who has described Himself as being able to do all things, whether existent or non-existent. He has not restricted His omnipotence to any specific thing. He is incapable of nothing, and it is impermissible to restrict that by saying that He is able to do only certain things. Also it should not be said that He is able to do all that He wills only⁸. This phrase is specific to Allah's ability to gather the dwellers of heaven and earth when He wills.

“And of his signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and what He has dispersed throughout them of creatures. And He, for gathering them when He wills, is competent.” [Qur'ān 42:29]

This was concerning a specific case.

(23) And all things are dependent on Him;

Nothing can dispense with Allah ﷻ, not the angels, the heavens, the earth, jinn, or man, and not any inanimate objects, such as the mountains and seas. Everything is in need of Allah ﷻ.

“O mankind, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.” [Qur'ān 35:15]

⁸ Because that would entail that He is not able to do what He did not will [Translator's Note]

All things are in need of Allah ﷻ. Neither the pious nor the heavens cease to be in need of Allah ﷻ. Those who say that some pious people have non-human abilities and control the universe and provide harm and benefit beside Allah ﷻ are saying what disbelievers and idolaters say. Neither the pious, nor the Messengers, or the angels are free of the need of Allah ﷻ and they have no control beside Him.

This is why it is wrong to worship anything besides Allah ﷻ, like idols or the like. How could someone worship something that is in need and neglect Him in whose Hand is the kingdom? In this regard, some scholars of the grave worshippers said to a layman from the adherents of *tawḥīd*, 'You say that the pious cause neither benefit nor harm.' He said, 'We say that they cause neither benefit nor harm.' He said, 'Does Allah the Almighty not say: ***“And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision”*** [Qur'ān 3:169]?' He replied, 'Did Allah ﷻ say “*Yarzuqūn* (Giving provision)” or “*Yurzaqūn* (receiving provision)”?' He said: 'No, He says, “*Yurzaqūn* (receiving provision).’ He said: 'So I ask the one who provides and I do not ask them.' That scholar lost the argument to that layman who had a natural disposition of faith.

(24) And all things are easy for Him.

“His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.” [Qur'ān 36:82]

Allah ﷻ gives life and brings death, creates and provides, gives and prevents, and gives life to the dead after they perish. All of those things are easy for the Most High. He incurs no loss and it does not tire Him. In contrast, created beings incur some kind of loss when doing things, or they can fail to do them. There is nothing, on the other hand, that Allah ﷻ is incapable of, and there is nothing difficult for Him.

“Your creation and your resurrection will not be but as that of a single soul.” [Qur'ān 31:28]

(25) He is not in need of anything.

Allah ﷻ is free of need from anything. He is not in need of His creation, because He is al-Ghanī (the Self-Sufficient). He is the one who gives to His creatures.

(26) There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

This is negation of *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) for Allah ﷻ. The *kāf*-preposition [in '*laysa ka-mithlihi shay'un*' (there is nothing like unto Him)] is for emphasizing negation, like [the *bā'*-preposition in] '*kafā bi'llāhi 'alīman*':

“...and sufficient is Allah as Knower.” [Qur'ān 4:70]

In principle, it is said, '*wa kafā Allāh alīman*'; however, the *bā'*-preposition is for emphasis.

There is nothing at all that resembles Allah ﷻ: neither the angels, the Prophets, the pious, nor any other created being.

“...and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur'ān 42:11]

He has named Himself al-Samī' (The All-Hearing), al-Baṣīr (The All-Seeing).

The first part of the verse is a response to the proponents of *tashbīh* and the end of it is a response to the proponents of *ta'tīl* (divesting Allah ﷻ of his attributes). It indicates that *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) is not a necessary consequence of *ithbāt* (confirming) the names and attributes of Allah ﷻ. In other words, created things hear and see but that does not resemble the hearing and sight of the Almighty.

(27) He created the creation according to His divine knowledge.

Allah ﷻ says:

“Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?” [Qur'ān 67:14]

Thus, His creation is evidence of His omniscience and omnipotence. Allah ﷻ says:

“But Allah is not to be caused failure by anything in the heavens or on the earth. Indeed, He is ever Knowing and Competent.” [Qur'ān 35:44]

(28) And He ordained all things in due measure.

Allah ﷻ predestined the measures of all things, and He did not bring things into existence without measure.

“And there is not a thing but that with Us are its depositories, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure.” [Qur'ān 15:21]

So Allah ﷻ predestined all things according to certain measures and manners without inconsistency or change. Allah ﷻ predestined the bodies, senses, and limbs of man as well as their compositions and weights; and thus they become humans who have upright posture, walk, and stand. If some of the body parts or components of those humans were to fail, the whole body fails. Likewise for all other beings.

“And everything with Him is by due measure.” [Qur'ān 13:8]

So, everything has a predetermination by which it gets its order; and everything has a predetermination that differs from the predetermination of something else.

(29) And set a fixed term for them.

Created things have a set span of existence and an end. Allah ﷻ says:

“Everyone upon the earth will perish, and there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour.” [Qur'ān 55:26-27]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Everything will be destroyed except His Face.” [Qur'ān 28:88]

Everything has a limited lifespan, set by Allah the Almighty, either short or long. Allah ﷻ said:

“And no aged person is granted [additional] life nor is his lifespan lessened but that it is in a register. Indeed, that for Allah is easy.” [Qur'ān 35:11]

So, everything's lifespan is in His Hand. This is evidence of the totality of His lordship and omnipotence. What He willed was and what He did not will was not.

(30) Nothing was hidden from Him before He created it.

Rather, He knows everything before it exists, and does not only know it after it exists.

(31) He knew what they would do before He created them.

He knew what His servants would do before He created them, namely that some people would be obedient and others would be sinful.

(32) He commanded them to obey Him and forbade them from disobeying Him.

To this effect, Allah ﷻ says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” [Qur'ān 51:56]

First, He created them, and then, He commanded them to worship Him. So He commanded them to obey Him although He had known what they would do beforehand. Nonetheless, judgment is not the result of Allah's ﷻ omniscience, but rather the result of people's actions. So Allah ﷻ does not punish anyone depending on omniscience unless they actually do the sin, and someone is not rewarded unless they actually do an act of good. So judgment is the result of action not of omniscience and not predetermination: So He differentiates between the omniscience and the judgment, which is why Allah ﷻ commands and forbids. Those who obey the commands and leave what is forbidden receive the reward; and those who disobey the commands and commit what is forbidden have earned punishment by their actions and not by Allah's ﷻ actions. So the worshipper is the one who prays, pays the alms, performs the rites of Ḥajj, and fights in *jihād*. Actions are attributed to the person, not to

Allah ﷻ, except from the aspect that He creates, knows, predestines, and guides actions.

(33) Everything happens according to His decree.

There is no doubt that everything is according to His decree. No good or bad thing, no act of obedience or sin, neither faith nor disbelief, neither sickness nor health, neither wealth nor poverty, and neither knowledge nor ignorance are outside of Allah's ﷻ decree. Everything happens according to His predetermination. There is nothing in His kingdom that He did not decree or will.

(34) His will always comes to pass; His slaves have no will except as He has willed for them; what He willed for them occurred, and what He did not will for them never took place.

Allah ﷻ has a will, and humans have a will, but the will of human beings depends on the will of Allah ﷻ, therefore it is not independent. To this effect, Allah ﷻ says:

“And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.” [Qur'ān 76:30]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And you do not will except that Allah wills – Lord of the worlds.” [Qur'ān 81:29]

Allah ﷻ says that He has a will, it is one of His attributes; and He said that His slaves have a will, it is one of their attributes; and He bound their will by His

will. This is a response to the Qadarīyah (adherents of 'free will' doctrine) and Jabrīyah (adherents of absolute fatalism) sects. The Qadarīyah deny the will of Allah ﷻ in the actions of people and say that people have an absolute will and are independent in their actions and wills. This is the doctrine of the Qadarīyah (absolute 'free will'), such as the Mu'tazilites and others. The Jabrīyah say that a person does not have a will, and that only Allah ﷻ has a will, and that people move without choice just like a tool is moved. One group is excessive in their confirmation of Allah's ﷻ will and the other is excessive in their confirmation of the free will of man.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, on the other hand, confirm the will of both, and they say that the will of people is bound by the will of Allah ﷻ as derived from the previous two verses. The saying of Allah ﷻ: **“And you do not will...”** includes confirmation of the will of people, and His saying: **“...except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds”** includes confirmation of the will of Allah ﷻ. The verse also entails that the will of people is not independent but rather bound by the will of Allah ﷻ because it is one of Allah's ﷻ creations. He created the will of people. In that regard, when some people said to the Prophet ﷺ: “As Allah and you will.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Have you made me an equal (*nidd*) to Allah?” In other words, ‘have you made me a partner?’ He said: “As Allah alone wills.” When the Prophet ﷺ heard that people were saying, “As Allah wills and as Muḥammad wills”, he ﷺ disapproved and said:

“Say, ‘As Allah wills, and then as Muḥammad wills.’”

And so He said that His will is bound by the will of Allah ﷻ using the word 'and then' (*thumma*), which marks order and interval, instead of the word 'and' which involves equality.⁹

(35) He guides whom He wills, and protects and keeps them safe from harm out of His Grace; and He leads astray whom He wills, and abases and afflicts them out of justice.

⁹ Aḥmad, 1/214, 224, 283 & 347; al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 783; ibn Mājah, no. 2117; al-Nasā'ī, *ʿAmal al-Yawm wa'l-Laylah*, no. 988.

Allah ﷻ guides whom He wills and He leads astray whom He wills, and this is according to His decree and predetermination. Nonetheless, Allah ﷻ guides those who are fit for guidance, and who are keen on seeking it. Allah ﷻ makes their path easy for them. And He leads astray whom He wills because of their aversion to seeking guidance and goodness. Thus, He leads them astray to punish them for their aversion and lack of desire for goodness. This is further explained by the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“As for he who gives and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], We will ease him toward ease.” [Qur'ān 92:5-7]

Here, the cause is from the person, and the predetermination is from Allah ﷻ.

“But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need and denies the best [reward], We will ease him toward difficulty.” [Qur'ān 92:8-10]

Here, the cause is from the person, and the predestination is from Allah ﷻ. However, Allah ﷻ decrees that, in order to punish him.

Thus, Allah ﷻ predestines guidance out of grace and honour on His part for the person who wants good and guidance. Allah ﷻ makes his or her path to goodness and acts of goodness easy. This is for their interest, not for the interest of Allah the Almighty. As regards to Allah ﷻ leading misguided people astray, it is justice on His part. It is judgment for their aversion and lack of interest for good and being disobedient to Allah ﷻ. He does not wrong them. In the same manner, we find that Allah ﷻ says in many verses:

“...and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.” [Qur'ān 2:258]

“And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.” [Qur'ān 2:264]

“...and Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.” [Qur'ān 5:108]

Here, He says that injustice, disbelief, and sin are causes for not being guided. These are the acts of people; Allah ﷻ judges them out of justice on His part, and not out of injustice.

“And Allah wronged them not, but they had been wronging themselves.” [Qur'ān 16:33]

It is not then befitting that Allah ﷻ honours someone who has such qualities, and it is also not befitting that Allah ﷻ lets the deeds of those who do good go to waste. Allah ﷻ says:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds – [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.” [Qur'ān 45:21]

“And Allah created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.” [Qur'ān 45:22]

“Then will We treat the Muslims like the criminals? What is [the matter] with you? How do you judge?” [Qur'ān 68:35-36]

This is injustice and Allah ﷻ is transcendent of this. Allah ﷻ says:

“Or should we treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like corrupters in the land? Or should We treat those who fear Allah like the wicked?” [Qur'ān 38:28]

Allah ﷻ does not neglect the reward of those who do good, and He does not reward someone without action and without work. Allah ﷻ says:

“And you will not be recompensed except for what you used to do.” [Qur'ān 37:39]

All acts, whether good or bad, are attributed to the person, and the reward of either grace or justice is from Allah ﷻ.

(36) And all of them are subjugated by His will, between His grace and His justice.

None of Allah's ﷻ slaves are excluded from alternation within Allah's ﷻ will, alternation between grace for the people of obedience and goodness, and justice for the people of disbelief and idolatry. This is befitting of the wisdom and greatness of the Almighty. He does not make equal those who are opposite and different, but rather does everything in a manner befitting [each individual]. Hence one of Allah's ﷻ names is al-Ḥakīm (the Most Wise), and wisdom is one of His attributes. The Most Wise is He who 'puts all things in their right places'. Thus He applies His grace with the people of obedience and punishment with the people of disbelief and sin. This is grace and justice from Allah ﷻ.

(37) He is transcendent of all opponents and rivals.

Transcendent (*muta'ālin*) means the Most High, as His being, His omnipotence, and His subjugation (*qahr*), is above all rivals. A rival (*nidd*) is an equal or a similar being. There is nothing similar, equal, or comparable to Allah ﷻ. Nothing has a share of divinity, is equivalent to or resembles Allah the Most High. This is from Allah's ﷻ highness as it relates to His omnipotence and subjugation of all things. His being is also high above His creations. As regards to 'opponents', it means any opposition. Allah ﷻ has no opposition, no one can oppose Him. If He wants something to be, no one can oppose or prevent His command. If He wants to give something, no one can withhold it, and if He

wants to withhold something, no one can give it. “There is none to prevent what You have given, and none to give what you have prevented.”¹⁰

Allah ﷻ says:

“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy – none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds – none can release it thereafter. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.” [Qur’ān 35:2]

Thus, nothing can rival or oppose what Allah ﷻ commands and forbids, as opposed to created things, as there are those who contest them and stand in opposition to their commands. All created things have equals, who are comparable to them in knowledge, name, and everything else, physically or qualitatively. They have common actions and possessions. Allah ﷻ, however, is not common with or comparable to anyone.

(38) There is no one to prevent His decree, nor anyone to override His judgment, nor anyone to overpower His command.

Allah ﷻ says:

“When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, “Be,” and it is.”
[Qur’ān 19:35]

“...there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account.” [Qur’ān 13:41]

If Allah ﷻ decrees something, no one is able to undo or reject it, as opposed to created things: the execution of their decrees can be suspended or undone.

¹⁰ It is related that Warrād, the scribe of al-Mughīrah ibn Shu’bah ؓ, said: al-Mughīrah ibn Shu’bah dictated to me a letter to Mu’āwiyah ؓ, saying that the Prophet ﷺ said at the end of every obligatory prayer: “There is no god but Allah alone – He has no partner. His are the praise and kingdom, and He is able to do all things. O Allah, there is no one who can prevent what You have given, and no one who can give what You have withheld, nor does any fortune avail, from You is all fortune.” [Al-Bukhārī, no. 844; Muslim, no. 593.]

The author ﷺ says: "...nor anyone to overpower His command." If He commands something, nothing can overpower His universal decree. The commands of His law, however, can be suspended or violated. Those commands are trials and tests and the basis for reward and punishment.

(39) We believe in all of these things, and we are certain that all of it is from Him.

All of the aforementioned, from the beginning to the end of this statement of creed is what we have adopted as our faith in Allah ﷻ. It is not only words on the tongue but it is also from our hearts.

(40) And Muhammad ﷺ is His chosen slave, selected prophet, and messenger with whom He is pleased;

After the *shaykh* ﷺ explained at the beginning of the discourse what is obligatory to know about Allah ﷻ, and that it is obligatory to believe that He is the Lord who is worthy of all worship to the exclusion of all other things, and that He has attributes of perfection and glory both eternally and infinitely, he went on to explain what is obligatory to believe about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His saying: "Muḥammad is His chosen slave..." This is conjoined with the beginning of the discourse: "With the help of Allah, we say about our belief in *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allah): Allah is one: He has no partner." Later, he says: "And that Muḥammad is..." and so forth. We must have faith in this. Just as we have to attest to the right of worship of Allah ﷻ, so do we attest to the fact that Muḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah; and therefore, both testimonies of faith are always inseparable.

'Muḥammad' is the name that he is known by. Allah ﷻ said in the Qur'ān:

“Muḥammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah.” [Qur'ān 33:40]

Also:

“And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad – and it is the truth from their Lord – He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition.” [Qur'ān 47:2]

And in the words of Allah ﷻ:

“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him...” [Qur'ān 48:29]

The name 'Aḥmad' also appears in the Qur'ān as Allah ﷻ quotes 'Īsā عليه السلام as saying:

“O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.” [Qur'ān 61:6]

He has other names that appear in the Sunnah as Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله mentioned in his book, *Jalā' al-Afhām*.

Learning about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a religious obligation and one of the fundamentals of Islam. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhāb said in *al-Uṣūl al-Thalāthah* (the Three Fundamental Principles): "The first principle: knowledge of Allah ﷻ; the second: knowledge of His Prophet ﷺ; the third: knowledge of the religion of Islam with evidence." Just as you have to know about Allah ﷻ, you also have to know about His Prophet ﷺ and about the religion of Islām with evidence. These are the three fundamental principles that the dead will be asked about when placed in their graves.

The author says: "His ... slave". Muḥammad ﷺ is the slave of Allah ('Abdullāh), and he has no share of divinity or lordship; rather he is no more than the slave and Messenger of Allah ﷻ, who follows the commands and

desists from doing what He has forbidden, and who delivers the word of Allah ﷻ. This is a response to those who are excessive with regard to the Prophet ﷺ and ascribe some forms of lordship or worship to him and pray to him along with Allah ﷻ. It is similar to how the Christians are excessive with regard to the Messiah, 'Īsā ibn Maryam ﷺ, and say that he is the son of Allah or part of a trinity.

The statement of the author: "...His chosen slave," entails a response to that excessiveness, as he was a slave of Allah ﷻ just as everyone in the heavens and on earth is a slave to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

"There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a servant." [Qur'ān 19:93]

The angels are also slaves. Allah ﷻ says:

"Rather, they are [but] honoured servants. They cannot precede Him in word, and they act by His command." [Qur'ān 21:26-27]

The Prophets and Messengers are also slaves of Allah ﷻ, as Allah ﷻ says about Nūh (Noah) ﷺ:

"Indeed, he was a grateful servant." [Qur'ān 17:3]

Allah ﷻ also says:

"...and they denied Our servant..." [Qur'ān 54:9]

He says about Dāwūd (David) ﷺ:

"...and remember Our servant, David, the possessor of strength; indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back [to Allah]." [Qur'ān 38:17]

And He says about Sulaymān (Solomon) ﷺ:

“An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah].” [Qur'ān 38:30]

And He says about Ayyūb (Job) ﷺ:

“And remember Our servant Job...” [Qur'ān 38:41]

And He says about 'Īsā (Jesus) ﷺ:

“Jesus was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favour, and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.” [Qur'ān 43:59]

If the Prophets, Messengers and angels (being the most distinguished creatures) are slaves of Allah ﷻ, then others, such as the pious and righteous, have to be so with even more certainty.

Muḥammad ﷺ is superior to all of them, and He is the final prophet. Allah ﷻ named him a 'slave' as He says:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muḥammad]...” [Qur'ān 2:23]

I.e. what we sent to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ also says:

“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant...” [Qur'ān 25:1]

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night...” [Qur'ān 17:1]

The status of being the servant of Allah ﷻ has the highest possible standing; there is nothing more honourable than servitude to Allah ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Do not exceed in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave, so call me the Slave and Messenger of Allah.”¹¹

¹¹ Al-Bukhārī, no. 3445.

Muṣṭafā means the chosen one. Allah ﷻ says:

“And remember Our servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – those of strength and [religious] vision. Indeed, We chose them for an exclusive quality: remembrance of the home [of the Hereafter]. And indeed they are, to Us, among the chosen...” [Qur’ān 38:45-47]

‘The chosen’ is ‘muṣṭafayn’. It is a plural form of ‘one who is chosen’ (muṣṭafā).

Al-Muṣṭafā is the chosen one, as out of all his people, Allah ﷻ chose Muḥammad ﷺ for the message (of Islām), and Allah ﷻ knows best whom to give the message to. He chooses only the right people who are worthy of being chosen and who fulfil this difficult and great task. Allah says:

“Allah is most knowing of where He places His message.” [Qur’ān 6:124]

“...Selected...” (al-Mujtabā) means al-Muṣṭafā (the chosen one). A ‘prophet’ is someone who receives divine revelation but has not been commanded to deliver the message. A ‘messenger’ is someone who receives divine revelation and has been commanded to deliver the message. This is the most popular opinion on the difference between a prophet and a messenger. ‘To deliver the message’ means to command others to follow it in a manner that is obligatory, and to fight for the sake of the divine revelation.

Accordingly, a prophet receives divine revelation and preaches the word of Allah ﷻ; however, a prophet follows previous prophets and treads the same path as them and does not have a unique law, as is the case with the prophets of the Children of Israel. They received and preached the Torah which was sent down to Mūsā (Moses) عليه السلام.

“...with whom He is pleased” (al-murtaḍā) also has the same meaning as al-muṣṭafā and al-mujtabā (the chosen one). ‘Al-murtaḍā’ means that Allah ﷻ chose and accepted him.

(41) And that he ﷺ is the final Prophet (*khātam al-anbiyā'*), the foremost of the pious, the chief of the Messengers, and the beloved of the Lord of the Worlds.

These are the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ:

He is *khātam al-anbiyā'*. What *khātam* (seal) means is that no prophet is to come after him. The 'seal' of something is what is placed upon it so that it does not increase or diminish. Thus, Allah ﷻ has sealed all messages with Muḥammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets.” [Qur'ān 33:40]

So there is no need for any prophet after him because the Qur'ān is present and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ is present, and the learned ones who preach Allah's ﷻ word and give sight to people are present. So the religion of Muḥammad ﷺ remains until the coming of the Hour and is not changed, abolished or amended, because Allah ﷻ made it suitable for every time and place. The laws of all previous prophets, on the other hand, were limited to their people over a certain period. Then, Allah ﷻ replaced these laws with other laws that were more suitable for the later people.

“To each of you We prescribed a law and a method.” [Qur'ān 5:48]

Similarly, Allah ﷻ says:

“For every term is a decree.” [Qur'ān 13:38]

This means that every decree has a term and appointed time.

The religion of Islām is complete and is not in need of any messenger after Muḥammad ﷺ. And those who have knowledge are the heirs of the Prophets. If anyone believes that a prophet is to come after Muḥammad ﷺ he is a

disbeliever. The Prophet ﷺ told us that liars will appear, claiming that they are prophets after him. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“After me, there will come thirty liars, all of whom will claim that they are prophets. And I am the seal of the Prophets. There is no prophet after me.”¹²

So anyone who claims to be a prophet, or if it is claimed that anyone is a prophet, then all of those who make the claims are disbelievers. The Muslims have fought them and declared them disbelievers. The most recent person to claim to be a prophet in modern times is a Pakistani man named Qādiyānī. He claimed to be a prophet, and his followers are the Qādiyānīs. They are also called Aḥmadīs in relation to his name, as his name is Aḥmad al-Qādiyānī. Scholars declared him a disbeliever and drove him out of the Muslim lands, and they declared his followers disbelievers as well, because they reject what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ have said. In fact, they are disbelievers according to the unanimous agreement of the Muslim community, without disagreement from anyone.

A Muslim has to believe that Muḥammad ﷺ was the final prophet and messenger, and the leader (*imām*) of the pious, more so, he is the only example for the pious (those who are conscious of Allah ﷻ). Allah ﷻ says:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.” [Qur’ān 33:21]

On the other hand, the example of anyone besides the Prophet ﷺ is to be followed only if they follow the example of the Prophet ﷺ. In contrast, it is impermissible to follow anyone who acts contrarily to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.’” [Qur’ān 3:31]

¹² It is related that Abū Hurayrah ؓ said the Prophet ﷺ said: “The Hour will not come until two parties fight, and there will be a great number of casualties among them. Their claim is the same. And the Hour will not come until the *dajjāls* are sent forth. They are around thirty. Each one claims to be a messenger of Allah.” [Al-Bukhārī, no. 3609; Muslim, no. 157/84 (*Kitāb al-ḥajj*)]

So the only path to Allah ﷻ is to follow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and to take him as an example.

"The chief (*sayyid*) of the Messengers" is the Prophet ﷺ, the chief of Ādam's ﷺ descendants. Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ said:

"I am the chief of the sons of Ādam, I say so without boasting."

He said so out of thanks to Allah ﷻ, and in order that his Ummah give thanks to their Lord for the blessing that He made their messenger the chief of the Messengers.¹³

Sayyid (chief) means someone who is foremost or who is a leader. Thus, he is the most superior of all Messengers, and he is the leader who is at the forefront.

"...the Beloved (*ḥabīb*) of the Lord of the Worlds." There is an objection to be made about the language used here, because it does not suffice to say *ḥabīb*, but rather he is the *Khalīl* (intimate friend) of the Lord of the Worlds. *Khullah* (intimate friendship) is superior to love in the absolute sense of the latter. Love is different levels, and *khullah* is pure love. Only two people have ever attained this rank: Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ﷺ, as Allah ﷻ says:

"And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend (khalīl)." [Qur'ān 4:125]

And our Prophet ﷺ as he ﷺ has told us:

"Allah has taken me as a *khalīl* as He has taken Ibrāhīm as a *khalīl*."

So it should not be said *ḥabību'llāh* (Allah's Beloved), as this is befitting of every believer, so there would not thereby be any distinction for the Prophet ﷺ; *khullah* (intimate friendship), on the other hand, is not jointly attributed to anyone else.¹⁴

¹³ Al-Tirmidhī, no 3624; Aḥmad, no 3/144-145; al-Tirmidhī said: "This ḥadīth is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*." It is supported by another ḥadīth as related from Abū Hurayrah ؓ: "I am the chief of the people (*qawm*) on the Judgment Day;" and with another wording: "I am the chief of man (*nās*) on Judgment Day." [Al-Bukhārī, no. 3340, 4712; Muslim, no. 194, 2278.]

¹⁴ Muslim no. 532. It is also related that ibn Mas'ūd ؓ said: the Prophet ﷺ said: "If I were to take anyone as a *khalīl*, I would have taken the son of Abū Quḥāfah as a *khalīl*, but your companion is the *Khalīl* of Allah." Meaning himself ﷺ. Muslim, no. 2383; al-Bukhārī: "However, there is the brotherhood and affection of Islam."

(42) Every claim to prophecy after him is false (*ghayy*) and [based on] whims and desires (*hawā*).

This was already mentioned in the discussion related to the fact that he is the final prophet. Every claim to prophecy after him is both false and a form of disbelief, because there is no prophet after our Prophet ﷺ. When 'Isā عليه السلام comes in the end of times, he will not return as a prophet and messenger and he will not bring a new law; he will come as a reviver of the religion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and as a follower of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; and he will judge according to the Islamic law.

(43) He ﷺ was sent to all of the jinn and all of mankind with truth, guidance, light, and illumination;

This also has to be asserted as faith about the Prophet ﷺ. It does not suffice to believe that he is the Messenger of Allah, but there must be conviction that he is a messenger to all of mankind; rather, to both jinn and mankind. Allah ﷻ says:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner.” [Qur'ān 34:28]

And Allah ﷻ said to him:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.’” [Qur'ān 7:158]

So his message is to all of mankind. This is one of his distinguishing features (*khaṣā'iṣ*): He is the Messenger of Allah to all of mankind, and it is obligatory for everyone, whether Arab or non-Arab, black or white, jinn or human, to obey him. It is obligatory upon anyone who learns of the message of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to obey and follow him. If someone acknowledges that

he is the Messenger of Allah to Arabs only (as a group of Christians say that he is the Messenger of Allah to Arabs only and deny that he is a prophet for anyone else) then this is disbelief in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner.” [Qur'ān 34:28]

And Allah ﷻ says (what means):

“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.” [Qur'ān 25:1]

His message is thus universal.

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The Prophets were sent to their people only, but I was sent to all mankind.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent letters to the kings of the world and called on them to accept Islām, so it is evidence that he was sent to all people on earth. He also commanded to fight until people accepted Islām, so it is evidence on the generality of his message, and it is obligatory to believe that.¹⁵

With regard to the Messenger ﷺ, the following is obligatory to believe:

- 1- He is the Servant and Messenger of Allah ﷻ.
- 2- He is the final Prophet, and that there is no prophet after him.
- 3- His message is general to both mankind and jinn.

The evidence that his message is general to mankind is all of the aforementioned verses from the Qur'ān and the letters of the Prophet ﷺ.

The evidence for the generality of his message for the jinn is the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And [mention, O Muḥammad], when We directed to you a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur'an. And when they attended it, they said, ‘Listen quietly.’ And when it was concluded, they went back

¹⁵Al-Bukhārī, no. 335 & 438; Muslim: "...and I was sent to both the red and the black" (no. 521).

to their people as warners. They said, ‘O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path. O our people, respond to the Messenger of Allah and believe in him; Allah will forgive for you your sins and protect you from a painful punishment.’ [Qur’ān 46:29-31]

Here, they are speaking about Muḥammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ also says:

“Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of the jinn listened and said, “Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur’an. It guides to the right course, and we have believed in it.”’” [Qur’ān 72:1-2]

This indicates that his message is general for all jinn. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ was sent to all people on earth, both jinn and mankind. Those who believe in him will enter Paradise, and those who do not believe in him will enter the fire of Hell (both jinn and man). The author says: "...light, and illumination": They have the same meaning. The Prophet ﷺ was sent with both of them. Allah ﷻ says:

“O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.” [Qur’ān 33: 45-46]

(44) And [we believe] that the Qur'ān is the word of Allah;

After you believe in Allah ﷻ and you believe in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, you have to believe that the Qur'ān is the word of Allah ﷻ, because it is what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought to us. Allah ﷻ revealed the Qur'ān to him. The Qur'ān is not the word of Muḥammad ﷺ and not the word of Jibrīl ﷺ, but rather the word of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ spoke it, Jibrīl ﷺ learned it from Allah ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ learned it from Jibrīl ﷺ, and the Muslims learned it from the Prophet ﷺ.

It is the word of Allah ﷻ; it originated from Him. Jibrīl ؑ did not take it from al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz (the Guarded Tablet) as some deviant people say; it is rather the word of the Lord of the Worlds. A point that must be noted is that Jibrīl ؑ and Muḥammad ﷺ only deliver the word of Allah ﷻ. A word is only ascribed to whoever said it in origin and not to anyone who said it in quoted form.

Whoever says that Jibrīl ؑ took it from the Guarded Tablet, or that Allah ﷻ created it within something and Jibrīl ؑ took it from that thing has disbelieved in Allah ﷻ and left the religion of Islām. This is the claim of the Jahmīs, the Mu'tazilites and the like. It is the word of Allah ﷻ in form and meaning. Allah ﷻ spoke in whatever manner He so willed. We confirm that Allah ﷻ has the attribute of speech, and this speech is an attribute of action. As regards to the manner in which Allah ﷻ spoke it, we say, Allah ﷻ knows best. It is like all of the other attributes: we believe in them but we do not know the manner. The meaning is known but the manner is unknown to us.

(45) It began as a word from Him, in a manner that we do not know; and He sent it down to His Messenger as Revelation (waḥy).

The meaning of this statement is that the Qur'ān came down from Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ spoke it, and it did not come down from anyone else. It did not begin from Jibrīl ؑ (as some say) or from the Tablet, or from the sky. Its origin is with Allah ﷻ, and Jibrīl ؑ heard it and delivered it to the Prophet ﷺ as divine revelations. The Prophet ﷺ subsequently delivered it to people. If the Qur'ān was the word of a human, someone would have been able to create a *sūrah* of its like. The fact that they were unable to do so is evidence that it is the word of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muḥammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.” [Qur'ān 2:23]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Or do they say, ‘He invented it’? Say, ‘Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented...’” [Qur’ān 11:13] -

Allah ﷻ challenged them to that and they were not able to do so, even though they were eloquent speakers of Arabic, and the Qur’ān is in the Arabic tongue, in the same letters that they used to speak, and they were adamant in their opposition to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. If they were afforded any chance to raise an objection to the Qur’ān, they would have not spared a moment to do so, and the fact that they failed to do so is evidence that it is the word of Allah ﷻ which nothing can falsify from before or after.

(46) The believers attest to it being absolute truth;

Those who believe in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ attest to the Qur’ān being the word of Allah ﷻ, and that Muḥammad ﷺ only delivered it from Allah ﷻ.

Nonetheless, Allah ﷻ says:

“[[That] indeed, the Qur'an is a word [conveyed by] a noble messenger, owner of power, and high rank with (Allah) the Lord of the Throne.” [Qur’ān 81:19-20]

The reason why it was attributed to Jibrīl ؑ is from the aspect of him delivering it, as it is impossible to be both the word of Allah ﷻ and the word of Jibrīl ؑ. It can only be from one of them, and it cannot be the word of more than one. The attribution to Allah ﷻ is literal, and the attribution to Jibrīl ؑ is from the aspect that he delivered it. In another verse, Allah ﷻ says:

“[[That] indeed, the Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger. And it is not the word of a poet; little do you believe.” [Qur’ān 69:40-41]

This refers to Muḥammad ﷺ. It is attributed to him because he delivered it. Sometimes Allah ﷻ attributes it to Himself, and sometimes to Jibrīl ﷺ, and sometimes to Muḥammad ﷺ; yet the word is one and the same. It is not possible that more than one had spoken it. The attribution to Allah ﷻ is because of its origin, it is His word. And the attribution to Jibrīl ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ is because they delivered it.

(47) And they are certain that it is truly the word of Allah.

This is not in a figurative sense, as the Jahmīs and Mu'tazilites say. They say that it is the word of Allah ﷻ, but the attribution to Allah ﷻ is figurative, and that its attribution to Allah ﷻ is an attribution of a created thing to its creator.

We say in response that this is wrong because there are two types of attributions to Allah ﷻ: the attribution of qualities and the attribution of objects.

The first type: the attribution of qualities to Allah ﷻ, such as speech. The attribution of qualities to Allah ﷻ is an attribution of attributes to the entity. So speech, hearing, sight, omnipotence and will are all attributes of Allah ﷻ, as they are qualities that do not exist by themselves but rather with Allah ﷻ.

The second type: the attribution of objects, such as the house of Allah, the camel of Allah, and the servant of Allah. This is the attribution of created beings to their creator. They are attributed to Him as an honour.

(48) It is not created like the speech of human beings.

So, it is said that the word of Allah ﷻ is not created. This is a response to the Jahmīs and Mu'tazilites who say that the Qur'ān is created, because, according to them, Allah ﷻ does not speak, according to their doctrine of negating all of Allah's ﷻ attributes in order to avoid *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism), as they claim. This is because they do not differentiate between the attributes of the

Creator and those of created beings, so they try to avoid their imagined *tashbīh* but instead commit *ta'ṭīl* (divesting Allah ﷻ of His attributes), which is even more reprehensible, like someone escaping heat by entering a fire.

If only they confirmed what Allah ﷻ confirms about Himself, and knew that there is a difference between the attributes of the Creator and those of created things, they would have reached the truth and been relieved, and relieved others. Instead, they are in error.

(49) Whoever hears it and says that it is the speech of man has disbelieved.

If someone hears the word of Allah ﷻ and claims that it is the word of a human, that person is then a disbeliever, because he will have then rejected the word of Allah the Almighty. If Allah ﷻ did not have a word that He sent down to His slaves, how would the arguments be placed against them? Their intent in saying such a thing is demolishing the divine revelations. If there were no word of Allah ﷻ in the universe, not in the Torah or the Injil (Gospel), or the Qur'ān, it would have meant that Allah ﷻ has not set up any arguments against people. This is the greatest form of disbelief and misguidance.

(50) Allah has warned him and censured him and threatened him with Hellfire (*Saqar*); as the Most High has said: "I will cast him into Hell-fire." [Qur'ān 74: 26]

Allah ﷻ has condemned those who say that the Qur'ān is the word of a human, like al-Walid ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī. He was one of the people at the fore amongst the disbelievers of Makkah. They called him *zahrāt Makkah* (the flower of Makkah) because of his status among the Makkans. When he heard the Qur'ān from the Messenger ﷺ, he had a liking for it and knew that it was not the word of a human. He praised the Qur'ān, saying: 'It is not poetry,

and not sorcery. I know the different types of poetry and sorcery, and the ways of the diviners, and so on. The Qur'ān is not one of those things.' When he said that, his people censured him because it meant that he acknowledged the message of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When he saw that, he changed his discourse and Allah ﷻ is our refuge. He said:

“This is nothing but the word of a human being!” [Qur'ān 74:26]

So Allah ﷻ revealed:

“Indeed, he thought and deliberated. So may he be destroyed [for] how he deliberated. Then may he be destroyed [for] how he deliberated. Then he considered [again]; then he frowned and scowled; then he turned back and was arrogant And said, ‘This is not but magic imitated [from others]. This is not but the word of a human being.’” [Qur'ān 74:18-25]

Allah ﷻ says:

“I will drive him into Saqar.” [Qur'ān 74:26]

Saqar is the Fire.

(51) Because Allah has promised Hell for those who say “*This is nothing but the word of a human being!*” [Qur'ān 74: 25] we know and are certain that it is the word of the Creator of human beings.

Whoever says that the Qur'ān is not the word of Allah ﷻ but the word of a human or an angel is similar to al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah. What is the difference between them besides the fact that one claims to be Muslim and al-Walīd did not claim so? It does not suffice to claim to be Muslim, because if someone disbelieves in the Qur'ān, then any claims to be Muslim are to no

avail, as that is a form of apostasy. So it is clear that the Qur'ān has to be recognized as the word of Allah ﷻ in the most literal sense.

(52) And it does not resemble the speech of humans.

If the Qur'ān were the word of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ there would have been no blame on al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah for saying that the Qur'ān is the word of Muhammad ﷺ. So why did Allah ﷻ make such stern threats against him? This demonstrates that he said something significant and abhorrent insofar as he attributed the Qur'ān to someone other than Allah ﷻ. Anyone who has the same view or follows along the same course is just like al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah and they will abide in the Fire forever.

(53) Whoever ascribes to Allah an attribute of humans has disbelieved.

That is to say that anyone who likens Allah ﷻ with a quality associated with humans has disbelieved, because he would have then blasphemed as he undervalued Allah the Most High.

(54) He who understands this will take heed;

This is because there is a clear difference between the characteristics of the Creator and the characteristics of created things even if they have a common name and meaning. Nonetheless, the actual nature is different in reality and appearance. There is no resemblance between the word of Allah ﷻ and the word of man, and there is no resemblance between the hearing of Allah ﷻ and

the hearing of man, and there is no resemblance between the sight of Allah ﷻ and the sight of man, and between the knowledge of Allah ﷻ and the knowledge of man, and between the will of Allah ﷻ and the will of man. There is a difference between the attributes of Allah ﷻ and the qualities of man, and anyone who does not differentiate between them is a disbeliever.

(55) And will refrain from saying such things as the disbelievers say.

If you reflect on the Qur'ānic verses that Allah ﷻ revealed about al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, you will ascertain that the views of these deviant sects on the Qur'ān are incorrect.

(56) And will know that His attributes are not like that of man.

His characteristics, such as speech or anything else, are not like the characteristics of humans because of the difference between the characteristics of the Creator and those of created beings.

(57) It is true that the people of Paradise will see Allah, without encompassing Him and in a manner that is unknown to us.

The *Ru'yah* (vision) refers to believers seeing their Lord the Most High. The believers will see their Lord in the afterlife in plain view with their sight, like they see the moon on the night of a full moon, and like they see the sun in a clear sky without clouds, as the Muṣṭafā ﷺ has told about in an authentic ḥadīth and successive (*mutawātir*) ḥadīths attributed to him. Accordingly, the

author said: "The *Ru'yah* (Vision) ... is true": that is, it is well-established in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and unanimous agreement of the predecessors (*salaf*) and successors (*khalaf*) of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah*.¹⁶ No one has disagreed on that other than the innovators and followers of fallacious doctrines.

Thus, the believers will see their Lord, as Allah ﷻ says:

"[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant Looking (nāẓirah) at their Lord." [Qur'ān 75:22-23]

Those are the faces of the believers. 'Radiant' (*nāẓirah*) means that they will be spectacular and beautiful. Allah ﷻ says:

"You will recognize in their faces the radiance of pleasure." [Qur'ān 83:24]

'Nāẓirah' means to watch something with sight. It is said, '*naẓartu ilā kadhā*' (I looked at something); that is to say 'I saw it', from sight. The root of the word "*n - ẓ - r*" has different uses in the Qur'ān. If it is transitive by way of the preposition *ilā* (to/at), then it denotes vision and sight. Allah ﷻ says:

"Then do they not look (yanẓurūn) at the camels – how they are created? And at the sky – how it is raised?" [Qur'ān 88:17-18]

Meaning 'do they not see those wonderful creations that demonstrate Allah's ﷻ omnipotence with their sight?!' In this verse,

"Looking at (ilā) their Lord (ilā Rabbihā nāẓirah)." [Qur'ān 75:22-23]

"*Naẓar*" is transitive by way of the preposition *ilā*.

If the verb "*naẓar*" is transitive without a preposition, then it means to stop and wait. Allah ﷻ says:

¹⁶ It is related that Jarir ibn 'Abdullah al-Bajali ؓ said: "We were with the Prophet ﷺ and he looked at the moon on the night of a full moon and said: 'Verily, you will see your Lord as you see this moon. You will have no trouble seeing Him.'" [al-Bukhārī, no. 8; Muslim, no. 16]

“On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, ‘Wait for us (unḡurūnā) that we may acquire some of your light.’” [Qur’ān 57:13]

Which means ‘wait for us so that we can take some of your light’, as the lights of the hypocrites will be extinguished (and Allah ﷻ is our refuge) and they will remain in darkness and ask the believers to wait for them so that they can draw from their light. The Most High also says:

“Do they await but that Allah should come to them...” [Qur’ān 2:210]

Meaning that, ‘they are only waiting for the coming of the Lord on Judgment Day to judge between His slaves’.

Whenever "naḡar" is transitive by way of the preposition *fī* (in, about), it denotes thought and reflection, like when Allah ﷻ says:

“Do they not reflect on (yanḡurūn fī) the realm of the heavens and the earth and everything that Allah has created and [think] that perhaps their appointed time has come near?” [Qur’ān 7:185]

That is, think about the creations of Allah ﷻ high and low, and infer the omnipotence of the Creator and His worthiness to be worshipped.

To sum up, whenever "naḡar" is transitive by way of *ilā*, it denotes sight and vision.

Allah ﷻ says:

“For them who have done good is the best [reward] and extra.” [Qur’ān 10:26]

The Prophet ﷺ explained that ‘the best reward’ (*al-ḡusnā*) is Jannah and that the ‘extra’ (*ziyādah*) is to see Allah’s ﷻ Face, as related in the *Ṣaḡīḡ* of Muslim.¹⁷

Allah ﷻ also says:

¹⁷Muslim, no. 181; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2557.

“They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more.” [Qur’ān 50:35]

‘More’ (*mazīd*) is to see the Face of Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says about the disbelievers:

**“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”
[Qur’ān 83:15]**

In other words, they are partitioned from Allah ﷻ, that is, they will not be able to see Him, because they disbelieved in Him on earth, so they are veiled from seeing Him on the Day of Judgment. This is the greatest deprivation and punishment (Allah ﷻ is our refuge). These verses indicate that the believers are not veiled from Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment, and that they see Him in the afterlife because they believe in Him in this world though they do not see Him but rather look to His signs and messages as evidence; and so Allah ﷻ will honour them by allowing them to see Him on the Day of Resurrection.

To see Allah’s ﷻ Face is the greatest blessing in Jannah.

This is the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah*, and this is some of their evidence from the Qur’ān.

There is also so much evidence from the Sunnah that it is to the level of concurrence, or successiveness (*tawātur*), as ibn al-Qayyim states in *Ḥādī al-Arwāḥ ilā Bilād al-Afrāḥ*. There he cites ḥadīths involving *Ru’yah*, and they are so many that they have reached the degree of *tawātur*.

One of those ḥadīths is the following: The Prophet ﷺ said:

“You will see your Lord on the Day of Judgment as you see the moon on the night of a full moon, and as you see the sun clearly without clouds. You do not doubt (*tuḍamūn*) seeing Him and you do not crowd each other (*tuḍammūn*) to see Him.”

That is to say that they do not crowd (*tazdahimūn*) each other to see Allah ﷻ, because everyone sees their Lord from their places without crowding, just as people see the sun and moon without crowding. Usually, if something is on earth and is subtle, people crowd each other to see it. But if something is up high, like the sun or moon, they do not crowd each other to see it. Everyone

sees it from the places they are in. Since this is true for created beings, then with even more certainty, it is true for the Creator.¹⁸

No one has denied the *Ru'yah* besides some heretical groups, such as the Jahmīs and Mu'tazilites, who reject the *Ru'yah*, saying that Allah ﷻ being in a certain direction is a necessary consequence of the confirmation (*ithbāt*) of the *Ru'yah*. For them, Allah ﷻ is neither within nor outside of the universe, and He is neither above nor below, neither to the right nor to the left; he is in no specific direction. This means that Allah ﷻ would have to be nonexistent. Far be it from Allah ﷻ what they say about Him. They reject the *Ru'yah* because of this false reasoning.

The Ash'arīs, on the other hand, because they are not able to deny the evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, they confirm the *Ru'yah* but say that Allah ﷻ is seen but not in any specific direction. This is a startling contradiction! There is nothing that is seen but is not in a certain direction. On that basis, the Mu'tazilites responded to them because of that being impossible. *Ahl al-Sunnah* say that Allah ﷻ is seen while He is high above them. So if what is meant by a 'direction' is a characteristic of created things, then Allah does not have a direction, because He is under no circumstances within the creation.

If what is meant by 'highness' is being above all created beings, then this is something that is confirmed about Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ is high above the heavens. Direction, however, is neither confirmed nor denied in the Qur'ān; however, the aforementioned details can be said about it.

"Without encompassing Him and in a manner that is unknown": It means that they do not fully encompass Allah ﷻ. They see him but do not encompass Him. Allah ﷻ is great and cannot be encompassed. Allah ﷻ says:

"...but they do not encompass Him in knowledge." [Qur'ān 20:110]

Allah ﷻ also says:

"Vision perceives Him not." [Qur'ān 6:103]

In other words, He is not comprehended by sight. It does not mean that He cannot be seen. Allah ﷻ did not say that He cannot be seen by sight but rather

¹⁸Al-Bukhārī, no. 554, 806 & 7434; Muslim, no. 182: "...tuḍārrūn..."

that ‘vision does not encompass Him’. Encompassment is one thing and seeing is something else. This is also a response to those who deduce the non-occurrence of the Ru’yah from this verse, those who say that the Ru’yah is impossible because Allah ﷻ said that He is not comprehended by sight (*lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār*). We say to them ‘you do not know the meaning of “Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision”’.

“Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision” means that He is not comprehended by sight. It does not mean that He cannot be seen by sight. Allah ﷻ has not said that He is not seen by sight.

They also cited as evidence the fact that Mūsā ﷺ said:

“My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.’ [Allah] said, ‘You will not see Me.’” [Qur’ān 7:143]

This is their evidence for denying the Vision.

We say to them: This is on earth, because Mūsā ﷺ asked that when he was on earth and no one sees Allah on earth, not the Prophets and not anyone else. In the afterlife, however, the believers will see their Lord, and the situation on earth is not like the situation in the afterlife. On earth, people have weak bodies and senses, and they are not able to see Allah ﷻ. In the afterlife, however, Allah ﷻ gives them the strength to be able to see their Lord, out of honour for them.

That is why when Mūsā ﷺ asked his Lord in this verse, Allah ﷻ said:

“You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.’ But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level...” [Qur’ān 7:143]

The mountain crumbled to dust, yet a mountain cannot hear and is solid, so what would happen to a created being that is made from flesh, blood, and bones? He could not see Allah ﷻ in this world.

The fact that Mūsā ﷺ asked Allah ﷻ is evidence that it is plausible and possible, because Mūsā ﷺ would not ask his Lord for something impossible; rather, he asked Him about something that is possible. It will not, however, happen in this world. Allah ﷻ says: **“You will not see Me...”** but He did not say, I am not to be seen.

Allah ﷻ will thus be seen in the afterlife. And the most worthy people of seeing Him are the Prophets.¹⁹

The author says: "...and in a manner unknown": One should not say, 'How do they see Allah ﷻ?' Because like all other attributes of Allah the Almighty, we do not know the exact nature; so we believe in it and we know what it means and we confirm it; however, the manner is unknown, and we do not know it. Only Allah ﷻ knows it.

(58) As the Book of our Lord has told: "Some faces that Day will be radiant, Looking at their Lord." [Qur'ān 75:22-23]

This clearly shows that it is to see Allah ﷻ with sight as the verb is transitive by way of the preposition *ilā*, which then means to see with sight. The Mu'tazilites say that *ilā* in "*ilā Rabbihim*" (at their Lord) is a plural form of 'favours' (*ilyah*). In other words, they are 'waiting (*nāzīrah*) for the favours (*ilā*) of their Lord'. Anyone who possesses reason would laugh at a fallacy such as this, as a preposition cannot change into a plural form.

(59) The explanation of this is only as Allah knows and wills.

This means that the explanation of "**Looking at their Lord.**" [Qur'ān 75:23] is only as Allah ﷻ intended, that is, to see Him with sight, not as the innovators intend.

¹⁹ It is related that Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "There are two gardens, and the vessels and all that is in them are made of silver; and there are two gardens, and the vessels and all that is in them are made of gold, and nothing comes between the people seeing their Lord but the clothing of *kibr* on His Face in the Garden of Eden." [al-Bukhārī, no. 4878, 4880; Muslim, no. 180]

(60) Everything that is related in a *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth* from the Messenger ﷺ regarding this is [exactly] how he said.

Everything that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said regarding the confirmation of the *Ruy'ah* is true and literal, just as what is found in the Qur'ān. It is obligatory to believe in it because the word of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is divine revelation from Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.” [Qur'ān 53:3-4]

It is called '*al-waḥy al-thānī*' (the second divine revelation), and the Prophet ﷺ stated in many *ḥadīths* that have *mutawātir isnāds* (concurrent chains of transmission) that the believers see their Lord on the Day of Judgment, so it is obligatory to have faith in that without *tahrīf* (distorting the meaning), *ta'tīl* (depriving it of its meaning), *tamthīl* (likening it to the creation), or *takyīf* (assigning an outright qualitative designation).

(61) It means what he intended.

The narrations concerning this mean what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ meant, not what the innovators and those who distort the meaning meant.

(62) We do not interpret it according to our own opinions or base our conceptions upon our whims and inclinations;

This is the manner in which the Jahmīs, Mu'tazilites, and those who learn from them do. They adopt their own reasoning, leading to false interpretations.

Rather, what is obligatory upon us is to follow the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and not allowing our minds and thoughts to interfere and judge over what is stated in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Instead it is obligatory to make the Qur'ān and Sunnah judge over our minds and thoughts.²⁰

(63) Because no one is safe in his religion except the one who surrenders himself completely to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ;

'Surrender' means to accept whatever Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ say, and to have faith in that accordingly, without intervening by *tahrīf* (distortion) or *ta'wīl* (interpretation). This is what it means to submit (*taslīm*).

Imām al-Shāfi'ī رحمه الله said: "I believe in Allah and what has come in the Book of Allah according to the intent of Allah ﷻ; and I believe in the Messenger of Allah, and what has come from the Messenger of Allah, according to the intent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." In other words, not according to *hawā* (desires), distortions, or upon the opinions of men.²¹

One has to accept, submit and refer anything unclear (in terms of meaning or nature) back to someone who knows, namely, to Allah the Most High. If something is problematic for someone, they should refer it back to those who have knowledge, and there is always someone with higher knowledge. If those who have knowledge (scholars) do not know about that thing, then the matter should be entrusted to Allah the Almighty.

²⁰ It is related that 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "The most hated men to Allah are those who are most vehement in their disputes." Al-Bukhārī, no. 2457; Muslim, no. 2668

²¹ Abu 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī رحمه الله said: "Feats of the mind end in restraint, and the works of men are ultimately in error. And our souls are in isolation of our bodies, and the outcome of worldly ways is harm and plague. And we did not gain anything from our life-long search besides a collection of statements of men." See *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah*, 8/96.

(64) And refers to those who know for the knowledge of matters unclear to him.

This is why when the Prophet ﷺ asked his companions about things they did not know, they would say, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best’. They did not delve into enigmas or conjecture.

Therefore if you find a reliable person with knowledge to explain something unclear to you, then that is good; otherwise, continue to accept it and believe that it is true and that it does have a meaning, but that meaning is not clear to you.

(65) One’s Islām is not secure unless it is based on acceptance and submission.

The correct belief in Islām is based only on submission to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.” [Qur’ān 4:65]

‘Submission’ is acceptance and obedience to whatever Allah and His Messenger ﷺ say.

(66) He who seeks the knowledge of what is beyond his capacity to know, and whose intellect is not content with surrender, his search will veil him from true faith in Allah's oneness (*tawḥīd*), from clear knowledge, and from correct faith.

In regards to asserting faith in things that are impossible to know, such as the nature (*kayfiyah*) [of Allah's attributes], it is obligatory to believe in these things and refer knowledge of them back to Allah ﷻ.

“And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, ‘What did Allah intend by this as an example?’” [Qur’ān 2:26]

Allah ﷻ says:

“It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] clear – they are the foundation of the Book – and others not entirely clear. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is not entirely clear, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah.” [Qur’ān 3:7]

Allah ﷻ has kept some knowledge hidden from created beings, so do not tire yourself. Then He said: {But those firm in knowledge say,

“‘We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.’ And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.” [Qur’ān 3:7]

They submit and accept, and the fact that they do not know what it means does not keep them from having faith in it and accepting it. Or it could mean that they refer the ambiguous parts (*mutashābih*) of the Book of Allah back to the clear, unambiguous parts (*muḥkam*) for the interpretation of them and to get a clear meaning of them; and they say, ‘All of it is from our Lord’.

(67) He will find himself wavering between disbelief and faith, belief and denial, acceptance and rejection;

Knowledge of Allah ﷻ and the truth is obscured from those who do not submit to Allah ﷻ or the Prophet ﷺ. They become entangled in mazes and fall into error.²²

This is the condition of the hypocrites, those who waver in faith and are sometimes with the Muslims and sometimes with the hypocrites and who sometimes believe and sometimes disbelieve.

“Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still].” [Qur’ān 2:20]

Those who have faith, on the other hand, talk about what they know, and what they do not know they entrust the knowledge of it to Allah ﷻ, and they do not take it upon themselves to do something they do not know or say something about Allah ﷻ that they do not know. To speak about Allah ﷻ without knowledge is equal to idolatry, nay it is even greater than it. Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘My Lord has only forbidden immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed – and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.’” [Qur’ān 7:33]

Here, Allah ﷻ says that speaking about Allah ﷻ without knowledge is greater than idolatry, which demonstrates the seriousness of speaking about Allah ﷻ without knowledge.

²² Abdullah ibn Mas’ūd ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The *mutanaṭṭi'ūn* are doomed." He said that three times. (Muslim, no. 2670). "The *mutanaṭṭi'ūn* are those who go into things too deeply and are excessive in speech. Those who speak from the depths of their throats. It is derived from *naṭ'*, the hard palate of the mouth, and it is further used for going deeply into any word or act." (Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāyah*, 5/74).

(68) Subject to satanic whispers, lost and in doubt, being neither a true believer nor an obstinate denier.

This is the state of those who waver in faith and are hypocrites, they are always in doubt. They also waver in faith, because they are not strong in Islām and have not submitted to Allah ﷻ or to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Accordingly, Allah ﷻ says about the hypocrites:

“Wavering between them, [belonging] neither to the believers nor to the disbelievers.” [Qur’ān 4:143]

“And when they meet those who believe, they say, ‘We believe’; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, ‘Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers.’ [But] Allah mocks them and prolongs them in their transgression [while] they wander blindly.” [Qur’ān 2:14-15]

(69) One has not correctly believed in the *ru'yah* of the people of Dār al-Salām (Jannah), if he tries to imagine what it will be like or interprets it according to his intellect;

Dār al-Salām is Jannah. "One has not correctly believed in the *ru'yah*," namely, seeing Allah ﷻ in Jannah, if he interprets it or denies the reality of it and does not submit to Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and intervenes with his own ideas or understanding.

(70) Because the interpretation of this *ru'yah*, and the interpretation of every attribute associated with the Lordship (*rubūbiyah*) is by avoiding one's personal interpretations and committing to strict acceptance.

Everything here emphasises the aforementioned, namely that it is obligatory to accept everything that Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ have said, which includes the *Ru'yah*. We do not involve ourselves in it like the followers of innovations, but rather confirm it and believe in it as it is. We confirm that the believers see their Lord in the *'araṣāt* (the place where Judgment will take place) on the Day of Judgment before they enter Jannah. They also see him after entering Jannah as an honour for them for having believed in Him in the worldly life without seeing Him.

(71) The religion of the Muslims is according to this.

The religion of the Muslims is in accordance with these beliefs, namely assertion of faith and acceptance of everything that Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ have said, and not to interfere in this with one's own understanding, conceptions, false interpretations, and deviant distortions. This is the religion of Islām, unlike non-Muslims: they interfere in what Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ have said and distort the proper usages of the words.

(72) He who does not take caution against *nafy* (negating Allah's ﷻ attributes) and *tashbīh* (declaring that Allah's ﷻ attributes resemble that of the creation), has erred and not properly affirmed Allah's transcendence;

As mentioned, there is a necessary middle course between *ta'ṭīl* (divesting Allah ﷻ of His attributes) and *tashbīh* (assimilation). One should not be so excessive in asserting Allah's transcendence as to divest Allah ﷻ of His attributes as the *Mu'aṭṭilah* do; and also not excessive in confirmation (*ithbāt*) so as to declare that He resembles His creations. Rather, one should be moderate and confirm what Allah ﷻ asserted about Himself and what His Messenger ﷺ has asserted about Him, without *tashbīh* (asserting resemblances), *tamthīl* (asserting equality), *ta'ṭīl* (divesting Allah ﷻ of His attributes), and without *takyīf* (asserting a specific nature/mannerism).

This is because there is nothing like Allah ﷻ, nothing resembles Him, and He has no equal.

(73) For our Lord, the Most High possesses the attributes of oneness (*waḥdānīyah*);

The attributes of oneness are that Allah ﷻ is One and does not share His *Rubūbiyah* (lordship), His *Ulūhiyah* (worship), and names and attributes with anyone. Thus, He is One in all of these realities.

(74) And the qualities of uniqueness (*fardānīyah*). No created being shares the reality [of those attributes].

The 'qualities' are the attributes of perfection and qualities of majesty, which do not resemble anything in His creation. In fact, His names and attributes are exclusively His and they are befitting of Him. Similarly, the characteristics and names of created things are specific to and appropriate for them. Knowing the truth and dissociating oneself from the ways of the *Mu'aṭṭilah* and the *Mushabbihah* are based on this.

(75) He is beyond having limits, ends, parts, limbs, and instruments.

This contains a kind of (ambiguous) brevity: If he means created limits, then Allah ﷻ transcends limits and incarnation in any of His creation. If he considered 'limits' to be non-created limits, namely the direction of highness, then this is something confirmed about Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ does not transcend highness because that is the truth, so it is not a matter of limits or a matter of created direction.

There is (ambiguous) brevity in 'ends' (*ghāyāt*). It can be interpreted correctly or incorrectly. If what is meant by *ghāyāt* is wisdom in creating all creations, and that He created them with wisdom, then that is true. However, it should be said 'wisdom' and not 'end' (*ghāyah*). Allah ﷻ says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” [Qur’ān 51:56]

If what is meant by *ghāyāt* is the need for creations, then, yes, it is correct to deny this. Allah ﷻ did not create the creation for some need of them, as Allah ﷻ is free from need of everyone.

"...parts, limbs, and instruments": There is also (ambiguous) brevity here. If what is meant by 'parts, limbs, and instruments' is the attributes of Allah's ﷻ being (*dhāt*), such as the Face and Hands, then those are true, and it is wrong to deny them. And if what is meant is to deny limbs that share similarities with the limbs and instruments of created things, then Allah ﷻ transcends that. As relating to dimensions and limbs, in short, it requires further elaboration:

First: If what is meant is to deny the attributes of Allah's ﷻ being (*dhāt*), such as the Face or Hands, and the other attributes of His being (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) that have been confirmed, then it is incorrect.

Second: If what is meant, on the other hand, is that Allah ﷻ transcends having the dimensions, parts, and instruments of created things, then yes, Allah ﷻ transcends that, as none of His creations are like Him – neither in His being, His names, nor His attributes.

To sum up, the language put forth by the author has an element of (ambiguous) brevity, nevertheless it should be interpreted correctly because he was an adherent of the Sunnah and *Jamā'ah*, ﷺ. Furthermore, he was an imām of the ḥadīth scholars, so he could not have meant anything wrong but rather he meant the correct meanings. One would hope that he would have elaborated and clarified and not left it so ambiguous.

(76) He is not bound by the six directions of space like all created beings are.

This is somewhat ambiguously brief. If what is meant is the directions of created beings, then Allah ﷻ transcends that as nothing contains Him; and if what is meant is the direction of highness and that He is above all created things, then this is true and it is wrong to deny it. Perhaps the author means by the 'six dimensions' created directions, and not the direction of highness, because the author ﷺ confirms Allah's ﷻ highness, and he also confirms the *istiwa'* (Allah ﷻ rising above the Throne [*al-'Arsh*]).

(77) And the *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) is true. The Prophet ﷺ was taken on the journey by night (*Al-Isrā*);

Isrā' means to 'travel by night', and the Prophet ﷺ was taken by night on a journey from *al-Masjid al-Harām* (the Sacred Mosque) to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* in a single night.

It was Jibrīl ﷺ who took him by the command of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqṣa...” [Qur'ān 17:1]

This was one of the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ because such a distance could only be travelled in a month or more, and the Prophet ﷺ travelled it in one night.

The *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) is the means of ascension. And 'araja means 'to ascend' (*ša'ada*). Allah ﷻ says:

“The angels and the Spirit will ascend (ta'ruju) to Him...” [Qur'ān 70:4]

That is, they ascend (*taṣ'udu*). Thus, 'urūj has the same meaning as *ṣu'ūd*. It has been confirmed that the Prophet ﷺ was involved in both.²³

The *Isrā'* (Night Journey) was undertaken from the Sacred Mosque to the al-Aqsa Mosque, and the *Mi'rāj* from earth to the heavens. All of this happened in one night: He was taken by night on a journey to Bayt al-Maqdis where he led the Prophets in prayer, and then he ascended to the heavens and went past the seventh level, and Allah ﷻ showed him the greatest signs that He showed him. Then, he descended to earth, and Jibrīl ﷺ brought him back to the place where he had first taken him for the journey, in one night.

The *Isrā'* is mentioned in Sūrat al-*Isrā'* and the *Mi'rāj* is mentioned in Sūrat al-*Najm*.

“By the star when it descends, your companion [Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred, nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed, Taught to him by one intense in strength...” - meaning Jibrīl ﷺ - “One of soundness. And he rose to [his] true form While he was in the higher [part of the] horizon.” [Qur'ān 53:1-7]

This is the 'Urūj. **“Then he approached...”** His Lord, or it means that Jibrīl ﷺ approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

“...and descended and was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer. And he revealed to His Servant what he revealed.” [Qur'ān 53:8-10]

²³ The ḥadīth of the *Isrā'* (Night Journey) and *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) is related by al-Bukhārī, no. 3207 & 7517, and Muslim, no. 162.

The *Isrā'* and the *Mi'rāj* are both true. Anyone who denies them or considers them implausible has disbelieved in Allah ﷻ, and anyone who assigns an interpretation to them has gone astray. It was none other than the idolaters who denied those events. If anyone says that it was his soul that travelled and not his body, or that it was a dream and not when he was awake, then he is astray, because Allah ﷻ said that He took His Slave on a journey by night (*asrā bi-'abdihi*), and *'abd* (slave) denotes both soul and body. It is not said that a soul (*rūh*) is a 'slave'. The Night Journey happened in a state of wakefulness and was not a dream, because dreams are not so significant. All people have dreams and see amazing things, and this is not something specific to the Prophet ﷺ.

(78) And he ascended his bodily form to the heavens while awake;

"He ascended in his bodily form" is a response to those who say that he ascended in spirit. Rather, he ascended in person, as 'bodily form' denotes both spirit and body, and Allah ﷻ says that He *asrā bi-'abdihi* (took His slave on a journey by night).

(79) And then to whatever high places Allah willed. Allah honoured him as He so willed.

This is the Ascension to the heavens.

(80) And He revealed to him what he revealed. "The heart did not lie [about] what it saw." [Qur'ān 53:11]

Allah ﷻ divinely inspired to him at that place what He divinely inspired and Allah ﷻ spoke to him, but he did not see Allah ﷻ because Allah ﷻ is not seen in this world.

This is the Ascension mentioned in Sūrat al-Najm (Qur'ān 53).

(81) May Allah give him peace and blessings in this life and the next.

This is one of the rights of the Prophet ﷺ, to pray for blessings and peace for Him when he is mentioned. Allah ﷻ states:

“Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.” [Qur'ān 33:56]

By morning, when the Prophet ﷺ told the idolaters of Makkah about this incident, they were in utmost disbelief of the whole thing and used it to discredit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They said, “We travel to Palestine in a month or longer and he says he travelled in one night!” Some people, who were weak in faith, abandoned their faith because of this incident. Those who had true faith, however, remained steadfast and believed in it. To this effect, when it was said to Abū Bakr ؓ, “What do you think about what your companion has said?” He said: “What has he said?” They said: He says that he went to Bayt al-Maqdis and came back in one night. He said: “If he said so, then it is as he said because he does not speak of his own accord.” And He said: “I believe in what he tells of the heavens [that is, the divine revelation], should I not believe him in this?” This is strong, firm faith that is unwavering.

(82) The Ḥawḍ (pool) with which Allah has honoured him, to quench the thirst of his Ummah [on the Day of Judgement], is real.

Among the beliefs of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah* is what has been authentically reported about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as relates to the Day of Judgment, and the things that take place on that Day, such as the *Ḥawḍ*. The Prophet ﷺ said that he will have a pool²⁴ on the Day of Judgment at the place of Resurrection and that he will give it to his followers (those who believe in him and follow him) to drink from. After drinking from it just once, they will never thirst thereafter. This is because the Day of Judgment will be severe and difficult, and it will be extremely hot.

So there will be extreme thirst, and Allah ﷻ made this pool to quench the thirst of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ. It is known that both the earth and living things gain life from the rain that Allah ﷻ sends down from the heavens. The same goes for the *Ḥawḍ*. It is water that Allah ﷻ provides to quench the thirst of people during their severe need for water.

A *ḥawḍ* is a pool of water. The Prophet ﷺ described it as being a great pool: the length of which is one month's travel and the width of which is one month's travel. Its vessels are many as the stars of the heavens, and whoever drinks from it will never thirst thereafter. Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey.²⁵

The Prophet ﷺ also said that some people will come to it and then be driven away and prevented from drinking from it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ will say: "O Lord, my Ummah! My Ummah!" And Allah ﷻ will say: "You do not know what they have innovated after you." So the Prophet ﷺ will say: "Away with those who changed and altered."²⁶ He will thus prevent the misguided people of innovation, those who opposed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who committed disbelief, turned back on their heels and abandoned the Sunnah and who instead adopted their own deviant whims, desires and opinions. Those people will be prevented from the *Ḥawḍ* of the Prophet ﷺ because they have changed and altered the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ and no one will come to it besides those who follow the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in word, action, and belief.

²⁴ It is related that Anas ibn Mālik ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The size of my *Ḥawḍ* is like what is between Aylah and San'ā' in Yemen, and it has jugs like the number of stars in the heavens." Al-Bukhārī, no. 6580; Muslim, no. 2303

²⁵ It is related that 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ؓ said: "The Prophet ﷺ said: 'My pool is one month's travel, its water is whiter than milk, its scent sweeter than musk, and its vessels are many as the stars in the heavens. Whoever drinks from it shall never thirst again.'" Al-Bukhārī, no. 6579; Muslim, no. 2292

²⁶ Al-Bukhārī, no. 6582, 6584 & 70518; Muslim, no. 2291, 2304.

Some scholars of Islām hold that the *kawthar* mentioned in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muḥammad], al-Kawthar;”
[Qur’ān 108:1] - is the *Ḥawḍ* while others hold that *kawthar* means 'much good'.

Undoubtedly, the *Ḥawḍ* is included among those good things as it is a good thing for the Ummah²⁷. This is the *Ḥawḍ* of the Prophet ﷺ and it is necessary to believe in it and to hold fast to the Sunnah, in order to come to the *Ḥawḍ* and not be driven away from it on the Day of Judgment.

(83) The *Shafā’ah* (intercession), allocated to his ﷺ followers, is real, as related in the aḥādīth.

The *shafā’ah* (intercession) is also an important matter of faith²⁸, because some people have gone astray with regards to confirming it. Some people have gone to excess in confirming it, while others followed a middle course.

On the Day of Judgment, there are three categories of people when it comes to intercession:

People who are excessive in confirming it, thereby seeking intercession from the dead, the graves, idols, trees and stones. Allah ﷻ says:

²⁷ It is related that Sa’id ibn Jubayr related that he heard ibn ‘Abbās ؓ as saying about *kawthar* that it is "the good that Allah gave him". Abū Bishr said: "I said to Sa’id ibn Jubayr: 'People say that it is a river in Jannah.' Sa’id replied: 'The river in Jannah is among the good that Allah has given him.' Al-Bukhārī, no. 4966, 6578 It is related that Anas ibn Mālik ؓ said: "One day, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was among us, he fell asleep and then lifted his head with a smile, so we said: "What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "A *sūrah* was sent down to me just now." He read: {Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muḥammad], al-Kawthar.} Then, he said: 'Do you know what *kawthar* is?' We said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best'. He said: 'It is a river my Lord has promised me. There is much good in it. And it is a pool that my ummah will come to on the Day of Judgment.'" Muslim, no. 400.

²⁸ The ḥādīth of the Intercession has been recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3340, 4712 & 7510), and Muslim (no. 193 & 194). It states: "...Go to the Prophet ﷺ, and they will come to me and I will fall in prostration below the Throne, and it will be said, O Muḥammad, raise your head and intercede and your intercession will be granted, ask and you will be given."

“And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’” [Qur’ān 10:18]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And those who take protectors besides Him [say], ‘We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.’” [Qur’ān 39:3]

People who are excessive in their denial of the intercession. Among these sects are the Mu’tazilites and the Khārijites as they deny any intercession for those who commit major sins (*kabā’ir*). Thus they contradicted concurrent (*mutawātir*) pieces of evidence from the Qur’ān and Sunnah that confirm Intercession.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l Jamā’ah steer a middle course and confirm intercession in the manner that Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ have mentioned and they believe in it neither in excess nor in negligence.

Linguistically speaking, the word *shafā’ah* is derived from *shaf* (even, or pair), which is the opposite of *witr* (odd, or singular). *Witr* is a single unit. *Shaf* is anything greater than one (two, four, six...). It is what is known as even numbers.

In Islām, intercession means mediation to fulfil certain things. It is mediation between anyone who has a need and someone who can furnish that need. This is of two kinds: intercession with Allah ﷻ, and intercession with people.

Intercession with people is of two kinds:

To intercede in a good cause (*shafā’ah ḥasanah*), which is that you mediate with someone who is able to provide the good, beneficial, and permissible needs of people.

Allah ﷻ says:

“Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a reward therefrom.” [Qur’ān 4:85]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Intercede and you will be rewarded, and Allah fulfils what He permitted on the tongue of His Messenger.”²⁹

This is intercession in a good cause. It entails a reward because it is a benefit to Muslims and gets their needs fulfilled and provides for the things that they desire and that are of benefit to them, and it does not involve any offense or injustices against anyone.

To intercede in a bad cause, which is to mediate in forbidden matters, such as interceding to have someone exempted from a *ḥadd* penalty, if a *ḥadd* crime was committed.

This is included among those who the Prophet ﷺ cursed in his saying:

“Allah cursed one who shelters an offender.”³⁰

Intercession can also be used to infringe the rights of others and transfer property to the wrong people. Allah ﷻ says:

“...and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a burden therefrom.” [Qur’ān 4:85]

Intercession with Allah ﷻ, on the other hand, is not like intercession with created beings. Intercession with the Creator is that Allah ﷻ honours some of His slaves to pray for one of the Muslims who deserve punishment because they have committed major sins. The intercessor intercedes with Him to pardon them and not punish them because of them having worshipped Allah ﷻ alone. The intercessor intercedes with Allah ﷻ to pardon such people or for someone who enters the Fire because of sin – the intercessor intercedes with Allah ﷻ to have him brought out and relieved of the punishment. This is what is called intercession for those who commit major sins (*al-shafā’ah fī ahl al-kabā’ir*).

Notwithstanding, there are two prerequisites for intercession with Allah ﷻ:

29 Al-Bukhārī, no. 1432; Muslim, no. 2627.

30 It is related that ‘Ali ؓ said: “We have nothing but the Book of Allah and this parchment from the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Madīnah is a sanctuary from ‘Ā’ir Mountain to such and such a place, and whoever commits a sin there, or shelters an offender is cursed by Allah, the angels, and all the people, and no exchange or ransom will be accepted from him.” Al-Bukhārī, no. 1870; Muslim, no. 1370

1- Allah ﷻ has to permit this intercession. Before His permission, no one can approach Allah the Almighty.

“Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?” [Qur’ān 2:255]

It is not like created beings where people approach to intercede with them, even if they do not permit.

2- The second prerequisite is that the person who the intercession is for is someone who is from the people of *tawḥīd* (worships Allah ﷻ alone), *īmān* (has faith), and whom Allah ﷻ is pleased with in terms of his speech and actions.

Allah ﷻ says:

“...and they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves.” [Qur’ān 21:28]

Meaning those whom Allah ﷻ is pleased with in regards to their speech and actions. Both of these preconditions are mentioned in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.” [Qur’ān 53:26]

To summarize the first prerequisite for *shafā’ah* is that Allah ﷻ permits it, and the second is that Allah ﷻ approves of the person.

On the other hand, intercession is of no benefit to a disbeliever.

“So there will not benefit them the intercession of [any] intercessors.” [Qur’ān 74:48]

“For the wrongdoers there will be no devoted friend and no intercessor [who is] obeyed.” [Qur’ān 40:18]

Therefore there are two kinds of intercession in the Qur’ān:

1- A denied intercession (*shafā’ah manfiyah*), which is an intercession that does not meet the conditions.

2- A confirmed intercession (*shafā'ah muthbatah*), whose conditions are fulfilled.

Intercession is of no benefit to a disbeliever. If those in the heavens and on earth were to intercede on the behalf of one, Allah ﷻ would not accept any intercession for him, because he is an idolater and a disbeliever in Allah ﷻ, and Allah ﷻ is not pleased with his speech and actions.

An exception to that is the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ for his uncle, Abū Ṭālib. This is a special type of intercession, and it is not an intercession for him to be brought out of the Fire but rather for the punishment of that man to be lessened because of the aid, protection, and defence he provided for the Prophet ﷺ. So the Prophet ﷺ will only intercede for his punishment to be lessened.

The confirmed intercession is of several types:

Some of these types are exclusively for the Prophet ﷺ and some of them are common to both him and all other Prophets, angels, righteous people and those who die before maturity (*al-bulūgh*). All of these people intercede with Allah the Almighty.

The intercession that is exclusively for the Prophet ﷺ is also of several types:

1- His intercession for the people at the place of gathering (*ahl al-mawqif*). As they stand at length on the Day of Judgment and as their distress and crowding intensifies, the sun draws near to their heads, and great anguish abounds, the people at the place of Resurrection (*al-maḥshar*) seek someone to intercede for them for the Judgment to begin and to be removed from that place of standstill, either to Jannah or to the Fire. So they turn to Ādam ﷺ but he declines to do so out of reverence for such a position and for the majesty of Allah ﷻ. Then, they turn to Nūḥ ﷺ who was the first messenger of Allah, but he declines. Then, they turn to Mūsā ﷺ, to whom Allah ﷻ spoke, but he declines. Then, they turn to 'Īsā ﷺ but he declines as well. Then, they turn to Muḥammad ﷺ and he says: "It is for me, it is for me." Then, he comes and falls in prostration before Allah the Almighty, and he praises Him and prays until it is said to him, "Raise your head, ask and you shall be given, intercede and your intercession will be heard."³¹ After praying and seeking permission, he does not intercede directly, but rather prostrates himself, prays, praises Allah ﷻ and seeks His favour through His names and attributes. Then, he is given

31 Al-Bukhārī, no. 3340, 4712, 7510; Muslim, no. 193-194.

permission to intercede, and then he intercedes for the judgment of the creation to begin. Allah ﷻ accepts his intercession and comes to judge His slaves. Allah ﷻ says:

**“No! When the earth has been levelled – pounded and crushed –
And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank.”
[Qur’ān 89:21-22]**

Allah also says:

**“Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of
clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided?”
[Qur’ān 2:210]**

This is the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ to begin the judgment of the creations. It is an immense honour given to the Prophet ﷺ, the highest honour of praise (*al-maqām al-mahmūd*) about which Allah ﷻ says:

**“And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship]
for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a
praised station.” [Qur’ān 17:79]**

Because the first and the last praise him over it, and his virtue is shown at that great moment.

2- His intercession on behalf of the people of Jannah to be brought to Jannah.³² The first person whom the gate of Jannah will be opened to is Muḥammad ﷺ and he will be the first to enter³³. And the first of the communities of believers to enter it is his Ummah.

3- His intercession with Allah ﷻ to raise the ranks and degrees (*darajāt*) of the people of Jannah. He will intercede for people in order that Allah ﷻ raises their degrees in Jannah, and Allah will do so after his intercession.

32 It is related that Anas ibn Mālik ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I am the first intercessor in Jannah." -Muslim, no. 196.

33 It is related that Anas ibn Mālik ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'I will come to the gate of Jannah on the Day of Resurrection, and the gatekeeper will say, 'Who are you?' and I will say, 'Muḥammad.' Then, he will say, 'I was commanded not to open it for anyone before you.'" Muslim, no. 197.

4- The fourth intercession (which is general), is the intercession for the people of major sins (*kabā'ir*) among the Muslims, for those who deserve to enter the Fire to not enter it, and for those who have entered it to be brought out of it. This has been a focus of dispute among different sects. The Jahmīs and Khārijites, and those like them, deny it and say that those who enter the Fire do not come out of it. *Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah* confirm and believe in it as it is related in the texts. It is imperative that a Muslim believes and has faith in that and asks Allah ﷻ that the Prophet ﷺ intercedes on his behalf because he is in need of that.

The intercession on behalf of the people of major sins (*ahl al-kabā'ir*) is common to many: the angels, the Prophets, the righteous, and the pious all intercede³⁴, and children who die early (*al-afrāt*) will intercede for their parents.

5- His intercession on behalf of his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, who died an idolater and a follower of the religion of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the idolater. He said that he followed the religion of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and he died following it and is thus one of those who will abide in the Fire forever. However, Allah the Almighty accepts the intercession of His Messenger ﷺ for his punishment to be lessened, so he will be in a shallow part (*ḍahḍāḥ*) of the Fire. It will be thought that no one is receiving punishment worse than him, although he is to receive the lightest punishment of those in the Fire.³⁵

(84) The Covenant (*mīthāq*) that Allah made with Ādam ﷺ and his descendants is real.

The Covenant (*mīthāq*) that Allah ﷻ made with Ādam ﷺ and his descendants, namely that they worship Him and do not associate anything as partners with

34 It is related that Abū Sa'īd ؓ said, as attributed to the Prophet ﷺ "Allah says, '...The angels have interceded, the Prophets have interceded, and the believers have interceded, and no one remains but the Most Merciful of the merciful.'" He will then take a handful from the Fire and bring out of it people who never did any good and who had been turned into charcoal, and He will cast them into a river called the River of Life..." Muslim, no. 183.

35 It is related that al-'Abbās ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib ؓ said to the Prophet ﷺ: "What have you availed your uncle, for he used to protect you and stand up for you?" He said: "He is in a shallow part of the Fire, and if it were not my sake, he would have been in the lowest depths of the Fire." [al-Bukhārī, no. 3883; Muslim, no. 209]

Him, is real. This is according to what has been related in a ḥadīth in which the Prophet ﷺ told us that Allah ﷻ brought forth the descendants of Ādam ؑ from his loin (*zahrīhī*) in the form of very small particles (*dharr*), and He called them as witnesses to testify against themselves that Allah ﷻ is one. He made a covenant with them to worship Him and not worship anything alongside Him³⁶. We believe in that. This pledge and covenant did not suffice, but rather it was also necessary to send messengers in order to serve as a reminder and to preach what it entails.

As regards the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam – from their loins – their descendants...” [Qur’ān 7:172]

Some of the scholars of Qur’ānic interpretation (*tafsīr*) are upon the view that this is the pledge and covenant that Allah ﷻ made with the descendants of Ādam, but it is not so. Rather, this is something else. Allah ﷻ says: **“from their loins”** and not **‘from the loins’** (*zahr*) of Ādam ؑ. The verse goes on to say: **“and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes...’”** some scholars said that this is in relation to the natural disposition of faith (*fiṭrah*) that Allah ﷻ has created in mankind and the natural signs that Allah ﷻ has set up for them to know their Lord.

Allah ﷻ has thus created them with a natural disposition of the recognition of Allah’s ﷻ oneness (*tawḥīd*) and submission (*islām*)³⁷.

“So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiṭrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people.” [Qur’ān 30:30]

36 It is related that ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, Allah made the covenant with the loins of Ādam at Nu'mān [i.e. 'Arafah], and He brought forth from his spine (*ṣulbihi*) every seed (*dhurriyah*) that he would sow, and He scattered them before him and then He spoke to them as they stood in front Him, saying, 'Am I not your Lord,' and they said, 'Yes, we confess... what the falsifiers have done.' Aḥmad, no. 1/272; al-Ḥākim, 2/544. Al-Ḥākim said it is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and al-Dhahabī concurred with him. Al-Haythamī states in *Majma' al-Zawā'id* (7/25): Aḥmad related it and its men are those of *al-ṣaḥīḥ*. Shākir said it was authentic in his revision of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, no 2455.

37 It is related that Abū Hurayrah ؓ said: "The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Every child is born with *fiṭrah* and it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Naṣrānī (Christian) or a Majūsī (Magian). Just as a camel is born whole – do you perceive any severed limb?'” Then, Abū Hurayrah read (what means): **“[Adhere to] the fiṭrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people...”**

It is the religion of Islām and the religion of tawḥīd. Islām means the kind of tawḥīd that was brought by the Messengers. It means to worship Allah alone without partners. This is the correct religion.

Nonetheless, He has set up evidence of His *rubūbiyah* (lordship) in what they observe in the wonderful form and wonderful signs within themselves that point to the Creator. He has also set up the heavens, earth, and creations that point to the Creator. Those created things necessarily have a creator. They did not come about by chance or without a creator.

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.” [Qur’ān 52:35-36]

*“So it is indeed amazing how Allah ﷻ is disobeyed
and how those who disbelieve deny Him.*

*There are signs in everything
that point to Allah being One.”*

Everything in front of you points to the Oneness of Allah ﷻ, and testifies to the fact that it is Allah alone who created all of those things.

“Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah will never create [as much as] a fly, even if they gathered together for that purpose.” [Qur’ān 22:73]

The Creator is, therefore, Allah and there is no one who creates alongside Him. Therefore how can other things that neither create nor provide and are unable to help or harm themselves be worshipped?! What the verse

“And [mention] when your Lord took...”

means is that the natural disposition of faith (*fiṭrah*) and all objects attest to the Oneness of Allah and no one is to put forth an excuse on the Day of Judgment and say:

“Indeed, we were of this unaware.” [Qur’ān 7:172]

So, to put forth the argument of traditions is not appropriate against that decisive proof and clear evidence.

(85) Allah knew, before the existence of time, the exact number of those who will enter *Jannah* (Paradise) and the exact number of those who will enter the Fire. This number shall neither be greater nor smaller.

The *shaykh*’s ﷺ discourse from here forward has to do with *qadar* (predestination) and *qaḍā’* (preordainment).

Faith in predestination and preordainment is one of the six pillars of faith (*īmān*), as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Faith is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in *Qadar*, whether good or bad³⁸.”

In the Qur’ān, Allah ﷻ says:

“Indeed, all things We created with predestination.” [Qur’ān 54:49]

And He:

“...and has created each thing and determined it with [precise] predetermination.” [Qur’ān 25:2]

There is nothing that was not predestined and nothing that happens by chance or without intervention. Everything that happens is predestined and written.

Faith in *qaḍā’* and *qadar* involves four levels, summed up as follows:

³⁸ Al-Bukhārī, no. 50; Muslim, no. 10.

1- To have faith in the omniscience of Allah ﷻ, which comprehends all things, and that Allah ﷻ knew everything beforehand from eternity. He knew what was and what would be and what would not be, and how those things would have been. Nothing is hidden from His knowledge, Glorified be He.

This is the general “Writing” (*kitābah*) that comprehends all things. “The first thing that Allah ﷻ created was the Pen. He said, 'Write.' It said, 'what should I write?' He said, 'Write all that is to be until the Day of Judgment³⁹.'” So the Pen wrote all that is to be until the Day of Judgment.

2- Allah ﷻ wrote in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) the predetermined measures of all created things after having known that.

3- The level of the divine will (*mashī'ah*). Nothing happens in the universe except what Allah ﷻ wills and wants, as written on the Preserved Tablet, and according to His omniscience. Nothing happens outside of His will, and there is nothing inside of His kingdom that He does not want.

“Indeed, Allah does what He intends.” [Qur’ān 22:14]

“Such is Allah; He does what He wills.” [Qur’ān 3:40]

All of what occurs in this universe of life and death, wealth and poverty, faith and disbelief are things that Allah ﷻ has willed. He wills both good and bad. He wills both faith and disbelief. So everything is included in the will of Allah ﷻ. What He wills is, and what He does not will is not.

4- The level of creation and origination. What Allah ﷻ wills and wants, He brings into existence and creates.

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs.” [Qur’ān 39:62]

“His is the creation and the command.” [Qur’ān 7:54]

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being...” [Qur’ān 57: 22]

39 Abū Ya’lā, no. 2329, as ascribed to the Prophet (*marfū’*); al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, as ascribed to ibn ‘Abbās (*mawqūf*), 9/3. Abū Dāwūd, no. 4700; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2160.

There is much revealed evidence for omniscience of Allah ﷻ.

One of the attributes that Allah ﷻ ascribes to Himself is omniscience, or knowledge (*‘ilm*). Allah ﷻ knows how many people will enter Jannah and how many will enter the Fire. That is part of His eternal knowledge.

Whatever Allah ﷻ has predetermined does not increase or decrease. Among those things is that He knows the people of Jannah and the people of the Fire; He knows what they do. We believe in that and we act in accordance with it, and we do not discuss *qadar* and *qadā’*. For example: asking ‘how?’, ‘why?’ or ‘how can someone be held accountable for something that was predetermined?’ and other forms of nonsense, time wasting, and argumentation against Allah ﷻ.

The only thing one is obliged to do is to do good deeds and abstain from sins, and it is not a person's business to investigate the mysteries of Allah ﷻ and to put forth arguments against Him. To this effect, when the Prophet ﷺ told his companions that there is not a single one of them whose place in Jannah or the Fire is not written, they said: "O Messenger of Allah, should we not rely on what was written and abandon deeds?" He said:

“No. Do good deeds, for the path of each has been made easy for them⁴⁰.”

Allah ﷻ says:

“Indeed, your efforts are diverse. As for he who gives and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], We will ease him toward ease.” [Qur’ān 92:4-7]

The cause emanates from the person himself. He is either going to be one of the blessed, or one of the wretched.

“But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need and denies the best [reward], We will ease him toward difficulty.” [Qur’ān 92:8-10]

What is required of us is to do good deeds and leave bad ones.

40 Al-Bukhārī, no. 6605; Muslim, no. 2647.

Advancing *qadā'* and *qadar* as a pretext is not a sound excuse, because Allah ﷻ has made clear what is good and what is bad, so there are no excuses. People fall into trouble because of delving into matters that do not concern them. They say, for example, 'if Allah ﷻ has written that I will enter Jannah, I am going to enter it, and if He has written that I will enter the Fire, then I am going to enter it', and then they do not do any good deeds.

It should be said to them, "You would not say so when it comes to your everyday life. Do you sit at home and leave seeking sustenance and say, 'if Allah ﷻ has written that I will receive sustenance, then He will make that easy for me', or would you go out to work and seek livelihood? Animals and birds do not sit in their dens and nests but go out and seek sustenance". It has been related in a ḥadīth:

"If only you placed due trust in Allah ﷻ, He would provide for you as He provides for birds, they go out hungry in the morning and come back with full bellies in the evening."⁴¹

Allah has created birds so that they take the means and seek sustenance. Those are animals, and you are a rational human being!

Furthermore, if someone stole something from you, would you say, "This was predestined and preordained" or would you report it? Of course, you would report it and file a claim, and you would not advance predetermination as an argument.

(86) The same applies to the actions of people, as He knew what they would do.

That is, He knew what they would do from eternity.

41 Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 1/30, 52; 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, no. 10; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2344; ibn Mājah, no. 4169. At-Tirmidhī said: This ḥadīth is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*. Shākir said it was authentic in his revision of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, no. 205, 370, 373.

(87) The path of each shall be made easy for him.

Allah the Most High says:

“As for he who gives and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], We will ease him toward ease. But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need and denies the best [reward], We will ease him toward difficulty.” [Qur’ān 92:5-10]

(88) It is the final deeds that dictate one's fate.

It is the final deeds (*al-khawātīm*) that dictate one's fate. People should not be deceived by their good deeds, even if they are the most righteous of people. Rather, they should fear a bad ending, and no one is judged to be one of the people of the Fire based on their deeds, because their final deeds are not known. To explain, it is related that ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ related that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Each one of you is gathered in his mother's womb in the form of a drop for forty days. Then, he becomes an *‘alaqah* for the same. Then, he becomes a piece of flesh for the same. Then, the angel is sent to him and breathes the spirit into him, and it is commanded to write down four things: it writes his sustenance, his term, his deeds, and whether he is to be blessed or wretched. Verily, one of you keeps doing the deeds of the people of Jannah until there is nothing between him and it but a cubit, and so what was written comes to pass, and he does the deeds of the people of the Fire and enters it. And, verily, one of you keeps doing the deeds of the people of the Fire until there is

nothing between him and it but a cubit, and so he does the deeds of the people of Jannah and enters it.”⁴²

So people should fear having a bad ending to life (*khātimah*), and no one should be judged as having had a bad ending because how their life concludes is not known. Repentance wipes out everything before it.

“Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them.” [Qur’ān 8: 38]

So it is the final deeds that dictate someone's fate. However, out of Allah's ﷻ grace, those who live a good life are given a good ending, and those who live a bad life are given a bad ending. A person should take the necessary measures and think and expect good from Allah ﷻ.

Some people say, “I will repent before death”. We say to them, “Do you know when you are going to die? You could die at a moment when repentance is not possible, and you do not know whether your repentance will be accepted or not, because there are conditions for repentance”.

(89) The fortunate are those who are fortunate by Allah's decree, and the wretched are those who are wretched by Allah's decree.

A person is not wretched by Allah's ﷻ decree but rather by his deeds which Allah ﷻ has decreed for him. If Allah ﷻ decrees anyone to be either fortunate (*sa'īd*) or wretched (*shaqīy*), He makes that easy for them.

(90) Allah has kept the exact nature of the *qadar* (predestination) hidden from His creation;

⁴² Al-Bukhārī, no. 8023; Muslim, no. 3462.

That is, no one can solve its mystery, no matter how hard they tried to study *qadar*, so do not take it upon yourself to do so. Instead, have faith in it and do good deeds and abstain from bad deeds. Searching for the mysteries of *qadar*, on the other hand, is none of your concern or business, and you are not commanded to do so.

(91) Neither an angel nor a messenger sent to man has been given knowledge of it.

This is Allah's ﷻ affair, and a matter of the unseen which no one (neither the angels, nor the Prophets, nor anyone else) knows but Allah ﷻ. In fact, the most superior of all Messengers ﷺ said:

“And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth...”
[Qur’ān 7:188]

(92) Delving into this and reflecting too much upon it will only lead to disappointment, non-attainment, and transgression.

These are great words. That is to say, 'scrutiny' about *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, and about the issues associated with them, and occupying one's time, energy, and heart with what inherently causes doubts and diminishes deeds, all of this is in vain and leads to disappointment.

When Allah ﷻ forsakes His slaves, He keeps them occupied with such matters, and when He honours His slaves, He keeps them occupied with obedience and allows them to take advantage of their time.

We have limits that we should not transgress. Allah ﷻ has not commanded us to study *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, but He has commanded us to *believe* in them, to do righteous deeds, and to refrain from bad deeds.

(93) So be very careful of over-analysing and over-thinking about it, or allowing satanic whispers to assail you;

That is, beware of such matters, and beware of speculating about such matters, and also of thoughts and whispers (*waswasah*), in other words, indecisiveness and doubts. Leave those things and put an end to them at their roots.

(94) Because Allah has kept the knowledge of *qadar* hidden from mankind;

This emphasises the aforementioned, namely that Allah ﷻ has kept the exact nature of *qadar* hidden from His creation. This is because it is not of any benefit to them.

(95) And He forbade them from seeking it;

That is, from the desire to study *qadar*. The Prophet ﷺ was angered when he saw some of the Companions posing questions to each other about *qadar*, and he said:

“Is this what you were commanded to do?” or, “Is this what you were created for?”⁴³

43 It is related that 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb related that his father related that his grandfather said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out one day and people were speaking about *qadar*, and it was as if pomegranate seeds had burst on his face because of anger. He said: 'Why do you use one part of the Book of Allah against another? This is what led to the doom of the nations who came before you.'" 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ؓ said: "I was never so happy to have missed a gathering with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as I was to have missed that gathering." Aḥmad, 2/178, 181, 185 & 195; ibn Mājah, no. 85. Aḥmad Shākir said that it is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) in his revision of *Al-Musnad* by Aḥmad (no. 6668).

(96) As the Most High has said in His Book: “He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned.”

You should not question Allah ﷻ about or raise any objections to His actions or what He has preordained and predestined. Behave properly with Allah ﷻ, as you are a servant, so you should not get involved in His affairs. Allah ﷻ is not to be questioned over what He does, as Allah ﷻ does not do anything without wisdom, but this wisdom could be either apparent or hidden from us.

People are responsible for their actions and not the actions of Allah ﷻ, so have concern for what you will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. It is imperative for people to submit to Allah ﷻ.

(97) So, whoever asks, ‘Why did He do so?’ has indeed rejected a judgment of the Book.

That is, if anyone asks, “Why has Allah done so?” or “Why has Allah predetermined so?” then they have indeed rejected the judgment of the Book, because Allah ﷻ has said:

“He is not questioned about what He does.” [Qur’ān 21:23]

(98) And whoever rejects a judgment of the Book is among the disbelievers.

Anyone who rejects the judgment of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, objects to it and instead turns to his own intellect and thoughts is among the disbelievers⁴⁴, because belief in the Qur'ān and Sunnah are two pillars of faith.

(99) This is a summary of what is needed by one whose heart has been given light, one who is among the *awliyā'* (allies) of Allah, the Most High.

That is, what is needed in matters of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*. So, you should believe in *qadar* and the four levels of it, and you should believe in its details related in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and you should not pose any objections or advance any arguments but instead do righteous deeds and seek the proper causes.

(100) And this is what constitutes the level of those firmly grounded in knowledge;

Firmly grounded (*rāsikhūn*) means having strong, unwavering knowledge – those whose knowledge is firm, and who don't have doubts or ignorance. They are those who believe in *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, and do righteous deeds and refrain from doing bad ones. They do not get involved in matters that Allah ﷻ has kept hidden, nor raise objections or advance arguments against Him. The ignorant, on the other hand, fall into error and matters that they innovate.

44 It is related that 'Ā'ishah ؓ related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "The most hated men to Allah are those who are most vehement in their disputes." Al-Bukhārī, no. 2457; Muslim, no. 2668.

(101) As there are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge that Allah has taught the creations and knowledge that He has kept hidden from them.

There are two kinds of knowledge:

Knowledge that Allah ﷻ alone possesses, with the exclusion of others; namely knowledge of the unseen (*ilm al-ghayb*).

Knowledge which Allah ﷻ has taught Created beings. This is the knowledge that is to their benefit. He taught them by sending down the Book and sending the Messengers. Allah ﷻ says:

“And teach them the Book and wisdom.” [Qur’ān 2:129]

The 'Book' is the Qur’ān, and 'wisdom' is the Sunnah, but it has also been said that 'wisdom' is to have understanding of Allah's religion (*al-fiqh fī dīni'llāh*). Allah ﷻ has taught us and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has taught us,

“and teaching you that which you did not know.” [Qur’ān 2:151]

(102) To deny the knowledge that Allah taught us is disbelief, and to claim possession of the knowledge that He kept hidden from us is also disbelief.

To reject prescribed knowledge, which includes what is commanded and forbidden, and what has been told about past and future events, is disbelief.

To claim to have knowledge of the unseen is disbelief. Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.’” [Qur’ān 27:65]

The most perfect of all creatures ﷺ said:

**“And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth.”
[Qur’ān 7:188]**

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ does not know anything from the unseen besides what Allah ﷻ taught him. Allah ﷻ also says:

“And they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills.” [Qur’ān 2:255]

(103) Faith is only affirmed by accepting the knowledge that Allah taught us and not seeking the knowledge that He kept hidden from us.

Faith is only affirmed by accepting the knowledge Allah ﷻ taught us, namely the knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah, and leaving the knowledge of the unseen to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says: **“The unseen is only for Allah [to administer].”**

(104) We believe in the *Lawḥ* (Tablet) and the *Qalam* (Pen) and all that was written on it.

This is a continuation of the discussion about *qaḍā'* and *qadar*. As mentioned earlier, among the levels of faith in *qadar* is faith in what was written in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) and faith in the fact that after knowing all things, Allah ﷻ wrote them on *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*. In other words, Allah ﷻ created the creations and the first thing He created was the Pen. He said to it: "Write." It said: "What should I write?" He said: "Write all that will be until the

Day of Judgment." And so, by the command of Allah ﷻ, the Pen wrote all that will be until the Day of Judgment, as related in a *ḥadīth*.⁴⁵

No one knows the exact nature of *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* and the Pen besides Allah ﷻ. They are both created things and are two of Allah's ﷻ creations. We believe in that. To that effect, the author said: "We believe in the *Lawḥ* (Tablet) and the *Qalam* (Pen) and all that was written on it", that is, the Preserved Tablet, and the writing on it.

This is the second level of belief in *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, namely belief in what is written in the Preserved Tablet.

(105) So, if the entire creation got together to prevent something occurring that Allah the Most High has written would occur, they would not be able to do so. And if they got together to make something occur that Allah had not written would occur, they would not be able to do so.

No one is able to change what is written in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*, so if all of creation got together to change something that Allah ﷻ has written, they would not be able to do so. Similarly, if they got together to bring something about that Allah ﷻ has not written in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*, they would not bring it about. It is related in a *ḥadīth* attributed to ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said to him:

"And know that if the creation were to come together to cause you benefit, they would not benefit you unless Allah had already written so, and if they were to come together to cause you harm, they would not harm you unless Allah had already written so. The pens have been lifted, and the pages have dried."⁴⁶

45 Abū Dāwūd, no 4700; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2160; Abū Ya'lā, no. 2329, as attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; Al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan*; 9/3, as attributed to one of the Companions, but it is effectively attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

46 Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2521; Aḥmad, 1/293; al-Ḥākim, 3/541. Al-Tirmidhī said "*ḥadīth ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*." Al-Ḥākim said: "This *ḥadīth* is 'ālin." 'Alin usually means a short line of transmission to the Prophet ﷺ. [Translator's note]

So there is no possibility of going against what Allah ﷻ has written in the Preserved Tablet.

(106) The Pen has dried, having written down all that will take place until the Day of Judgment. What someone did not receive was not meant for him, and what has come to him would never have passed him by.

This is what it means to believe in *qadar*: that you know that nothing happens to you except what Allah ﷻ has written for you, and that anything that happens to you was not to pass you by, and what passes you by was not to happen to you.

If some misfortune that you dislike happens to you, then you know that it is written in *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*, and that it is inevitable. Thus you find comfort in that and you neither grieve nor become discontented; you just have faith in Allah the Almighty.

And whatever passes you by was not meant to happen to you. Even if you were keen on getting something, and you put forth all of your energy and resources, you would not attain it. So, if you took the means and put forth your utmost effort and did not attain it, you should accept that and have faith in *qadar*. You should not feel disturbed and have concerns and worries, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Strive for what benefits you, ask Allah for help, and do not be weakened. If something happens to you, do not say, ‘if only I did such and such, then such and such would have happened’. Rather, say, ‘Allah ﷻ has destined (it), and He does what He wills’, for ‘if only’ makes way for the work of the devil.”⁴⁷

If you know this, then matters become easy for you, and you do not grieve or regret. All matters are in Allah's ﷻ hands. Indeed, you should take the means and strive after what benefits you, but the results are from Allah ﷻ, and you

47 Muslim, no. 2664.

do not know what is to your best interest. Allah ﷻ may not have given you that thing, because you might have been harmed if you had got it. Allah ﷻ knows, and you do not, so you have to be content with what Allah has decreed and destined.

In the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ says to His Prophet ﷺ:

“Say, ‘Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.’ And upon Allah let the believers rely.” [Qur’ān 9:51]

He said in response to what the disbelievers said about those who were killed in the Battle of Uḥud:

“If they had been with us, they would not have died or have been killed;” [Qur’ān 3:156]

Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘Even if you had been inside your houses, those decreed to be killed would have come out to their death beds.” [Qur’ān 3:154]

Whatever is written for someone must come to pass for them. No matter how many protective measures they take, it will not prevent them from the decree and *qadar* of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you should be within towers of lofty construction.” [Qur’ān 4:78]

(107) Allah’s slaves must know that He already knows everything that will happen in His creation.

This is the first level of faith in *qadar*, namely to affirm faith in and believe that Allah ﷻ knows what will take place and what will not with His eternal omniscience, with which He is attributed eternally and infinitely. He knew all things with His all-encompassing knowledge even before they happen. It is necessary to believe in this.

(108) He decreed it with mastery and in a way that cannot be altered.

He knew it and destined it. Allah ﷻ says:

“...and has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination.” [Qur’ān 25:2]

Thus, matters are neither chaotic nor without control. Everything is arranged and controlled by the decree and determination of Allah ﷻ, and is written by Him. Allah ﷻ transcends any kind of chaos and frivolity.

(109) None from His creation on either the heavens or the earth can undo it, overturn it, remove it, change it, take from it, or add to it.

No one can do anything to change what Allah ﷻ has decreed and determined. No one can deny His decree or overturn His judgment.

“And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision.” [Qur’ān 13:41]

No one can ever take away from or add to anything that Allah ﷻ has decreed. It is something that Allah has already decided and it is finalized.

If a Muslim believes in the aforementioned, then he will be relieved of much doubts and misconceptions. However, this does not mean that someone should rely on *qadar* and what was written and abandon action⁴⁸. Rather a Muslim is commanded to take action, seek sustenance and take the means. This is as far as action is concerned. All results, on the other hand, are in Allah's ﷻ hands.

(110) This is one of the tenets of faith and a principle of knowledge [of Allah];

This doctrine, the doctrine of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, is one of the tenets of faith in Allah ﷻ. If someone is not a believer in *qadar*, then he is not a believer in Allah ﷻ and is in fact undervaluing Allah, Glorified be He. Belief in that is one of the fundamentals of creed rather than a secondary or subsidiary matter. Faith in *qaḍā'* and *qadar* lies at the core of the faith and is one of its pillars, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in *qadar*, whether good or bad."⁴⁹

48 It is related that 'Alī ؓ said: "We were at a funeral in Baqī' al-Gharqad, and the Prophet ﷺ came to us and sat, and we sat around him, and he had a small stick, and he lowered his head and began scraping the ground with his stick. Then, he said: 'There is not one among you, nor any soul that has been breathed, whose place in Jannah and the Fire has not been written, and who has not been written as blessed or wretched.' One man said: 'O Messenger of Allah, should we not then rely on what was written and stop doing deeds? Those of us who are among the blessed are destined to do the deeds of the blessed, and those of us who are among the wretched are destined to have the deeds of the wretched.' He said: "The deeds of the blessed have been made easy for them, and the deeds of the wretched have been made easy for them." Then, he read: {As for he who gives and fears Allah...} [al-Bukhārī, no. 1362; Muslim, no. 2647]

49 Al-Bukhārī, no. 50; Muslim, no. 10.

(111) And it is part of acknowledging the *tawḥīd* (Oneness) and *rubūbiyah* (Lordship) of Allah; as the Most High says in His Book: “...and [He] has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination.” [Qur’ān 25:2] Allah also says: “And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed.” [Qur’ān 33:38]

Faith in *qaḍā'* and *qadar* is a part of the belief in *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyah* (Oneness of Lordship), because it has to do with the actions of Allah the Almighty. Therefore, if someone rejects predetermination then he is not a believer in *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyah*.

Allah ﷻ says:

“and [He] has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination.” [Qur’ān 25:2]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed.” [Qur’ān 33:38]

“Indeed, all things We created with predestination.” [Qur’ān 54:49]

These three verses and other verses point to faith in *qaḍā'* and *qadar*.

“No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah.” [Qur’ān 64:11]

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register.” [Qur’ān 57:22]

Meaning that it is in the Preserved Tablet.

(112) So woe to those who dispute with Allah's decree;

Anyone who delves into and questions matters of *qadar* is an adversary to Allah ﷻ. Faith is only correct when there is faith in *qaḍā'* and *qadar* according to their four levels, based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Therefore we should not get involved in questioning or problematizing or in doubts or misconceptions, because all of this is tantamount to raising objections to Allah ﷻ. Those who delve into matters of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* have never arrived at anything but they have instead fallen into confusion, perplexity, and corruption of faith.

(113) And who study it with a sick heart;

Matters of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, and all other matters of Allah ﷻ, are not comprehended through speculation, intellect, and reason, so do not take it upon your mind to do something which it is not able to do. The mind is limited, and it is not able to comprehend everything, so don't get it involved in puzzles and matters that it cannot handle.

(114) They have sought to uncover an undiscoverable matter with their vain and delusory attempts at examining the unseen;

Because Allah ﷻ has kept *qaḍā'* and *qadar* hidden from His creatures, we should not search for it. It is not our responsibility to do so; rather our only responsibility is to do good deeds, be obedient, and be compliant.

(115) Instead becoming sinful and liars due to what they say.

Everything they say and search for is sinful lies (*ifk*) and falsehoods (Allah ﷻ is our refuge). This is because they do what they are not commanded and they get involved in matters that do not concern them.

(116) The ‘Arsh (Throne) and the Kursī (Footstool) are true.

Allah the Almighty created the heavens, and He created the earth, and He created the *Kursī* (footstool), and He created the ‘*Arsh* (Throne) - all of these are creations of Allah ﷻ. The heavens are above the earth, and above the heavens is the sea, and above the sea is the *kursī*, and above the *kursī* is the Throne, so it is the highest of all creations. This is according to the *ḥadīth*:

"Verily, the seven heavens compared to the *kursī* are like seven dirhams thrown into a shield," - that is, the seven heavens in all their greatness and with all they contain (as compared to the *kursī*) are like seven dirhams cast into the like of a disc that is taken as a shield by a soldier.

What are seven dirhams compared to a round shield? They are minor in proportion. In that regard, Allah ﷻ says:

“His *kursī* extends over the heavens and the earth.” [Qur’ān 2:255]

Yet the ‘*Arsh* (Throne) is even greater than the footstool. The *kursī*, compared to the Throne, is like a ring cast into a desert, as related in a *ḥadīth*. If you were to cast a ring into a vast piece of land, how would it compare to that piece of land? It would be nothing at all.

These creations are great and vast and none knows about them except Allah, the Most High.

The Throne is the highest of all creations, and Allah is the Most High above His Throne and above His creations.

The *kursī*, which is the place for the feet, or *footstool*, as related in one report, is under the Throne. So, the *kursī* is a created thing, and what is meant by it is not knowledge, as has been attributed to ibn ‘Abbās ؓ. It has been attributed to him that he said with regard to the saying of Allah ﷻ: “His *kursī* extends over the heavens and the earth” that *kursī* means His knowledge, meaning that His knowledge encompasses the heavens and earth. The meaning is correct; however, that is not what is meant by the verse. The *kursī* is a created thing, and knowledge is one of Allah's ﷻ attributes, not of one of His creations. So, it is obligatory to have faith in the Throne and the *kursī* in all reality. The Throne is not 'the Kingdom' as the Ash‘arites and those with the same tendencies believe. They say with regard to the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And then He rose above (istawā) the Throne” [Qur’ān 7:54] - that it means that He seized (istawlā) the kingdom.

This is misguidance because the Throne is something created. Allah ﷻ says:

“And His Throne had been upon water.” [Qur’ān 11:7]

Thus, under the Throne is the *kursī*, and under the *kursī* are the heavens, and the earth is under the heavens. It is related in a *ḥadīth*:

“If you ask Allah, then ask Him for the Highest Firdaws, as it is in the most even and highest place of Jannah, and above it is the Throne of The All-Merciful.”⁵⁰

Firdaws is the highest garden of Jannah, and above it is the Throne of the All-Merciful.

The Throne is created, and it has bearers, who are namely a group of angels.

50 Al-Bukhārī, no. 2790, 7423.

“And they will bear the Throne of your Lord above them, that Day, eight [of them].” [Qur’ān 69:17]

Before the Day of Judgment, there are four angels that carry it. When the Day of Judgment comes, they are doubled, becoming eight, and each one of those angels has unimaginable form, greatness, and strength.

Would it be said then, that if the Throne was the kingdom, that the kingdom is borne by angels?

(117) He is not in need of the Throne or that which is beneath it.

It should not be imagined that the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“And then He rose above the Throne.” [Qur’ān 7:54]

Means that He is in need of the Throne, like when a created thing mounts another created thing. Rather, Allah ﷻ has mounted the Throne, and He has no need of the Throne or anything that is beneath it.

All creatures are in need of Allah ﷻ.

“Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease. And if they should cease, no one could hold them [in place] after Him.” [Qur’ān 35:41]

It is Allah ﷻ who holds the Throne, the earth and all other created things by His omnipotence and might. Those things are in need of Him, and He is not in need of them.

It does not necessarily follow that if something is above something else that the higher thing is in need of what is beneath it. The heavens, for instance, are above the earth, yet they are not in need of it.

(118) He encompasses all things and is above them.

He encompasses everything.

“Indeed, from Allah nothing is hidden in the earth nor in the heaven.” [Qur’ān 3:5]

His encompassment of things is His knowledge of them. Otherwise, Allah ﷻ is above all things on high.

(119) Yet His creatures are unable to encompass Him.

Allah the Almighty knows what lies before them and what lies ahead of them, and their knowledge does not encompass Him. Allah ﷻ says:

“and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth.” [Qur’ān 2:255]

Thus, Allah's ﷻ knowledge encompasses everything.

“So you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.” [Qur’ān 65:12]

(120) And we say with faith, belief, and acceptance, that Allah took Ibrāhīm (Abraham) as His *Khalīl* (Beloved) and spoke directly to Mūsā (Moses).

One of the beliefs of the Muslims is that the Messengers are the best of all created beings, and that the Messengers themselves vary in virtue. Muslims believe that Allah ﷻ took Ibrāhīm ؑ as a close friend (*khalīl*), as Allah ﷻ says:

“And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend.” [Qur’ān 4:125]

Khullah (from *khalīl*) is the highest degree of love. Allah ﷻ loves His believing servants, the pious, and those who do good, and He loves those who repent and those who purify themselves. However, *khullah* was only achieved by two people in the universe: Ibrāhīm ؑ and Muḥammad ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Allah has taken me as a *khalīl* as He has taken Ibrāhīm as a *khalīl*.”⁵¹

“And Allah spoke to Moses with [direct] speech.” [Qur’ān 4:164]

Allah ﷻ favoured some of the Prophets over others, although all of them are in the highest rank. Nonetheless, Allah ﷻ favoured some of them over others.

“Those messengers – some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degree.” [Qur’ān 2:253]

Allah favoured each prophet with something special. He favoured Ibrāhīm ؑ and Muḥammad ﷺ with *khullah*. He favoured Mūsā ؑ by speaking directly to him without an angel as an intermediary. Mūsā ؑ heard His speech, He called on him (*nādāhu*), and He spoke softly with him (*nājāhu*). The former (*munādāh*) is to speak loudly and the latter (*munājāh*) is to speak softly. All of this happened with Mūsā ؑ. This is a virtue that no one else was given. Allah ﷻ said that He spoke to him *directly* (*kallamahū taklīman*) for emphasis, so that no one would be able to say that it is a figure of speech. As He emphasizes the verb with the infinitive form (*taklīman*), it indicates that He literally spoke to him. This entails confirmation (*ithbāt*) of Allah's ﷻ speech, and it also entails confirmation of the superiority of Mūsā ؑ to other prophets as pertains to this characteristic. But just because one prophet is distinguished from the other prophets as far as one characteristic does not necessarily mean that he

51 Muslim, no. 532; al-Bukhārī related similar versions (no. 466, 467). See earlier citation.

is superior in all respects. Rather, he is superior to the other prophets in that characteristic only.

(121) And we believe in the Angels and the Prophets.

This is one of the pillars of faith, the first of which is faith in Allah ﷻ, and the second is faith in the angels. Angels make up a kingdom of the kingdoms of the unseen, which no one knows except Allah ﷻ. Allah created them from light in order that they worship Him and execute His commands with respect to His creations. He entrusted them with tasks that they carry out and execute on Allah's creations. Among them is the angel entrusted with the divine revelations. Among them are those that are entrusted with the rain and vegetation. Among them are those who are entrusted with taking away the souls. Among them are those who are entrusted with blowing into the horn. Among them are those who are entrusted with keeping a record of the deeds of the children of Ādam ﷺ, and among them are those who are entrusted with the foetus inside of the mothers' wombs. This last task is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* as related from ibn Mas'ūd ؓ:

"Then He sends the angel to it and it writes down its sustenance, its term, its deeds, and whether it is blessed or wretched."⁵²

They are assigned jobs that they carry out as Allah ﷻ has commanded.

"They cannot precede Him in word, and they act by His command." [Qur'ān 21:27]

"They exalt [Him] night and day [and] do not slacken." [Qur'ān 21:20]

They worship Allah ﷻ continuously and simultaneously carry out the commands they were assigned with respect to the creations. They have great

⁵² Al-Bukhārī, no. 3208; Muslim, no. 2643.

tasks, and their forms are only known by Allah.⁵³ They have different forms than the children of Ādam ﷺ,

“[who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four.” [Qur’ān 35:1]

Some of them have more than that:

“He increases in creation what He wills.” [Qur’ān 35:1]

Jibrīl ﷺ has six-hundred wings, and each wing fills the horizon, so no one knows their exact nature but Allah ﷻ. Humans, however, cannot see the angels in their proper form. But an angel can come in the form of a human, as Jibrīl ﷺ used to come to the Prophet ﷺ in the form of a human and sit with him and speak to him. The Prophet ﷺ did not see him in his angelic form except for twice: once in a valley of Makkah, and once at the Lote Tree at the Utmost Boundary (*sidrat al-muntahā*) during the night of the Isrā' and the Ascension. Apart from those two instances, Jibrīl ﷺ always came to the Prophet ﷺ in the form of a human, and he often came in the form of Diḥyah al-Kalbī ﷺ.

The author says: "the Prophets" which is the plural of prophet, who is someone to which was revealed a prescribed law but who was not commanded to deliver the message. A 'messenger' refers to one who received revelation of a prescribed law and was commanded to deliver the message. It is obligatory to believe in all of the Prophets and Messengers. Whoever believes in some of them and disbelieves in others is a disbeliever in all of them.

**“We make no distinction between any of His Messengers.”
[Qur’ān 2:285]**

53 It is related that Abū Dharr ﷺ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'I see what you do not see, and I hear what you do not hear. The heavens creak and it is only right that they creak. There is not a space of four fingers without an angel prostrating its forehead before Allah.'" Aḥmad, 5/173; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2317; ibn Mājah, no 4190; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 2/510-551. Al-Ḥākim said: "The transmission (*isnād*) of this *ḥadīth* is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and [al-Bukhārī and Muslim] did not cite it."

(122) And the Books revealed to the Messengers; and we testify that they were upon the clear truth.

Among the foundations and pillars of faith is belief in the Books that were revealed to the Messengers to guide people. Allah ﷻ sent down the Books to the Messengers with His speech, divine revelations (*wahy*), and His prescriptions. He revealed them to the Messengers to convey them to their people. They contain what is commanded, what is forbidden and the prescribed laws of Allah ﷻ.

Among them are those that Allah ﷻ named in the Qur’ān, and among them are those that Allah ﷻ did not name. We believe in all of the Books, those that He has named and those that He has not, such as the Torah, which He sent down to Mūsā ؑ, and the Injil, which He sent down to ‘Isā ؑ, and the Qur’ān, which He sent down to Muḥammad ﷺ, and the Psalms (*zābūr*), which He sent down to Dāwūd ؑ.

“And to David We gave the book [of Psalms],” [Qur’ān 4:163] and the scriptures (*ṣuḥuf*) of Ibrāhīm ؑ.

We believe in all of them, and we believe that they are for the benefit and guidance of people, and also to put forth the proper arguments against them. If someone believes in just some of the Books and disbelieves in some, he is a disbeliever in all of them, because all of them are part of the word of Allah, so it is not permissible to have faith in some of them and disbelieve in the others. Allah ﷻ says:

“So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?” [Qur’ān 2:85]

Similarly, it is obligatory to believe in and act in accordance with the entirety of any given book, so we don't accept only that which is in accordance with our desires and reject what goes against them.

Therefore, anyone who rejects one of Allah's Books or a part of one of them, or a word from one of them, or a letter from one of them, is a disbeliever in Allah.

(123) We call those who share our qiblah (prayer direction) Muslims and believers.

It is a matter of faith to believe that anyone who utters and upholds the Testimony of Faith is a Muslim. Even if they happened to sin and even if those were major sins, as long as they are anything less than idolatry (*shirk*). However, the faith and Islām of such a Muslim are deficient, and he is a sinner (*fāsiq*). Nonetheless, he is not to be judged a disbeliever if his sins are anything less than idolatry. This is the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, they do not declare anyone a disbeliever over sins that are less than idolatry. However, sins detract from someone's faith and the one who commits them is a minor sinner (*fāsiq fisq aṣghar*), as he does not leave the sphere of the religion. Contrarily, the Khārijites declare those who commit *kabā'ir* (major sins) to be disbelievers, and that they leave the religion of Islām by that and will abide in the Fire forever. This is also in contrast to the Mu'tazilites: they say that those who commit major sins leave the religion, but they do not say that they are disbelievers. They say that they have a status between those two (*manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*). However, if those people die committing major sins, then the Mu'tazilites are like the Khārijites in judging them to be disbelievers. This is in contrast to the belief of the Murji'ites: they say that faith is not affected by sin. For them, anyone who believes in Allah ﷻ is a believer, no matter what they do, even if they abandon all of the pillars of Islām. For them, they are not disbelievers as what matters is the belief and conviction in the heart. They also believe that faith does not increase or decrease in accordance with actions, and actions are not even a part of faith. They are total believers as long as they believe. This is the doctrine of the Murji'ites, and it is a misguided doctrine.

Thus, they are on the opposite side of the Khārijites. One party (the Khārijites) is too vehement, and the other party is too passive and lenient and

says that sin has no effect on faith. Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, on the other hand, steer a middle course. Their doctrine is derived from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. It is just and brings unity to all of the evidence. The Khārijites and Mu'tazilites, however, hold fast to the passages where there is the threat of punishment and leave those where there is a promise of reward. The Murji'ites hold fast to the passages with the promise of reward and desert those with threat of punishment. Nonetheless, Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah hold fast to both types and bring unity to those passages as this is the correct methodology.

“But those firm in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.’” [Qur'ān 3:7]

They refer the former to the latter, and they do not adopt one side and leave another, as is the case with the doctrines of the deviant sects.

“As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific.” [Qur'ān 3:7]

They hold fast to the parts that are ambiguous (*mutashābih*) and abandon the parts that have a clear meaning (*muḥkam*), by which the ambiguous parts gain interpretation.

The author says: "Muslims and believers", but this is not in the most absolute sense, because they may be lacking in faith and adherence to Islām and thus, fall under the threat of Allah the Almighty.

(124) As long as they acknowledge what the Prophet ﷺ taught and believe in what he said and told.

But if they reject anything that is related as being said by the Prophet ﷺ and do not acknowledge it, then they would be disbelievers, even if they believed in some of what has been related from the Prophet ﷺ. If they reject a part of it, they are disbelievers in the whole of it. It is imperative to believe in all of it,

whether it is in line with or goes against our whims and desires, because it is the truth.

If someone disbelieves in some of the authentic *ḥadīths*, on the other hand, then he is also a disbeliever. If someone rejects a *ḥadīth* in al-Bukhārī, and the *ḥadīth* is authentic, and he says, I do not believe in this *ḥadīth* because it contradicts modern science then *Subḥāna'llāh!* Would you have doubts about what the Prophet ﷺ has said and not have doubts about what people say? Moreover, modern science may not be contrary to the authentic *ḥadīths*. It is related, for instance, in the *ḥadīth* about the fly, that in one of its wings is a disease, and in the other is a cure. Medicine confirms the fact that poison is treated with its antidote and with what counteracts it. Flies have both of these counteracting agents, so if a fly lands in water, the wing that has the remedy removes and absorbs the wing that has the poison. So, the Prophet ﷺ commanded us to submerge the wing that has the remedy⁵⁴, so that it can overwhelm the poison. This is confirmed by medicine. However, since it is at odds with the tastes of those ignorant people, they say such things, and this is disbelief, and Allah ﷻ is our refuge. They also make some of the most outrageous statements against the Sunnah. They reject it and cast doubts on it, saying that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“You know your worldly matters better.”⁵⁵

They say so whilst at the same time claiming to be preachers of Islām. This is their stance when it comes to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Those ignorant people say that these are worldly matters and that the Prophet ﷺ said: “You know your worldly matters better.” What this means is that they are calling the Prophet ﷺ ignorant.

The author says: ‘*acknowledge*’ and ‘*believe*’, but it does not suffice to acknowledge and believe, except according to the doctrines of the Murji'ah alone. Rather, there has to be action in accordance with what is related, and there also has to be sincerity in that.

54 It is related that Abū Hurayrah ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If a fly lands in the drink of someone among you, then let them submerge it and then remove it, for in one of its wings is a disease, and in the other is a cure." Al-Bukhārī, no. 3320, 5782.

55 Muslim, no. 2363.

(125) And we do not have false dialogues about Allah and we do not debate over Allah's religion.

We do not hold any false dialogues about Allah ﷻ but instead believe in His names and attributes, and we neither interpret them nor deny their outward (*ẓāhir*) meanings. We do not come up with meanings that neither Allah ﷻ nor His Prophet ﷺ intended so as to follow our whims and desires and our limited minds. That would be to disbelieve in Allah ﷻ.

We also do not hold debates or argumentation and say "We believe in this but are undecided on believing in that." As long as something is an established part of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, then there is no room for discussion. Rather, we believe in it and accept it, even if our minds are somewhat unable to comprehend it. Our minds are limited. If they were perfect, we would not require the Prophet ﷺ to be sent to us, and humanity would not require messengers to be sent. This is evidence that the mind is limited and that it is necessary for the messengers to be sent to realize truth and invalidate falsehood.

(126) And we do not debate over the Qur'ān, and we testify that it is the word of the Lord of the Worlds.

The author says: "... we do not debate over the Qur'ān," This includes that we do not say that the Qur'ān is not from Allah ﷻ as the disbelievers say. They say that it is from Muḥammad ﷺ.

The same goes for debating about the meanings of the Qur'ān. We are not to interpret the Qur'ān on our own accord. The Qur'ān is only to be interpreted according to what has been related in the Qur'ān or Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷻ or what the Companions or the successors (*tābi'ūn*) have said, or what the Arabic language, in which it was revealed, requires.

Thus, we do not speak about the Qur'ān with our inadequate minds, but rather its interpretation is only made by Allah ﷻ, who revealed it, or the

Prophet ﷺ who was entrusted with it, or the Companions, who learned it from the Prophet ﷺ or the *tābi'ūn* who related it as being heard by the students (Companions) of the Prophet ﷺ, or the Arabic language, in which it was revealed, because it was revealed in a *clear Arabic tongue*. As for interpreting the Quran according to what some doctor or intellectual or astronomer says... the theories of today can be invalidated by the theories of tomorrow, because they are the work of man. Therefore, the word of Allah ﷻ is not to be interpreted according to these things that change and are modified. This is what some ignorant people do today and call it a scientific miracle.

The author says: "and we testify that it is the word of the Lord of the Worlds." We testify that the Qur'ān is the word of Allah ﷻ and that Allah ﷻ literally spoke that word. Jibrīl ؑ heard it from Allah ﷻ and delivered it to Muḥammad ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ delivered it to his *Ummah*, and the *Ummah* passed it down from generation to generation. We write it down, read it, and memorize it, yet it is still the word of Allah ﷻ and not our own word, nor is it the word of the Prophet ﷺ or the word of Jibrīl ؑ.

(127) *Al-Rūh al-Amīn* (The Trusted Spirit) descended with it and taught it to the Chief of the Messengers, Muḥammad ﷺ.

The *Trusted Spirit* is Jibrīl ؑ. He is named so because he was trusted not to change or alter anything and was entrusted to do what Allah ﷻ commanded him to do. He is not to be suspected as being disloyal, such as what Jews say, "Jibrīl is our enemy!" Or like what extremist Shi'ites say, that the message was meant for 'Alī but Jibrīl betrayed and delivered it to Muḥammad ﷺ. This is disbelief in Allah ﷻ because He called him *trusted*.

Allah revealed the following verse concerning the Jews:

“Say, ‘Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel – it is [none but] he who has brought the Qur'an down upon your heart, [O Muḥammad], by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it.’”
[Qur'ān 2:97]

Then, He says:

“Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael – then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.” [Qur’ān 2: 98]

If anyone takes Jibrīl ﷺ or any angel as an enemy, then Allah ﷻ is an enemy to that person. Likewise, if someone takes one of the Messengers of Allah as an enemy, then he is a disbeliever. And anyone who takes one of Allah's allies (*awliyā'*) as an enemy, has waged war against Allah ﷻ, as authentically related in a *ḥadīth*.⁵⁶ This is because Jibrīl ﷺ taught it to the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Taught to him by one intense in strength.” [Qur’ān 53:5]

The pronoun ('him') in *‘taught to him’* refers to the Prophet ﷺ; and *‘one intense in strength’* refers to Jibrīl ﷺ. He taught him at the command of Allah ﷻ.

(128) It is the word of Allah, the Most High and it is not at all the same as the word of created beings.

It is the word of Allah ﷻ, which He spoke in reality. Jibrīl ﷺ heard it from Allah ﷻ, in reality, and he delivered it to the Prophet ﷺ without addition or omission.

“Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it.” [Qur’ān 41:42]

“And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We revealed to you in order to [make] you invent about Us something else; and then they would have taken you as a friend.

⁵⁶ It is related that Abū Hurayrah ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah Almighty said: 'He who has shown enmity to one of my allies has declared war against Me. And My servants do not draw nearer to Me by anything more beloved to Me than what I have obligated upon them. And if My servant keeps drawing near to Me by doing beyond the obligations, then I will love him....'" Al-Bukhārī, no. 6502.

And if We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little. Then [if you had], We would have made you taste double [punishment in] life and double [after] death. Then you would not find for yourself against Us a helper.” [Qur’ān 17:73-75]

Thus, the Messenger ﷺ delivers the Qur’ān without addition, omission, or alteration.

“And if Muḥammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; Then We would have cut from him the aorta.” [Qur’ān 69:44-46]

It is the word of Allah ﷻ, as it was revealed. Allah ﷻ has preserved it from additions and omissions.

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.” [Qur’ān 15:9]

(129) We do not say that it was created, and we do not oppose the united community (*jamā'ah*) of the Muslims.

We do not say that the Qur’ān is created, as the Jahmīyah sect says. This is disbelief and rejection of the word of Allah ﷻ. It also implies a blasphemous ascription to Allah ﷻ, namely that He does not speak, as anything that does not speak is imperfect and is not a God.

To this effect, the people of the Samaritan said:

“This is your god and the god of Moses.” [Qur’ān 20:88]

They were referring to the calf or the statue. Allah ﷻ says:

“Did they not see that it could not return to them any speech and that it did not possess for them any harm or benefit?” [Qur’ān 20:89]

The Almighty says **‘that it could not return to them any speech’**, meaning that it does not speak. This is evidence for the wrongfulness of their worship of it. In another verse, Allah ﷻ says:

“Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way?” [Qur’ān 7:148]

Speech is an attribute of perfection, and the inability to speak is an attribute of imperfection. Allah ﷻ transcends all attributes of imperfection, and He is characterized by all of the attributes of perfection.

"And we do not oppose the united community (*jamā’ah*) of Muslims": The united community of Muslims believes that it was revealed in reality and is not a created thing. From Him it began and to Him shall it return. This is the doctrine of the Muslims concerning the Qur’ān.

Likewise, we do not oppose the united community of Muslims in anything that they have agreed on in matters of religion. Allah ﷻ says:

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him, we will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”

‘From Allah it began’: It is not as some misguided people have said: that Jibrīl took it from *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet). Rather, he heard it directly from Allah ﷻ. *‘To Him it shall return’*: That is to say, in the end of times the Qur’ān will ascend to Allah ﷻ, which is one of the signs of the Hour. The Qur’ān will be removed from the codices and pages (*maṣāḥif*) and from people’s hearts and will not remain on earth.

(130) We do not declare anyone from Ahl al-Qiblah (the people of the qiblah) a disbeliever over sin, so long as they do not say it is lawful.

As mentioned, as long as the sin is not an act of disbelief or idolatry that removes one from the religion, we do not declare any Muslim an unbeliever on account of it. Rather, we believe that he is a believer with incomplete faith, and who is under threat and under Allah's ﷻ will. This is the belief of a Muslim, as long as he does not declare that sin to be lawful. If anyone says that what Allah ﷻ has forbidden is lawful, like if someone says that *ribā* (usury), *khamr* (wine), or the flesh of an unslaughtered animal (*maytah*), or the flesh of swine, or *zinā* (fornication) is lawful, then they have disbelieved in Allah ﷻ. The opposite is also true: if someone says that what Allah ﷻ has made lawful is unlawful, then they have also disbelieved.

“They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him.”
[Qur’ān 9:31]

It has been related concerning the interpretation of this verse that they declared as lawful what was unlawful to them and declared as unlawful what was lawful to them, and they obeyed them.⁵⁷

On the other hand, if someone commits a sin but does not claim that it is lawful, rather acknowledges the fact that it is forbidden, then we do not declare such a person an unbeliever, even if it were any major sin besides *shirk* and disbelief. Even so, such a person is a believer with incomplete faith, or a *fāsiq* (sinner) because of his sin and a believer because of his faith.

57 It is related that 'Adī ibn Ḥātim ؓ said: "I came to the Prophet ﷺ and I had a crucifix of gold around my neck, so he said: 'O 'Adī, remove this idol from you.' I heard him read from *Sūrat Barā'ah*: '**They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah**'. He said: 'Verily, they did not worship them but if they (their scholars and monks) declared something to be lawful to them, they made it lawful, and if they declared something unlawful to them, they made it unlawful.'" Al-Tirmidhī, no. 3095.

The author says: "We do not declare anyone a disbeliever over sin": This is with an exception: someone who deliberately abandons *ṣalāh* (prayer) has committed an act of disbelief⁵⁸, as evidenced in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

(131) We do not say that sin does not affect the faith of the one who commits it.

As the Murji'ites say that as long as someone affirms faith in his heart then he is a believer with complete faith. Deeds, on the other hand, are insignificant. Therefore, someone who does not pray, fast, perform *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage), pay *zakāh* (alms), nor does he do any acts of obedience, they say that he is a believer simply because of what lies in his heart! This is one of the most major forms of misguidance.

The response to them is that sins have a negative effect: some of them invalidate faith altogether while some of them do not. Rather, they detract from faith and the one who commits them falls under the consequent threat.

(132) We hope that [Allah] will forgive the good believers (*muḥsinīn*) and send them to Jannah, but we do not claim that they are totally secure, nor do we testify that they will go to Jannah.

This is a discussion about testifying to whether a specific person is one of the dwellers of Jannah or whether he is one of the dwellers of the Fire. We do not testify that anyone is either in Jannah or in the Fire without evidence. However, if the Prophet ﷺ gave testimony that someone was among the dwellers of Jannah, then we attest to that, and if the Prophet ﷺ gave testimony that someone was in the Fire, we attest to that likewise. This is with

58 It is related that Buraydah ibn al-Ḥuṣayb Al-Aslami ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The covenant that stands between us and them is the *ṣalāh*, so whoever abandons it has disbelieved." Aḥmad, 5/346, 355; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2621; al-Nasā'i, 1/231; ibn Mājah, no. 1079.

respect to specific individuals. However, in a general sense, we believe that the disbelievers are in the Fire and the believers are in Jannah.

In a particular sense, though, we do not pass judgment against anyone in specific without evidence. However, we hope well for good believers and fear for those who do wrong. This is the doctrine of the Muslims.

(133) We ask forgiveness for bad Muslims and fear for them, but do not lose hope for them.

We ask forgiveness for bad Muslims because they are our brothers. We pray for them to repent and be given grace, although they are guilty of sin. It is our duty of faith towards them.

“And ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women.” [Qur’ān 47:19]

We do not place any sinner beyond any hope for Allah's ﷻ mercy, as do the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites. We do not say there is no hope for such people but rather that they are under threat and under Allah's ﷻ will. Allah ﷻ turns to those who turn to Him in repentance.

“Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” [Qur’ān 12:87]

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?” [Qur’ān 15:56]

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah.’” [Qur’ān 39: 53]

The 'threat sect' (*al-wa'idiyah*), namely the Khārijites and those who tread their path, are the ones who say there is no hope for people in terms of Allah's

ﷻ mercy. They call people disbelievers on account of sins, even those less serious than idolatry.

(134) Loss of fear [of Allah's punishment] and loss of hope [of Allah's mercy] remove one from Islām.

Among the fundamental principles of the Islamic faith are *fear* and *hope*. They are two of the *greatest* principles of faith. Fear and hope have to be evoked in combination. It is not sufficient only to have one of them. Allah ﷻ says describing His Prophets:

“Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope (raghaban) and fear (rahaban).” [Qur’ān 21:90]

Raghaban [lit. 'desire'] means *rajā'* (hope), and *rahaban* is *khawf* (fear). Allah ﷻ says:

“Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.” [Qur’ān 17:57]

Thus, they combine fear and hope.

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]?” [Qur’ān 92:9]

Along with these, there also has to be love for Allah ﷻ. All of these three things are necessary: love for Allah ﷻ, fear of Him, and hope for His bounty.

Anyone who confines himself to love alone is a *Ṣūfī* (mystic). The *Ṣūfīs* worship Allah ﷻ through love but they do not fear or have hope for anything. A *Ṣūfī* may say, “I do not worship Allah ﷻ out of desire for Jannah, nor out of

fear of the Fire; I worship Him only for the sake of love”. Such is sheer misguidance and Allah ﷻ is our refuge.

If someone serves Allah ﷻ in fear alone, then he is a Khārijite. That is because the *Khārijites* hold fast to the aspect of fear and focus on the threat of sins only, so they declare others disbelievers on account of sins.

If someone serves Allah ﷻ in hope alone, then he is a Murji'ite. The Murji'ites are those who hold fast to the aspect of hope alone and disregard the aspect of fear.

The people of *tawhīd* serve Allah ﷻ with all three: with love, fear, and hope. Furthermore, the fear they have is not accompanied by despair. If it is accompanied by despair from Allah's ﷻ mercy, it then becomes disbelief.

“Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” [Qur’ān 12:87]

Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said:

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?” [Qur’ān 15:56]

Likewise, hope is not hope if accompanied by fearlessness (*amn*) of Allah's ﷻ plot (*makr*), which is the doctrine of the Murji'ites, who have strayed from the path.

“Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.” [Qur’ān 7:99]

Thus, hope alone is disbelief, so is fear alone, without hope. Hence, the author said that they become disbelievers.

This is why some of the predecessors said that someone has to be in a state between fear and hope, that is, to have an equal amount of each, like the wings of a bird. The wings of a bird are even, and if one of them were not so, the bird would fall from the sky. Likewise, a servant of Allah ﷻ should be in a balanced state between fear and hope like the wings of a bird.

(135) The right path for *Ahl al-Qiblah* is between the two.

Muslims are called *ahl al-qiblah* (the people of the *qiblah*) because they pray toward the Ka'bah. Anyone who does not pray towards the Ka'bah is not one of the Muslims because Allah ﷻ commanded us to face the Ka'bah in prayer. It is incumbent to follow His command as He abrogated prayer in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdis. The believers revolve around the commands because they are servants of Allah ﷻ.

“And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels.” [Qur’ān 2:143]

(136) One does not leave the faith unless they reject what brought them into it.

This statement entails some criticism, because it is the doctrine of the Murji'ites to restrict disbelief to outright rejection (*juḥūd*). However, there are a number of things that render someone's acceptance of Islām invalid, including rejection (*juḥūd*), idolatry (*shirk*), mocking Islām or any part of it, even without rejection. There are many invalidators (*nawāqidh*) which the scholars of Islām and experts of Islamic law (*fuqahā'*) have listed in sections of their literature on apostasy (*riddah*). Another example is to declare lawful what is unlawful and to declare unlawful what is lawful.

Shaykh al-Islam Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ؒ named the ten most important invalidators of Islām [in some of his works]; however, there are many. So it is wrong to limit the nullifiers of Islām to denial alone. Some writers of today who pretend to be learned have tried to champion this doctrine so as to accommodate to people's religious persuasions. For them, as long as someone is not a denier (of the faith), he is a Muslim. If they prostrate themselves before idols and say, 'I have not denied anything, I acknowledge that Allah ﷻ is one,' then that is only a sin. Or if someone slaughters an animal

in sacrifice to anything besides Allah ﷻ or directs an insult towards the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or Islām, they say, 'He is a Muslim because he has not denied anything.' This is a great mistake and it is complete divestment of the religion as there would be no religion left by that. So it is obligatory to beware of this great danger.

(137) Faith is to confess with the tongue and believe in the heart.

This is the definition according to the Murji'ites; they limit faith to confession with the tongue and belief in the heart.

The truth of the matter is that faith is the word of the tongue, the belief of the heart and the action of the limbs. Thus, action is included in the reality of faith, and it is not something additional to it. Therefore, whoever confines the matter to the word of the tongue and the belief of the heart would not have correct faith.

So, faith, according to the scholars of Islām, is: the word of the tongue, the belief of the heart and the action of the limbs. It increases according to obedience and decreases according to disobedience.

Allah ﷻ says:

“And when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith.” [Qur’ān 8:2]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“As for those who believed, it has increased them in faith.” [Qur’ān 9:124]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And those who have believed will increase in faith.” [Qur’ān 74:31]

These verses are evidence that faith increases and decreases, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“If any one of you sees an evil, then let him change it with their hands, and if they cannot, then with their tongue, and if he cannot, then with their heart, and that is the weakest of faith.”⁵⁹

This is evidence that faith decreases. In another version:

“There is not a mustard seed of faith beyond that.”⁶⁰

This is evidence that faith decreases until it is the weight of a mustard seed.

In another authentic *ḥadīth*:

“Bring out of the Fire anyone who has the smallest, smallest weight of a mustard seed of faith.”⁶¹

Faith is the word of the tongue, the belief of the heart and the action of the body parts (limbs); it increases according to obedience and decreases according to disobedience. This is the correct definition as taken from the Qur’ān and Sunnah.

It is not as the Ḥanafī scholars say: the word of the tongue and belief of the heart (*jinān*) alone.

It is also not as the Karāmīyah sect says: the word of the tongue alone.

It is also not as the Ash’arīs say: the belief of the heart alone.

It is also not as the Jahmīs say: the knowledge (*ma’rifah*) of the heart alone.

Thus, there are four denominations of the Murji’ites, the farthest from the truth being the Jahmīs. According to their proposition, Pharaoh would be a believer because he *knew*, and Iblīs would also be a believer because he *knew* in his heart.

The Ash’arīs say that it is the belief (confirmation) of the heart. Then, Abū Lahab, Abū Ṭālib, and all of the other idolaters would be believers because there was certainty in their hearts and they believed. They believed the

59 Muslim, no. 49.

60 Muslim, no. 50.

61 Al-Bukhārī, no. 7510; Muslim, no. 192.

Prophet ﷺ in their hearts, however, pride and envy prevented them from following him.

The Jews acknowledged that he was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in their hearts, however, it was a matter of pride and envy.

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons.” [Qur’ān 2:146]

Allah ﷻ says about the idolaters:

“And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers reject.” [Qur’ān 6:33]

‘*They do not call you untruthful*’ means that they believe you.

Abū Ṭālib said: “I know that the religion of Muḥammad is among the best religions of all creations. Were it not for blame and fear of insult, I would have declared faith openly.”

(138) All of the authentic legislations and teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are the truth.

These are good words. Everything that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was authentically related as having said or done is the truth. In contrast to those who say that the accounts of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ can be classified into *mutawātir* (handed down concurrently through many *isnāds*) and *āḥād* ("singular", less than *mutawātir*). They only accept the *mutawātir* accounts and say that the *āḥād ḥadīths* provide knowledge (*‘ilm*) but not certainty (*yaqīn*) and that they should not be used as evidence in matters of creed. This is false. Anything that the Prophet ﷺ is authentically reported as having said or done (whether *mutawātir* or *āḥād*) is a source of knowledge and matters of creed are to be based on it, on account that it is authentically traced back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“And whatever the Messenger has given you – take.” [Qur’ān 59:7]

If a *ḥadīth* is authentically traced to the Prophet ﷺ it is to be acted upon in all matters, provided that it is correctly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. There are some groups now that are sceptical about the Sunnah, and they say that it is not right to act in accordance with the Sunnah and that it suffices to act in accordance with the Qur’ān⁶². There are also some people who say that the only thing that is acceptable from the Sunnah is that which is *mutawātir*. Both groups are astray.

It is obligatory for a Muslim to believe that all that is correctly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ is the truth. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ acted upon the testimony of a single person in many instances: the sighting of the new moon, for example: ibn ‘Umar ؓ came and told him that he had seen the new moon so he commanded the Muslims to fast. A Bedouin Arab came to him and told him that he saw the new moon, so he asked him: "Do you testify that there is no god but Allah? Do you testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah?" He said: 'Yes'. So, the Prophet ﷺ commanded the people to fast⁶³.

The Prophet ﷺ used to also send his messengers individually. He did not send groups. Those who received the messages would have had to act upon what they heard from the single delegate of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

(139) Faith is one.

This is a mistake, because faith is not one, and the people of faith are not equal. There is disparity in faith. It increases and decreases, the Murji'ites falsely believe that faith is static.

62 It is related that al-Miqdām ibn Ma’dikarib al-Kindī ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Verily, I have been given the Book and it's like as well. Verily, I have been given the Qur’ān and its like as well. Verily, there will soon come a man full and reclining on a his couch, saying, 'Keep the Qur’ān, and whatever lawful thing you find in it, make lawful, and whatever unlawful thing you find in it, make unlawful.'" Aḥmad, 4/130; Abū Dāwūd, no. 3804, 4604. Aḥmad (according to similar wording), 4/132; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2664; ibn Mājah, no. 3193; al-Dārimī, no. 592.

63 Al-Tirmidhī, no. 691; Abū Dāwūd, no. 2340; ibn Mājah, no. 1652; ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1923; ibn Ḥibbān, no. 870; al-Ḥākim, 1/424.

Belief in the heart is also not the same amongst the people. The faith of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ is not like that of one of the sinners among the Muslims, because a sinning Muslim has very weak faith, whereas the faith of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq amounts to the faith of the entire *Ummah*⁶⁴. So people are not the same in the essence (*aṣl*) of faith, either. This is in terms of its essence (*aṣl*).

Likewise, when it comes to action: there is disparity between people in terms of actions, as Allah ﷻ says:

“Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself.” [Qur’ān 35:32]

This is the sinner whose sin is less than idolatry, he wrongs himself and thus he is placing himself in danger. *{And among them is he who is moderate}* This is the one who meets his obligations and avoids doing what is forbidden.

“And among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah.” [Qur’ān 35:32]

This is the one who does what is obligatory and what is desirable (*muṣtaḥabbāt*), and refrains from what is forbidden and undesirable, as well as some things that are permissible to be on the safe side. The Muslims are not, then, the same. There are three groups: one group wrongs itself, one group is moderate, and the last is foremost in good deeds. This is evidence that there is disparity between people in terms of faith.

64 It is related that 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ؓ said: "We used to compare people as to who was the best in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. We said Abū Bakr was the best, then 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, and then 'Uthmān. Al-Bukhārī, no. 3655. In another version: "In the time of the Prophet ﷺ we did not hold Abū Bakr to be equal to anyone, and then 'Umar, and then 'Uthmān. Then, we would leave the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ as not having any superiority among them." (no. 3698)

It is related that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyah said: "I said to my father: Who is the best of all people after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? He said: 'Abu Bakr.' I said: 'Then who?' He said: 'Then 'Umar.' And I feared that he would say 'Uthmān. I said: 'Then you?' He said: 'I am but a man from among the Muslims.' Al-Bukhārī, no. 3671.

(140) And with regard to its essence, all believers are the same. They differ only in their fear of Allah, piety, abstention from inclinations (*hawā*), and pursuance of what is best.

This is not enough because it implies that the actions are not comprehended by the term *faith*. This also means that if someone believes in their heart and utters it on the tongue, then they have complete faith, and that there is no disparity between people. This is a big mistake, because there is disparity in what he mentions here as well as in righteous deeds.

(141) All of the believers are *awliyā'* (allies) of the Most Merciful. The most honourable of them to Allah are those who obey Him most and follow the Qur'ān best.

This is right. All of the believers are allies of Allah ﷻ, they are His loved ones. Allah ﷻ loves the believers, the pious, those who do much good, those who repent and those who purify themselves. He hates the unbelievers and sinners. Allah ﷻ loves and hates according to deeds.

Everyone who believes is an ally (*walī*) of Allah ﷻ, and there is also disparity in this alliance. Some are superior to others. Allah ﷻ says:

“Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve Those who believed and were fearing Allah.” [Qur'ān 10:62-63]

Some people have complete alliance with Allah ﷻ, some have incomplete alliance, whilst others are enemies of Allah ﷻ and are distant from Him.

Anyone who has faith and piety is an ally of Allah ﷻ. However, there is disparity in alliance according to deeds. Some of them have complete alliance while some of them, namely sinful believers, are allies in one respect. They are

allies to Allah ﷻ according to their obedience and enemies to Allah ﷻ according to their disobedience and misdemeanour.

Some of them are pure enemies, like the disbelievers and idolaters.

This is the truth of the matter. It is falsehood to believe that only those whose graves have tombstones and are taken as holy sites are Allah's ﷻ allies, and that those whose graves do not have tombstones are not His allies, as is commonly the case with the grave-worshippers. This is falsehood.

(142) Faith is to have faith in Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, the Last Day, and *qadar* (predestination), whether good or bad, sweet or bitter – it is from Allah, The Most High.

Faith has already been defined in the aforementioned. It is the word of the tongue, belief of the heart, and the actions of the limbs; it increases by obedience, and decreases by disobedience⁶⁵. What the author mentions here is the pillars of faith, as stated by the Prophet ﷺ when asked by Jibrīl ؑ. He said: "Tell me about faith." He replied:

"Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in *qadar*, whether good or bad."⁶⁶

It has many characteristics, such as in the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

"Faith has some-seventy branches, or some-sixty branches⁶⁷ and the highest one is to say, 'There is no god but Allah', and the lowest is to remove harm from the road."⁶⁸

65 Al-Bukhārī reported in The Book of Faith: Chapter: The Increase and Decrease of Faith, He said: "Allah says: *and We increased them in guidance*", *and those who have believed will increase in faith*." Allah ﷻ says: *This day I have perfected for you your religion*." He who leaves something that is perfect is then imperfect.

66 Al-Bukhārī, no. 50; Muslim, no. 10.

67 In Arabic *Bid'* is any number between three to nine, therefore *bid' wa sab'un* and *bid' wa situn* is anywhere between seventy three to seventy nine and sixty three to sixty nine. [Translator's note]

68 Al-Bukhārī, no. 9; Muslim, no. 35 (this wording is from Muslim).

These six, on the other hand, are the pillars and foundations that it stands on.

We have already discussed faith in Allah ﷻ, faith in the angels, faith in the Messengers and faith in the books. All of these have been mentioned previously, however, earlier on in this declaration of creed.

(143) We believe in all of that;

It is obligatory to have faith in all of those things. If someone denies any of these pillars, then he is not a believer, because he would be missing a pillar of faith.

(144) And we make no distinction between any of the Messengers. We believe in all of them and what they preached.

This was mentioned previously: it is obligatory to have faith in all of the Messengers, from the first to the last, those whom Allah ﷻ has named in the Qur’ān and those whom He has not named. We believe in all of the Messengers that Allah ﷻ has sent to His slaves. If an individual believes in some of them and disbelieves in others, then he is a disbeliever in all of them. Likewise if one were to deny only a single prophet, he has disbelieved in all of the prophets.

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say, ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between – Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.” [Qur’ān 4:150-151]

Thus, the Jews are disbelievers because they disbelieve in two honourable prophets: 'Īsā ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ. Christians are also disbelievers because they deny the message of Muḥammad ﷺ. So, the people of today who say that Jews and Christians are Muslims and believers, and that they belong to divine religions, and that there has to be rapprochement between these religions and interfaith dialogue, this is a mistake and error, and Allah ﷻ is our refuge. This is to mix truth with falsehood and faith with disbelief, because after the dispatch of the Prophet ﷺ no religion is correct besides Islām.

“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.” [Qur’ān 3:85]

Islām abrogated everything before it. It commanded man and jinn, Jews, Christians, Arabs and non-Arabs to follow the Chosen one (al-Muṣṭafā) ﷺ. So, there is no faith without following the Messenger ﷺ.

(145) Those who commit major sins (*kabā'ir*) from the Ummah of Muḥammad shall not be in Hell forever, if they die worshipping Allah alone;

The major sins are those that are less serious than idolatry and more serious than minor sins (*ṣaghā'ir*). The guideline for determining the major sins is that they are every sin that results in a prescribed punishment (*ḥadd*), or is concluded with the anger of Allah ﷻ, His curse or the Fire. Or a sin that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has disavowed whoever does it, then this is a major sin, such as in his saying: “Whoever deceives us is not one of us.”⁶⁹ - And: “Whoever draws a weapon on one of us is not one of us.”⁷⁰

All of these considerations indicate that if someone commits a major sin (that is less serious than idolatry) then he has not left the faith but is rather a believer of less faith, or is a sinner (*fāsiq*). This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah

69 Muslim, no. 101.

70 Al-Bukhārī, no. 6874; Muslim, no. 98, 100, 101.

wa'l-Jamā'ah: they do not declare anyone a disbeliever on account of any major sin besides idolatry; however, they do not say that a sinner is a believer in an absolute sense. They say that their faith has some limitations, so it is said: "believer by faith, sinner by (major) sin."

It should not be said that a sinner who committed a major sin is a complete believer, as the Murji'ites say. It should also not be said that they have left Islām, as the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites say.

Hence, there are three groups when it comes to major sins (that are less than idolatry):

The Khārijites and Mu'tazilites, who exclude major sinners from Islām; however, the Khārijites say that the person becomes a disbeliever, whereas the Mu'tazilites instead say that he is 'in a status between two positions (*manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*). Nonetheless, they exclude them from Islām.

The Murji'ites say that he is a believer with complete faith, as long as he believes in his heart (according to the popular opinion among them) and as long as he pronounces it on his tongue (according to some of them). Then he is a believer with complete faith, and sins do not at all detract from his faith, even if they were major ones. This is also misguidance.

The true way, however, is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. Someone who commits a major sin other than idolatry is a believer, not a disbeliever, but his faith is incomplete. It is obligatory to know this, and it has to be entrenched in your mind. The evil of the evil people has increased in these times, championing the doctrines of the Murji'ah and promoting them to people in order to conceal the misguidance that they themselves belong to.

So, it is one of the greatest obligations for students of [Islamic] knowledge today to know this.

(146) Even if they do not repent, as long as they meet Allah as knowing believers. They are under the will and judgment of Allah, if He wills, He may forgive them and He may pardon them by His grace, as Allah has said in His Book: "...but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills." If He wills, He may punish them in Hell out of justice.

Yes, this is the right doctrine: that those who commit major sins less than idolatry are not disbelievers. If they meet Allah ﷻ without repenting from these sins, then they are under Allah's ﷻ will. If He so wills, He will punish them according to the extent of their sins and then bring them out of the Fire and admit them to Jannah on account of them worshipping Him alone and having faith, and they will not abide in the Fire forever. Evidence for that is the saying of Allah ﷻ:

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.” [Qur’ān 4:48]

However, there is some ambiguity and brevity in the author's statement: "knowing believers". If he were to say, "those who worship Allah ﷻ alone" (*muwaḥḥidīn*), instead, as he had said earlier, it would have been better.

And if Allah ﷻ wills, He could carry out the threats on them, but they will not abide in the Fire forever. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah and this is the doctrine of truth, as opposed to the *Khārijites*, who say that they will be in the Fire in any case, and that they will abide in it forever. So, for them, anyone who enters the Fire does not come out. In contrast, the *Murji'ites* say that they will never even pass through the Fire. This is wrong. Rather, we cannot guarantee that they will be saved as they are under Allah's ﷻ will.

If He wills, He will forgive them out of His grace, and if He wills, He will punish them out of His justice. But Allah ﷻ does not wrong them; He punishes them for their actions, which are the cause for that. Allah ﷻ does not punish those who do not disobey Him, and He does not equate between a sinner and an upright Muslim.

“Then will We treat the Muslims like the criminals? What is [the matter] with you? How do you judge?” [Qur’ān 68:35-36]

“Or should we treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like corrupters in the land? Or should We treat those who fear Allah like the wicked?” [Qur’ān 38:28]

This is a criticism from Allah the Almighty.

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds – [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”
[Qur’ān 45: 21]

(147) Then they will be brought out of Hell because of His mercy and the intercession of the obedient Muslims.

This is because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is authentically reported to have said so. Those who believe in Allah ﷻ alone but have committed many sins will be brought out of the Fire⁷¹, either by the grace of Allah ﷻ or by intercession by the permission of Allah ﷻ. Intercession is true, but it is only by the permission of Allah ﷻ. It is permissible on behalf of those who worship Allah ﷻ alone (*al-muwaḥḥidūn*), and not on behalf of the disbelievers, idolaters, and hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*).

(148) Then, He will send them to Paradise.

It has been related that they will be brought out of the Fire burnt like charcoal. They will later be cast into the River of Life and their bodies and flesh will sprout like plants. Afterwards, when they are cleansed and purified, they will be allowed to enter Jannah, and they will enter it.⁷²

71 For example, it is related in the *ḥadīth* of the intercession as attributed to Anas ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Bring out of the Fire anyone who said, "There is no god but Allah", and who had the weight of a grain of barley of good in his heart. Then, bring out of the Fire anyone who said, "There is no god but Allah", and who had the weight of a grain of wheat of good in his heart. Then, bring out of the Fire anyone who said, "There is no god but Allah", and had the weight of a speck of good in his heart." Al-Bukhārī, no. 7410; Muslim, no. 193.

72 It is related that Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī ؓ said that the Prophet ﷺ said: "When the people of Jannah enter Jannah, and the people of the Fire enter the Fire, Allah will say, 'Bring out of the Fire anyone who has the weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart.' So they are to be brought out, and by that time, they will have burnt and become like coal. Then, they will be cast into the River of Life and will sprout as a seed sprouts on a flood bank. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Behold! It sprouts yellow and twisted." Al-Bukhārī, no. 5060; Muslim, no. 184, 185

(149) This is because Allah is the ally of those who know Him and He has not made them the same in both abodes as those who have denied Him, those who did not receive His guidance or alliance.

Allah the Most High says:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds.” [Qur’ān 45:21]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Or should We treat those who fear Allah like the wicked?” [Qur’ān 38:28]

These, along with other verses, indicate that Allah ﷻ does not treat the obedient and the disobedient, or the believers and disbelievers equally, but rather repays each according to their actions.

"He has not made them the same in both abodes as those who have denied Him, those who did not receive His guidance or alliance": Rather, Allah ﷻ has made each distinct in this world and in the afterlife. He has made the obedient distinct from the disobedient, and the disbelievers distinct from the believers in this world and in the afterlife. He has made them distinct in their characteristics, distinguishing features, and actions; so, the actions of the allies of Allah ﷻ and the obedient are not like the actions, speech, and behaviour of the enemies of Allah ﷻ. Look at the people of today. Look at how they behave. Look at the behaviour of the pious believers and look at the behaviour of the sinners, the disobedient, the disbelievers and heretics. This is in this world.

In the afterlife, Allah ﷻ will make each type of people distinct as well. Allah ﷻ gives some the honour of Jannah and punishes others in the Fire. Allah is Most Wise; He keeps everything in its right place. He gives His mercy only to those who deserve it and He gives punishment only to those who deserve it. That said, the author said: *“those who know [Him] (ahl al-ma’rifah)”*. This falls

short and perpetuates the misconception that faith is knowledge (*ma'rifah*) alone, as believed by extremist Murji'ites. If he were to say, 'those who are obedient', it would have been better and clearer.

(150) O Allah, O ally of Islām and the Muslims, keep us steadfast upon Islām until we meet You.

These are some of the most beautiful words of the author ﷺ.

After mentioning these great and serious issues, He asks Allah ﷻ to allow him to remain steadfast, that Allah ﷻ does not lead him astray along with the people who belong to those misguided ways and utterers of those words of misguided heresy. This demonstrates his understanding and wisdom, insofar as one should not be deceived by his own knowledge and say, "I know about *tawḥīd*, I know about '*aqīdah*, I'm not in any danger". This is deception. In fact, we fear that such a person will have a bad ending and will be led astray, and that such a person will be fooled by those who have strayed from the path. Many an upright person has deviated from the path, especially when the trials and tribulations are strong, a man is a Muslim by day and a disbeliever by night, and a Muslim by night and a disbeliever by day; he trades his religion for the goods of the world, as authenticated in a hadith.⁷³

When tribulations come, a person has to ask Allah ﷻ for steadfastness⁷⁴. One should not say, "I'm not at risk, I know and I pray". Yes, you know and you pray, *al-ḥamdu li'llāh*. But you are at risk, and you have to show concern. Who is better, you or Ibrāhīm ؑ? He said:

73 It is related that Abū Hurayrah ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Hasten to action before there come tribulations like the darkness of night: a man will be a believer by day and an disbeliever by night, or a believer by night and an unbeliever by day, trading his religion for some goods of the world." Muslim, no. 118.

74 It is related that Jābir ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to say: "O You who turns the hearts, make my heart steadfast upon Your religion." We said: 'O Messenger of Allah, do you fear for us though we have believed in you and in what you've brought?' He said: 'Yes. Verily, the hearts are between two of Allah's fingers, He turns them as He wills.'" Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2145; ibn Mājah, no. 3834; al-Ḥākim, 1/525, 526, 4/321. Al-Ḥākim said it is *ṣaḥīḥ* and al-Dhahabī said it is concurred. Al-Tirmidhī said: "This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan*."

Muslim presented it as being related by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'Aās ؓ who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "The hearts of the sons of Ādam are all between two fingers of the fingers of the All Merciful, as one heart; He turns it as He wills." Then, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "O Allah, You who turn the hearts, turn our hearts to obey You." Muslim, no. 2654.

“My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.” [Qur’ān 14:35]

Ibrāhīm ؑ feared that he would worship idols, even though he broke and shattered them with his hands and was subsequently tortured and humiliated for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Even so, he said:

“Make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.” [Qur’ān 14:35]

He didn't say, “I'm saved now”. Instead, he asked Allah ﷻ to keep him and his sons from worshipping idols. A person should always fear his Lord, the Almighty. Many people who were once on the path have gone stray, and many who were upright have deviated, and many believers have disbelieved and apostatised, and many who were once lost were then guided by Allah ﷻ, and many who were disbelievers submitted to Allah ﷻ as Muslims. The matter is in Allah's hands.

(151) We believe *ṣalāh* is to be prayed behind every righteous or sinful person from *Ahl al-Qiblah* and over everyone that dies from them.

This involves two issues:

First: that prayer (*ṣalāh*) is an act of worship and a good deed, hence when people, especially those who have authority (leaders), perform it, they do a good deed. Further to the point, the consequences of deserting prayer behind them are serious and disturbing as it causes things such as, secession from the united community, disunion and even bloodshed, which are great dangers and thus have to be avoided.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Pray behind anyone who says, 'There is no god but Allah', and over anyone who says, 'There is no god but Allah.’”⁷⁵

This is general to all Muslims, so with even greater reason, it should apply to the rulers, the opposition of who causes disunion, and has adverse effects on the Muslims.

This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah: They fight in Allah's ﷻ cause with every *amīr*, whether righteous or sinful, as long as that *amīr* has not left Islām.

This is a fundamental principle of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, from the time of the Companions to the time of the *imams*. It is also that which the Muslims of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah unanimously agree on.

The second issue is that *ṣalāh* is to be prayed at the funeral of all Muslims, even if they were sinners. As long as they do not apostatise, then they are Muslims and have the same rights and duties as all Muslims. On the other hand, if they apostatise, then prayers should not be offered at their funerals because they are not Muslims. However, it is not the right of every person to judge whether someone has apostatised. Instead, it is only the right of people of knowledge and insight by referring to the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. Therefore it is not right for every person to make such a judgment, even if he has good intentions. Such judgments are only to be made by those who have insight and who have firmly grounded knowledge.

(152) We do not place any of them in Paradise or Hell.

We do not testify that anyone, regardless of their level of righteousness and piety, will be in Paradise, because we do not know the unseen. We also do not judge that any Muslim will be in the Fire; regardless of what sins he does, because we do not know how his life will be sealed and what he will die upon⁷⁶. This is regarding specific individuals.

⁷⁵ Dārquṭnī, 2/43, no. 1743.

⁷⁶ It is related that Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sā'idī ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Actions are judged according to the last of them." Al-Bukhārī, no. 6493.

We do not have the right to judge except by what is apparent. Similarly, we are not to judge that someone will be in the Fire unless the Messenger of Allah ﷺ testified to that. That goes for both Jannah and the Fire, such as the ten promised Jannah, namely, the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqāṣ, Sa'īd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl, 'Abdurrahmān ibn 'Awf, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awām, Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ, and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd-Allāh. ⁷⁷ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also attested to Thābit ibn Qays ibn Shammās al-Anṣārī being in Jannah, as well as a man of the Anṣār. He said: "A man from the people of Jannah will enter your place." So a man with water trickling from his beard from his ablution entered with his sandals in his hands. Then, he sat in the circle. On the second and third day, the Prophet ﷺ said the same thing. This was for the sake of emphasis; otherwise, one testimony is enough. 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr followed the man to learn what act was the reason for him to be promised Jannah. He did not, however, find that he performed much worship. He did find that he was mindful of the obligations, stood for prayer at night, and when he woke at night, he would remember and glorify Allah's name and declare Him as one. When 'Abdullah was about to leave, he said to the man: "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say such-and-such, so I wanted to carefully observe what you do." The man said: "It is only as you have seen." But when he went off, he called him and said: "However, I find no malice in my heart toward any Muslim." He said: "This is what is beyond our abilities." ⁷⁸

To sum up, if the Prophet ﷺ testifies to someone being in Jannah, we also testify to them being in Jannah, and we ascertain that they will be in Jannah. On the other hand, we cannot be certain about anyone else, but we wish them the best. We also do not determine that individual disbelievers will be in the Fire. That is because they may repent and die having repented from their sins and ended their lives in a good way. Nonetheless, we fear they will be in the Fire. This is in terms of individuals.

In general terms, on the other hand, we can definitively determine that Muslims will be in Jannah, and disbelievers will be in the Fire.

77 It is related that Sa'īd ibn Zayd said among some men that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Ten are in Jannah: Abū Bakr is in Jannah, 'Umar is in Jannah, and so are 'Uthmān, 'Alī, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, 'Abdurrahmān, Abū 'Ubaydah, and Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqāṣ." He said: He counted those nine and kept silent about the tenth, so people said: "We implore you by Allah, who is the tenth?" He said: "You have implored me in Allah's name. Abū Al-'A'war is in Jannah." Al-Tirmidhī, no. 3757. Abu-Eesa said: "Abū'l-'A'war is Sa'īd ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nawfal. I heard Muḥammad [i.e. al-Bukhārī] say: 'It is more authentic than the prior hadith.'"

78 Aḥmad, *Musnad*, 3:166; 'Abdul-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, no. 20,559; al-Baghwaī, *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, no. 3535; al-Nasā'ī, *Amal al-Yawm wa'l-Laylah*, no. 863; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-imān*, no. 6605.

(153) We do not testify that any of them is a disbeliever, idolater, or hypocrite as long as they do not outwardly demonstrate any of that;

The standard rule is that every Muslim is upright. This is a great doctrinal principle. Therefore, we are not to harbour suspicions regarding any Muslim, or spy or snoop on them; however, if something is outward, we pass judgment according to that. On the other hand, if there is nothing outward, then we do not have suspicions about Muslims, and we treat them in a way that corresponds to what outwardly appears of them. It is not our duty to search or investigate people's affairs or pass judgment upon them, and Allah ﷻ has not made it our duty to do so.⁷⁹

(154) And we leave their private affairs to Allah the Most High.

We have a good opinion about them, and their private affairs are up to Allah the Most High. It is not our duty to investigate people and their affairs. What is obligatory is to hide the faults of Muslims, to have a good opinion about them and to maintain brotherhood among the Muslims.

“The believers are but brothers.” [Qur’ān 49:10]⁸⁰

79 It is related that ibn ‘Umar ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ climbed the pulpit and yelled out: "O you who have submitted (*aslama*) on the tongue but whose faith has not reached the heart, do not cause trouble to the Muslims, do not insult them, and do not track their faults. Whoever tracks the faults of their Muslim brother, Allah will track theirs, and if Allah tracks someone's faults, He exposes them, even if they were in the middle of their home."

One day, ibn ‘Umar looked at the Ka'bah and said: "How great you are, and how great is your sanctity! And the sanctity of a believer is greater to Allah than you." Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2037. Al-Tirmidhī said: This *hadith* is *hasan gharib*.

80 It is related that ibn ‘Umar ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He does not wrong him and he does not forsake him. He who fulfils the needs of his brother, Allah fulfils his needs; and he who alleviates the plight of a Muslim, Allah will alleviate a plight from the plights of the Day of Judgment; and he who shields a Muslim, Allah will shield him on the Day of Judgment." Al-Bukhārī, no. 2442; Muslim, no. 2580.

(155) We do not believe in fighting anyone from the *Ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ except those whom it is obligatory to fight.

It is not permissible to kill a Muslim or to declare his blood as lawful, because Muslims are defended and protected by the fact that they are Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"I have been commanded to fight people until they say, 'There is no god but Allah'. If they do so, they defend their blood and property from me, except for what is due, and Allah is their judge."

So, if someone seems outwardly a Muslim, utters the testimony of faith and does not invalidate his faith in any way, his blood is sacred. It is wrong to commit any offense against him or to shed his blood. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Your blood, property, and honour are sacred to you as this day, this month, and this land are sacred."

He said so in his sermon at Minā on the Day of Sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥr*).^{81,82}

Is there anything more sacred than this? The sanctity of a believer is greater than the sanctity of the Ka'bah, because the Prophet ﷺ said, while looking at the Ka'bah: "How sacred is your sanctity! And the sanctity of a Muslim is greater to Allah than your sanctity," or as he had said.⁸³

It has also been related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "It is not lawful to violate the blood of a Muslim except for three: a non-virgin fornicator, a life for a life and one who leaves his religion and splits away from the community."⁸⁴

First: the non-virgin fornicator (*al-thayyib al-zānī*), or a *muḥṣan* who is confirmed to have had intercourse with his wife in a valid marriage while both parties were of sound mind and were free adults (not slaves). If such a person commits fornication (*zinā*), he is to be stoned to death.

81 Al-Bukhārī, no. 25, 392 and 2946; Muslim, no. 21 and 22.

82 Al-Bukhārī, no. 67; Muslim, no. 1679.

83 This dictum is verified to have been correctly attributed to ibn 'Umar as presented by al-Tirmidhī, no. 2037. Al-Tirmidhī said: "This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan gharīb*."

84 Al-Bukhārī, no. 6878; Muslim, no. 1676.

Second: if a Muslim commits an act of assault against another Muslim and unjustly, wrongfully kills him, and the relatives of the person who was killed demand retribution (*qiṣās*), then he is to be killed.

“O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered.” [Qur’ān 2:178]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And We ordained for them therein a life for a life.” [Qur’ān 5:45]

Third: an apostate. Such a person is to be killed according to the prescribed penalty of apostasy.

Other than these three types, the blood of a Muslim is highly sacred.

The same applies to transgression. If anyone, even a Muslim, transgresses against a Muslim, then the transgressors are to be fought. This is because they seek to disunite the Muslims and because they would be revolting against the leader, so it is incumbent to fight them.

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah.” [Qur’ān 49:9]

Their blood is shed in order to stop them from transgressing, to maintain the united community of Muslims and to maintain security.

It is also lawful to shed the blood of highway robbers (*quṭṭā’ al-ṭarīq*).

“Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land.” [Qur’ān 5:33]

The penalty of each is according to their crime.

Allah ﷻ has made it lawful to kill those types of people as defence against their evil and aggression.

(156) We do not believe in revolting against our leaders and governors;

This issue is of great importance. One of the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah is that they do not believe that it is right to revolt against those who govern the Muslims.

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." [Qur'ān 4:59]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"He who obeys the emir has obeyed me, and he who disobeys the emir has disobeyed me".

Therefore, it is impermissible to revolt against them, even if they are sinners, as long as they have been given a pledge of allegiance and stand as leaders. Revolting against them, even if they were sinners, results in a number of evils, such as sedition, disunion, disruption of security, and allowing the disbelievers to gain authority over the Muslims.⁸⁵

Shaykh al-Islam [ibn Taymiyah] رحمه الله said: "A people have not revolted against their leader except that the situation after the revolt became worse than the situation before it," or as he mentioned.

This is also true for a disbelieving leader. When people revolt against their leaders, it disturbs their own security, they end up more or less killing each other, and there is much instability, as observed in the revolutions that have occurred throughout history. So what about revolting against a Muslim leader? It is not permissible to revolt against Muslim leaders even if they were sinners, as long as they do not apostatise. The Prophet ﷺ said:

⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī, no. 2957; Muslim, no. 1835.

"Hear and obey unless you see disbelief that is so outright that you have proof from Allah in it."

Thus, sin and disobedience (to Allah ﷻ) are not causes for revolution. Even so, the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites hold the view that it is an obligation to revolt against anyone who has committed sins. They say that it falls under enjoining right and forbidding wrong. By that, they mean to revolt against those governing the Muslims.⁸⁶

Mu'tazilites have five basic principles:

Tawḥīd (oneness of Allah ﷻ). It is associated with the rejection of all of His attributes, and they hold that anyone who confirms the attributes is an idolater.

Justice (*adl*), which is associated with the rejection of predestination (*qadar*). They say it is injustice to confirm the predestination of Allah ﷻ, and that it is incumbent upon Allah ﷻ to be just.

Enjoining good and forbidding wrong. But by this, they mean revolution against Muslim leaders who commit sins that are less serious than disbelief. This itself is wrong (*munkar*) and it is far from anything right (*ma'rūf*).

The intermediary status of salvation (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*). This means that those who commit major sins are judged as having left Islām but haven't entered into disbelief (*kufr*), rendering them neither Muslims nor non-Muslims. The Khārijites, on the other hand, hold that such people are disbelievers.

The enforcement of threats (*infādh al-wa'id*). It means that anyone who dies having committed a major sin less serious than idolatry will abide in the Fire forever. Thus, they are in agreement with the Khārijites as far as one's fate in the afterlife, but they disagree with the Khārijites as far as their intermediary status between Islām and disbelief. One of their leaders, Qāḍī 'Abdul-Jabbār, authored a book about this titled, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah*.

(157) Even if they commit injustice.

⁸⁶ Al-Bukhārī, no. 7056; Muslim, no. 1709.

The word for injustice (*jawr*) used here has the same meaning as *ẓulm*, injustice. If they transgress and commit wrongs against people by taking their property and striking their backs, or killing Muslims, then [we] hold that there is to be no revolt against them. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Hear and obey, even if he takes your property and flogs your back."

Patience with them is better than revolt, because revolt entails great evils, so it is a matter of committing the lesser of two evils to avoid the greater one. This is a principle held by Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. And the Prophet ﷺ commanded patience with the injustices of the authorities even if they do wrong, commit injustice or sin.⁸⁷

(158) Nor do we pray against them.

It is impermissible to pray against them because this is a symbolic form of revolt (*khurūj ma'nawī*), and praying against them is like revolting with weapons, as it means not holding their authority to be legitimate. What is obligatory is to pray for them to have guidance and righteousness, not to pray against them. This is one of the foundational principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. So, if you see someone praying against the authorities, you should know that they have strayed from the right doctrine and do not follow the path (*manhaj*) of the early Muslims. Some people see revolt as a matter of zeal or discontentment over the infringement of Allah's ﷻ laws. However, it is zeal and discontentment in the wrong manner, because if they were to be removed, evils would occur.

Imām al-Fuḍayil ibn 'Iyāḍ ؒ said and cited Imām Aḥmad ؒ as saying: "If I knew that one of my prayers would be answered, I would pray it for the authorities."

⁸⁷ Muslim, no. 1847, presented as being related by Hudhayfah ibn Yamān.

Imām Aḥmad showed patience during the Great Trial⁸⁸, and he is not confirmed to have devoted any prayers against them (the authorities) or to have spoken ill of them. Instead, he was patient and the final outcome was in his favour. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

Those who pray against the Muslim authorities do not belong to Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. Moreover, those not praying for them show a sign that they have deviated from the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

Some people even criticize those who pray for the authorities during Friday sermons. They say that it is flattery, hypocrisy, and adulation. *Subḥāna'llāh!* The doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, rather of the Sunnah, is to pray for the authorities, because if they are righteous, their people will also be righteous. So, you should pray for them to be righteous and rightly guided and for good things for them, even if they have done some evils. As long as they are Muslims, there is some good in them. As long as they seek judgment from the Islamic law, uphold the statutes, maintain security and defend against aggression from the disbelievers against the Muslims, then there is much good and prayers should be made for them on that basis. On the other hand, whatever sins they have committed, then it is they who are to bear the blame, but the good that they do is greater. Prayers should also be made for them to be upright and righteous. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. On the other hand, the doctrine of those who have gone astray and the ignorant is the belief that such is flattery and bootlicking. They do not devote prayers on their behalf but rather pray against them.

It is not 'religious zeal' to pray against them. If you wish to do good, pray for good and righteousness for them. Allah ﷻ is able to guide them to the path and bring them back to what is right. Have you, nonetheless, given up hope for them to be rightly guided? This is a form of despair of Allah's ﷻ mercy (*qunūt min raḥmati llāh*). Furthermore, praying for them means having sincerity (*naṣīḥah*) towards them, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "Faith is good will, faith is good will, faith is good will." "Towards whom, O Messenger of Allah?" He said:

⁸⁸ The Great Trial refers to a controversy that arose during the time of Imam Ahmad about whether the Quran was created. The ruler asked him to say that it was created (therefore, implying that it will eventually perish) yet he completely refused and endured much torture due to this. Fortunately, though, his opinion prevailed and Allah brought him safely out of his trial. [Translator's note]

"Toward Allah, His Book, His Messenger, and the *imāms* and common folk among the Muslims."

This is a great fundamental principle that has to be given notice, especially in these times.⁸⁹

(159) Or disobey them.

This is to emphasize the aforementioned, even if they were to commit wrongs, injustices, acts of disobedience, and major sins apart from idolatry, we do not disobey them, nor do we revolt against or disobey them.

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.” [Qur’ān 4:59]

Rather, we fight in *jihād* for them, and we observe all congregations of the daily, Friday, and ‘Eid prayers with them, for the sake of unity among Muslims.

(160) We believe that obedience to them is obedience to Allah the Almighty, a statute, as long as they do not command sin.

Allah ﷻ says:

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.” [Qur’ān 4:59]

⁸⁹ Muslim, no. 55; al-Bukhārī presented it with a discontinuous route of transmission in *kitāb al-imān, bāb qawī al-nabī ṣallā ‘alayhi wa sallam, al-dīn al-naṣīḥah lillāhi wa li-rasūlihi wa li-‘immat al-muslimin wa li-‘āmmatihim*.

So, Allah ﷻ commands obedience to the authorities of the Muslims. On the other hand, it is not the Muslims' duty to obey a disbeliever.

“And never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to overcome them].” [Qur’ān 4:141]

Because Allah ﷻ said: *“those in authority among you”* (ulū’l-amri minkum), that is, among the Muslims. It is obligatory to obey them unless they command us to disobey Allah ﷻ, as there is no obedience to a creature if it means disobeying Allah ﷻ. We are not to obey them in any such disobedience. However, that does not mean that we are to revolt against them and renounce our obedience altogether. It only means that we are not to obey them in that sin, but we obey them in everything besides that, as long as it does not mean disobeying Allah ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Obedience is only required in what is good."⁹⁰

(161) We pray for them to be righteous and well.

We pray that Allah ﷻ brings them back to what is right (i.e. The Truth) and corrects their wrongs. We pray that they be set aright, because their righteousness means the righteousness of the Muslims, and them being rightly guided means that the Muslims will be rightly guided. The effects of the good things that they do are felt by others as well. So, if you pray for them, you are praying for all of the Muslims.

(162) We follow the Sunnah and the jamā’ah (united community), and we avoid anomalies, discord, and division.

⁹⁰ Al-Bukhārī, no. 4340 and 7145; Muslim, no. 1840.

This is one of the important fundamental principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, namely the following of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Anyone who lives among you (after me) will see much disagreement, so hold on to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs to come after me. Hold on to it and bite on it with your molars. And beware of newly introduced matters, as every newly introduced matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and all misguidance is in the Hell Fire." So, just as he commanded holding on to the Sunnah, he forbade innovation (*bid'ah*).⁹¹

Innovation is anything that is newly introduced into the religion which was not originally part of it. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"He who does an act that is not in accordance with our affair, then it is rejected."

Every form of worship and every act through which a person seeks to draw nearer to Allah ﷻ, which is not supported by any evidence in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, is an innovation, regardless of whether the intent of the one who does it is to draw nearer to Allah ﷻ. It only takes one away from Allah ﷻ, and one is not rewarded for it, but in fact is to be punished. Thus, the Sunnah is what is in accord with evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunnah.⁹²

There are many kinds of innovations as the people have introduced many different forms of them. Innovations are neither to be adopted nor acted upon, regardless of what they are or who they have originated from. One innovation is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ (*al-mawlid*). It is an innovation for which there is no evidence from the Qur'ān, or the Sunnah, or the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidīn*), or from the generations of virtue (*al-qurūn al-mufaḍḍalah*)⁹³, whose virtue has been attested to by the Prophet ﷺ. The birthday (*mawlid*) was introduced after these generations when ignorance spread. The first people to have introduced the *mawlid* were the Shi'ite Fātimids. The first people belonging to Ahl al-Sunnah to fall for this accepted it out of good intentions, claiming that it was out of love for the

91 Abū Dāwūd, no. 4607; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2681; ibn Mājah, no. 42..

92 Muslim, no. 1718; al-Bukhārī, presented it according to the following wording: "Whoever introduces a matter into our affair which is not from it, then it is rejected" (no. 2697).

93 This is a reference to the "best three generations", namely the generation of the Prophet ﷺ then that which followed and then that which followed them. We are to follow in the footsteps of those three generations and try our best to emulate them. [Translator's note]

Prophet ﷺ. However, it is not out of love for him, as love for him is only by following him, not by innovating.

One poet said:

You disobey Allah in your claim of love for Him?

This is a gravely mistaken analogy.

If your love were sincere, you would have instead obeyed Him,

As the lover is indeed obedient to his beloved.

The sign of sincere love is following [the Sunnah]. Innovation, on the other hand, is a sign of hatred, because the Prophet ﷺ warned against innovation. Then you, O innovator, revive and introduce them! This means that you hate the Sunnah, and if you hate the Sunnah, then you hate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. If you would like to do something good, then turn to Allah ﷻ in repentance. Obstnacy and pride, on the other hand, are foul choices to make for yourself in that situation.

In addition [to the Sunnah], we stick to the united community of Muslims (*jamā'ah*) and leave deviations or oddities (*shudhūdh*). We do not act in accordance with any irregular practices or opinions that are not in accord with the practices and opinions of the Muslims because this causes disunion and creates enmity. So, as long as the Muslims tread along the path of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, we don't forsake what they follow for the irregular opinions. Irregularity and transgression are not permissible. Thanks to Allah ﷻ, Muslims seek the truth, and their agreement is the fact that "Allah ﷻ does not unite my *Ummah* in error." Although this *ḥadīth* has been presented with an authentic chain of transmission, it is somewhat inconsistent with what is more established as authentic, so it is called a *shādh* (irregular) *ḥadīth* report in the terminology of the *ḥadīth* scholars.⁹⁴

Such matters have to be verified, and we do not try to exhume opinions and practices that have been abandoned, and then write about them and confuse people about their religion. Deviation, or irregularity (*shudhūdh*), means to be inconsistent or disagree with what the Muslim community follows. Disagreement is the opposite of agreement; division (*furqah*) the opposite of unity (*ijtimā'*), and irregularity the opposite of coalition (*i'tilāf*). Whereas seeking irregular opinions means claiming that the Muslim *imāms* were

94 Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2172.

misguided and ignorant. Have you been given more knowledge than them? Or have you been given special knowledge that they were unable to attain? It has gotten to the point that, in recent times where ignorance is widespread, some people follow such matters. The majority of that originates from people pretending to be knowledgeable but who are not, in fact, knowledgeable, who have not studied the correct doctrine or the Islamic Law but instead learned the law at their own hands and thus ended up making additions to Allah's ﷻ religion that are not from it. This is a misfortune, as knowledge is not chaotic; it requires guidelines, understanding, and comprehension.

(163) We love those who are just and fulfil their trusts and hate those who are unjust and break their trust.

Love is an act of the heart. There are two kinds of love:

Natural love, such as the love a person has for his family, wife, and children, and the love he has for his friends, and the love he has for his food and drink. This kind of love is not included in matters of worship.

Love as associated with religion.

There are two kinds of the second type:

The first kind is love for Allah the Almighty, which is the greatest kind of worship. Ibn al-Qayyim said:

To serve The All Merciful is *to have the greatest love* for Him with the *inferiority of His slaves*, these are two poles,

And the orbit of worship revolves around them until the two poles stand.

To serve The All Merciful is to have the greatest love for Him: that is, ultimate love, which all matters of worship revolve around. It is a great kind of worship, and it is not permissible to love anyone besides Allah ﷻ.

“And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah.”
[Qur’ān 2:165]

This is idolatry of love, which (i.e. Love) is the greatest kind of idolatry, and that is why He ﷻ says:

“But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.” [Qur’ān 2:165]

The believers love nothing more than Allah ﷻ, and their love for Allah ﷻ is greater than the love idolaters have for their idols, because love of Allah ﷻ neither discontinues in the world nor in the hereafter. On the other hand, the love of other things that are served apart from Allah ﷻ discontinues in the hereafter, and there will be enmity between the things that are served besides Allah ﷻ and those who serve them.

“And when the people are gathered [that Day], they [who were invoked] will be enemies to them, and they will be deniers of their worship.” [Qur’ān 46:6]

“You have only taken, other than Allah, idols as [a bond of] affection among you in worldly life. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will deny one another and curse one another, and your refuge will be the Fire...” [Qur’ān 29:25]

The second kind is love for Allah ﷻ and for the sake of Allah ﷻ. That is to say that you love whatever acts and people that Allah loves. You love the faithful and the pious.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.” [Qur’ān 2:222]

“Indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.” [Qur’ān 2:195]

So you love them because Allah ﷻ loves them. At the forefront of those individuals are the angels, the Prophets, the Messengers, the allies of Allah (*awliyā'*), the righteous and all of the believers.

This is called *love for the sake of Allah* and is the firmest thing upon which one lays hold of faith, as it is related in a *ḥadīth*:

"The firmest thing upon which one lays hold of faith is love for Allah's sake and hate for Allah's sake."⁹⁵

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"There are three things that if one has them, they have found the sweetness of faith,"⁹⁶ - and one of those things are:- "that they love someone for nothing more than Allah's sake."

So, you should love the allies of Allah ﷻ because Allah loves them and hate the enemies of Allah ﷻ because Allah hates them. So your love and hate are for the sake of Allah ﷻ, not for the desire of this world. A person does not taste the sweetness of faith unless he loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah, and also makes friends and enemies for the sake of Allah.

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said: "It has become that the majority of fraternity amongst people is for matters of the world, and that is of no use to those people."

This kind of love remains in this world and in the hereafter, but the love of the world discontinues and becomes hatred in the hereafter.

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.” [Qur’ān 43:67]

And you hate someone for the sake of Allah ﷻ, not because of any offense that they did to you, but rather you hate them because they are an enemy to Allah ﷻ. This is the religion of Ibrāhīm ؑ: to love and hate for Allah's ﷻ sake.

“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, ‘Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone.’” [Qur’ān 60:4]

⁹⁵ Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, 11/215, no. 11537.

⁹⁶ Al-Bukhārī, no. 16; Muslim, no. 43.

Amongst the seven people whom Allah ﷻ will shade on the Day when there is no shade but His are "two men who loved for the sake of Allah and came together and departed for that purpose." Loving and hating for Allah's ﷻ sake is a matter of great importance, as it is a criterion of truth and falsehood.

“O you who have believed, if you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion.” [Qur’ān 8:29]

A believer should have a criterion by which to make a distinction between this and that.⁹⁷

The scholars of Islām have noted that people are of three types when it comes to love:

The first type of people is those who have a right to sincere and pure love not accompanied by hate. These are the angels and Messengers as well as the select believers, such as the Companions,

“Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed.” [Qur’ān 59:10]

And the righteous early Muslims and Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. This is because they adhere to a pure doctrine and because of the truth they are upon, as they obeyed Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The second type of people is those who have a right to pure and sincere hate, not accompanied by love. These are the disbelievers, the enemies of Allah ﷻ.

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies.” [Qur’ān 60:1]

That is to say, do not take them as loved ones, thus neither love them, give them your alliance and aid nor defend them. Instead, it is a duty to disavow them because they are the enemies of Allah ﷻ.

⁹⁷ Al-Bukhārī, no. 660; Muslim, no. 1031.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those – He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow.” [Qur’ān 58:22]

What *spirit* means here is 'strength of faith'.

The third type of people is those who combine both love and hate. These are the sinful believers; they are loved in one respect and hated in another. You love them for their goodness and obedience and you hate them for their sin and misdemeanour. A Muslim ought to make distinctions between people according to this.

Love is a matter of great importance, and it deserves attention and knowledge, because creed and matters of faith largely revolve around it. A person should not be a yes-man, not knowing who to love and hate; rather, he should place love and hate on a scale and make a distinction between the allies of Allah ﷻ and the allies of *Shayṭān*, and one should not make it a scale based on worldly matters and desires, thus loving anyone who is in conformity with his interests and inclinations or who gives him some mundane things of the world, even if that person were the most faithless or sinful of all people. A person should not also hate anyone who does not give him anything, even if he were the most righteous of all people. This is not permissible.

(164) And when something is unclear to us, we say “Allah knows best.”

This is an issue of great importance: it is the issue of knowledge. We do not speak about something of which we do not have knowledge. If a person has knowledge of something, he should say it; if not, then he should not say anything. Also a person should not speak about religious matters, such as

worship, without knowledge. Rather he should stop and say, "Allah knows best."

A man came to Imām Mālik ؒ, "Imāam Dār al-Hijrah", and asked him about forty issues. He answered four of them and said in respect to the rest: "I do not know." So, the man said: "I have come to you from such and such place on my camel, and you say, 'I do not know'?" Imām Mālik told him: 'Ride your camel, and go back to the land you came from and say, 'I asked Mālik and he said, I do not know!'"

Whenever the Prophet ﷺ was asked about something concerning which no revelation came to him, he would wait until he received the divine revelation. Also, whenever the Companions were asked about something that they did not know, they would say, "Allah and His Messenger know best," and they did not make fabrications. This is a great and serious matter. Allah ﷻ has made speaking about Him without knowledge one grade above idolatry. The Most High says:

“Say, ‘My Lord has only forbidden immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed – and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.’” [Qur’ān 7:33]

Allah ﷻ says:

“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.” [Qur’ān 17:36]

My dear brothers, it is enough to say, “I do not know”. If you say that, then you have given an answer. And do not make fabrications or enter into false speech about the laws of the Religion without discernment. To say “I do not know” about something you do not know is not a fault but rather an ideal, because it is a sign of piety and care, and others will praise you for it.

Many people who associate themselves with knowledge, especially in these later times when scholars are few and readers are many, issue legal opinions and rulings and they recklessly enter into discourse about the laws of the

Religion without knowledge, on the media and elsewhere. By the grace of Allah ﷻ, their ignorance has been exposed to the masses, and Allah the Almighty has shamed them. Were they to shield themselves and abstain from matters that they do not have knowledge about and show some piety, it would have been more ideal, and Allah ﷻ would have honoured them in the eyes of people. Let us take warning from that.

(165) We believe in wiping the *khuffs* while traveling or at home, as related in *ḥadīths*.

This is an issue of jurisprudence, so why is it presented in a statement on creed? Because innovators have rejected this issue and Ahl al-Sunnah have confirmed it. *Ḥadīths* reporting wiping over the *khuffs* have been related consistently (*mutawātir*) as being attributed to the Prophet ﷺ.

Some of those who are known for their rejection of wiping the *khuffs* are the Rāfiḍites. They are at variance with Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah regarding that and at variance with the *ḥadīth* reports that have been confirmed as authentic. Wiping the *khuffs* is something established. It is valid for one day and one night for someone who is settled as a resident, and three days and three nights for someone who is travelling. This is a permission and facilitation from Allah ﷻ to His servants.

The Rāfiḍites reject the wiping of the *khuffs* and say instead that the wiping [in the Qur'ān] is of the feet, which is one of the greatest fallacies, as none [of the early Muslims] were of that opinion. Thus Allah ﷻ does afflict those who abandon the truth with falsities.

The Rāfiḍites cite as evidence for wiping the feet the saying of the Most High:

“And wipe over your heads and your feet;” [Qur'ān 5:6]

According to the variant reading of the Qur'ān with the genitive case (*jarr*). 'Feet' is syntactically conjoined with 'heads' in this reading and the heads are what are wiped [that is, *wipe over your heads and your feet*]. In their view, the

ka'b, the place where the straps or laces are tied, are the place where the foot and the heel meet, which is called the *'arsh* (throne) of the foot.

In the view of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, *ka'b* means the ankles. So the wiping of the feet is incorrect, as the common reading of the verse with *fathah* [that is, in the accusative case as it is effectively a direct object] as it is syntactically conjoined with the parts of the body that are washed [in simple ablution [*wudhū'*]], with **“wash your faces and your forearms.”** The part of the body to be wiped is inserted between the parts of the body to be washed for the sake of sequence. If it was placed after them, it would imply that the wiping of the head is to be done after the washing of the feet.

The reading of *feet* in the genitive case is, however, correct, but nonetheless, there are four responses. The first response is that the genitive case is based on adjacency, and this is according to one dialect of Arabic. One may say, for instance, *hadhā juhr ḍabbin kharibin* (this is a destroyed lizard's hole). Here, *destroyed* is not an adjective of *lizard* [as the matching case would suggest], but rather of *hole*, and *hole* is in the nominative case (*marfū'*), so it would be expected that the matching adjective would also be *marfū'* (nominative).

However, because of adjacency, for the sake of ease of pronunciation, it is in the genitive case because it is adjacent [to a word in the genitive case].

Second: that *wipe* (*mash*) means *wash* (*ghusl*). *Ghusl* is sometimes termed as *mash*. One may say, *tamassaḥtu bi'l-mā'* [lit. *I wiped with water*], that is, *ightasaltu bi'l-mā'* (*I washed with it*). Thus, *wiping the feet* means *washing them*, as evidenced by the reading with the accusative case.

The third response is that the more known of the two readings is the reading where *feet* is in the accusative, and so there is no contradiction.

The fourth response is that washing the feet is the manner of ablution of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which the Companions have transmitted to us. Moreover, it has not been presented in a single *ḥadīth* (not even a weak one) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wiped his feet, and it has not been verified that his companions did so either. In fact, when the Prophet ﷺ once saw that water had not touched a spot of the foot of one man, he commanded him to repeat his ablution. And the Prophet ﷺ said: "The woe of the Fire betides the heels"⁹⁸ because people are negligent in washing the heels and water may not reach them because of leniency and negligence. This matter is clear.

⁹⁸ Al-Bukhārī, no. 60, 96 and 163; Muslim, no. 241.

(166) Ḥajj and Jihad shall continue until the coming of the Hour, under the Muslim rulers, whether pious or impious. Nothing shall abrogate or undo them.

The issue of being led by every *imam*, be they righteous or unrighteous, in prayer, was mentioned previously. We pray behind them in compliance with the command of the Prophet ﷺ as he commanded us to obey them and forbade us from disobeying them. The Companions complied with this command: they used to pray behind rulers, such as al-Ḥajjāj and others, even if they were guilty of major sins.

This action is for the sake of unity and is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, as opposed to the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites.

The author says: "[we believe] that Ḥajj and *jihād*": It is the duty of the Muslims to hold the Ḥajj (pilgrimage) every year. On the other hand, it is enough for individuals to perform the Ḥajj rites only once, and anything more is voluntary.

The one who holds the Ḥajj rituals is the *imām* of the Muslims. He also leads the pilgrims, announces the Day of 'Arafah, stays with them at 'Arafah [for *wuqūf*] and rushes with them to Muzdalifah [for *ifādhah*]. Muslims thus follow him in the Ḥajj rites, whether it is with the *imām* or someone representing him, but the matter should not be done in chaos.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah perform Ḥajj with their *imām*. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"The fast is the day when the Muslims fast, and the sacrifice is the day when the Muslims sacrifice."⁹⁹

The community of Islām fast together if they share a common area of sighting (*maṭāli'*). They perform the rites of Ḥajj and pray *ṣalāt al-ʿid* together. Unity is a feature of Ahl al-Sunnah while division is a feature of the people of innovation and misguidance. What is meant by *jihād* is to fight the disbelievers and transgressors among the Muslims, and also to fight the Khārijites. We fight

⁹⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, no. 696; Abū Dāwūd, according to a similar wording (*lafz*), no. 232; ibn Mājah, no. 1660. At-Tirmidhī said: "This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan gharīb*."

alongside the *imām* of the Muslims. We fight transgressors because of their transgression and not because of their disbelief.

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah.” [Qur’ān 49:9]

Fighting the disbelievers is done in order to spread monotheism and suppress idolatry.

There are two kinds of fighting against the disbelievers:

To fight in defence (*qitāl al-difā’*), which is in a state of the weakness of the Muslims. If an enemy attacks their land, then it is incumbent upon them to fight them. It is the duty of anyone who is able to 'bear arms' to fight them, in order to defend their land against the enemy.

Fighting in pursuit of the enemy (*qitāl al-ṭalab*). That is to say that if the Muslims have strength, they invade the enemies within their lands and call on them to worship Allah ﷻ alone. They either accept or the Muslims fight them in order to advance and exalt the word of Allah ﷻ.

“And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allah.” [Qur’ān 8:39]

Ibn al-Qayyim ؒ said that *jihād* went through stages:

The first stage: being prohibited, which was when the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims were in Makkah. They were commanded to refrain from fighting, pray the *ṣalāh* and give alms (*zakāh*).

“Have you not seen those who were told, ‘Restrain your hands [from fighting] and establish prayer and give zakah?’” [Qur’ān 4:77]

The prohibition was on account of the Muslims neither being able nor having an established state or strength. Allah ﷻ commanded His Prophet ﷺ to have patience, forgiveness, and to wait until relief was to come. Anyone who fought during this stage would have been disobedient to Allah ﷻ and the Messenger

of Allah ﷻ because fighting in this stage would have resulted in harm to the Muslims, and to the message of Islām, and in the disbelievers gaining full authority over the Muslims.

The second stage: when the Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madīnah and the Islamic state was established. It was then that it was made permissible to fight, but it was not a command.

“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right – only because they say, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’ And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned.” [Qur’ān 22:39-40]

It was permitted but not commanded. This was a preliminary step, as Allah ﷻ prescribes difficult things in a gradual manner in order to make matters easy on our souls.

The third stage: the command to fight those who fight and to refrain from fighting those who did not fight.

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.” [Qur’ān 2:190]

This is termed defensive fighting (*qitāl al-daf’*).

The fourth stage: when the Muslims became strong, had sturdiness in fighting and Islām had a state, they were commanded to fight in an absolute sense.

“And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush.” [Qur’ān 9:5]

“And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allah.” [Qur’ān 8:39]

Allah ﷻ commanded them to fight in an absolute sense. Thus, when they became prepared, had strength and were equipped, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ commanded them to engage in battle: the battles of Badr, Uḥud, Khandaq (or the Trench), and so on, all until the Conquest of Makkah and when people accepted Allah's ﷻ religion in crowds. Then, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away and the great apostasy (*riddah*) occurred, so Abū Bakr ؓ fought the apostates. When he was finished with them, he began to engage in *jihād* against the disbelievers, built an army to fight the Persians and Romans and then died. Then, ‘Umar ؓ came and continued the conquests until he made the states of Khosrau and Caesar to fall, thus spreading the religion of Islām and beginning to gain control of the entire world, the east and the west. This is fighting in Islām.

So who regulates and acts as the leader in the fighting? It is the *imām* and we are to follow him. If we are commanded to engage in battle, then we engage in battle and do not carry out an invasion without the authorisation of the *imam*. It is impermissible to do so because it is one of the executive powers of the *imām*.

“O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth?” [Qur’ān 9:38]

Fighting is one of the executive powers of the *imām*, so when the *imām* summons the people to battle, it is incumbent upon every person able to bear arms. It is not a condition that the *imām*, who upholds the *Ḥajj* and *jihād*, is not a sinner: he may have committed some sins and transgressions, but as long as he does not forsake the religion of Islām, it is incumbent to participate in *Ḥajj* and *jihād* with him. His righteousness and strength are to the advantage of the Muslims yet his unrighteousness is only against himself. *Jihād* and *Ḥajj*, in light of this, are to the advantage of the Muslims, and so is the prayer. Therefore, if he is correct, then we are with him, and if he is mistaken, then we do not take part in his misdeed, but we also do not revolt against him or renounce our

obedience. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah and what is to the best interest of the Muslims is founded upon this.

The people of innovation and misguidance, on the other hand, believe in revolting against the authorities. This is the doctrine of the Khārijites and we dissociate ourselves in front of Allah ﷻ from that doctrine.

(167) We believe in the angels that write down our deeds. Allah has made them protectors over us.

Belief in the angels is one of the pillars of faith.

These fundamental principles are presented in the Qur'ān.

“But [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets.” [Qur'ān 2:177]

So, we believe in the angels, that they are one kind of Allah's ﷻ creatures and that they are part of the world of the unseen (*‘ālam al-ghayb*). We do not see them; Allah ﷻ created them from light.¹⁰⁰ And He entrusted them to carry out different tasks, each having an appointed task. At the same time, they serve, or worship, their Lord without slackening.

“They exalt [Him] night and day [and] do not slacken.” [Qur'ān 21:20]

“They are [but] honoured servants. They cannot precede Him in word, and they act by His command.” [Qur'ān 21:26-27]

They are of different types. Amongst those types are:

The *ḥafazah*, or *guardian angels*. They are those whom Allah ﷻ has entrusted to guard the children of Ādam ﷺ and record their deeds. Every person among

¹⁰⁰ It is related that 'Ā'ishah ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'The angels were created from light, the jinns were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Ādam was created from what has been described to you.'" Muslim, no. 2996.

the descendants of Ādam ﷺ has four of them who watch over him at night and day: two are recorders, one on the right and one on the left. The one on the right writes down all good deeds and the one on the left writes down all bad deeds.

“Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].” [Qur’ān 50:18]

There are two other angels, one at the front and one at the back and they guard the person from harm for as long as Allah ﷻ has written for him to stay alive.

“For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah.” [Qur’ān 13:11]

The angels defend him against danger, and when his term is up, they abandon him and what Allah ﷻ has written for him takes place. If we believe in that, then we would be ashamed to do bad deeds or enter into false speech in the presence of the honoured angels because they record them against us.

(168) We believe in the Angel of Death, who is appointed to take the souls of people;

Allah ﷻ says:

“And He is the subjugator over His servants, and He sends over you guardian-angels until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers.” [Qur’ān 6:61]

That is, messengers from amongst the angels, as the messengers may be from the angels or from mankind.

“Allah chooses from the angels messengers and from the people.”
[Qur’ān 22:75]

“Our messengers take him, and they do not fail [in their duties].”
[Qur’ān 6:61]

“And if you could but see when the angels take the souls of those who disbelieved... They are striking their faces and their backs.”
[Qur’ān 8:50]

Allah ﷻ says in another verse:

“The angel of death will take you.” [Qur’ān 32:11]

In some verses, death is attributed to more than one angel whilst in other verses it is attributed to one angel. This indicates that the angels have a head angel who is the Angel of Death.

There is no one who contests the issue of death, but the Angel of Death and his helpers are denied by some of the children of Ādam ﷺ. Nonetheless, faith in the angels is a fundamental principle of Islām and of faith as established in the Qur’ān and Sunnah; so if one were to deny the existence of angels in general or of any angel in particular, they would be a disbeliever for denying one of the pillars of faith.

(169) And in the punishment of the grave for those who deserve it; and in the questions posed by Munkar and Nakīr in the grave about their Lord, their religion and their prophet, according to the accounts related from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companions ﷺ.

Shaykh al-Islam mentioned in *al-‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyah* that faith in the Last Day includes everything that happens after death. Examples of these are: the punishment and pleasure of the grave, the resurrection, the presentation (*al-*

'ardh), the balance, the dispersing (*taṭāyur*) of the records, Paradise and the Fire. Anyone who denies any of that is not a believer in the Last Day.

We do not intervene with our minds and thoughts in the Last Day and the matters of the unseen that constitute it, but we rely instead on what is presented in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. We do not interfere in such matters and we do not say anything about them without evidence.

The grave is a *barzakh* (partition) between the world and the hereafter. *Barzakh* is anything that separates two things.

“And behind them is a barrier (*barzakh*) until the Day they are resurrected.” [Qur'ān 23:100]

The grave is a waiting stop which people move from to the resurrection and judgment. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته said that there are three abodes:

The abode of the world, which is a place of work and acquisition of good and honour.

The abode of the *barzakh*, which is a temporary abode, and so it is a mistake to say '*final resting place*¹⁰¹'.

The abode of settlement (*qarār*), which is Paradise or the Fire.

“And indeed, the Hereafter – that is the home of [permanent] settlement.” [Qur'ān 40:39]

When the dead are placed in the graves and buried and all the people leave them, they hear the sounds of their footsteps, as related in a *ḥadīth*. This is because their souls are brought back to their bodies and this is the life of the *barzakh*. None has full knowledge of it but Allah ﷻ and He is able to do all things. After the soul is brought back to the body and another life is given, two angels come and ask three questions:

“Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?”¹⁰²

Those who answer correctly have succeeded and triumphed. Their grave becomes a garden from the gardens of Jannah and then on the Day of

¹⁰¹ Some Arabs use this phrase to refer to the grave.

¹⁰² Aḥmad, 4/287, 295; Abū Dāwūd, no. 4753; al-Ḥākim, 1/37-40. Al-Ḥākim said that it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Judgment, they will be from amongst the people of Jannah. If anyone fails to answer, their grave will become a pit from the pits of the Fire. Their grave will close in on them so that their ribs are crushed together. The grave of the former will expand as far as the sight can see, and a door of Jannah will be opened unto them, and its comfort and sweet scent will come to them. The grave of the latter closes in on them so that their ribs are crushed together, and then a door of the Fire is opened unto them and its heat and flames come to them (Allah ﷻ forbid).

The correct answer, the answer by which Allah ﷻ gives steadiness to the one who says it, is that one says, ‘my Lord is Allah, my religion is Islām, and my prophet is Muḥammad ﷺ.’

“Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in the worldly life and in the Hereafter.” [Qur’ān 14:27]

Steadiness to answer these questions comes from faith in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, not because of being learned or cultured. Those who do not have faith dawdle before they answer; they are the hypocrites, who appear to have faith in the world but conceal their disbelief. Such people will not be able to answer, they will stutter and say, ‘*I don't know, I heard people say something, so I said it*’. They will be struck with a large hammer of iron and everything will hear it except for man; if man were to hear it he would fall unconscious.

“And Allah sends astray the wrongdoers. And Allah does what He wills.” [Qur’ān 14:27]

(170) The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell.

One may say that the dead become dust, so how can one be punished when one is dust? We say, Allah ﷻ is able to punish them as dust and He is able to heat the dust.

Someone may say, not everyone is buried: some are cast into the sea and some are eaten by wild animals, so how can they receive punishment? We say, yes, the punishment is received, wherever the person may be, and the two angels will come. To have faith in this constitutes having faith in the unseen and in what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ have told. Not believing in this, and instead depending on reason and thought, is the plainest error.

The punishment and pleasure of the grave are supported by evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In fact, scholars of Islām say that the *ḥadīth* reports that go back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are *mutawātir*, or related so consistently that there could be no collusions. Anyone who denies a command that is *mutawātir* is a disbeliever.

The Mu'tazilites do not believe in the events of the grave because they are rationalists (*'aqlānīyūn*) and base all matters on logic. They call the evidence as laid out in the Revelation as presumptive (*ẓannī*) and in their view; logical evidence constitutes absolute truths (*yaqīnī*). Thus, this is what the rationalists, or the Mu'tazilites, and the rationalists who tread the same path in these times, say.

Among the evidence of the punishment of the grave is the saying of Allah ﷻ concerning the people of Pharaoh:

“The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], ‘Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.’” [Qur’ān 40:46]

As He says, *‘the Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening’*: this is in the grave.

“And indeed, for those who have wronged is a punishment before that, but most of them do not know.” [Qur’ān 52:47]

As He says, *‘a punishment before that’*, it is said that it is the punishment of the grave.

However, it is also said that it is the punishment of this world, such as death, captivity, imposition of the *jizyah* (tribute) and other things that they suffer. The verse is inclusive of both things. Allah ﷻ also says:

**“And we will surely let them taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will repent.”
[Qur’ān 32:21]**

The *nearer or lesser punishment* is the punishment of the grave, and the *greater* one is that of the Day of Judgment.

As for the Sunnah, the *ḥadīths* that confirm the punishment of the grave have been related with great consistency. In established accounts, it is related that the Prophet ﷺ passed by two graves and said,

“They are being punished, but they are not being punished for something great, indeed it is something great [or: but indeed it is something great]¹⁰³. One of them used to go around with gossip and scandalous speech and the other used to not clean himself from urine.”¹⁰⁴

Additionally, in a sound *ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ commanded us to seek refuge in Allah ﷻ from four things:

“I seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of the Fire, and from the punishment of the grave, and from the trials of life and death, and from the trial of the Dajjāl.”¹⁰⁵

There is also more evidence. Some people may see the punishment of the grave for the sake of exhortation and warning. Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab said some astonishing things in his book *Ahwāl al-Qubūr wa-aḥwālūhā Ahlihā ilā Yawm al-Nushūr*, and so did ibn al-Qayyim in his book, *al-Rūḥ*.

As the author says, "according to the accounts related from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ" it means that the punishment and pleasure of the grave are matters of the unseen and, thus, cannot be confirmed without the evidence that has been related. We also cannot deny what has been related. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

¹⁰³ That is, it is a sin that people underestimate however in the eyes of Allah ﷻ it is great.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Bukhārī, no. 218; Muslim, no. 292.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, no. 3613. Al-Tirmidhī said: This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.

(171) We believe in the Resurrection and Judgment on the Judgment Day. We believe in the ‘Ardh [when men are presented before their Lord], the Ḥisāb [when their deeds are tallied], and the Book being read. We believe in reward and punishment, the Ṣirāt (Path) and the Mīzān (Balance).

After the *barzakh*, people will be resurrected from their graves, and graves contain and preserve the bodies. When the resurrection comes, Allah ﷻ will create these bodies once again as He created them the first time and they will be in no way incomplete.

“As We began the first creation, We will repeat it. [That is] a promise binding upon Us. Indeed, We will do it.” [Qur’ān 21:104]

They will return to how they were insofar as if someone were to walk past someone they knew, they would say, ‘this is such and such person’. Then, Allah ﷻ will command Isrāfīl to blow in the *ṣūr*, or horn, for the second time and the souls will fly to their bodies.

The *maḥshar*, or *place of gathering*, is the place where the communities will be gathered. Allah ﷻ gathers the first and last after the resurrection. Allah ﷻ is able to do all things, and faith in the resurrection is one of the six pillars of faith, as related in a *ḥadīth*.

The *mushrikūn* [or, the idolaters of Makkah] and the atheists (*al-malāḥidah*) deny the resurrection on the basis of rationality. They say:

“When we die and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected? And our forefathers [as well]?” [Qur’ān 56:47-48]

Allah ﷻ mentions this denial in a number of instances, such as:

“Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?” [Qur’ān 36:78]

Allah ﷻ also provides rational evidence for the resurrection.

“And it is He who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him.” [Qur’ān 30:27]

This is for the purpose of offering an example: He who created them from a vile form of water is (with more reason) able to create them from dust and bring them back to how they were.

“Does man think that he will be left neglected? Had he not been a sperm from semen emitted? Then he was a clinging clot, and [Allah] created [his form] and proportioned [him] and made of him two mates, the male and the female. Is not that [Creator] Able to give life to the dead?” [Qur’ān 75:36-40]

Further evidence is the revival of the barren and arid earth, which is white and has nothing on it. Allah ﷻ sends down the rain upon it and in a few days, the land shakes with the sprouting of vegetation.

Isn't He who gives life to the earth after its death able to re-create man? This is something rational and something tangible.

“And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life;” [Qur’ān 36:33] - after it is dead and He gives it life by sprouting vegetation.

“And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells.” [Qur’ān 22:56]

Also evidence for the resurrection is the fact that were Allah ﷻ not to resurrect people and repay them for their deeds, His creation of them would have been in vain. However, Allah ﷻ, Glorified be He, is far exalted above doing anything in vain.

“Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?” So exalted is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth.” [Qur’ān 23:115-116]

So, could it be so that someone spends their entire life serving and obeying Allah ﷻ in the world, and then he dies and is not resurrected?! Similarly, a disbeliever wreaks havoc on earth and commits all kinds of immoralities and then he dies and is not resurrected?! This is not from the wisdom of Allah ﷻ.

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds – [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”
[Qur’ān 45:21]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Then will We treat the Muslims like the criminals? What is [the matter] with you? How do you judge?” [Qur’ān 68:35-36]

“And We did not create the heaven and the earth and that between them aimlessly. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire. Or should we treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like corrupters in the land? Or should We treat those who fear Allah like the wicked?” [Qur’ān 38:27-28]

A believer may not have any pleasure in this life, and live in poverty and hardships; so would it be reasonable to say that he would not be rewarded for his deeds? A disbeliever may have pleasure and live ruthlessly and cause mischief on earth; so would it be reasonable to say that he will not be penalized? This does not befit Allah's ﷻ wisdom.

The resurrection (*al-ba'th*) means to rise from the graves.

“The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?” [Qur’ān 83:6]

The *judgment* (*jazā' al-a'māl*), or *repayment of deeds*, means, as mentioned previously, that those who do good and those who do bad do not receive repayment in this world but rather they receive it in the abode of the hereafter.

The *'ardh* means to be presented before Allah ﷻ.

“That Day, you will be presented [for judgment]; not hidden among you is anything concealed.” [Qur’ān 69:18]

“And they will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say], ‘You have certainly come to Us just as We created you the first time.’” [Qur’ān 18:48]

They will be presented before Allah the Almighty barefoot, naked and with foreskin (uncircumcised).

The *tallying* (*ḥisāb*) of the deeds: the report of good deeds and the report of bad deeds. This is in relation to the believer. The disbeliever, on the other hand, is not to be called to account for the scales of good deeds and bad deeds but rather only made to acknowledge his sins and disbelief, because he has no good deeds.

Some of the believers will enter Paradise without being called to account and some will have an easy account and will then turn happily back to their families. This is the *presentation*. Some of them will be called to a more thorough account. According to one *ḥadīth*,

“Whoever is called to account will be punished.”

These are the degrees of the believers.¹⁰⁶

The *records* (*kutub*) are the scrolls (*ṣaḥā'if*) of deeds that were done in the world. Each will be given a record and a scroll of the deeds that they did in the world and everything will be written in it.

“And the record [of deeds] will be placed [open], and you will see the criminals fearful of that within it, and they will say, ‘Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?’” [Qur’ān 18:49]

Allah ﷻ also says:

106 Al-Bukhārī, no. 6536; Muslim, no. 2876.

“And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will encounter spread open.” [Qur’ān 17:13-14]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“So as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will say, ‘Here, read my record! Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account.’ So he will be in a pleasant life – In an elevated garden.” [Qur’ān 69:19-20].

This class of people will rejoice and be glad that people see their records.

“But as for he who is given his record in his left hand, he will say, ‘Oh, I wish I had not been given my record and had not known what is my account. I wish my death had been the decisive one.’” [Qur’ān 69:25-27]

That is to say: I wish I had not been resurrected and death was the end of my life without resurrection.

“My wealth has not availed me. Gone from me is my authority.” [Qur’ān 69: 28-29]

This is the dispersing of the records and it is either in the right or the left hand.

The *reward* and *punishment* are the reward for good deeds and the punishment for bad deeds.

The *ṣirāt* is the bridge that is raised above Hell. It is sharper than a sword, finer than a hair and hotter than burning coal. People will cross it according to their deeds: Some will cross it like a flash of lightning, some like the passing of the wind, some like racehorses and some like riding camels. Some will cross it walking and some will cross it crawling; some of them will be snatched by hooks (*kalālīb*) on both sides of the bridge, which will cast them into the Fire. These are matters of the unseen, so a person cannot intervene in them with his mind. All people will come to cross the *ṣirāt*.

“And there is none of you except he will come to it. This is upon your Lord an inevitability decreed. Then We will save those who feared Allah and leave the wrongdoers within it, on their knees.”
[Qur’ān 19:71-72]

The good deeds will be weighed, and if one's good deeds have the greater weight, then one will have succeeded. Yet if one's bad deeds outweigh their good ones, then one is forsaken and is in loss.

“And the weighing [of deeds] that Day will be the truth. So those whose scales are heavy – it is they who will be the successful. And those whose scales are light – they are the ones who will lose themselves for what injustice they were doing toward Our verses.” [Qur’ān 7:8-9]

The *weighing* and the *balance* are repeatedly mentioned throughout several verses. It is out of Allah's justice that He does not wrong anyone. The balance is real and it has two scales. Good deeds will be placed on one scale and bad deeds will be placed on another. Those whose good deeds are the weightiest are the successful and those whose bad deeds are the weightiest are the losers.

“And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as accountant.” [Qur’ān 21:47]

(172) Paradise and Hell are both creations that shall never perish nor die out.

Among the things that will be in existence on the Day of Judgment are Paradise, the abode of the righteous and the Fire, the abode of the criminals. Allah ﷻ says concerning Paradise:

“Prepared for the righteous.” [Qur’ān 3:133]

And He says concerning the Fire:

“Prepared for the disbelievers.” [Qur’ān 2:24]

They are two everlasting abodes, places of settlement and of the end.

(173) And [we believe] that Allah created Paradise and Hell before creating mankind, and He created people for them.

Paradise and the Fire have already been created; they are now in existence. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. Allah ﷻ says: **“Prepared for the righteous”** and He says: **“prepared for the disbelievers.”** Prepared is a past tense verb. Once, the Prophet ﷺ was with his Companions and they heard something fall. He said: "Do you know what this is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said:

“This is a stone that was thrown into *Jahannam* (the Fire) seventy autumns ago and now it has reached its bottom.”¹⁰⁷

This indicates that the Fire has already been created.

The Prophet ﷺ also said that heat and cold are two breaths of *Jahannam*:

“One breath in the winter, which is the most intense cold you feel; and one breath in the summer, which is the most intense heat you feel.”¹⁰⁸

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

107 Al-Bukhārī, no. 538; Muslim, no. 616.

108 Al-Bukhārī, no. 537; Muslim, no. 617.

“When it is very hot, pray when it is cooler, for the intensity of the summer's heat is from the vehemence of the raging heat of Jahannam.”¹⁰⁹

Moreover, a gate of Jannah is opened unto the dead in their graves and a gate of the Fire is opened unto a disbeliever. This is evidence of the existence of Paradise and the Fire. The people of misguidance have denied this and said that they are to be created on the Day of Judgment.

Allah ﷻ has predetermined that some people belong to Paradise and that others belong to the Fire. They are repaid according to their deeds.

(174) Whoever He wills goes to Paradise out of His grace and whoever He wills goes to Hell out of His justice.

Paradise is not attained through deeds, but deeds are only a cause; Paradise is only attained by the grace of Allah ﷻ. Whatever good deeds the son of Ādam ﷺ does (even if they are great), they do not correspond to Paradise. Rather, Paradise is only attained by the grace of Allah the Almighty. Good deeds are but a cause:

“Enter Paradise for what you used to do,” [Qur’ān 16:32] - meaning, *because* of what you used to do.

The entering of the Fire is because of disbelief and it is out of Allah's ﷻ justice that He makes people enter the Fire. He does not wrong them but rather causes them to enter it because of their deeds.

109 Al-Bukhārī, no. 538; Muslim, no. 616.

(175) Each person acts for whatever has been decided for him and will go to the place for which he was created.

If someone is one of the fortunate, they do the deeds of the fortunate; and if someone is one of the wretched, they do the deeds of the wretched. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Work, for each has been created for that which has been made easy for them.”¹¹⁰

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Indeed, your efforts are diverse. As for he who gives and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], We will ease him toward ease. But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need and denies the best [reward], We will ease him toward difficulty.” [Qur’ān 92:4-10]

So, it is the actions that you are to be judged by: if they are good, the path of ease (*al-yusrā*) is made easy for you; and if they are bad, the path of difficulty (*al-‘usrā*) is made easy for you.

(176) Good and bad have been decreed for all.

This has already been discussed in the section on *qadar* (predestination), which is one of the six pillars of faith, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, the Last Day and in *qadar*, whether good or bad.”¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Al-Bukhārī, no. 1362; Muslim, no. 2647.

¹¹¹ Al-Bukhārī, no. 50; Muslim, no. 10.

The author derived this description from an explicit textual reference to a *ḥadīth*.

Good and bad are both predestined by Allah ﷻ because nothing in the universe happens outside of Allah's ﷻ decree and predestination. It is necessary to believe in that.

Allah ﷻ created the good and the bad out of wisdom.

“And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned.” [Qur’ān 21:35]

Thereby, the people of faith, *tawḥīd*, and obedience to Allah ﷻ are distinguished from the people of disbelief, idolatry, and heresy. If there were no good, this distinction would not be realised.

Allah ﷻ loves, destines and decrees good. He hates and is displeased with the bad, but He creates and destines it for an underlying reason and with wisdom: to try and test people. If there was no evil, there would be no disbelief or enmity towards prophets and messengers. If there was no good, there would be no *jihad*, commanding the right, forbidding the wrong and alliance and enmity [for the sake of Allah] and people would not be distinguished from each other.

Someone could try to challenge this and say, “Allah hates idolatry and unbelief, so how could He have predetermined them?” We say, ‘Allah ﷻ predetermined that with wisdom, to distinguish people from each other’.

“Allah would not leave the believers in that [state] you are in [presently] until He separates the evil from the good.” [Qur’ān 3:179]

The only way for us to know whether someone is obedient or disobedient is through actions, as they distinguish the wretched from the fortunate.

Matters are not set right unless opposites exist.

(177) Action is only obligatory after ability. The ability that is associated with Allah's decree and that cannot be ascribed to man exists concurrently with action. But the ability associated with health, physical competence, capability and wellness exists prior to action. The obligation to fulfil the commands is related to the latter ability, as Allah says: "Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity." [Qur'ān 2:286]

Ability (*istiṭā'ah*) is the physical ability of man. There are two types:

The capacity, as associated with *Takleef* (an order or prohibition people will be held accountable for), commands, and prohibitions.

The capacity by which a person is able to act and put into effect.

The first type, ability as associated with *Takleef*, means that a person possesses the capacity to either do or not do something i.e. they have the possibility and capabilities. Divine *Takleef* is related to this type of ability. Someone who does not have the means or the ability is not held accountable for obligations, as with an insane or young person. They are not accountable and are thus neither commanded to do nor are forbidden from doing anything. However, when a young person reaches seven years of age, they have some ability, so they are commanded to pray. It is a matter of desirability, education and training for children to do acts of worship. It is not an obligation until the child reaches maturity and becomes accountable. This kind of ability exists *before* action.

The second type is the ability that involves the implementation and realisation of things. This kind runs concurrently *with* action. For example, *Ḥajj* involves both kinds of ability. Allah ﷻ says:

"And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able..." [Qur'ān 22:97]

This refers to the ability by which someone acquires all the necessary means to be able. If so, *Ḥajj* is a duty on those who are able to do it. The *sabīl*, or way [mentioned in the verse], is the supplies and means of transportation to complete the journey. It is a duty to perform *Ḥajj* if those things are available,

because one thereby has the ability. This kind of ability occurs *before* action. The kind of ability occurring *with* action, on the other hand, which is the actual carrying out of the Ḥajj, may not be within someone's ability, as is the case with a chronically ill person or someone who is old and decrepit. Such a person is not able to put the action into effect, but he or she has the ability as far as *Takleef* is concerned; and so such a person is accountable in relation to the obligation of Ḥajj.

Another example is that the beginning of the time of prayer renders the prayer obligatory to those who are accountable, but the carrying out of the prayer occurs according to the ability: An ill person prays standing, if unable, then sitting, and if unable, then upon their side. Thus, prayer is obligatory under all circumstances as a person is able to do it. This is the ability *before* action. The ability *with* action may be completely absent, or it may be present but incomplete, and it would thus be one's duty to do what is within one's ability.

“So fear Allah as much as you are able.” [Qur’ān 64:16]

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.” [Qur’ān 2:286]

Here, the two kinds of ability are differentiated:

The first is associated with the commands, as Allah ﷻ says:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.” [Qur’ān 2:286] -and the second is associated with the performance.

(178) Man’s actions are the creations of Allah and the works of man.

This issue involved some controversy and caused many to go astray: Are actions the creations of Allah ﷻ or are they the creations of Allah's ﷻ slaves?

The former pronouncement is that of the Jabrī and Jahmī sects, that Allah's ﷻ slaves are under divine 'compulsion' and do not have the power to intervene in their own actions, they are purely the creations of Allah the Almighty. Thus, the prayer that one prays is not by choice but rather by compulsion. This sect is extreme in its confirmation of Allah's ﷻ omnipotence.

This view of theirs is a manifest error. It means that Allah ﷻ wrongs them and punishes them for something that is not within their choice, and not within their ability. It also means that Allah ﷻ punishes His slaves for the actions of someone else and rewards them for something that they did not do. This is one of the most insidious doctrines.

The latter pronouncement, which is the complete opposite of the former and is the view of the Mu'tazilites, is that actions are the product of people. People have an absolute free will; Allah ﷻ does not intervene but instead the person creates his own actions. This sect is extreme in its confirmation of the ability of the created beings.

A necessary consequence of this view of theirs is that Allah ﷻ is unable to do something and that others are associated with Allah ﷻ in His creating and originating. This is the belief of the Zoroastrians and therefore, the Mu'tazilites have been named the Zoroastrians of the Ummah (*majūs al-ummah*).¹¹² The Zoroastrians [or: *majūs*] believe that there are two creators in the universe: a creator of good and a creator of evil. The Mu'tazilites add to that, saying that each individual creates his own actions and thus they assert the existence of (dual) creators.

The moderate doctrine, in light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, is that of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. They believe that the actions of people are their actions in terms of their own will and volition and that they are creations of Allah ﷻ.

“While Allah created you and that which you do?” [Qur'ān 37:96]

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs.” [Qur'ān 39:62]

¹¹² It is related that ibn 'Umar ؓ said: "The Prophet ﷺ said: "The *Qadarīs* are the *Majūs* (Zoroastrians) of this *ummah*. If they are ill, do not visit them; and if they die, do not attend their funerals." Abū Dāwūd, no. 4691.

“Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and earth?” [Qur’ān 35:3]

Thus, Allah ﷻ is Alone in His creation and predestination, and people have wills and volitions. So they go to the mosque by choice, and they go to the theatre by choice, because they have the ability. A person that Allah ﷻ has not given the ability is excused by Allah ﷻ, such as an insane person or someone under compulsion. Such a person does not have a will or intent. But if someone does have a will and intent, then they choose the action on their own accord and intent, and the punishment and reward are based on their action and not the action of Allah the Almighty.

Allah the Most High says:

“Indeed, those who believed.” [Qur’ān 2:62; 4:59]

“Indeed, those who disbelieve.” [Qur’ān 3:116]

Here, both faith and disbelief are attributed to people.

“Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.” [Qur’ān 4:59]

“And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger.” [Qur’ān 24:52]

Here, actions are attributed to people.

Evidence that people have a will and intent is the fact that Allah ﷻ says:

“And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.” [Qur’ān 76:30]

Here, Allah ﷻ establishes that both He and His slaves have a will. He said that the will of the slave is under His will:

“For whoever wills among you to take a right course.” [Qur’ān 81:28]

Whoever wills, that is, by one's own choice, and this is a response to the Jabrī sect.

“Except that Allah wills.” [Qur’ān 76:30]

This is a response to the Qadarī sect.

(179) Allah does not obligate them to do except that which they are able;

Allah ﷻ says:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.” [Qur’ān 2:286]

“Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear.” [Qur’ān 2:286]

“Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.” [Qur’ān 2:185]

So, Allah ﷻ does not hold anyone to account for something that is beyond one's capacity, unless it is a matter of punishment, as He laid a great burden upon the Children of Israel because they made a simple matter difficult for themselves.

“For wrongdoing on the part of the Jews, We made unlawful for them [certain] good foods which had been lawful to them, and for their averting from the way of Allah many [people], and [for] their taking of usury.” [Qur’ān 4:160-161]

Allah ﷻ punished them and laid upon them a burden that they were unable to bear; and therefore, it is presented in the prayer:

“Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us.” [Qur’ān 2:286]

Out of His grace and kindness He does not hold His servants accountable for anything that is beyond their powers. This is out of His mercy, as He is the Most Merciful.

“Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.” [Qur’ān 2:143]

(180) And they are only able to do what He obligated them to do.

This is questionable. Rather, they are able to do more than what He has obligated them to. However, Allah ﷻ wants to make matters easy on them rather than difficult. Thus, Allah ﷻ has rid them of their burdens and has prescribed for them a religion of ease and has forbidden doing more than what is moderate. So it is not permissible for someone to pray for the entire night or to abandon marriage. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"But I pray and I sleep, and I marry women, and I fast and I break my fast; so whoever forsakes my *sunnah* is not of me."¹¹³

Allah ﷻ does not obligate anyone to do what causes distress, and were Allah ﷻ to obligate people, they would have had the faculties to do so; however, He is not pleased with them having hardship and distress.

113 Al-Bukhārī, no. 5063; Muslim, no. 1401.

(181) This is what it means to say, "Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-llāh" (There is neither change nor strength but from Allah). We say, there is no ploy or movement for anyone, and no one can turn from Allah's disobedience, without Allah's help; and there is no strength for anyone to obey Allah and be steadfast upon doing so without Allah's grace.

Lā ḥawla, that is, there is *no turning* from one state to another *except by Allah (illā bi-llāh)*, the Almighty, and by His help. It also means "you have no strength unless it is by the strength of Allah". This entails submission and the disavowal of one's own ability to *change (ḥawl)* and one's own strength (*quwwah*). One should not be impressed by one's own power and strength but should instead return to Allah the Almighty and ask for help in being obedient and in making the shift from sin to obedience, and from disbelief to Islām. All things are through Allah's ﷻ intervention and strength; and if He were to entrust you to yourself, you would not be able to do anything. Nonetheless, the toil and work you do to seek money emanates from you, however, success and blessing are from Allah the Almighty.

(182) Everything happens according to Allah's will, knowledge, decree, and predestination.

Nothing occurs in His kingdom without His knowledge and predestination.

**"And you do not will except that Allah wills – Lord of the worlds."
[Qur'ān 81:29]**

It was what He has decreed and predetermined and what was written in the Preserved Tablet. Everything that happens in the universe is by the decree and determination of Allah ﷻ.

(183) His will prevails over the will of all others.

Allah ﷻ says:

“And you do not will except that Allah wills – Lord of the worlds.”
[Qur’ān 81:29]

Here, it is confirmed that people have a will; but it is included within Allah's ﷻ will, i.e. one cannot have a will except by Allah's ﷻ will.

(184) And His decree prevails over the ploys of all others.

Whatever means you take, they will not be to your advantage if Allah ﷻ has not predestined the result. All actions are of no benefit if Allah ﷻ has not predestined that they will benefit you. Your duty is to take the means and success is from Allah ﷻ. You are commanded to do what is a cause of the result.

(185) He does what He wishes, but He is never unjust. He is pure from every evil and free from every flaw.

Allah ﷻ does whatever He so wills, every good or bad thing, every blessing or instance of wrath. He is not unjust to His servants, as He puts matters in their right places. He favours and gives success to those who are suitable for it; and He deprives those who do not deserve to be under His grace and obedience. Yet He is not unjust. He does not punish someone who obeys him and is righteous as He does not reward someone who disobeys Him for his disobedience.

Thus, Allah the Almighty is perfect in His essence (*dhāt*), perfect in His names and attributes and perfect in His actions and creation.

(186) “He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned.” [Qur’ān 21:23]

Allah ﷻ is not to be questioned about what He does because everything He does is with wisdom and is done in the proper way. People, on the other hand, are prone to make mistakes and to put things out of place. There is a difference between the Creator and created things. There is nothing that Allah ﷻ does that is flawed. People, on the other hand, are full of injustice, envy and pride and are created in such a way that they necessarily make mistakes in their affairs and actions.

(187) As for the dead, they will benefit from the prayers and *ṣadaqah* (charity) of the living.

This is a matter of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), but it is associated with creed (*‘aqidah*). The Prophet ﷺ said:

“When the son of Ādam dies, all of his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous child who prays for him.”¹¹⁴

One's deeds come to an end after death, except for that which is a cause for remaining after death, such as an ongoing charity, like founding a masjid or a school. As long as there is benefit, the reward is ongoing as long as this charitable trust (*waqf*) is a source of benefit.

114 Muslim, no. 1631.

The second deed mentioned was beneficial knowledge: i.e. that one has taught jurisprudence or creed and has students, the reward for one's teaching is then ongoing, or if one authored books that are of benefit to people, one's reward is ongoing. This is from knowledge that one teaches.

“Or a righteous child who prays for him”: One marries to be chaste and to have righteous offspring, so when such a person is given a righteous child, it is something that he is a cause in. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“The best of what you consume is what you have worked for, and your children are something you have worked for.”¹¹⁵

If children are righteous, they pray for their parents after death and their prayers reach them. It counts as a person's deeds since one plays a role in it, so the deeds of someone else are of benefit to that person.

There are other matters that have been an object of debate. Allah ﷻ says:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.” [Qur’ān 53:39]

Explicitly, the verse pronounces that the works of man are of no benefit to others, except those things in which someone is a cause. Some of the scholars held fast to this verse and said that one does not benefit from anyone's work besides their own, without exception. However, the Prophet ﷺ told us of some things that benefit the dead that are from the deeds of someone else, such as prayers and asking forgiveness.

“Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith.” [Qur’ān 59:10]

“And ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women.” [Qur’ān 47:19]

This also includes the dead.

The Prophet ﷺ also commanded the believers to ask for forgiveness and strength for their brothers when they bury them and stand at their

¹¹⁵ Abū Dāwūd, no. 3528; al-Tirmidhī, no. 1362. Al-Tirmidhī said: This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.

gravesites.¹¹⁶ Moreover, charity benefits the dead. A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and told him that his mother died and he said that if she were able to will, she would give in charity. He asked, "Should I give charity on her behalf?" He said: "Yes."¹¹⁷

The Ḥajj rites can also be to the advantage of someone else, as presented in the evidence related in 'the ḥadīth of Shubrumah'. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Perform Ḥajj on your own behalf and then perform Ḥajj on behalf of Shubrumah."¹¹⁸

This is the deed of someone else and it is to the advantage of the dead. Also, a woman came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked about Ḥajj on behalf of her mother: "The Ḥajj was obligated upon her in her lifetime, yet she did not perform it. Shall I perform it on her behalf?" He said:

"Yes, perform Ḥajj on your mother's behalf."¹¹⁹

So, these things: prayer, asking for forgiveness, charity, Ḥajj, and 'umrah are to the advantage of the dead. Therefore, they are exceptions to the verse:

"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives." [Qur'ān 53:39]

One group went to extremes and said that all of the deeds of others are of advantage to the dead. Hence people even hire Qur'ān reciters to recite Qur'ān for the dead. Deeds such as these are not to the advantage of the dead or the living, because the reciter takes a fee for reciting, so he does not get a divine reward. On the other hand, doing so is an innovation as there is no evidence to support it. *Subḥāna'llāh!* If the fee paid to the reciter were given as charity on behalf of the deceased, it would have been in accord with the Sunnah and to the advantage of the deceased. But in an innovated manner, it is neither to

116 It is related that 'Uthmān ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Ask forgiveness and strength for your brother, for he is being asked now." Abū Dāwūd, no. 3221; al-Ḥākim, no. 1/370. Al-Ḥākim said: "This ḥadīth is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and [al-Bukhārī and Muslim] did not cite it."

117 Al-Bukhārī, no. 2760; Muslim, no. 1004.

118 Abū Dāwūd, no. 1811; ibn Mājah, no. 2903; ibn Khuzaymah, no. 3039.

119 Al-Bukhārī, no. 1852.

the advantage of the dead nor the living. This is the result of abandonment of the Sunnah.

(188) Allah the Most High answers supplications and fulfils the needs of all.

These are some of the attributes of Allah ﷻ, namely that He answers those who supplicate to Him. Allah ﷻ says:

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.” [Qur’ān 2:186]

Allah the Almighty commands us to call upon Him, saying:

“And your Lord says, ‘Call upon Me; I will respond to you.’ Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.” [Qur’ān 40:60]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth?” [Qur’ān 27:62]

There are also other verses that include the command to supplicate and that Allah ﷻ answers it. It is out of Allah's ﷻ generosity and kindness that He commands His servants to supplicate to Him in order that He answers them, although He is free of need of them. However, because He knows their need, He commands them to make *du‘ā'* to Him. It has been related in a *ḥadīth*:

“Allah is angry with those who do not ask of Him.”¹²⁰

Supplicating to Allah ﷻ is one of the greatest kinds of worship, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“*Du‘ā’* is worship.”¹²¹

As He commanded us to make *du‘ā’* to Him, so has He forbidden us from making it to anyone besides Him and from associating anything with Him in prayer or *du‘ā’*. Allah ﷻ says:

“And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.” [Qur’ān 72:18]

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘I only invoke my Lord and do not associate with Him anyone.’” [Qur’ān 72:20]

“And whoever invokes besides Allah another deity for which he has no proof – then his account is only with his Lord. Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed.” [Qur’ān 23:117]

So it is impermissible to invoke anything other than Allah ﷻ. Anyone who does this is an idolater, whether what is prayed to is an angel, a prophet, or a saint (*walī*), and such a person has committed major idolatry (*shirk akbar*).

“And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware.” [Qur’ān 46:5]

“If you invoke them, they do not hear your supplication; and if they heard, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association.” [Qur’ān 35:14]

Here, it is called *association* (*shirk*). Allah ﷻ also says:

120 Aḥmad, 2/477; al-Tirmidhī, no. 3370; ibn Mājah, no. 3827; al-Ḥākim, 1/491. Al-Ḥākim said that it is sound and al-Dhahabī concurred.

121 Abū Dāwūd, no. 1479; al-Tirmidhī, no. 3369; ibn Mājah, no. 3828. Al-Tirmidhī said: *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allah.’ They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership [with Him], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant. And intercession does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits.” [Qur’ān 34:22-23]

Thus, *du‘ā’* is to be made only to Allah ﷻ; no one from the living or dead is to be prayed to besides Allah ﷻ, whatever that thing may be.

There are two types of supplication:

Supplication of worship (*du‘ā’ ‘ibādah*), which is to praise Allah ﷻ for His names, attributes and actions. If someone glorifies, magnifies and praises Allah ﷻ, then one has supplicated to Him in the form of worship.

Supplication of asking (*du‘ā’ mas’alah*), which is to request one's needs from Allah ﷻ. Both of these types are included in *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. We describe the first part of it until the middle as 'supplication of worship', up to where Allah ﷻ says: **“It is You we worship”** and the last part of the *sūrah* is a 'supplication of asking'.

The scholars say that the supplication of worship is intrinsic to the supplication of asking and the supplication of asking is inclusive of the supplication of worship.

Allah the Almighty has promised to answer anyone who invokes Him. One might say, I made *du‘ā’* but it has not been answered.

It is said in response: the impediment is from your side. *Du‘ā’* is a cause, and the result is only achieved if all of the impediments are absent. It might be that there is some impediment that impedes the answering of your *du‘ā’*. It is either you supplicated with a heedless and negligent heart (and how can a *du‘ā’* from a heedless and negligent heart be answered? As related in a *ḥadīth*), or because you eat, drink, and wear what is unlawful. The Prophet ﷺ said regarding one who,

“has travelled at length, is shaggy and dusty, and raises his hands to the sky, saying, ‘O Lord, O Lord, O Lord’; and yet his food is unlawful, his clothes are unlawful, and he is nourished from what is unlawful. How will his prayers be answered?”¹²²

122 Muslim, no. 1015.

It could also be that someone prays for a sin or to sever family ties, so the invocation is not answered, on one hand. On the other hand, Allah the Almighty knows better what is in your best interest than you do. Allah ﷻ may answer your prayer, delay it, or He may take some harm equal to it away from you, yet you do not know. It has been related in a *ḥadīth*:

“Whenever one prays to Allah for something that does not involve sin or the severing of family ties, He gives him one of three things: He either immediately answers it, delays it or keeps an equal amount of evil away from him.”¹²³

People of misguidance say, “There is no need to invoke because matters are predetermined. There is no need for invocation because if something has been written for you, then it will happen, even if you don't invoke; and if it were not decreed and predetermined for you, then even if you made *du'ā'*, it would not occur or be decreed”. This is misguidance and Allah ﷻ is our refuge; it contradicts the words of Allah ﷻ.

The response is that there is no contradiction between *du'ā'* and the divine decree and predestination. He who has decreed and predestined has also commanded that we pray to Him. *Du'ā'* is a cause and it is Allah ﷻ who determines the proper causes. Some things are predestined according to the causes and when the causes [i.e. when *du'ā'* is made] come into existence, the results also come into existence, and *du'ā'* is a cause.

(189) All things are under His dominion, and He is under the dominion of none.

Among the attributes of Allah the Almighty is that He possesses everything. All things in the universe are possessions of His.

“Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent.” [Qur'ān 67:1]

123 Al-Tirmidhī, no. 3390.

Allah ﷻ also says:

“His is the dominion of the heavens and earth.” [Qur’ān 57:2]

There is nothing outside of His kingdom: all people and all that they possess are part of His kingdom.

“Say, ‘O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honour whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.’” [Qur’ān 3:26]

Thus, there is no one who imposes anything upon Allah ﷻ nor compels Him to do anything nor dictates anything to Him. That is because people are servants of Allah ﷻ who are in need of Him, as Allah ﷻ says:

“And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses; not for them was the choice. Exalted is Allah and high above what they associate with Him.” [Qur’ān 28:68]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Indeed, Allah does what He wills.” [Qur’ān 22:18]

It is no one but Allah ﷻ who is in charge of all of the affairs and He is alone. He arranges everything according to His wisdom.

(190) Nothing is independent of Allah, even for the blink of an eye.

Allah the Almighty is free of need and He is worthy of praise. All created beings are in need of Allah ﷻ; there is no one that can dispense with Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says:

“O mankind, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.” [Qur’ān 35:15]

No one can dispense with Allah ﷻ, even if one had the world as a kingdom. All kings are in need of Allah ﷻ and likewise all of the rich. There is no one who can dispense with Allah ﷻ, neither the angels who are drawn near, nor any other created being.

(191) He who thinks himself independent of Allah for the blink of an eye has disbelieved and has become one of those who will be destroyed.

If a person claims that he is free of the need of Allah ﷻ and that he can dispense with Allah ﷻ, then he has disbelieved and abandoned the religion. It is incumbent on each person to demonstrate their weakness to Allah ﷻ and not be impressed by their strength, health, and wealth. These matters are in Allah's ﷻ hands and therefore, it is not possible to dispense with Allah the Almighty.

(192) Allah becomes angered and pleased, but not like anyone of the creation.

Among the active attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-fi’liyah*) of Allah ﷻ is that He becomes angry and becomes pleased. Allah ﷻ says:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct – Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.” [Qur’ān 9:100]

Thus, Allah ﷻ becomes pleased with His servants. Allah ﷻ says:

“But approval (riḍwān) from Allah is greater.” [Qur’ān 9:72]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree.” [Qur’ān 48:18]

Allah ﷻ also becomes angry. He says:

“Say, ‘Shall I inform you of [what is] worse than that as penalty from Allah? [It is that of] those whom Allah has cursed and with whom He became angry.’” [Qur’ān 5:60]

Allah ﷻ gets angry and detests (*yamqutu*) those who disobey Him. *Maqt* (detestation) is the most intense form of hatred. Allah ﷻ says:

“But whoever kills a believer intentionally – his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.” [Qur’ān 4:93]

Created beings become angry and become pleased, but there is no resemblance between the anger and contentment of created beings and the anger and contentment of the Creator. Allah's ﷻ anger and contentment befit Him as with all of His other attributes.

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

There is nothing like Him in His essence (*dhāt*), His names or attributes, although He has names and attributes, and created beings have names and attributes; there is no similarity between them.

This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. They confirm the contentment (*riḍā*) and anger (*ghaḍab*) of Allah the Almighty, as well as other attributes. Although these attributes exist in kind within created beings, there is a difference.

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

Created beings can also have hearing and sight. Allah ﷻ says about Himself that He is the *All Hearing and the All Seeing*. He says earlier on in the verse that there is nothing like Him. This indicates that there is a difference between the qualities of the Creator and the qualities of created things, and this is something known from the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the doctrines of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. The people of interpretations (*ahl al-ta'wīl*) and misguidance, on the other hand, deny the names and attributes of Allah ﷻ because in kind, the qualities of those names and attributes exist within created beings. According to them, confirming them has the necessary consequence of attributing likenesses to Allah ﷻ, but in reality it does not have that necessary consequence.

This understanding is futile. They interpret the *anger* of Allah ﷻ as meaning His *vengeance* (*intiqām*) and His *contentment* as His *giving of favours* (*in'ām*). What is obligatory is to submit to Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and accept everything that they are confirmed to have been related as saying, and to leave such nonsense and interpretations.

Hence, when Imām Mālik ؒ was asked about *how* Allah ﷻ rose above the Throne (*istawā 'alā al-'arsh*), Mālik lowered his head out of fear and shyness before Allah ﷻ, then he raised it and said: "Rising is known, its manner is unknown, to believe in it is incumbent, and to ask about it is an innovation."

(193) We love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Companions (*aṣḥāb*) is the plural of *ṣāḥib*. A *ṣāḥabī* (companion) is someone who met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, believing in him and who died as such. If

someone believed in him but did not meet him, then they are not a Companion, even if that person were a contemporary of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ such as *al-Najāshī* (Negus). It is also a condition that one believed in him and died as a believer. Apostasy, or death as an apostate, renders one's status as a Companion, as well as all other deeds, invalid. The Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were the best of all generations and communities of believers (*umam*) after the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, that is because they made it to see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They also believed in him, joined him in *jihād* and acquired knowledge from him. The Prophet ﷺ also loved them and Allah ﷻ chose them to be the Companions of His Prophet ﷺ.

Allah ﷻ says:

“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.” [Qur’ān 48:18]

Allah also says:

“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers – so that Allah may enrage by them the disbelievers. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.” [Qur’ān 48:29]

The Companions are the best of all generations as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The best of all generations is my generation, then those who follow them and then those who follow.”

So, they are the best of all generations by virtue of them being the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, loving them is faith and hating them is hypocrisy (*nifāq*). Allah ﷻ says:

“...so that Allah may enrage by them the disbelievers.” [Qur’ān 48:29]

It is incumbent upon all Muslims in general to love all of the Companions because Allah ﷻ loved them, and because the Prophet ﷺ loved them. We also love them because they engaged in *jihād* for Allah's sake, spread Islām in the east and the west of the earth and aided and believed in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. And they followed the light that was sent down to him. This is the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

Mentioning the *Muhājirūn* (Emigrants) and *Anṣār* (Helpers), Allah ﷻ says:

“For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful. And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful. And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed.’” [Qur’ān 59:8-10]

This is the believers' attitude toward the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: they ask forgiveness for them and ask Allah ﷻ not to put any hatred for the Companions in their hearts. The same goes for the family of the Prophet ﷺ as they enjoy certain rights for their kinship and certain rights for their being believers. The doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah involves keeping *walā'* (to love and defend) for the family of the Prophet ﷺ (*ahl bayt al-nabīy*).

The Nawāṣib sect align themselves with the Companions and hate the family of the Prophet ﷺ which is why they are called *nawāṣib* [from *n - ṣ - b*]: for their manifesting (*naṣbihim*) hostilities toward the family of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Rāfiḍah Shī'ites conversely align themselves with the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), as they claim, and they hate the Companions. Moreover, they curse them, declare them to be disbelievers and vilify them.

The Companions vary in respect of their excellence. The most superior of them are the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī ؑ, those concerning whom the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Adhere to my *sunnah* and to the *sunnah* of the four rightly guided caliphs to come after me; bite down on them with your molar teeth.”¹²⁴

Next in succession are *the ten who were promised Jannah*, namely, Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh, Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqāṣ, Sa'id ibn Zayd, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awām, Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd-Allāh and 'Abdurraḥmān ibn 'Awf ؑ.

Then come those who fought in the Battle of Badr and then come those who pledged themselves in 'the *pledge of good pleasure*' (*bay'at al-riḍwān*) about which Allah ﷻ says:

“Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.” [Qur'ān 48:18]

Then come those who believed and fought in *jihād* before the Conquest of Makkah. They are superior to those who fought in *jihād* after the Conquest of Makkah. Allah ﷻ says:

“Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in

¹²⁴ Abū Dāwūd, no. 4607; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2678; ibn Mājah, no. 42. Al-Tirmidhī said: This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.

degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best [reward].” [Qur’ān 57:10]

Here, the *conquest* means, the treaty at al-Ḥudaybiyah.

Then come the *Muhājirūn* (Emigrants) in a general sense and then the *Anṣār* (Helpers), as Allah ﷻ gives precedence to the *Muhājirūn* over the *Anṣār* in the Qur’ān. Allah ﷻ says:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar...” [Qur’ān 9:100]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful.” [Qur’ān 59:8]

This is a reference to the *Muhājirūn*.

Allah ﷻ then says in reference to the *Anṣār*:

“And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful.” [Qur’ān 59:9]

Here, the *Muhājirūn* and their deeds are given precedence over the *Anṣār* and their deeds, which suggests that the *Muhājirūn* are superior, as they left their homeland and property for Allah's ﷻ sake. This is evidence of the sincerity of their faith. It is obligatory to love and align oneself with all of the Companions. We do not involve ourselves in the wars that occurred between them. Whatever wars happened between them was because of an interpretation on their part as they were qualified to exert personal

discretions (*mujtahids*). And so if any one of them were correct, they would have two divine rewards and if they were mistaken, they would have one divine reward. Moreover, they had such good deeds and great virtues that would have expiated any mistakes that some of them might have fallen into.

It is the duty of all Muslims to be pleased with them, to seek excuses on their behalf and to defend them. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. They do not involve themselves in the disputes that occurred between the Companions because of their virtues and precedence, and because the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Do not insult my companions, for, by Him in whose hand lies my soul, if one of you were to lay out the like of Mount Uḥud in gold, it would not amount to one *mudd*, and not half a *mudd*, of one of them.”¹²⁵

This is because of their virtue. So, if someone was to involve himself in what occurred between the Companions and then acquire some doubts in his heart, then that person is a heretic. Also if someone was to say, we discuss what happened between the Companions for the sake of research, then this is very dangerous and it is not permissible. Hence, when 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ؓ was asked about what happened between the Companions, he said: "Those are people whom Allah ﷻ has cleansed our hands of their blood, so it is our duty to cleanse our tongues of their honour."

And the Prophet ﷺ said: "Should you not leave my companions to me?"¹²⁶ So we do not involve ourselves in what happened between the Companions as it is a requisite of faith and a requisite of good will towards Allah, His Messenger, His Book, and to the general and elite Muslims not to do so.

(194) But we do not exceed the limits in our love for any one of them.

¹²⁵ Al-Bukhārī, no. 3673; Muslim, no. 2541.

¹²⁶ Al-Bukhārī presented it according to a similar wording (no. 3661).

We should not be excessive in our love for any one of them, in the way that the Rāfiḍites have been excessive and immoderate in their love of ‘Alī ؑ as they claim. Even so, it is evident that they neither love him nor love the Muslims in general. They are immoderate in such a way that some of them say, that ‘Alī is Allah, as happened in the era of ‘Alī ؑ. In light of this, he dug out ditches for them and burned them out of zeal for Allah the Almighty. Excess is prohibited, whether it is for the Companions or for anyone else. Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth...” [Qur’ān 5:77]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Beware of excess, for it is not but excess that destroyed those who were before you.”¹²⁷

Therefore we love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ but we are not so excessive that we associate them as partners with Allah ﷻ or pray to them besides Allah ﷻ as the Rāfiḍites and grave worshippers do. This is not love for the Companions. Rather, love for them is to follow them, emulate them and pray that Allah be pleased with them.

(195) Nor do we dissociate ourselves from any of them.

This is a reference to the Rāfiḍites, who disavow the Companions, especially Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān, and in fact, they declare many of the Companions to be disbelievers. This is an example of negligence. So we should not be negligent or abandon our love for them.

¹²⁷ Aḥmad, *Musnad*, 1/215, 347; ibn Mājah, no. 3029.

(196) And we hate whoever hates them.

Anyone who hates the Companions also hates the religion of Islām, because the Companions are the ones who have transmitted Islām and are the followers of al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ. So whoever hates them, hates Islām. This suggests that those people do not have faith in their hearts as it also suggests that they do not love Islām.

(197) Or says anything other than good about them. We only speak well of them.

As mentioned, it is not permissible to discuss what happened between them. In fact, one should refrain from doing so and should say nothing about them besides that which is good.

(198) Loving them is conviction, faith, and kindness, and hating them is disbelief, hypocrisy, and transgression.

This is a great foundational principle that all Muslims should know, namely, loving the Companions and appreciating them, as this emanates from faith. And hating them, or hating someone from amongst them, emanates from disbelief and hypocrisy. Moreover, love for them emanates from love of the Prophet ﷺ and hating them comes from hate of the Prophet ﷺ.

(199) We confirm that the first rightful *Khalīfah* (Caliph or successor) of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was Abū Bakr ؓ because of his superiority to the entire *Ummah*; then, ‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ; then, ‘Uthmān ؓ; then, ‘Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib ؓ. These are *al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn* (the Rightly-Guided Caliphs) and the rightly-guided imāms.

After concluding the discussion on what is obligatory in terms of love and loyalty to the Companions, and in terms of not hating them and hating those who hate them, and not entering into discourse about what happened between them, the author began mentioning the caliphate that followed the Prophet ﷺ which is according to what the author has mentioned here. The reason is that the Prophet ﷺ pushed Abū Bakr ؓ forward to lead the prayer towards the end of his life, so it signifies his right of the caliphate. Hence, the companions pledged allegiance to him, and said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was content with you being in charge of our religion. Should we not then be content with you being in charge of our worldly affairs?' So they pledged allegiance to him as the Caliph. Also, Abū Bakr ؓ had a great background both before and after the Hijrah. He was the most rightful of all people after the Prophet ﷺ and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ came next to him, and then came ‘Uthmān ؓ according to the unanimous agreement of the Companions. He was chosen by members of a consultation (*shūrā*) that included the ten promised Paradise, the best of all of the Companions, which ‘Umar ؓ appointed before his death. After ‘Uthmān's ؓ death, ‘Alī ؓ assumed the office of Caliph, and this is the order of Caliphate. So anyone who claims that the caliphate after the Prophet ﷺ belonged to ‘Alī ؓ has strayed from the path and has breached the ordinances of the Prophet ﷺ as well as the unanimous agreement of the Muslims.

The Shī'ites, for instance, claim that the succession belonged to ‘Alī ؓ, and they call him the bequest (*waṣī*) of the *Ummah*. But their intent is only to ignite sedition and disorder among people, as their opinion is not greater than that of the Companions ؓ. The Shī'ites say that the Companions were wrongdoers, and that every vilifying description in the Qur’ān is associated with the Companions, in their view. Thus, they describe them as being wrongdoers,

disbelievers and misguided. This is among the reasons why scholars of Islām have explicitly cited the Caliphate after the Prophet (*al-khilāfah*) in their creed literature – so that no one is affected by the impurities of the Shī'ites. The order of Caliphate of the four rightly-guided caliphs according to this is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, because it is the Companions who have given and agreed upon this order. Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah ؒ said: "Whoever opposes the matter of Caliphate after the Prophet is more astray than his family's donkey."

(200) And [we believe] that the ten who the Messenger of Allah ﷺ named and promised Paradise will be in Paradise, according to the testimony of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who speaks the truth. They are: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, Sa'd, Sa'id, 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf and Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ, the trustee of this Ummah. May Allah be pleased with them all.

These are the ten people who it has been testified that they will be in Paradise. Abū 'Ubaydah ؒ is described as being the 'Trustee' of this *Ummah* because when the Prophet ﷺ made a covenant with the people of Najrān and imposed the *jizyah* tribute on them, they requested that he send a trustee to them, so he chose Abū 'Ubaydah. The Prophet ﷺ said: "I will send someone to you who is truly trustworthy." Upon knowing this, the Companions looked forward to having this honour, and he sent Abū 'Ubaydah.¹²⁸

(201) Whoever speaks well of the Companions, the pure and pious wives and the sacred progeny of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is free from hypocrisy.

¹²⁸

Al-Bukhāri, no. 3745; Muslim, no. 2420.

After mentioning the rights of the Companions, the author shifts to a discussion about the family of the Prophet (ahl bayt al-nabi) ﷺ. First and foremost, the family of the Prophet ﷺ includes the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.” [Qur’ān 33:33]

This is addressed to them.

Thus, the family of the Prophet ﷺ primarily includes his wives. Then come his relatives, namely, the descendants of al-‘Abbās, Abū Ṭālib, and the family of al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib.

The Rāfiḍī Shī’ites defame ‘Ā’ishah ؓ and attribute offenses to her that Allah ﷻ has cleared her of. This is denial of what Allah the Almighty has said and it means attributing to Allah ﷻ that He chose an inappropriate woman to be the wife of His Messenger ﷺ. This is disbelief in Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“Evil words are for evil men, and evil men are [subjected] to evil words. And good words are for good men, and good men are [an object] of good words.” [Qur’ān 24:26]

The Prophet ﷺ possessed nobility, so Allah ﷻ would only choose a good wife for him.

What is meant by his *descendants (dhurriyah)* are his children and the children of his daughter Fāṭimah ؓ, al-Ḥasan ؓ, al-Ḥusayn ؓ and their children. These are the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ.

(202) The ‘ulamā’ from the Salaf (pious predecessors) and the Tābi‘ūn (their successors), the people of goodness and ḥadīth traditions, and the people of fiqh and sound reason are only to be spoken of in the best terms. Whoever speaks ill of them is not on the right path.

Having concluded the discourse on the Companions, the Family of the Prophet ﷺ and their right to love and loyalty and not detracting from any of them their high reputations, the author ﷺ shifted the discourse to those who directly follow them in virtue: the 'ulamā' (knowledgeable people and scholars).

The 'ulamā' of the Ummah enjoy a special status and merit that comes next to the Companions, because they are the heirs of the Prophets, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets.”¹²⁹

What is meant by 'the 'ulamā' are the learned ones (scholars) of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, those who possess knowledge, foresight and understanding, as well as those who are experts of the traditions of the *salaf* (*ahl al-athar*), namely, the *ḥadīth* scholars.

There are two types of 'ulamā':

Those who have knowledge of the traditions and accounts of the *salaf* ('ulamā' *al-athar*). They are those who have been concerned with the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and with preserving and defending it, who present it to the Ummah in its purest form as spoken by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They remove from it every contamination and lie, put all of the fabricated *ḥadīth* reports to the side and demonstrate and demarcate them as being fabrications. Such people are called scholars of transmission ('ulamā' *al-riwāyah*).

The *fuqahā'* (jurists): they are the ones who derive the laws from pieces of evidence, who demonstrate and explain its proper understanding for the people. They are termed scholars of discernment or know-how ('ulamā' *al-dirāyah*).

There are scholars who mastered both kinds of knowledge, called *fuqahā' al-muḥaddithīn*, such as Imām Aḥmad, Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī and al-Bukhārī.

All of these learned people are people of virtue. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“May Allah give good pleasure to someone who hears what I say, keeps it in mind and then conveys it as he has heard it.”

¹²⁹ Al-Bukhārī, presented it without a chain of transmission (*mu'allaq*) in *kitāb al-'ilm: bāb al-'ilm qabl al-qawl wa'l-'amal* (The book of knowledge before speech and action); Abū Dāwūd, no. 463; ibn Mājah, no. 223; al-Tirmidhī, no. 2687.

Here, the Prophet ﷺ devoted a supplication for such people and praised them.¹³⁰

The 'ulamā' have carried out their duty from Allah ﷻ to protect the religion and creed and explain the laws, such as the laws of inheritance and what is lawful and unlawful. They have also clarified the jurisprudence of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and thus, left a great wealth for the *Ummah* to benefit from and use to measure upon contemporary problems.

Fiqh has two types as well:

The greater knowledge (*al-fiqh al-akbar*), which is the knowledge of creed.

Practical knowledge (jurisprudence), or knowledge of the Islamic law which is no less important than 'the greater knowledge'. It is the knowledge of the practical laws.

In reference to the virtue of the 'ulamā', it has been presented in some *ḥadīth* reports as attributed to the Prophet ﷺ:

“The superiority of the learned to worshippers is like the superiority of the moon to all other heavenly bodies.”¹³¹

According to another version:

“The superiority of the learned to worshippers is like my superiority to the least of you.”¹³²

Thus, the learned have high esteem and status.

It is not permissible to commit libel against them or to detract from their reputations. Even if some of them were to be mistaken in their discretionary judgments, it does not require detracting from their reputations because it is possible that they might be mistaken, but nonetheless they seek the truth. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“If a judge exerts his judgment to the best of his ability and is correct, he will have two rewards. If he exerts his judgment to the best of his ability and is mistaken, then he will have one reward.”

¹³⁰ Ibn Mājah, no. 230, 231, 232 & 3056.

¹³¹ Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2687.

¹³² Al-Tirmidhī, no. 2690.

This is with regard to the 'ulamā', who have knowledge, and not to those who pretend to have knowledge, as they do not have the right to involve themselves in something that they are not good at.¹³³

(203) We do not say that any of Allah's *awliyā'* (allies) are superior to any of Allah's Prophets. We say that a single prophet is better than all of Allah's *awliyā'*.

The author ﷻ switched the discussion from that of the 'ulamā' to that of the *awliyā'* or allies of Allah ﷻ.

Awliyā' is the plural of *walī*, which is derived from *wilāyah*, meaning *closeness* and *love*. Thus, the *awliyā'* are those who possess closeness and love from Allah the Almighty. They are called *awliyā'* for their closeness (*qurb*) to Allah ﷻ and because Allah ﷻ loves them. Allah ﷻ says:

“Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.” [Qur’ān 2:222]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.” [Qur’ān 2:195]

Allah ﷻ explains who they are as He says:

“Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve, those who believed and were fearing Allah.” [Qur’ān 10:62-63]

Thus, a *walī* has to have both of these two qualities: faith and piety (*taqwā*).

In terms of being loved [i.e. having *wilāyah*] and hated [by Allah], there are three groups of people:

¹³³

Al-Bukhārī, no. 7352; Muslim, no. 1716.

The first are the close allies of Allah ﷻ (*awliyā' Allāh al-khullaṣ*), such as the angels, Prophets, the true in faith (*al-ṣiddīqūn*), martyrs and the righteous believers.

The second are the pure enemies of Allah ﷻ, like idolaters, disbelievers and those who commit the major form of hypocrisy (*al-nifāq al-akbar*). These are the enemies of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth.” [Qur’ān 60:1]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred.” [Qur’ān 58:22]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.” [Qur’ān 5:51]

The third are those who are allies in one regard and enemies in another, namely, those of the Muslims who are sinful. They have *wilāyah* in accordance to their obedience and enmity in accordance to their sin. Every Muslim is an ally of Allah ﷻ but only according to how much faith he has.

If someone claims to be a *walī* or is proclaimed to be one but has neither faith nor piety, then that person is a deceiver (*dajjāl*) and a liar.

Some may go as far as to claim to be *walīs* but [in reality] they are magicians, diviners and sorcerers. Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah رحمته, authored a book entitled *al-Furqān bayn awliyā' al-Raḥmān wa-awliyā' al-shayṭān* and in it, he exposes those who claim to be *walīs* and who present some things

that people believe to be miracles (*karāmāt*), but which are in fact paranormal activities of the *shayṭāns*. This is to be explained later on.

It is incumbent to love the allies of Allah ﷻ, to follow their example, to be their allies and to be near them.

The author's statement: "We do not say that any of Allah's allies (*awliyā'*) are superior to any of Allah's Prophets" is a response to Ṣūfīs, as they are excessive with respect to *awliyā'*. To them, they are superior to the Prophets. Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah are not excessive with respect to the *awliyā'*, but place them in their proper place. The misguided Ṣūfīs, on the other hand, consider them superior to the Prophets and say: the status of a prophet is just above a messenger but under a *walī*.

This is disbelief, as the superior ones are the Messengers, then the Prophets and then the *awliyā'*. The reason why *awliyā'* are given precedence to the Prophets in the view of the Ṣūfīs, as they so claim, is that a *walī* receives divine messages directly from Allah ﷻ and a prophet receives them through an intermediary.

"We say a single prophet is better than all of Allah's *awliyā'*." There is no doubt about this. All of the *awliyā'*, from the first to the last of all creatures, are never equal to a single prophet. And this is the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah.

(204) We believe in the *karāmāt* (miracles) that have occurred in their honour according to what was authentically related to us through reliable sources.

This is a great subject, namely that of *karāmāt* (miracles). A *karāmah* is a paranormal event. If it takes place at the hands of a prophet, then it is a *mu'jizah* (an inimitable miracle presented as a challenge) such as the inimitable challenge of the Qur'ān. Man and jinn lack the ability to produce anything like it and it is among the greatest miracles. There are other great miracles like the miracle of Mūsā's ﷺ rod and the nine signs given to him; and like the bringing of the dead to life by 'Īsā ﷺ, the son of Maryam ﷺ. If it happens at the hands of a righteous person, then it is a *karāmah* (honour) from

Allah ﷻ, who causes it to occur at one's hand but it does not actually originate from that person. Examples of this are what occurred with the companions of the cave (*aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*) and what occurred with Maryam ʿ.

“Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision.” [Qur’ān 3:37]

She used to receive sustenance as she devoted herself in worship to Allah ﷻ, and as she did not part from her chamber. Similarly, *karāmāt* have occurred to the members of this *Ummah*. Shaykh al-Islām mentions several instances of them in his book, *al-Furqān*.

If a paranormal event happens at the hands of a diviner or sorcerer, on the other hand, then it is a satanic paranormal event and it happens at such a person's hands as a trial and test. For instance, one may fly in the air, walk on water or do other paranormal acts but they are acts of devils.

The guiding principle is that we look at a person's actions. If they are in agreement with Islām then the things that happen at his hands are *karāmāt*. Otherwise, they are a service to him from the devils.

Allah the Most High says:

“O company of jinn, you have [misled] many of mankind.’ And their allies among mankind will say, ‘Our Lord, some of us made use of others.’” [Qur’ān 6:128]

Here, we see that jinns take pleasure in man's subjection and obedience to them, and that man takes pleasure in the jinns because they serve him and bring him what he wants. Allah ﷻ says:

“He will say, ‘The Fire is your residence, wherein you will abide eternally, except for what Allah wills. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing.’ And thus will We make some of the wrongdoers allies of others for what they used to earn.” [Qur’ān 6:128-129]

This is satanic paranormal activity. The difference between it and *karāmāt* is faith and good deeds. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. Those who oppose Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah have fallen into great

confusion on account of the concept of paranormal occurrences. Mu'tazilites and those who have the same tendencies such as the rationalists (*al-'aqlānīyūn*) to this day, deny the existence of *karāmāt*. In fact, extremists among them deny some *mu'jizāt*. They say that such things have not been proven through logic as they give precedence to logic.

The grave-worshippers and Ṣūfīs go to excess in their confirmation of *karāmāt* and thus, attribute *karāmāt* to allies of *shayṭān*. They attribute them to people who neither perform the prayer nor fast if something paranormal occurs at the hands of such a person. Yet such instances are satanic paranormal occurrences. There are even some who go to excess with regard to some righteous *walīs* and associate them as gods and partners with Allah ﷻ, as is the case with grave-worshippers. If you read a book by al-Sha'rānī called *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyā'*, you would find some of the most astonishing and false accounts. In their view, they are excluded from having any *Takleef* (orders and prohibitions) and are in no need of worshipping or serving Allah.

Regardless of the extent of a person's worship and righteousness, one is never beyond being a servant (of Allah ﷻ). This goes for the angels, *awliyā'* and Prophets. In fact, our Prophet ﷺ said:

“By Allah, I have the eager desire to be the most knowledgeable about Allah and God-fearing among you.”

This is coming from the foremost of all humanity and the best to have walked the earth. Allah ﷻ says to him:

“And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death).” [Qur’ān 15:99]

There is no one who has ever reached the same heights as the Prophet ﷺ and yet he was not exempted from worshipping and serving Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says, too, regarding the Messiah ﷺ:

“Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels near [to Him]. And whoever disdains His worship and is arrogant – He will gather them to Himself all together. And as for those who believed and did righteous deeds,

He will give them in full their rewards and grant them extra from His bounty. But as for those who disdained and were arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment, and they will not find for themselves besides Allah any protector or helper.”
[Qur’ān 4:172-173]

In short, this is a subject of great importance that should be learned, especially in an era of ignorance and false beliefs.

(205) We believe in *ashrāt al-sā ‘ah* (the Signs of the Hour), such as the emergence of the Dajjāl.

Ashrāt is the plural of *shart*, which is a sign (*‘alāmah*), and thus a *shurṭī* (policeman) is named as such, because of a mark or sign that he carries.

The Signs of the Hour are the signs that point to the nearness of the coming of the Hour. Allah ﷻ says:

“Then do they await except that the Hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications (*ashrāt*).” [Qur’ān 47:18]

His saying, here, *yanẓurūn* (do they wait) has the same meaning as *yantizirūn* and His saying, *baghtah*, or *unexpectedly* means that no one knows when it will be besides Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says:

“It lays heavily upon the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except unexpectedly.” [Qur’ān 7:187]

Jibrīl ﷺ once said to the Prophet ﷺ: "Tell me about the Hour." He said: "The one who is asked about it knows no more than the one who is asking." He said: "Tell me about its signs." He said: "That a slave-girl gives birth to her mistress

and that you see the barefoot and naked shepherds compete in raising tall buildings.”¹³⁴

The scholars of Islām have noted that there are three types of signs ahead of the Hour:

Minor signs which have already come and passed.

Medial signs: These continue to occur, and among them are advancements in industry and communications that have taken place in our times as well as the extracting of treasures from the earth. They also include the convergence of lands to the extent that the world has seemingly become one town, the gathering of the Jews in Palestine in anticipation of the Dajjāl and the precursors of the large scale bloodshed that will occur there.

Major signs such as the emergence of the Dajjāl, the descent of ‘Īsā (عليه السلام), the emergence of Gog and Magog, the emergence of the Beast and then the rising of the sun from the west. When these events occur, the rest will follow in succession.

"The emergence of the Dajjāl." This is the first of the major signs. The Dajjāl is one of the Jews and he will claim to be the Lord and satanic paranormal occurrences will take place at his hands. He will seduce many. He will give a command to the sky and it will rain and he will give a command to the earth and treasures and vegetation will come forth from it.

The Dajjāl is the greatest trial of faith and many will be seduced by him because of the great trials that he has. He has a paradise and a hell and will go to all places on earth besides Makkah and Madīnah. These trials of faith distinguish the believers from the disbelievers. The Dajjāl gets his name from the root *d - j - l* which indicates *deception*, or *lies*, because of his frequent lying. And he is called the *masīḥ* because he travels and journeys (*yamsaḥu*, from *m - s - ḥ*) the earth quickly, as Allah ﷻ gives him speedy means of transportation that will be faster than wind. But it is alternatively said that he is named so because one of his eyes is smoothed out (*mamsūḥah*, from *m - s - ḥ*). He is one-eyed and is also called the '*masīḥ of misguidance*' (*masīḥ al-ḍalālāh*). The Dajjāl will emerge and will be followed by the Jews. He will lead them and be a cause of the occurrence of great trials of faith for the Muslims. There was never a prophet who did not warn his people of him and our Prophet ﷺ was the most ardent in his warnings, as he was the final prophet, and his community of believers is the final community of believers and the nearest of them to the

¹³⁴ Al-Bukhārī, no. 50; Muslim, no. 9-10.

Dajjāl. The Prophet ﷺ commanded us to seek refuge in Allah ﷻ from four things after we recite the last *tashahhud* of the prayer: to seek refuge from the punishment of the Fire, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death and from the trial of al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl. Thus, his coming is a great trial of faith and an immense evil. Then, 'Isā ﷺ will descend from the heavens and kill him at the gate of Ludd, and Allah ﷻ thereby relieves the Muslims of him. Then, 'Isā ﷺ will judge by the law of Islām and is thus a follower of the Prophet ﷺ as there is no prophet to come after our prophet and there is no law after the law of Islām.¹³⁵

Then, in his time, Gog and Magog will emerge and they will also be a great trial. Allah ﷻ says:

“Until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend.” [Qur’ān 21:96]

They are a race of humans who lived in the time of Alexander, "Dhu'l-Qarnayn". He built a dam to blockade them. Allah ﷻ says:

“So Gog and Magog were unable to pass over it, nor were they able [to effect] in it any penetration.” [Qur’ān 18:97]

They are not able to climb over the wall nor penetrate a hole through, because of its strength as it is made of iron and mighty strength. However, when Allah's ﷻ promised time has come, it will be made level, they will eradicate people throughout the world and no one will have the power to fight them. Then, Allah ﷻ will cause them to perish in one hour.

(206) And the descent of 'Isā (Jesus), the son of Mary, from the heavens.

He is called the *masīḥ*, or Messiah, because he wipes over (*yamsaḥu*) those who have disabilities and Allah ﷻ heals them and is named the '*masīḥ* of guidance'.

¹³⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, no. 3613. Al-Tirmidhī said: This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.

His descent from the heavens to the earth in the end of times is something that has been consistently handed down to us in the traditions. Anyone who denies this is a disbeliever. Allah ﷻ says:

“And indeed, Jesus will be [a sign for] knowledge (‘ilm) of the Hour.” [Qur’ān 43:61]

In one variant reading of the Qur’ān: *he will be a sign (‘alam) of the Hour*, that is, an *‘alāmah*, or sign for the nearness of the Hour. Allah ﷻ says:

“And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death.” [Qur’ān 4:159]

This is in the end of times. He is living in the heavens and does not die until the task entrusted to him is concluded. He will die and be buried in the earth after slaying the Dajjāl and the swine, imposing the *jizyah* tribute and judging by the law of Islām.

(207) We believe that the sun will rise from the west;

The sun is compelled to move by the command of Allah ﷻ. It rises from the east and sets in the west. When the end of time comes and the coming of the Hour approaches, Allah ﷻ will command it to rise from the west, and this will be a sign of Judgment Day. When it rises from the west, Allah ﷻ will not accept anyone’s repentance. Allah says:

“Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come or that there come some of the signs of your Lord? The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had earned through its faith some good. Say, ‘Wait. Indeed, we [also] are waiting.’” [Qur’ān 6:158]

Then, a disbeliever may submit to Allah ﷻ as a Muslim, but Allah ﷻ will not accept their submission (Islām). Likewise, a sinner may repent but Allah ﷻ will not accept their repentance.

(208) And that the Beast will emerge from its place in the earth.

Allah ﷻ says:

“And when the word befalls them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them, [saying] that the people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith].” [Qur’ān 27:82]

This Beast will come forth and brand every believer and disbeliever. That is, it will place a mark upon each person whereby people will recognize and address each other. Some will say, ‘O, Muslim!’ and some will say, ‘O, disbeliever!’ In the verse, ‘*speaking to them*’ means in a paranormal manner. There are no confirmed reports of the place from which it will emerge. Even so, we believe that it will come forth from a place known by the All-Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. Allah ﷻ says:

“We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them.” [Qur’ān 27:82]

(209) We do not believe in diviners or fortune-tellers;

The author has already mentioned *karāmāt* (miracles) and the guiding principle for identifying them. He also mentioned that *karāmāt* are an established truth, and that it is not permissible to rely on them. It is not to be believed that *awliyā’* have such a status as to be prayed to besides Allah ﷻ, as grave-worshippers and some superstitious people believe. They attach

themselves to the *awliyā'* and righteous people who are associated with these paranormal occurrences.

As for his statement, “we do not believe in diviners or fortune-tellers,” it suggests a distinction between *karāmāt* on the one hand, and fortune-telling, divination, sorcery, magic, and astrology on the other. The latter (which fortune-tellers and diviners do) are satanic paranormal activities and practices that such people have mastered and learned in order to seek the favour of the devils, and people (especially those who are ignorant) believe that they are miracles and that they happen because those people are *awliyā'* of Allah ﷻ. This is a mistake. They are nothing more than acts of the devils, as those people are subjected to them and go along with them in their idolatry. Thus, whatever sorcery the sorcerers have learned is because of their subordination to the devils. Sorcery (*sihr*) is among the works of the devil and amounts to disbelief in Allah ﷻ, so one should not be deceived by it. People often say that they are games or stunts. Magicians appear at assemblies and clubs and are left to perform magic in front of people, and say that they are games and play tricks on people to take their money with their magic. It is necessary to warn of such people, to hate them and treat them as enemies, because they are the enemies of Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

There are two types of magic:

Real magic. This type has an effect on the body of the bewitched person, causing one to be sick, affecting their mind or even killing them. This is a satanic act.

Illusionary magic. Allah ﷻ says:

“And suddenly their ropes and staffs seemed to him from their magic that they were moving [like snakes].” [Qur’ān 20:66]

This is called *al-qumrah*. They do something to people's vision but it is not real. So it appears that the person is striking himself with a sword, or eating nails or fire or glass, or entering a fire, or that a car is running over him, or that they are sleeping on nails, or that he is dragging a car by his hair or that he is turning normal pieces of paper into money. When the illusion is finished, the paper turns back to normal as with pickpockets. Other magic acts include presenting a beetle, the known insect, and making it to appear to people as a

lamb as well as trying to convince people that one is walking a tightrope. This is called circus acting or stunt artistry.

All of these things are lies and fraudery and are also a form of magic to people's eyes. They are called illusionary magic, because when the magic disappears, everything returns back to normal.

Therefore, we should not be deceived by such people, and we should neither believe them nor allow them to promote their magic to our children or in our lands.

A diviner (*kāhin*), on the other hand, is someone who claims to have knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*). The Prophet ﷺ told us that devils eavesdrop what they can of what is spoken in the heavens and tell the diviner. The diviner, though, tells a hundred lies along with that one word; and so people believe in everything that he says because of that one word. Allah says ﷻ:

“Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar. They pass on what is heard, and most of them are liars.” [Qur’ān 26:221-223]

There was much divination in the pre-Islamic period of *jāhiliyyah* (ignorance). Each tribe had a diviner (*kāhin*) that they referred to for judgment and asked about matters of the unseen. When Islām came, divination was put to an end and the Prophet ﷺ forbade going to diviners. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever goes to a diviner, their prayer will not be accepted for forty days.”¹³⁶

It has been presented in the *sunan* literature that "whoever goes to a *kāhin* or an *arrāf* and believes what he says has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muḥammad."¹³⁷ And when asked about diviners, he said: "They are nothing." And the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not go to them."

A *kāhin* is someone who claims to have knowledge of the unseen because of his dealings with the devil.

¹³⁶ Muslim, no. 2230.

¹³⁷ Aḥmad, 2/429; al-Ḥākim, 1/8. Al-Ḥākim said: This is a sound *ḥadīth* according to the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

An *'arrāf*, on the other hand, is someone who claims to have knowledge of the unseen not through devils but rather through intuition and guesswork. He would say 'it's possible for so and so to happen' based on false predictions.

Some of the scholars said that an *'arrāf* is a *kāhin*. Each one of them tells of matters of the unseen but through different means. It is incumbent on all Muslims to disbelieve in all divination and fortune-telling and not to trust those who practice them. They are not among Allah's *awliyā'* but are rather allies of the Devil. If someone would like to seek more extensive knowledge of this matter, then the book *al-Furqān* by Shaykh al-Islām ؒ may be referred to.

As for astrology (*tanjīm*), a *munajjim* (astrologer) is someone who predicts the future by looking at the stars. If a certain star rises, such and such will happen; and if a certain star sets, such and such will happen; or a certain constellation is a sign of misfortune or happiness. They use such fallacies as bases for their predictions.

Thus, *tanjīm* is the attribution of events on earth to astronomical events, as defined by Shaykh al-Islām ؒ. *Tanjīm* is something that was practiced in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*). The Prophet ﷺ said:

“There are four matters of *jāhiliyyah* that my *Ummah* will not leave: attacking the reputations of family names, boasting of noble descent, wailing for the dead and asking the stars for water.”¹³⁸

Allah ﷻ says:

“Then I swear by the setting of the stars, and indeed, it is an oath – if you could know – [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Qur'an in a Register well-protected; None touch it except the purified. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent and make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?” [Qur'ān 56:75-82]

That is, you attribute the sustenance that you are given to the stars and astronomical events. This is among the beliefs of the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyyah*. The stars are among Allah's ﷻ creations and they are under Allah's ﷻ subjection. Allah ﷻ created them for three reasons:

¹³⁸ Muslim, no. 934.

To be an adornment for the lowest heaven.

To stone the devils.

To be guiding signs in the darkness in the land and the sea. If anyone believes that they are there for something else, then they have lost whatever good was given to them.

If you reflect upon the Qur'ān, you would find that Allah ﷻ has named three benefits of the stars. However, whatever events happen on earth are not at all affected by the stars. Rather, astrologers falsify information and lie to people. They say that such events occur because of the stars. Allah ﷻ says:

“...and the stars are subjected by His command.” [Qur'ān 16:12]

These matters amount to transgression of correct creed and render one's faith invalid if one believes that stars themselves are what cause things to happen in the universe.

(210) Or anyone who claims anything contrary to the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah.

That is, we do not believe one's word to be true if he says something contrary to the Qur'ān, Sunnah, or consensus (*ijmā'*), because evidence is based on these things, so anything that runs counter to them is false, be they statements, actions, or beliefs.

(211) We consider unity (*jamā'ah*) right and correct and we consider division deviation and punishment.

We, Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, hold that unity is truth and division is a punishment. The unity of the *Ummah* upon the truth is mercy, and their

division is a punishment. This lies at the heart of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. It is incumbent to unite and to reject division. Allah ﷻ says:

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.” [Qur’ān 3:103]

The *rope of Allah ﷻ* is the Qur’ān and Islām. His words, *all together*, mean “be united upon the Qur’ān and Sunnah”. ...*and do not become divided*: Having commanded unity, Allah ﷻ forbade division and He proclaims that unity is to be upon the *rope of Allah*, that is, *the Qur’ān*, and it is not permissible to unite for the sake of any other doctrines or groups. This causes division.

Thus, unity does not take place except upon the Book of Allah. Allah ﷻ says:

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.” [Qur’ān 3:103]

Allah ﷻ commands us to unite and to reject the division of our views and hearts. However much the Muslims are split and however far their lands are from each other, they are still united upon the truth, their hearts are united and they love each other. The people of falsehood, on the other hand, regardless of whether they are in one place or one of them is right next to the other, their bodies are united but their hearts are divided. Allah ﷻ says:

“You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse.” [Qur’ān 59:14]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.” [Qur’ān 3:105]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And do not be of those who associate others with Allah, [Or] of those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction rejoicing in what it has.” [Qur’ān 30:31-32]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“...to establish the religion and not be divided therein.” [Qur’ān 42:13]

It is incumbent on the Muslims to be united in their creed, worship, community and obedience to their leader. And they should thus be one hand, one body and one structure, as the Prophet ﷺ likened them to. This is a mercy to the Muslims. Their blood would be spared, their hearts would be brought together and their societies would be safe. When this happens, they will receive abundant good. But if they rival each other, break relations and hate each other, the enemy will gain the upperhand over them, and they will shed each other's blood.

There are two types of differing:

The first type is differing in creed (*‘aqīdah*). This is never permissible because it causes internecine fighting, enmity, hate and disunion. So it is incumbent that the Muslims have one creed, namely, the creed of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah) and to believe in that in word, in action and in the heart. Moreover, creed is something that has been prescribed and is not a matter of personal judgment and therefore, there is no possibility for division. Creed is also derived from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, and not from opinions and personal judgments of scholars. Division in creed results in bitter fighting, hate, and the breaking of relations, as with the Jahmīs, the Mu’tazilites, the Ash‘arites and all other deviant sects that the Prophet ﷺ has prophesied of in his pronouncement that “this *Ummah* will divide into seventy-three sects”. All of them are in the Fire except for one.” It was said, “Which one, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “The one that is in conformity with what my companions and I follow.”¹³⁹ Thus, there is nothing that unites people except what is in conformity with what the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions followed.

¹³⁹ Abū Dāwūd, no. 4569; ibn Mājah, no. 3991; Aḥmad, 2/332; al-Ḥākim, 1/128. Al-Ḥākim said that it is sound.

The second type is differing in matters of discretionary judgment in jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This does not cause enmity because it amounts to the study of evidence according to the perceptions of people, and people differ in that respect. They are not all the same. They differ in their ability to draw inferences from the evidence and in the extent of their knowledge.

This kind of differing (as long as it is not associated with intolerance) does not result in enmity. The Companions differed in matters of jurisprudence and no enmity occurred among them. They were brothers. Moreover, the righteous early Muslims and the four Imāms differed, and no enmity occurred among them. They were brothers. This is also the case for their followers. If any one of them were to be intolerant about an opinion, it would result in enmity. It is incumbent on every Muslim to adopt the opinions that are in agreement with the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Allah ﷻ says:

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day.” [Qur’ān 4:59]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And in anything over which you disagree – its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah.” [Qur’ān 42:10]

So, differences of opinion are to be referred back to the Qur’ān and Sunnah, and that which has the weightiest evidence is to be adopted.

(212) Allah’s religion is one in the heavens and on earth. It is the religion of Islām.

Islām is to serve and worship Allah, He who has no partners, alone. It is the religion of the angels in the heavens and of man and jinn on earth. It is the religion of Islām. In its general sense, it means to submit to Allah ﷻ, singling

Him out in His oneness (*tawhīd*), to yield to Him in obedience and to purify oneself of idolatry or associating anything with Him in His oneness, as defined by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyah ؒ, quoted by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ؒ in *al-Uṣūl al-Thalāthah*. So, Islām is the religion of all of the Prophets as well as their followers. Each prophet preached it to his people. Anyone who follows this message is a Muslim [lit.: one who submits or surrenders to Allah], be they from the earlier or the later people, as such a person submits to Allah ﷻ, serves Him as one God and yields to Him in obedience. The religion of the Prophets is one, but their laws vary and differ because of different human needs in each time and place. According to one *ḥadīth*,

“Prophets are paternal brothers. Their mothers are different, but their religion is one.”¹⁴⁰

Allah ﷻ also says:

“To each of you We prescribed a law and a method.” [Qur’ān 5:48]

Allah ﷻ prescribes a law to each prophet as is appropriate and best for his people. Then, Allah ﷻ abrogates the law for another people according to what is best for them. So whoever follows the religion of a prophet before it is abrogated, then they are a Muslim. Allah is to be served according to what He has prescribed for that prophet. But after sending Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, Allah ﷻ abrogated all religions that preceded it, and there became only one religion that counts and that is of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. So it is not permissible for anyone to continue following any of the preceding religions, because his message and religion are universal to humanity and comprehensible in every time, place and generation.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Bukhārī, no. 2365; Muslim, no. 3443.

(213) Allah the Most High says: “Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islām.” Allah also says: “Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islām.” [Qur’ān 3:19] “...and [I] have approved for you Islām as religion.” [Qur’ān 5:3]

It is the religion that Allah ﷻ is pleased with His servants to follow, from the time of the sending of Muhammad ﷺ until the coming of the Hour.

(214) It is a middle course between excess and negligence;

Islām is a middle course between *excess* (*ghulūw*), i.e. additions and doing that which is beyond one’s capacity and *negligence* (*taqṣīr*), i.e. to have an aversion (to something). The religion of Islām is a middle course and one should neither do what is beyond one’s capacity nor slip away from it. Each of these is blameworthy. Steering a middle course is best.

“Say, ‘O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth.’” [Qur’ān 5:77]

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The *mutanaṭṭi’ūn* are doomed," three times¹⁴¹. The *mutanaṭṭi’ūn* are those who go to excess in matters of religion. During the Prophet's ﷺ time, a group of men said such things as, 'I will fast and never break my fast,' another said, 'I will engage in the prayer and not sleep,' a third said, 'I will not eat meat,' and a fourth said, 'I will live whilst abstaining from women.' The Prophet ﷺ said:

“But I am the most pious and fearing of Allah, and I fast and break my fast, I pray and sleep, I marry women and I eat meat. Whoever forsakes my *sunnah* is not of me.”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Muslim, no. 2670.

¹⁴² Al-Bukhārī, no. 5063; Muslim, no. 1401.

This is to be hard on oneself to do more than what Allah ﷻ has commanded. Allah ﷻ says:

“O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you.” [Qur’ān 5:87] - that is, as a matter of one's profession of religion.

Allah ﷻ says:

“...and do not transgress.” [Qur’ān 5:87]

Thus, the verse includes both groups, and the religion of Islām is a middle course.

(215) Between *tashbīh* (likening Allah’s attributes to the creation) and *ta’ṭīl* (divesting Allah of His attributes);

That is, in terms of belief, it (the religion of Islām) lies between *ta’ṭīl* (divesting Allah ﷻ of His attributes) and *tashbīh* (likening Allah's attributes to those of the creation or roughly, anthropomorphism). The correct creed is the middle course. The adherents of *ta’ṭīl* are excessive in their confirmation of Allah's ﷻ transcendence (*tanzīh*) and thus, deny all of Allah's ﷻ names and attributes. And the adherents of *tashbīh* are excessive in their confirmation (*ithbāt*) of the names and attributes and therefore, assimilate Allah ﷻ to created things. The right creed is the middle course. Allah ﷻ says:

“There is nothing like unto Him.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

This is a response to the proponents of *tashbīh*.

“And He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” [Qur’ān 42:11]

This is a response to the proponents of *ta'ṭīl*. But we, Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, confirm the names and attributes that Allah ﷻ has confirmed and those that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has confirmed. We do not deny them or divest Allah ﷻ of them and we do not compare Allah ﷻ to any of His creations. Rather, we say that the names and attributes of Allah ﷻ benefit Him. Although those names and attributes exist in humans, the manner is different and an attribute is in accordance with that which it is attributed to.

(216) Between fatalism (jabr) and the denial of qadar.

The doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah is a middle course between the Jabriyyah sect and the Qadariyyah sect. The Jabriyyah sect are so excessive in their confirmation of predetermination that they deny the fact that people have any choice. They say that a person has no choice and that one is compelled to do all of one's actions. One is only an instrument that is moved by predetermination. Thus, one's prayers, fasting and other deeds are not by choice. One is moved in the same way that an instrument is moved. This is a false doctrine. The adherents of the Qadariyyah sect are excessive in their confirmation of choice, or free-will, of people and thus, deny *qadar* (predestination). In fact, they believe that people are independent in their actions, are beyond the will of Allah ﷻ and that a person has an independent free will. They say that individuals are the creators of their own actions and that their actions are not under Allah's ﷻ control. This is the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, on the other hand, follow a middle course when it comes to this issue. They say that a person has a choice and free will and that one acts by one's own choice, but this [an individual's choice] is not beyond the decree and predetermination of Allah ﷻ. One's actions are creations of Allah ﷻ, but they are one's own actions and work. It is the person who commits the sin or act of obedience, but Allah ﷻ is the one who predetermines it. And therefore, Allah ﷻ punishes people for their offenses and rewards them for their obedience, and if one were to do so without choice, he would not receive any reward or punishment. Thus, an insane

person and an underage person are not accountable. Likewise, someone who does something under compulsion or duress is not accountable as they do not have a choice.

(217) And between loss of fear [of Allah’s punishment] and loss of hope [of Allah’s mercy].

This is also a part of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, namely, following a middle course between being fearless (*amn*) of Allah's ﷻ plot (*makr*) and despair (*iyās*) of Allah's ﷻ mercy. In their view, one is to have hope in Allah's ﷻ mercy but not to be fearless of Allah's ﷻ plot, or punishment or trials of faith (*fitnah*). Nonetheless, one should not despair of Allah's ﷻ mercy. Thus, one should combine both fear and hope. This is in conformity with the way of the Prophets. Allah ﷻ says:

“Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.” [Qur’ān 21:90]

This refers to the Prophets. Their fear of Allah ﷻ did not lead them to despair of His mercy. Allah ﷻ says:

“Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” [Qur’ān 12:87]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?” [Qur’ān 15:56]

Furthermore, their hope for Allah ﷻ to have mercy on them does not cause them to be fearless of Allah's ﷻ plot (*makr*). Allah ﷻ says:

“Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.” [Qur’ān 7:99]

Ibrāhīm, the father of the Prophets, said:

“My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols...” [Qur’ān 14:35]

Thus, Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was not fearless over what might happen to him. He feared that his faith would be tested because he was human.

So one should not be fearless of being punished and say, ‘I am a good person’ but one should rather fear for oneself while not despairing of Allah’s ﷻ mercy. Allah ﷻ says:

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’ And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him.” [Qur’ān 39:53-54]

It is incumbent to do what is a cause of mercy, namely, repenting and submitting oneself to Allah ﷻ. It is then that mercy is attained. Allah’s ﷻ mercy is near to those who are doers of good, and doing good is a cause of mercy. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā’ah, and it is a middle course between that of the Murji’ites, who say that sin is not an inherent detriment of faith, and between the wa’īdiyāh Khārijites. As per the Murji’ites, if someone believes in their heart, then sin is of no effect on them. Those people do not fear the plot of Allah ﷻ, and say that deeds are not an intrinsic part of the nature of faith. In their view, one enters Paradise even without doing anything. This belief has caused much corruption in the world and many have gradually slipped away from the religion because of it. They say, as long as we are to enter Paradise, there is no need to do good deeds, and so they do what they want.

The wa’īdiyāh (those who are labelled as deviating in the matter of wa’īd, or threats) Khārijites, on the other hand, declare others to be disbelievers on

account of major sins that are less serious than idolatry. They believe that the threats that Allah ﷻ has mentioned will be enforced on those who disobey Him, as Allah ﷻ has posed certain threats against those who disobey Him. However, He says:

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.” [Qur’ān 4:48]

So, people are under Allah's ﷻ will. This is the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. It is a middle course.

The right belief is that of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah who tread a middle course between fearlessness and hope on one hand, and fear and despair on the other. Hence, they say that fear and hope are like the wings of a bird. The wings have to be flawless and sound. Similarly, if either of one's fear or hope is flawed it will fall, so there has to be balance as there is with the wings of a bird.

(218) This is our religion and belief, outwardly and inwardly. We dissociate ourselves from anyone who opposes what we have said and explained here.

That is, what we have said in this statement of creed, from beginning to end, it is our religion, the religion of the Muslims. We wash our hands of anyone who opposes it, because it is the right creed so whatever opposes it is false.

(219) We ask Allah to make us steadfast upon the faith and to allow us to die upon it;

This is the proper etiquette toward Allah ﷻ. After explaining the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, he (the author) asks Allah ﷻ to make him steadfast

upon the faith. It is not enough for someone to know the right creed. A knowledgeable person may fall into error or make mistakes, so one should not be deceived by one's knowledge and not feel safe from trials of faith. Is one's knowledge equal to that of Ibrāhīm ؑ? Who prayed to Allah ﷻ saying:

“My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people.” [Qur’ān 14:35-36]

So, one should ask Allah ﷻ for salvation and well-being. How many knowledgeable people have deviated from the right faith? Indeed, deeds are judged by the last of them.

(220) And to keep us from the many inclinations and diverse opinions;

There is nothing that has caused people to stray from the path other than the inclinations of the soul (*ahwā'*). Allah ﷻ says:

“And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah?” [Qur’ān 28:50]

Allah ﷻ also says:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire.” [Qur’ān 45:23]

One should ask Allah ﷻ to be kept safe from one's own whims and desires and to be guided to the truth, even if it is contrary to one's inclinations. Allah ﷻ says in respect to the Jews:

“But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were

arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed.” [Qur’ān 2:87]

Therefore inclinations are very dangerous.

(221) As well as the evil doctrines;

This is a reference to the sects that the Prophet ﷺ has told of when he said,

“My *Ummah* will divide into seventy-three sects: all of them are in the Fire...”¹⁴³ - on account of them being apart from the truth, except for those who tread a path like that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions. They are saved from the Fire and are thus, called *al-firqah al-nājiyah* (the saved sect).

‘Doctrines’ (*madhāhib*) here means views or opinions.

(222) Such as those of the Mushabbihah;

They are those who liken Allah's ﷻ attributes to those of created things.

(223) The Mu’tazilah;

They are those who divest Allah ﷻ of His attributes and deny them based on the argument that they confirm Allah's ﷻ transcendence. They are the

¹⁴³ Abū Dāwūd, no. 4596; ibn Mājah, no. 3991. Aḥmad, 2/332; al-Ḥākim, 1/128. Al-Ḥākim said that it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

followers of Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' and 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd. These two individuals were students of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ who used to attend some of his circles. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was asked about those who commit major sins, and he answered according to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, saying that those people are under Allah's ﷻ will, and that they are not disbelievers on account of their major sin but are lacking in faith. At that point, Wāṣil criticized him and said that such people have an intermediate state of salvation (*manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*) and that they are neither disbelievers nor Muslims. And so he invented this false doctrine and retreated from the circles of al-Ḥasan. Those who were like him gathered around him, and they became a group known as the *mu'tazilah* (those who retreat).

(224) The Jahmiyyah, the Jabariyyah;

They are followers of Jahm ibn Safwān¹⁴⁴ al-Tirmidhī, who adopted the doctrine of his shaykh al-Ja'd ibn Dirham¹⁴⁵, who in turn learned it from Ṭālūt, the Jew, who learned it from Labīd ibn al-A'ṣam, who had placed a magic spell on the Prophet ﷺ. This is the doctrine that views the Qur'ān as being created. Also among their views is the doctrine of *jabr* (fatalism), that people are compelled (*majbūr*) in respect to actions and other things. This is why they are associated with al-Jahm and are called al-Jahmiyyah. Al-Jahm learned it from al-Ja'd who lived to see the end of the Umayyad dynasty. He was slain by Khālīd ibn 'Abdullah al-Qasri. Khālīd was giving the sermon on *Eid-ul-Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice) and said: "Sacrifice your animals, O people. May Allah accept your offerings. I am to sacrifice Ja'd ibn Dirham, for he claims that

¹⁴⁴ Abū Maḥraz al-Rāsibī, one of the founders of misguidance and a leader of the Jahmīs, was a man of intelligence and dialectic. He denied the attributes of Allah ﷻ on account of (as he purported) his confirmation of Allah's ﷻ transcendence. He said that the Qur'ān was created and that Allah ﷻ is in all places. He also said that faith is the belief of the heart, even in cases of disbelief. See *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 6/26-27.

¹⁴⁵ He is Mu'addib Marwān, the donkey. He is the first to introduce the heresy that Allah ﷻ did not take Ibrāhīm ؑ as a friend and did not speak to Mūsā ؑ. Al-Madā'inī said: "He was a heretic". Ibn Wahb said to him, 'I believe that you are one of those who are doomed. Were it not for the fact that Allah told us that He has a hand and an eye, we would not have said so.' Not long after, he was crucified." See *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 5/433.

Allah ﷻ has not spoken to Mūsā ؑ and that Ibrāhīm ؑ is not the friend of Allah ﷻ.”

He came down from the pulpit and slaughtered him for being a heretic, the reason for which killing him would be an obligation. Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah have shown appreciation for this. Ibn al-Qayyim said in his *Nūniyah*:

On account of that, Khālid al-Qasri sacrificed Ja'd on the day of the sacrificial offerings.

Every adherent of Sunnah gives thanks for that sacrifice, your goodness be attributed to Allah, my brother and associate.

Jahm was his successor and the doctrine is attributed to him as it became a force by his doings. He combined the doctrine of fatalism with his own doctrines.

Hence, the words of the poet,

I am astonished at a devil who openly called people to the Fire, and has a name derived from jahannam (Hell).

(225) The Qadariyyah;

Such as those who deny *qadar*, namely, the Mu'tazilites. They say that the actions of people are their own creations and are not within the realm of Allah's ﷻ creation or will. This is why they are called the Zoroastrians (*majūs*) of this *Ummah*, because the *majūs* believe in two creators: a creator of good and a creator of evil. The Qadariyah, on the other hand, believe in multiple creators apart from Allah ﷻ.

(226) And others who have gone against the Sunnah and the Jamā'ah (united community), and allied themselves with error.

Referring to those who belong to any other misguided group that opposes the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

(227) We dissociate ourselves from them, and to us, they are astray and evil. And Allah ﷻ is our saviour and helper.

We dissociate ourselves from them and treat them as enemies and hate them for Allah's ﷻ sake, because they are people of misguidance and falsehood. It is obligatory to cease association with them and detest them, and to refute them and their falsehood.

We also dissociate ourselves from those who say that all of the sects fall under the name of Islām and that these matters should be overlooked in the name of freedom of speech and freedom of opinion, and so all of the sects are included in Islām. This is a false belief and it is dangerous to the *Ummah*. Freedom of speech and opinion are restricted by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the way of the predecessors of the *Ummah*. All of the sects that oppose this are in the Fire, except for one sect, and that is the one conforming with what the Messenger of Allah ﷻ and his Companions followed.

People are prone to error. Immaculacy, success, power and strength are in the hands of Allah ﷻ. A person should not feel assured of one's salvation but should rather have hope and fear in Allah ﷻ.

This ends this blessed fragment (on creed) which contains a major part of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah. We ask Allah ﷻ to make it of advantage to us and to reward the author greatly for what he has explained, clarified and written, and for his sincerity with the Muslims. May Allah ﷻ reward him abundantly as well as all of the *imāms* of the Muslims.

Allah ﷻ knows best, and may Allah confer His blessings on, and grant peace to, our Prophet Muḥammad and his Family and Companions.

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