

**(2.22) God’s ascent (*istawā*) and descent (*nuzūl*) are real.**

*God’s ascent (*istawā*) on the Throne, and His descent (*nuzūl*) to the heavens are both real, just as any other attribute and act, knowledge, speech, power, and so on of His. But this does not mean that His ascent and descent are like the ascent and descent of human beings, even though they are real in both cases. What real means in this context, is explained by Ibn Taymīyyah.*

Shaykh al-Islām (Ibn Taymīyyah) was asked about God’s words, “The Merciful ascended (*istawā ‘alā*) the Throne,” and the Prophet’s *ḥadīth*, “Our Lord descends (*yanzilu*) to the lowest heaven every night,”<sup>186a</sup> if this ascent or descent is real or not, and what is meant when it is said that it is real. Does reality here mean that the words are used in the sense they are denoted for, as the scholars of jurisprudence define the term?” And finally what follows from saying that God’s attributes are real? The *shaykh* first praised God and then said:

What we say about God’s ascent and descent is not different from what we say about all the attributes which God has predicated of Himself in His Book or directed His Prophet to predicate of Him. God has called Himself by certain names and predicated of Himself certain attributes. He has called Himself Living, Knowing, Wise, Powerful, Hearing, Seeing, Forgiving, Merciful, and so on, for example. “If you pronounce the word aloud (or say it silently), verily He knows what is secret and what is yet hidden” (20:7); “They do not compass ought of His knowledge except what He wills. His Throne does extend over the heavens and the earth” (2: 255); “God is He Who gives all sustenance, Lord of Power, Steadfast” (51:58); “With power and skill did We construct the firmament” (51:47); “My mercy extends to all things” (7:156); “God is well pleased with them, and they with God” (5:122); “The wrath of God is upon them, and He has cursed them” (48:6); “And to Moses God spoke directly (4:164); “The word of your Lord does

find its fulfillment in truth and in justice” (6:115); “I am with you: I hear and see (everything)” (20:46); “God is One Who hears and sees” (4:134); “God said “Iblīs! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with my hands?” (38:75); “He will love them, and they will love Him” (5:57); “Will they wait until God comes to them in canopies of clouds (with) angels (in His train)?” (2:210); “Your Lord will come and the angels rank upon rank” (89:22); and so on. What we say with regard to any of these attributes we say with regard to others.

The Elders and the *a’immah* of this *ummah* believe that we should predicate of God what He has predicated of Himself or what His Prophet has predicated of Him, without changing it in any way (*tahrīf*), or draining it of content (*ta’īl*) or saying anything about its modality (*tayif*) or imagining it on the pattern of anything else (*tamthīl*). It is not correct to negate any attributes of God which He has predicated of Himself, or to liken them to the attributes of the creatures. As He has Himself said, “there is nothing like Him, though He is Hearing and Seeing” (42:11). There is absolutely nothing like Him either in His essence or in His attributes or in His acts...

All those who affirm God’s attributes say that He is really Living, really Knowing, really Powerful, really Hearing, really Seeing, really Willing and really Speaking. Even the Mu’tazilah, who negate God’s attributes, say that God is really speaking, that He is really knowing, and really powerful, as Muslims in general believe. In fact some, like Abū Al-‘Abbās An-Nāshī<sup>186b</sup> have even said that these attributes are real only in the case of God, whereas in the case of created beings they are no more than metaphors. Their majority is in full agreement on this point with all the theologians who affirm God’s attributes: the Ash‘arīs, the Kullābīs, the Karmathians, the Salīmīs, as well as the followers of the four *a’immah*, the Ḥanafīs, the Mālīkīs, the Shāfi‘īs and the Ḥanbalīs, and the *ahl al-ḥadīth* and the Ṣūfīs, since they say that these attributes are used for God in the real sense, even though they are

also used in the real sense for created beings. They affirm that God does have knowledge, power, hearing, and seeing in the real sense.

Only the esoterics like the Karmathians and the Ismā‘īlīs, or the philosophers who negate divine attributes deny that God has these ... in reality. They say that He is neither living nor not-living, neither knowing nor not-knowing, neither powerful nor not-powerful, neither existing nor not-existing. They and others like them deny that God can have these attributes in the real sense. Some of them even say that these names are to be used only for created beings, not for God, neither really nor metaphorically...

If God’s names and attributes were metaphors such that they should be negated if they are applied to Him without qualification, He cannot be said to be Living, Knowing, Powerful, Hearing or Seeing, or that He loves people and is loved by them, or that He is established on the Throne, and so on. But we definitely know that Islam does not allow negating the names and attributes which God has affirmed of Himself; that would amount to negating the Creator Himself and to equating Him with non-being...

Those who deny that God really has these names and attributes do so either because they do not know what is meant by the word “really” or because they deny or negate what belongs to God, the Lord of the Universe. They think that to predicate them of God is to liken the Creator with the created. But this inference is not correct, for God exists in reality and man exists in reality, but it does not mean that one existence is like another existence. Again, God does have an essence (*dhāt*) in reality and man does have an essence (*dhāt*) in reality but it does not mean that the divine Essence is like the human essence.

Similarly, God has knowledge, hearing and sight in reality, and man has knowledge, hearing and sight, but God’s knowledge, hearing, and sight are not like man’s knowledge, hearing and sight. God speaks in reality, and men speak in reality, but God’s speech is not like human speech. God ascends the Throne in reality, and men ascend a boat in reality, but God’s ascension is not like men’s

ascension, for God does not depend on any thing or need anything, He is completely self-sufficient...

The question has been raised as to what is meant by saying that someone has an attribute in reality. First of all, it means that one uses the attribute in the sense it was first coined to convey. However, it may also mean that it is used in the sense in which it is now commonly used. In jurisprudence the terms “in reality” or “metaphorically” are employed to qualify either the use of a word or an idea; however they are much more common in the context of the former. However, it is not the case that the attributes and the names in question when used without qualification refer to created beings alone, and to God only when they are ascribed to Him. They may refer to God or to created beings when they are ascribed to the one or the other. Knowledge, for example, is sometimes used unqualifiedly, and sometimes in relation to man, as in this Qur’ānic verse: “There is no god but He: that is the witness of God, His angels, and those endued with knowledge standing firm on justice” (3:18), and sometimes in relation to God, as in this verse: “They do not compass aught of His knowledge except as He wills” (2:255). When knowledge is ascribed to created beings, it cannot be applied in that sense to the Creator, for the knowledge of created beings is not like the knowledge of the Creator. Similarly, when it is ascribed to the Creator as in the verse, “He has sent it from His (own) knowledge” (4:166), it cannot be predicated in that sense of created beings, for His knowledge is not like their knowledge.

But when we say knowledge and do not qualify it, it may be divided into the eternal knowledge and the contingent knowledge, for the word knowledge is used in the real sense in both cases. Similarly, existence, when unqualified, may be divided into eternal existence and contingent existence, or necessary existence and possible existence. Likewise, *istawā* when unqualified, may be divided into the *istawā* of the Creator and the *istawā* of the created. The same is true of will, mercy, and love; they may be divided into

the will, mercy, and love of God, and the will, mercy and love of man.

Hence, whoever thinks that we can characterize as real only the human attributes which are created and contingent but not the divine attributes is ignorant. Divine attributes are certainly perfect and worthy of their names. Human attributes do not bear any comparison with them, nor does human essence bear any comparison with the divine essence. How then can one say that human attributes are real or that men are really knowing, hearing and seeing while God's attributes are not real and that they are predicated of Him only metaphorically?

Some people say that these words are equivocal since they are more perfectly realized in one case than in the other. Existence, for example, should be better predicated, they say, of the Necessary Being than the possible, just as whiteness should be better predicated of snow than ivory. The same is true of the other attributes and names of God. He deserves them in a sense no creature does, even though they have something in common with Him. It is this common element which is denoted, they say, by these terms when they are used without referring specifically to anyone. When they are referred to anyone, they are qualified with that reference. When we say existence, quiddity, or essence, they refer to God as well as to created beings, though God deserves them more than the others. However, in either case they are used in the real sense. When we qualify them and say the existence of God or His quiddity or His essence they are specific to God, and the created objects do not share with them, and in that specific sense they are real for God alone. On the other hand, when we say the existence of created objects, their quiddity, or essence, they are specific to them and are also real for them, for example when we say the existence of man, or his quiddity, or his essence, God does not share into them; they are true of man only.

Ignorant people think that the term real is used only in the context of created beings. This is wrong from the points of view of

reason and revelation as well as language. We know as certain that between two existing beings there is something in common as well as something not in common which distinguishes one from the other. The word that denotes what is in common does not denote what is distinctive. It is part of the religion of Islam that God has good names, even though He has called His creatures by them. For example, He has called men hearing, seeing, living, loving, merciful, mighty, king, protector, knowing, wise, generous, etc. But everyone knows that by sharing in these common names, God does not become like His creatures; it only means that there is something in common between Him and His creatures; to be sure, what distinguishes Him from them is far more weighty and important than what He has in common with them.

So far as languages are concerned, this is recognized in every language whether spoken by the Arabs, Romans, Persians, or Turks, Berbers, or any other people. They are all aware that God is more worthy of the names Powerful and Actor than any other being, that He deserves more than any human being the title Mighty, and that He has that quality in reality. The same is true of the other beautiful names....

It is only fools who are deceived by the statement of the theologians that the Arabs coined the word *istawā* for man's mounting on a chair or a boat, or for the resting of the Ark on the mount Jūdī, or for the settling down of any other created object on something else. They have similarly claimed that people have coined the words hearing, seeing, and speaking for those who have eyeballs or brows, ears and lips. They have also said that people have coined the words knowledge, will, and mercy for those who have a certain piece of flesh, the heart. This is all nonsense. The Arabs coined for humans only what they ascribed to them. When they said men hear, see, speak, know, will, love, and have mercy, what was specific to men was only applicable to them. But when they said God hears, sees, speaks, knows, wills, loves, and has mercy, they referred to what was specific to God and had nothing

of what was specific to any created being. Hence those who think that *istawā* is real only when it represents some characteristics of created beings, even though God has used it in His own context, they must be called ignorant, in the light of language, as well as the distinction between reality and metaphor.

[*Fatāwā* 5:194-208]

**(2.23) The interpretation of *istawā* and *nuzūl* on symbolic lines is wrong.**

The Mu‘tazilah, the Jahmīyyah and the Harūrīyyah<sup>187</sup> interpret the verse, “The Merciful ascended the Throne” (20:5) to mean that He took control of things, managed the affairs and ruled over the world, and that He is not at one place but everywhere. These people deny that God is on His Throne as the people of the truth believe, and understand *istawā* in the sense of rule. But if what they say is true there would have been no reason to mention the Throne outside the earth, as God could very well rule over the world from the earth; He has power over everything...

The view which these people hold is wrong for various reasons. First, none of the Elders from among the Companions or their Successors ever interpreted *istawā* on these lines. There is nothing to that effect in any of the works that have recorded their sayings. Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Ash‘arī in his book, *Maqalāt, Maqaltāt al-Islāmiyyīn* well as *Al-Ibānah* observes that the first people to interpret symbolically were the Jahmīyyah and the Mu‘tazilah. Second, what *istawā* means was very well known to people. That is why when Rabī‘ah Ibn Abī Abdur-Raḥmān<sup>187a</sup> and Mālik Ibn Anas were asked about the meaning of the verse, “the Merciful ascended (*istawā*) the Throne” they said *istawā* is known, but its mode is unknown. However, we have to believe in it, remembering that questioning about it is *bid‘ah* unjustified innovation. Obviously they did not mean to say that they only knew what

*istawā* meant in language, and not what it meant in the verse, for they were specifically asked about its meaning in the verse whether it was in any way like the *istawā* of the people.

Third, since the meaning of *istawā* was known in the language in which the Qur'ān was revealed, what it meant in the Qur'ān was also known. Fourth, if the meaning of *istawā* in the verse were unknown, Rabī'ah and Mālik would have had no reason to say that its nature was unknown, for one denies knowing the nature of a thing only when one is acquainted with the thing itself. We do say, for example, we believe in God and recognize Him, but we do not know His nature.

Fifth, if *istawā* is taken in the sense of authority, rule or the like, it would extend to everything in the world as does God's Lordship. The Throne, to be sure, is the greatest object that God has created, but by saying the Lord of the Throne we do not thereby deny that He is the Lord of other things. In the Qur'ān we have, "Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne?" (23:86). Something similar we have in the supplication which the Prophet has taught us to say at the time of affliction.<sup>188</sup> If *istawā* is interpreted to mean 'taking control of' then one would be perfectly justified in saying that God *istawā 'alā* ascended the heavens or the air or the waters or the earth or anything else, and not only the Throne, for God's control extends to everything. The *ummah* is agreed that we should connect *istawā* only with the Throne and not with anything else, which this interpretation allows. We therefore conclude that *istawā* must mean something which can only be related to the Throne, and not to other objects.

Sixth, God has said that "He created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then ascended the Throne" (7:54), and that "His Throne was on the waters" (11:7) before their creation. Al-Bukhārī has recorded a *ḥadīth* on the authority of 'Imrān Ibn Ḥaṣīn that the Prophet said, "God was there while there was nothing else, and His



Throne was on the waters. He wrote everything in the Register (*adh-dhikr*), and then created the heavens and the earth.”<sup>189</sup> This means that He created the Throne before the heavens and the earth, and that He had been there on it since then. Hence *istawā* on the Throne cannot be in the same sense as *istawā* on any other thing, it must be in some sense specific to the Throne.

Seventh, there is no precedent in language to show that *istawā* means (*istawā ‘alā*), to take control of. Those who take this meaning cite in their support the famous couplet

Then Bishr took control of (*istawā ‘alā*) Iraq,  
Without using the sword or shedding any blood.

First, the Arabic origin of this couplet is not established; more than one scholar of language has denied it and said that it has been simply fabricated, and is not at all a part of genuine Arabic literature. Everyone knows that if you cite a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, you must first ascertain its authenticity. How then can one cite a couplet whose author is not known and whose genuineness is disputed? Abū Al-Muzaffar<sup>190</sup> has mentioned in his book, *Al-Ifsāḥ* that Al-Khalīl<sup>191</sup> was asked whether he knew any instance of *istawā* meaning *istawalā*, taking control of. His answer was that it was unknown to the Arabs, and was not to be found in their language. Khalīl, as we know, is an authority (*imām*) on language. His remark that it was unknown to the Arabs refutes the interpretation of *istawā* in the sense of *istawalā*)

Eighth, a number of philologists are of the opinion that one should not use *istawā* in the sense of *istawā ‘alā* except in the case of one who did not have control over any thing in the beginning and only got control over it afterwards. Obviously God is never thwarted by anything, not even by the Throne. Hence *istawā* cannot be used in the sense of *istawā ‘alā* for God. If this is accepted then *istawā* in the phrase, “Bishr *istawā* over Iraq” should be understood as a metaphor. And as a rule no sentence should be interpreted metaphorically unless there is some clue there that

indicates that the speaker means it. This is all the more true of ambiguous words. As for the Qur'ānic verse, there is no indication in it that may suggest that *istawā* should be understood in the sense of *istawā 'alā*....

Ninth, if at all it is established that the said couplet is really a part of Arabic literature, it would not mean that it has come down from the ancient Arabs. Even if that is granted, it would not mean that *istawā* in that sense was also a part of the prophetic language. If the Prophet at all used *istawā*, it should be taken in the sense in which the Qur'ān and the Sunnah commonly use it. It is in this sense rather than any other that *istawā* in the verse must be taken.

[*Fatāwā* 5:143-47]

#### **(2.24) The meaning of the words “God is with us.”**

*God is with us in reality, and he is on the Throne in reality. Discussion of the point, and reconciliation between His being with us and being above the world.*

God is really with (*ma'a*) us, and He is also really on the Throne. He has Himself put the two together, “He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then ascended the Throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what rises up to it. He is with you wheresoever you may be. And God is aware with all that you do” (57:4). Thus has He informed that He is above the Throne, that He knows everything, and that He is with us wherever we are. In the same vein the Prophet has said in a famous *ḥadīth*, “God is above everything, and He knows how you are doing.”<sup>192</sup>

When the word *ma'a* “with,” is used without any qualification, it conveys just the sense of co-existence without implying that one thing touches the other, or that it is on the right or the left. But when it is qualified in some sense say, it conveys co-existence in that sense. We say, “We were walking and the moon or the star

was with us. We sometimes say, “A is with us” when we have it with us even though it is on our head. Hence God is with His creatures in reality, and He is on His Throne in reality.

*Ma‘īyyah* (“being with”) may however, mean different things in different contexts. When God says, “He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it...He is with (*ma‘a*) you wheresoever you may be, what He means by *ma‘īyyah* here is that He knows you, sees you, looks after you, and is aware of you. This is what the Elders mean by saying, “He is with us with His knowledge.” And this is what the words of the Qur’ān apparently as well as in reality mean.

The same is true of the words, “There is not a secret consultation between three but He makes the fourth of them, nor between five but He makes the sixth, nor between fewer nor more but He is with them wheresoever they be” (58:7). And when the Prophet said to his companion in the cave “Have no fear, for God is with (*ma‘a*) us” (9:40), it was also true at face value. The context shows that *ma‘īyyah* here is *ma‘īyyah* of knowledge, help and support. Similarly in the words, “Verily God is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good” (16:128) and in the words “Fear not; for I am with you: I hear and see” (20:46) *ma‘īyyah* is to be taken conveying the sense of support and protection.

We often observe that when someone who scares a child approaches him, the child gets frightened and begins to weep. His father, looking at him from the top of the roof consoles him saying, “Don’t fear; I am with you, I am here.” He reminds the child of his being with (*ma‘īyyah*) him, which is sufficient to protect him from anything unpleasant. The father, as you see, distinguishes between “being with” the child and its consequence. Often the consequence is included in the meaning of *ma‘īyyah* thus causing variation in its meaning.

*Ma‘īyyah* has been mentioned in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah at various places, and at every place it conveys something different.

However, whether you say that its meaning varies from place to place, or that it has something common in all its uses, even though it has something distinctive on every occasion, it does not mean that God is there in touch with a created being, so that one might charge us that we have diverged from the face meaning of the word.

[*Fatāwā* 5:103-104]

### **(2.25) God’s being with us and being above the world.**

*The Elders believe that God is above the heavens on His Throne, and that He is different from the world and the world is different from Him. On the other hand, they also believe that He is with every human being with His knowledge, and with prophets and friends with His help, support and all-sufficient might. He is also there close to the latter people, responding to their call and granting their prayers.*

At various places in His book as well as through His prophets, God has made it repeatedly clear that He is above the world and that He is established on His Throne. On the former point, there are a number of verses in the Qur’ān, which, according to a great scholar of the Shāfi‘ī school, are more than a thousand; they all underline that God is above the world, as He is above the human beings... On the other hand, He has also referred to His presence (*ma‘īyyah*) and nearness (*qurb*). Presence is of two kinds, general and particular. The first is referred in the verse “He is with you wheresoever you are” (57:4), and the second is referred in the verse, “Verily God is with those who avoid evil, and those who do good” (16:128). As for nearness, it is referred to in the verses, “I am close (to you)” (2:186); “We are nearer to you than your jugular vein” (50:16); and, “We are nearer to him than you” (56:85).

People are divided into four groups on the question as to what these verses mean. The Jahmīyyah, who negate God's attributes, say that He is neither in the world nor outside it, neither above it nor beneath it. They neither affirm His transcendence (*'ulū*) nor His aboveness (*fawqīyyah*); they explain away every verse and declare God to be unknowable. Every group that has come out with unorthodox ideas cites one text or the other; this is true of the Khawārij, the Shi'īs, the Qadarīyyah, the Rāfiḍah and the Murji'ah. But the Jahmīyyah have no texts to cite, and no word in support of their negation of God's attributes...

The second group says that God Himself is present everywhere. We have in this group the Najjārīs and many from the Jahmīs, whether devotees, mystics or common people. They say that God is one with the world. Like the people of the Unity of Being, who say that Being is one, they believe in God's indwelling (*ḥulūl*) and union (*ittiḥād*) with the world. They argue from the verses which speak of God's presence and His nearness, and explain away those which speak of His transcendence and His ascension on the Throne. But the verses which they cite in their support go against them, for God's presence (*ma'īyyah*) has mostly been associated with the prophets or the saints, while according to them He is everywhere.

There are many verses that refute their view, for example, "Everyone in the heaven and the earth glorifies God, and He is Dominant and Wise" (57:1). Since everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God, and the glorifier has to be other than the Glorified, the world is other than God. The next verse says, "The kingdom of the heavens is His" (57:2), which simply means that God is the ruler of the world. The third verse says, "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He knows everything" (57:3). Referring to this verse, the Prophet said in a *ḥadīth* which is authentic, "You are the First, there is nothing before You; You are the Last, there is nothing after You; You are the Manifest and Dominant (*Aẓ-Zāhīr*), there is nothing above

You; You are the Hidden, there is nothing below You.”<sup>193</sup> That is to say, if He is the First, there be something there that comes after Him; if He is the Last there must be something there that goes before Him; if He is the Manifest and Dominant and nothing is above Him, there must be something there He dominates; and if He is Hidden and nothing is below Him, there must be something there which is not below Him....

*Ma'īyyah* (being with) does not imply intermingling or intermixing, nor does the word *qurb* imply that. Only the exponents of *ḥulūl* say that God dwells in the jugular vein, as He dwells in everything. This is sheer blasphemy and ignorance.

The third group says that God is on the Throne as well as everywhere. They claim that they believe in both kinds of texts, without interpreting any one on symbolic lines. Al-Ash'arī has mentioned this view and its exponents in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*. It is found in the writings of the Salīmīyyah and the Šūfīs, as it is found in the works of Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī,<sup>194</sup> Ibn Barrajan<sup>195</sup> and others.... In comparison to the others, this group is closer to the texts of the Qur'ān and less opposed to them. Whereas the first group does not hold to any text and opposes all, and the second ignores many clear and unequivocal texts and holds only to a few ambiguous ones, the third group claims that they hold to all the texts; however, they are not quite correct.

Whoever says that God Himself is present at every place opposes the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, the consensus of the Elders of the *ummah*, and other *a'immah*... He also goes against the knowledge God has endowed man with, against reason, and many other bits of evidence. The third group, on the other hand, is also guilty of contradictory statements. On the one hand, they affirm that God is above the Throne; on the other, they assert that the relation of the Throne with God is like that of the heart of a Gnostic with God. This is the view of Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī and others. But it is obvious that the heart of the gnostic has nothing of God except knowledge and faith in Him and what follows from

them. So when they liken the Throne with the heart of the Gnostic they contradict their own statement that God is above the Throne. Moreover, their saying that God Himself enters the heart of the Gnostic amounts to the belief in His indwelling (*ḥulūl*).

A section of the Ṣūfīs believes in *ḥulūl*. The author of the *Manāzil as-Sā'irīn*<sup>196</sup> is one of them; what he has said in the chapter of *Tawḥīd* at the end of his book is a kind of *ḥulūl*. Great Ṣūfīs have been very cautious on such points. For example, once when Junayd was asked about *tawḥīd*, he replied, “It is the separation of the contingent from the Eternal.” He thus made it clear that a strict monotheist has to differentiate between the Eternal Creator and the contingent world; he should never mix one with the other. But what these people say about the gnostics is similar to what the Christians say about Christ and the Shi‘īs about their imāms. Many Ṣūfīs who believe in *ḥulūl* and follow Satan object to what Junayd and other great gnostics who strictly adhere to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah have said in denying *ḥulūl* and affirming God’s commands and prohibitions. They say that the latter have not attained the knowledge of reality as they and other *ḥulūlīs* and disciples of Iblīs have attained.

The fourth group consists of the *Salaf* and the leaders of the *ummah* - leaders in knowledge as well as religion, scholars and devotees. They believe in whatever there is in the Qur’ān and Sunnah and affirm it, without altering, in the least, the meaning of any word. They say that God is above the heavens, that He is on His Throne, that He exists separately from the world He has created, and that the world exists separately from Him. They also affirm that He is present for all His creatures with His knowledge, and to His prophets and friends with His help and support and is sufficient for them, He is close to them and responds their call.

As evidence one can cite verse 58:7, which speaks of God’s presence at all secret consultations, as well as the words of the Prophet: “Lord! You are (our) Companion during the journey, and (behind us) over our family.”<sup>197</sup> Hence God is with the traveler on

his journey and with his family at his home. But this does not mean that His being touches the beings of the others. “Being with” in this context means the same as in the verse, “Muḥammad, the messenger of God and those who are with (*ma‘ā*) him” (48:29). that is, they are with him in faith. It is certainly not the case that their beings are in his being. They are only his companions. The same meaning is intended in the verse, “They are with the Believers” (4:146), that is to say they are one with the Believers in faith and in supporting each other. God knows men and is with them wherever they are. His knowledge of them is a consequence of His presence with them. A woman has said of her husband, “My husband has a long scabbard (*tawīl an-najād*), a heap of ashes (*‘azīm ar-ramād*), and lives in a house close to anyone who visits.” All she has said is true, for she refers to the ideas which are associated with these things: He is tall in stature, generous in offering meat cooked on fire, and quick to entertain any visitor.

[*Fatāwā* 5: 226-232]

### (2.26) Nearness (*Qurb*)

*The meaning of man coming near to God and God coming near to man explained.*

Man draws near to God through knowledge and the works that he performs. This comes out in the following verses and *ḥadīth*; “Bow down in adoration and bring yourself closer (to God)” (96:19). “Fear God and find out means to reach Him” (5:35). “They are those who call (God) and find out means to their Lord” (17:57). “If he is among the nearest ones...(56:88). The same is meant by the words the Prophet has quoted of God, “When one comes a span closer to Me, I go an arms length closer to him,<sup>198</sup> or the words, “the best that My servant can do to come close to Me is to perform the duties I have obligated on him. And he comes closer to Me through supererogatory acts, till I love him...”<sup>199</sup> The same is



implied in the word *qurbān* in the verse, “When they two offered a sacrifice (*qurbān*), We accepted only from one of them,” (5:27), and in the verse, “till he brings a sacrifice (*qurbān*) which the fire consumes” (3:183).

*Qurb* implies movement on the part of man from one state to another, but this may or may not be accompanied by movement of his soul or his self. If it moves at all, it may move towards either the divine Self or any other thing. If it moves towards God, the question remains as to what God’s coming close to man, drawing near or coming, means. It may mean either a reward from Him bestowed on man for his coming close to God, or that He takes the initiative and comes down to the nearest heaven. The first line is taken by the philosophers. They say that the soul is neither inside the body nor outside it; nor can we say that it moves or does not move. Some people in the *ummah* follow them on this point. They say that one comes near to God in the sense that one purifies oneself from evils and vices and adorns oneself with noble virtues, so that one comes close to God in the sense of imitating Him in some inner qualities. They say that philosophy is to imitate God as much as is possible. As for the movement of the soul, they simply rule it out. They explain the nearness (*qurb*) of the angels along the same lines.

They are correct in what they say about the purification of the soul from evils and its embellishment with virtues. But they are wrong in denying that it may mean something more. The most that they allow is that you visit objects which radiate a blessing from God, such as mosques, heavens, and saints. To them the ascension (*mi’rāj*) of the Prophet means nothing more than the revelation of truths about the universe. This is the view of Ibn Sīnā and those who follow him, like ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt<sup>200</sup> and Ibn Al-Khatīb,<sup>201</sup> as the latter has stated in his *Al-Maṭālib al-‘Alīyyah*.

The second view on this issue is taken by the theologians. They claim that God is not on the Throne, that the Throne and the Footstool stand with Him in the same relation, that He is neither

inside the world nor outside it. They allow for only the movement of human beings and the angels; they say that the statement that a person comes nearer to God means nothing more than that he moves from one holy place to another which God has blessed: the heavens, the bearers of the Throne, and Paradise. They interpret the ascension of the Prophet on similar lines. Thus they are one with the philosophers with regard to the movement of the body to blessed places and offering prayers there. They only differ with regard to the movement of the soul. The first group affirms the movement of the soul in the sense of a transformation of state, not of movement from one place to another. The second group agrees that both body and the soul can move to places where one may attain enlightenment on God, such as the heavens, mosques, saints of God, and the places that manifest God's names and signs.

The third view is held by the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. They say that God is on the Throne, that the bearers of the Throne are closer to Him than anyone else, that the angels of the farthest heaven are closer to Him than those of the second heaven, that in ascending to the heavens the Prophet went nearer to His Lord, that his ascension was to God and not to any of His created beings, and that the soul of a person praying to God draws near to Him while he prostrates himself (on the ground) even though he has put his head on the ground. This is the purport of various verses of the Qur'ān.

Does God come closer to man as a result of the latter going near to Him, just as a fixed object such as a house, a wall or a hill comes nearer to a person who goes towards it? Or does it involve some action on the part of God? Does He also move towards a person when the latter moves towards Him, one action in response to the other? On this question there are two views among the Ahl as-Sunnah corresponding to the two positions that they have among themselves on the issue of the active attributes of God like descent (*nuzūl*)...

Tradition says that God comes near to His chosen people and appears to their hearts. For example, Aḥmad has noted in his *Kitāb Az-Zuhd*<sup>202</sup> that Moses invoked God and said, “Lord, where can I reach you? The answer was, “Near weak souls who humble themselves for Me. I come a span nearer to them every day; otherwise, they would have burned.” Philosophers and the Jahmīyyah have taken this “nearness” in the sense of God’s manifestation or appearance to the heart of His servants. They understand “coming close” as imagery.

The philosophers do not believe in the movement of the soul; the Jahmīyyah admit that it does move towards a higher place, and the Ahl as-Sunnah affirm God’s appearance and manifestation as well as man’s coming near to God. However, on the issue of God coming near to man they have two different views, which I have discussed elsewhere. Theologians who negate God’s attributes would interpret His coming and descent in the sense of manifestation and appearance to His servant when the veils on the latter’s eyes that prevent him from seeing God are removed. His case is like that of a blind man who regains his sight, and on seeing the sun and the moon says, “The sun and the moon have come to me.” This is the view of the philosophers, the Mu‘tazilah, and the Asha‘irah who negate divine attributes. However, the Asha‘irah, as against the Mu‘tazilah, affirm the Beatific Vision, though there are people among them who come very close to the Mu‘tazilah in what they say.

According to the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah whether belonging to the *Salaf*, the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, or the people of different disciplines, jurists, Ṣūfīs, theologians or common men, God’s descent or coming may happen as a result of man’s moving, approaching, or coming near to Him. But it is certainly more than enlightenment on the part of man, for enlightenment is only a kind of knowledge, whereas for them it is knowledge as well as action. The Asha‘irah and other like-minded theologians do not deny movement as such on the part of man; that is a reality. What they

deny is man's movement towards God, as we have said earlier. Some of them have likened the coming of God to the coming of what is certain in the verse, "Serve your Lord until there comes to you that which is certain" (15:99), that is to say, death and things which will follow it.

[*Fatāwā* 6:5-91]

### (2.27) Beatific Vision

*The Salaf believe that the Faithful will see God in the next life, though no one has ever seen or shall ever see Him in this life. Only some Ṣūfīs claim that they have seen God with their own eyes in this life. But this is not correct; what they see is something inside themselves and not someone out there.*

(a) The *Salaf* and the *a'immaḥ* of the *ummah* are agreed that the Believers will see God with their eyes in the next life, but no one can see Him with his or her eyes in this life. They differ only with regard to the Prophet, whether he ever saw Him or not. In a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* he is reported to have said, "None of you will ever see God before his death."<sup>203</sup> Those who say that saints (*awliyā'*) and others may see God with their eyes in this world are mistaken; they go against the verdict of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the *ummah*. Some have even claimed superiority over Moses. Such people shall be asked to repent. If they do, they will be left alone, otherwise they will be killed. [*Fatāwā* 6:512]

(b) This is a place where a number of Ṣūfīs have gone wrong. They actually see something in their heart, but claim that it is out there. Some of the earlier as well as later Ṣūfīs have claimed that they see God with their eyes. What actually happens is that when their heart is occupied with knowledge, *dhikr*, and love, they are lost in the vision they have in their heart and forget everything else. They attain self-annihilation, and begin to think that they actually see God with their eyes, though what they see is nothing

out there but what is only in their hearts. They are just led to think that they see God with their eyes out there....

Some of them have said that Moses saw God with his eyes, that the mountain veiled him at first, but later on when God sent it crumbling into pieces he was able to see Him. This is found in the writings of Abū Ṭālib (Al-Makkī) and the like. Others identify the seer with the seen (God); they talk of union and say that Moses forgot himself so completely that the seer became one with the Seen. Hence, to them Moses did not see God, rather God saw Himself in Himself. They claim the same for themselves.

The claim of union or indwelling (*ḥulūl*) is wrong. To those who believe in it, it is only a matter of inner experience of the heart rather than something existing out there, and amounts to what the Christians believe about Christ. They do not say that anyone has seen the unseen Divinity appearing in a human body.

Such claims are quite common in the writings of the Ṣūfīs. They experience many things in the heart and wrongly imagine that they happen out there. A similar mistake is committed by the philosophers and various other thinkers when they first form in their minds ideas of things, like universals and immaterial realities, and then imagine that they exist out there, whereas the fact is that they exist only in their minds. That is why Abū Al-Qāsim As-Suhaylī<sup>204</sup> and others have sought refuge in God from the ratiocination of the philosophers and the imagination of the Ṣūfīs as their writings are full of contradictory statements.

Ṣūfīs like Ibn ‘Arabī and others who combine erroneous philosophical ideas with mystical fancies are farthest removed from truth. That is why Junayd, the leader of the Ṣūfī community, a true imām and one who was fully aware of the experiences Ṣūfīs have, said that *tawḥīd* is to separate the Eternal from the contingent.<sup>205</sup> He clearly distinguished between the contingent and the Eternal so that people should not fall into the error of *ḥulūl* or union (*itihād*). When heretics like Ibn ‘Arabī appeared, they objected to the words of Junayd since they contradicted their

doctrines. Junayd and Ṣūfīs like him are exponents of truth (*a'immaḥ al-hudā*), and those who oppose them are grossly mistaken. Many Ṣūfīs besides Junayd have also discussed things which they experience in their *sulūk* or the lights and other things which they perceive, and have warned against identifying these things with God. [*Fatāwā* 5:489-921]

### **(2.28) Did the Prophet see God in his lifetime?**

*The correct view on this issue is that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) did not see his Lord with his eyes; he only saw Him with his heart.*

The words which Ibn Abbās is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of *ḥadīth* to have said are, “Muḥammad saw his Lord with his heart twice.”<sup>206</sup> ‘Ā’ishah, on the other hand, is reported to have denied that he ever saw the Lord.<sup>207</sup> Some of the scholars who have discussed these *aḥādīth* have tried to reconcile one with the other. They say that ‘Ā’ishah only denied that the Prophet saw the Lord with his eyes; Ibn ‘Abbās affirmed, on the other hand, that he saw Him with his heart. The words that are reported of Ibn Abbās are qualified as well as unqualified. He sometimes says, “Muḥammad saw his Lord,” and sometimes, “Muḥammad saw Him.”<sup>208</sup> But he has not been reported to have ever said in so many words that he saw God with his eyes.

Likewise, Imām Aḥmad sometimes only affirms that the Prophet saw God without specifying its nature, and sometimes that he saw God by his heart. No one has mentioned that he heard him saying that the Prophet saw God with his eyes. A section of his followers who heard him affirming the vision without specifying its nature took it in the sense of visual perception, just as some people who heard Ibn Abbās affirming the vision without specifying its mode took it in the sense of seeing with the eyes.

There is nothing to prove that the Prophet saw God with his eyes. No companion had ever said that, nor is there anything in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah which may suggest it. In fact, authentic texts negate rather than affirm it, for example, Muslim has reported that Abū Dharr asked the Prophet, "Did you see the Lord?" and he replied, "Light! How could I have seen Him."<sup>209</sup> In the Qur'ān we have, "Glory to (God) Who did take His servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless in order that We might show him some of Our signs" (17:1). Had the Prophet seen God with his eyes on that occasion, God would have mentioned it at this place. In another verse we have, "Would you then dispute with him regarding what he saw... Indeed he did see the greatest signs of his Lord" (53:12,18). Had he seen God with his eyes, this was the place to mention it.

Both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim record in their *Ṣaḥīḥs* that, in commenting on the verse, "We granted the vision which We showed you just as a trial for men" (17:60), Ibn Abbās said, "It was a vision the Prophet saw with his eyes the night he was taken on a journey."<sup>210</sup> But it was a vision of the signs; for when he informed people what he saw with his eyes the night of Ascension, they wondered at it; some did testify to it but others belied it. The Prophet did not say that he saw God with his eyes, nor is there anything to that effect in the authentic reports of the Ascension recorded in *ḥadīth* collections. Had it really happened it would surely have been mentioned in these reports.

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah clearly say, and the consensus of the Elders of the *ummah* definitely states, that no one can see the Lord with his eyes in this life. Only a few people have made an exception in the case of the Prophet. As for seeing God in the next life, there is complete agreement that the Believers will see Him with their eyes just as they see the sun and the moon.<sup>211</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 6:509-10]

**(2.29) The hand of God**

*The Elders believe that the  $zāhirī$ , the apparent meanings of the verses that refer to the hand, sight and hearing of God, is what they really mean. However, this apparent meaning is one that behooves God, the Almighty, and not what behooves created beings. Commenting on this position, Ibn Taymīyyah has explained the meaning of the words,  $az-zāhir$ ,  $al-ḥaqīqah$  (the real meaning), and  $al-majaz$  (the metaphorical meaning), and defended the belief of the Elders regarding God's hands.*

The belief of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* who are the Elders of the first three centuries, as well as of those who follow their line from among the people of later ages, is that these *aḥādīth* should be taken at face value, should be believed and accepted, and should not be interpreted in a way that leads either to their negation (*ta'ṭīl*) or literalization (*takyīf*) amounting to anthropomorphization (*tamthīl*). A number of writers including Al-Khaṭṭābī<sup>211a</sup> have noted that the Elders are agreed that these verses are to be taken on their face (*zāhir*) without saying anything about the nature (*kayfīyyah*) of the things they assert or anthropomorphizing them. The position one takes on God's attributes is subject to the position one takes on His essence; the former follows from the latter and is in agreement with it. Since to affirm the essence of God is to affirm an existence and not merely a quality, to affirm His attribute is to affirm some thing existing and not merely a quality. This is why we say that God has a hand and that He has hearing; we never say that hand means power or that hearing means knowing.

Some people claim that the Elders did not believe that the *zāhir* of these verses was meant. This claim is wrong in words as well as meaning, or at least in meaning if not in words. *zāhir* is an ambiguous term, it may be taken in two different senses. It may be said that in *zāhir* the hand of God is an organ like a human organ,



that His anger entails the boiling of His blood for taking revenge, that His being in the heavens is like water being in a pot. In this view of *ẓāhir*, if any one says that these meanings are not intended, that God's attributes should not be understood in this way, that verses and *aḥādīth* should not be taken on their *ẓāhir* in this sense, he is right. The Ahl as-Sunnah are one on the point that there is nothing like God in His essence, attributes and acts. In fact, most of the Ahl as-Sunnah whether they belong to our school or not, call infidels those who anthropomorphize God (*al-mushabbīyyah*) or attribute to Him the qualities of a physical body (*al-mujassimah*) Whoever takes *ẓāhir* in this sense is wrong. He is even worse, for he is saying that such is the *ẓāhir* of the verses and the *aḥādīth* on divine attributes. He is certainly not correct in attributing this to the Elders.

The *ẓāhir* of a passage is what comes to the mind of an unbiased person knowing the language of the passage when he reads it. Sometimes this *ẓāhir* meaning comes to him simply from the passage itself and sometimes from its context. The meanings which have been noted above and which are inadmissible for God never come to the mind of any believer. For him, the hand of God is just like His knowledge, His power or His essence... No one from the Ahl-as-Sunnah has said that when we say that God has knowledge, power, sight and hearing their *ẓāhir* is not meant, or ever understood these attributes on the pattern of our attributes. Likewise, it cannot be said that the *ẓāhir* of the hand or face is not meant for there is no reason to differentiate between our body and any attribute of our body.

In the second sense of *ẓāhir*, the *ẓāhir* of these attributes is what behooves God. They stand to His sublime essence just as the attributes of any other being stand to its essence. Knowledge is an essential attribute of a being which is knowing and has its own characteristics. The same is the case with the face. We cannot say that God does not need these attributes, for they are necessary and essential to His being. God, Who is the object of worship and

obedience must have all these attributes. The same is true of His actions. We know that to create is to produce the universe from non-being, even though we do not say anything about the modality of creation since it is unlike our actions. Our actions are governed by our needs, and God is above all needs; He is Self-sufficient and All-Perfect. His being is known to us in outline, even though His essence is unlike the essence of created beings. What He is in His essence is known to none except Him; no one can form any idea of it. This is what comes to our mind when we speak of God's attributes, and it is in this sense that they should be understood.

The Believer knows what these attributes mean or imply, and this is what is required of him. He knows that God has power over everything, that He knows everything, that the whole earth will be in His grip on the Day of Judgment, that the heavens will be in His right hand all rolled up, that the Believers will be looking at the face of their Creator in Paradise and will enjoy it more than any other thing they could have, and so on. He also knows that he has a Lord, a Creator and a God, even though he does not know the real nature of any one. In fact, all knowledge that man has is like this, he knows things of this world only in some of their respects, not in their true nature, even his own self he knows in the same way....

When God mentions any one of His attributes, when His Prophet mentions one, or when those from among the Believers who have the correct faith mention one, before one turns away from the apparent meaning of that attribute, which is its real meaning, and interprets it in an esoteric sense opposite to its apparent meaning or in a metaphorical sense contrary to its real sense, one must ascertain the following four things.

First, if the word concerned has been used in a metaphorical sense. Since the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are in Arabic and the Elders expressed themselves in that language, nothing that is found in any of these sources can be taken in a sense that goes against the usage of the Arabs or violates the rules common to all the languages of mankind. It is necessary, therefore, that the word

concerned has really been used in the metaphorical sense; otherwise any pretender could interpret any word in any way he likes, even if there is no justification for it in the language.

Second, there must be some justification for leaving the real meaning of the word and taking it in a metaphorical sense. If a word is used on one occasion in its real sense, and on another occasion in a metaphorical sense, you are not justified in taking it in the metaphorical sense without giving any reason for it. This is commonly agreed. Hence, if anyone wants to depart from the real meaning of a word and take it in a metaphorical sense he must cite a reason for doing so.

Third, the reason which is offered must be incontrovertible. Otherwise, if an argument is advanced on the basis of the Qur'ān or the Faith which shows that the real meaning is what is intended, departure from it cannot be justified; and if this argument consists in citing a clear and unequivocal text, departure from it cannot be allowed. But if it is just the apparent meaning of the text, one must offer a reason for preferring the metaphorical meaning.

Fourth, if the Prophet (pbuh) states something and means something other than what his words apparently convey, he must have made it clear that he did not intend the real meaning, but rather he intended the metaphorical meaning, no matter whether he defined it or not. This is particularly necessary in statements which concern faith and knowledge rather than practice.... He must also have put in some clues that bar his people from taking his words in the apparent sense. However, the clue may be something rational, as we have in the verse, "She was given something out of everything" (27:23); everyone knows that what is meant is that she (the Queen of Sheba) was given something from everything which persons in her position usually have. Similarly, the verse, "He is the Creator of everything" (13:16, 39:62), everyone who hears these words knows that the Creator Himself is not included in "everything". The clue may also be contextual. There may be something in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah itself which leads one to

take the text in a non-apparent sense. The Prophet cannot have left the people to find out for themselves a secret clue which only a few can discover, be it rational or textual, for if he stated something meaningful, repeated it time and again, addressed it to each and every person, intelligent and unintelligent, perceptive and non-perceptive, asked them to understand it or reflect upon its ideas and their implications, and then wanted them not to believe in its apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) because of some secret reason which only a few can discover, and then inform that he did not mean the *ẓāhir* - that would be misleading the people and confusing them, and the Prophet would have failed in his mission of guiding people and expounding the truth.... One cannot imagine that, particularly when his words tell clearly that he means the apparent rather than the non-apparent meaning, and when the alleged hidden reason for taking the non-apparent meaning is imaginary rather than real....

I will take one of the attributes, the hand (*yad*), as an example and discuss it in detail; you can understand other attributes in the same way. God has said, “The Jews say, ‘God’s hand is tied up.’ Be their hands tied up, and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. No, both His hands are widely stretched. He gives and spends as He pleases” (5:677). Addressing Satan, He said, “Iblīs! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands?” (38:175). At other places, He has said, “No just estimate have they made of God such as is due to Him. On the Day of Judgment the whole of the earth will be but His handful, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand” (39:67); “Blessed be He in Whose hands rests all the dominion” (67:1); “In Your hand is all good; verily You have power over all things” (3:26); “Do they not see that it is We Who have created for them, among the things which Our hands have fashioned, cattle which are in their possession?” (36:71). In *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, too, there are many references to the hand of God.

The burden of all these texts is that God has two hands unique to Him and essential to Him, but behooving His greatness; He created man with His hands but not the angels or Satan; He holds the earth in His grip, and will hold the heavens rolled up in his right hand; His two hands are outstretched; their outstretching means that He is busy giving out from His blessings, for one does such things by stretching one's hands, and withdraws from them by closing them or putting them in one's pocket. When we say that the hands of X are outstretched we mean real hands, and that they are engaged in giving out things. God says, "Do not put your hands tied with your neck, nor stretch them too much" (17:29). And people often say, "X is tight-fisted (*ja'd al-banān*)," and X is open-handed (*sabit al-banān*)."

If the objector says that God does not have hands of the kind creatures have, and that His hands are not organs one strikes with, it is true. But if he says that he does not have hands in any sense not reducible to His seven attributes, he is mistaken. Such a person usually attempts the following things. First, he says that people often use *yad* in the sense of blessing or gift, just as they refer to a thing by its cause, for example, they refer to rain by the word "*samā*" (sky), for similar reasons, people say X has given a hand to Y; and Abū Ṭālib said the following couplet when he once lost his nephew Muḥammad (pbuh)

My Lord! bring back my horse-rider, Muḥammad,  
Bring him back, and give me a hand.

And 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd<sup>212</sup> said to Abū Bakr<sup>213</sup> at the time of Hudaybiyyah, "Had you not given me a hand which I could not return, I would have given you a fitting reply.

Hand is also used for power on the pattern of calling a thing by the name of its agent, for power is generated by the hand. People say "X has his hand in this matter" or that. Ziyād<sup>214</sup> is reported to have said to Mu'āwīyah,<sup>215</sup> "I control Iraq with one hand and keep

the other hand free.” What he meant is that he expends only half his power in ruling Iraq. The same idea is involved in the verse, “In whose hands is the marriage-tie” (2:237), meaning “who has power to make the contract of marriage.”

An action is also sometimes referred to as the hand of a person instead of the person himself. Since most acts are performed by the hand, to refer to them as the hand is to refer them to the person himself. The Qur’ān says, “God has heard the taunt of those who say, ‘Truly God is indigent and we are rich!’ We shall certainly record their words and their act of slaying the prophets in defiance of right, and We shall say, Taste you the penalty of the scorching Fire. This is because of the (unrighteous deeds) which your hands sent on before you” (3:181-2). That is to say, the deeds which you sent on; for the words that one utters is action one does....

In reply, I will say that we do not deny these uses that we have in the Arabic in which the Qur’ān was revealed. Those who interpret God’s attributes metaphorically change the meaning of the texts, and commit blasphemy with regard to His names and interpret wrongly His words, “His hands are outstretched” (5:64), and “one whom I have created with My hands” (38:75). They say that hand in these verses means either blessings in this life or the next or it means power. Hand is a symbol for charity; it does not require that there be a real hand there; in fact, it has replaced the word charity in the common language. The phrase, “whom I have created with My hands,” only means “one whom God has created”; it does not at all imply that He has any hands in reality.... This is the way they interpret these words.

The first thing that I would say in this regard is that hand is used in this verse in the dual (*yadayn*), and *yad* in the dual is not used in the sense of favor or power. Arabs do use the singular from in place of the plural; in the Qur’ān we have “Verily man (*al-insān*) is in loss” (103:2). Similarly they use the plural form in place of the singular; for example, “men (*an-nās*) said to them: a great army is gathering” (3:173). They also use the plural in place

of the dual, for example, “your hearts (*qulubukuna*) are indeed so inclined” (66:4). But they never use the singular for the dual or the dual for the singular. It is not permissible to say that you have a man (*rajul*) with you when you actually want to say that you have two men (*rajulayn*) with you, nor is it permissible to say that you have two men (*rajulayn*) with you when you actually want to say that you have one man (*rajul*) with you.... So the words, “whom I have created with My two hands” cannot be taken to mean, “whom I have created with My power”; power is a single attribute and cannot be referred to with a dual word. Nor can the words be taken to mean favor; God’s favors are innumerable, and as such they cannot be referred to by a dual word.

These words also cannot be taken to mean “whom I have created.” For if that had been the case, the act would have referred to the hand as its subject, for only when something refers to the hand as the subject may it mean referring to the agent himself, as we have in the verse, “because of (the deeds) which your two hands have sent forth” (22:10), or “because of what your hands have sent on” (3:182), or “among the things which Our hands have fashioned” (36:71). But when the act refers to the agent as its subject and hand is mentioned along with the preposition *bi*, as in the verse, “whom I have created with My hands” (38:75), it only means that the act has been done by means of the hands. That is why it is not allowed for one who has spoken something or walked somewhere to say that he has done (*fa’ala*) it with his hands. One can, however, say that this is what his hands have done, for the word *fa’ala* only means “he did”; so when you do not want to say that you did something with your hands, the addition of the words “with the hands” is unnecessary and meaningless. You will not find any Arab, or non-Arab who knows his language, saying, “I did it with my hands” or “someone did it with his hands” except when he or the other person really wants to say that he has done the act with his hands. It would not be correct to say either that they do

not have hands or that even though they have hands the act was not done with their hands.

I hope that after this clarification it will be easy to distinguish between places where a word is used in its real sense and where it is used in a metaphorical sense. It will also be clear that the verses mentioned above cannot be interpreted in a metaphorical sense in the light of the language itself....

The second thing that I would say is that sometimes the word *yad* may mean a real hand and sometimes a blessing or power, and sometimes it may also allude to an action. Having admitted that, I would ask the question: What is the justification for taking *yad* in the verse under discussion in a non-real sense? If your reason is that *yad* refers to a part of the body, and therefore cannot be attributed to God, I will say that surely hand and things like it should not be attributed to God if His hand belonged to the genus of the hands creatures have; this is absolutely right. But it does not rule out that God should not have hands that behoove Him or should not have those perfections which He deserves. There is nothing which reason knows of or revelation tells us that may declare it impossible. If this is the case, why should we not take the word in its real sense, and why should we interpret it metaphorically?

The third thing I would like to say to the person who interprets *yad* in a non-real sense is this: Can you point out any word in the Book of God, in the Sunnah of the Prophet, or in the sayings of any imām of the Muslims, which says that *yad* should not be taken in its apparent sense (*ẓāhir*) or that its apparent sense is not intended? Is there any verse in the Book of God that explicitly or implicitly denies attributing hands to God? The most that interpreters of *yad* on metaphorical lines cite is the verse, “Say: He Allah is one” (112:1), or “There is nothing like Him at all” (42:11), or “Do you know anyone who is worthy of the same name as He” (19:65). But these verses only deny reducing God to an organism (*tajsīm*) or anthropomorphizing Him (*tashbih*); they do not deny attributing



hands to Him which behoove His majesty. There is nothing in the Qur'ān that negates it. I would also ask if there is anything that reason knows of which categorically says that God cannot have any hands whether they behoove Him or not. Is there anything which reason may advance against God's hands or negate it by implication? Now, if there is nothing in revelation or in reason which rules out attributing a hand to God, the assumption that there is something that goes against it is purely subjective, a mere fancy....

On the other hand, I would, fourth, cite arguments clear and categorical that God has hands in reality. One is the verse which says that God honored Adam in that He created Him with His hands, a fact which made the angels prostrate themselves before him and refrain from asserting their superiority over him. If the verse only meant that God created Adam with His power, or that creation was an act of favor from God, or that it simply meant He created Adam, there was no honor in it, for that is also the case with the angels, with Iblīs, and with everything else.

One might say that things are ascribed to God to underline their dignity, as when we say "the camel of God" or "the house of God." I will say that you cannot affirm this dignity unless there is something in that object which is not found in others. If there were nothing distinctive in "the camel of God" and "the house of God" which distinguishes them from other camels or houses, they would not have been ascribed to God. The fact is that they have been really ascribed to God. It has been said that God created Adam with His hands, which only means that He created Adam with His hands whereas he has created others by saying, "Be," and they came into being, as has been stated in various traditions.

When you say "the government is in his hands" or "his hands have done this or that" you say two things: one, he has hands, and, two, the dominion is his or the action is his. In the case of the latter sentence, often some liberty is taken, but regarding the former it is never said except when the person concerned has hands in reality.

Obviously no one says “the hands of desire” or “the hands of water”. I do admit that the expression “the government is in his hands” may mean that it is in his power. But one never uses that expression except in the case of one who really has hands.

The difference between the verse, “whom I created with My hands” (38:75) and the verse, “out of what Our hands have done” is twofold: One, in the first case God has ascribed the action to Himself and made it clear that He has created it with His hands, whereas in the second He has ascribed the action to His hands. The other difference is that in Arabic one uses the plural form for the dual only when one is sure that it would not create any confusion, for example, the Qur’ān says “As to the thief, male or female, cut off their hands (*aydiyyahumā*) (5:41), that is, their two hands (*yaday humā*), or “the hearts (*qulūb*) of you (two) are indeed so inclined” (66:4), that is, the two hearts of you two. In the same way God has said “From what Our hands (*aydinā*) have done (36:71).

As for the *ḥadīth* there are many examples in them, for example, “Those who practice justice shall be with God on platforms of light on the right hand of the Merciful, though both hands of His are right. They are the ones observe justice in their judgments, in the people they rule, and in the affairs they manage.”<sup>216</sup> And, “At the time God created the universe, He wrote down with His own hands thus making obligatory on Himself: ‘My mercy shall dominate over My wrath.’”<sup>217</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 6:355-372]

### **(2.30) The meaning of the verse, “The Day when a shin shall be laid bare” (68:42)**

The Companions of the Prophet have not differed in their interpretation of the verses that speak of God’s attributes. I have read the comments they have made on these verses and I have studied the *aḥādīth*<sup>218</sup> they have narrated. I have also gone through more than a hundred commentaries on these verses in various

books, large and small, but I have not come across up to this time any statement whatsoever by any Companion in which he interprets any verse or *ḥadīth* speaking of God's attributes in a way different from what is commonly understood from them. On the contrary, we have innumerable statements in which they confirm the common understanding and underscore the apparent meaning in opposition to what later writers have said regarding them. There are also many things of interest in traditions they have narrated or the words which have come down from them.

I have not found them differing on anything except on a verse like, "the Day when a shin shall be laid bare" (68:42). Ibn 'Abbās and some other Companions have been reported to have said that it refers to the hardship to which God will expose people in 'alā. On the other hand, Abū Sa'īd and some others with him have taken the shin to be one of the attributes of God in view of the *ḥadīth* which Abū Sa'īd has himself reported and which is recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections.<sup>218a</sup>

From the language of the Qur'ān, however, it does not appear that it is one of the attributes of God, for the verse, "the Day when a shin (*sāq*) will be laid bare) mentions shin as an indefinite noun, and does not ascribe it to God. It does not say, "the shin of God." Since shin has not been ascribed to God, it cannot be counted as a divine attribute without giving further reason. Hence Ibn Abbās' interpretation of the shin cannot be taken as a misinterpretation (*ta'wīl*), for (*ta'wīl*) is to understand a verse in a sense different from what it means and what people commonly understand by it. Many people take a word in a sense it does not mean, and claim that it is the correct interpretation. This is wrong on two grounds that we have discussed time and again.<sup>219</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 6:394-5]

**(2.31) The meaning of the saying of the Prophet, “I feel the breath of the Merciful coming from Yemen,” and the saying of a Companion, “The Black Stone is the right hand of God on earth.”**

Ibn Taymīyyah was asked about the words ascribed to the Prophet (pbuh), “The Black Stone is the right hand of God on earth,”<sup>220</sup> and “I feel the breath of the Merciful coming from Yemen.”<sup>221</sup> ... He replied that the first *ḥadīth* has been reported from the Prophet through an unreliable chain of narrators. It is commonly believed to be a statement of Ibn ‘Abbās. His words are, “The Black Stone is the right hand of God on earth; whoever touches it or kisses it it is as if he shakes hands with God and kisses His right hand.” Anyone who reflects on these words a little will have no difficulty in figuring out what they mean; only those who do not think them over will not understand them. Ibn ‘Abbās has said, “the right hand of God on earth.” This is a qualified statement. He has not said that the Black stone is the right hand of God without any qualification. He has added the qualifying words, “on earth” and obviously that makes the thing different.

Ibn ‘Abbās has further said, “Whoever touches it or kisses it it is *as if* he shakes hands with God or kisses His right hand.” And we know that a thing is not same as the thing to which it is likened. This proves beyond doubt that one who touches the Black stone does not shake hands with God, rather he is *like* one who shakes hands with Him. Thus both first part of the *ḥadīth* and the last part show that the Black Stone is not an attribute of God, as every sensible person knows. The *ḥadīth* only states that, just as God has made a house for people to go round, He has also put there a thing for them to touch, so that they may take it as kissing the hand of great people. We know that kissing brings the visitor nearer to the person whose hand he kisses, and is a form of respect he pays to him. God and His Prophet never speak in language which is misleading; they do not fail to indicate what people should not

believe. The words of this *ḥadīth* are clear enough to negate any kind of anthropomorphism.

As for the second *ḥadīth*, the words “coming from Yemen” are sufficient to indicate what it actually means. Obviously Yemen has no special relation to God’s attributes; this is clear to everyone. What the *ḥadīth* means is that from Yemen there will come people whom God will love and who will love Him, people about whom He has said, “If anyone from among you turns back from his Faith, God will produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him” (5:57).

It has been reported that when this verse was revealed, the Prophet was asked about them. He said that the people (God has said to produce) are those of the tribe of Abū Mūsā Al-Ash‘arī.<sup>222</sup> This has been indicated in some other authentic *aḥādīth*, such as, “The people of Yemen coming to you have a noble and loving heart. The Faith is Yemeni, as is wisdom Yemeni.”<sup>223</sup> They fought the people who had apostatized after the Prophet to their former faith, and conquered countries with their swords. God removed through them the calamities which had befallen the faithful. Some people think that these *aḥādīth* refer to ‘Uways (Al-Qarānī;<sup>224</sup> but this is far from being correct.

[*Fatāwā* 6:397-8]

### 3. *TAWHĪD*: AFFIRMING GOD'S UNITY

#### (3.1) Affirming the unity of Lordship (*tawhīd ar-rubūbiyyah*) and the unity of Godhead (*tawhīd al-ilāhīyyah*)

*Tawhīd ar-rubūbiyyah is to believe and affirm that Allah is the Lord, the Creator and Ruler of all there is. This is the tawhīd which the theologians try to establish, well as the one whose perception (in experience) various groups of Ṣūfīs set as their goal. But this tawhīd will not qualify anyone as Muslim, not to say a friend (walī) of God, unless he also affirms the unity of Godhead (tawhīd al-ilāhīyyah), that is to say, unless he witnesses that no one is worthy of ‘ibādah, worship and absolute obedience other than Allah, and that Muḥammad (pbuh) is His messenger. He must also believe in whatever the Prophet says and submit to whatever he commands. Tawhīd is not perfect unless one refuses to anyone any share into the rights that are due to Allah alone such as worship, service, trust, fear and submission.*

Most theologians who expound on *tawhīd* in their theological works divide *tawhīd* into three kinds: *tawhīd* of the essence, that God is one in His essence without a second; *tawhīd* of attributes, that He is unique in His attributes and there is nothing like Him in any respect; and *tawhīd* of deeds, that He is singular in His deeds and has absolutely no partners.

Of these, the most important *tawhīd* in their eyes is the third one, the *tawhīd* of deeds, which they take to mean that the Creator of the world is one. They advance a variety of arguments for it, such as the argument from exclusion; they think it is the ultimate goal. They believe that this is what the words, “there is no *ilāh* except Allah” mean. They even interpret *ilāh* as one who has power to create. Everyone knows that the polytheists of Arabia to whom Muḥammad (pbuh) was first sent did not oppose him on this

count. They rather testified that Allah is the Creator of all there is; they even believed in the fore-ordainment of things. But in spite of that they were polytheists.

The same is true for the *tawhīd* of attributes, that there is none like Allah in His attributes. No one among the peoples of the world has ever affirmed another being eternal like Allah, whether he has considered him an active or an inactive partner. In fact, whenever someone has likened anyone to Him, he has only affirmed likeness in one respect or another. In fact, reason rules it out that any created being can share in all the attributes of the Creator, whether those that He necessarily has, or those He may have. That would require a combination of contradicting principles.

The case of the third *tawhīd* namely the *tawhīd* of essence, is no different. They affirm that God is one, that none shares in His essence, and that He is indivisible. This is true. The Qur’ān itself has said, “Say: He is Allah, One and Only; God, the Eternal. He neither begets nor is He begotten; and there is none like Him” (112:1-4). It follows that He is above parts and divisions, and that He is not a composite being made of elements. In this they are correct. But with this truth they combine some ideas which are wrong, such as that He is not above the Throne, or that He is so unlike the created beings that He has no real attributes. This is their *tawhīd*....

Let it be known that *ilāh* does not mean one who has power to create, as various leading theologians believe. They equate *ilāhīyyah* with the power to create, and believe that one who simply affirms that Allah alone has power to create witnesses truly that there is no *ilāh* except Allah. They are not correct; for the polytheists (of Arabia) did affirm it; nevertheless they were called polytheists, as we have said before. *Ilāh* is one who deserves to be worshiped and obeyed; the word is to be taken in the sense of *ma’lah* rather than *alih*. *Tawhīd* is to worship and serve Allah alone without associating anyone else with Him, and *shirk* is to associate another god with Allah.

It is now clear that the most that these thinkers who believe in fore-ordainment and count themselves among the Ahl as-Sunnah affirm is only the *tawḥīd ar-rubūbiyyah*, that Allah is the Creator-Lord of all things. Their position is no different from that of the polytheists (of pre-Islamic Arabia) who did affirm these things yet were nevertheless called polytheists

Similarly, the *tawḥīd* which a number of Ṣūfī sects who call themselves “people of gnosis, truth and unity” expound is nothing but a perception (*shuhūd*) in experience of this *tawḥīd*. It is a vision of the truth that Allah alone is the Lord, the Master and the Creator of all that there is. It is a vision in which the gnostic loses his own being in the being of God, the perception of his own self in the perception of God, and the knowledge of his own being in the knowledge of God. It is the experience of self-annihilation caused by the realization of the unity of Lordship (*tawḥīd ar-rubūbiyyah*), an experience in which everything contingent vanishes and the Eternal alone exists. This is the final goal for these Ṣūfīs beyond which they can visualize no other goal. But this is nothing but the realization in experience (*taḥqīq*) of the *tawḥīd* in which the polytheists of Arabia also believed. No one who believes in this *tawḥīd* alone is qualified even to be a Muslim, much less a friend (*walī*) of God, or most dear to Him...

This is a great truth; every Muslim must know it. What distinguishes the Believer from the non-believer is faith in the fundamental principle of Islam, faith in the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad, that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad is His Messenger. Many people have come up short on both counts or one of them, even though they think they have experienced *tawḥīd* and realized the truth. They must know that a polytheist who affirms that Allah is the Lord of all there is, its Master and Creator, will not be saved from God’s punishment if he does not affirm that there is no god (*ilāh*) other than He, that none but He is to be worshiped and served, and that Muḥammad is



His Messenger, and if he does not also believe in whatever the Prophet said and carry out whatever he commanded. I will explain these two principles further.

The first principle is the affirmation of the unity of Godhead (*tawhīd al-ilahīyyah*). God has said of the polytheists that they posit intermediaries between themselves and God and call upon them in the belief that they will intercede on their behalf with God even without His permission: “They serve, besides God, things that hurt them not, nor profit them; and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with God.’ Say: Do you indeed inform God of something He knows not, in the heavens or on earth! Glory to Him! And far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)” (10:18). This means that those who hold these beings to be intercessors are polytheists in the eyes of God... He has also said, “Call on those, besides Him, whom you fancy. They have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them. Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, even those among them who are closest (to Him). They hope for His mercy and fear His wrath, for the wrath of your Lord is something to beware of” (17:56-7). Commenting on this verse a number of Elders have said that as people worshiped Ezra, Christ, and angels, God revealed these verses and told them that even the angels and prophets sought to get closer to Allah, prayed for His mercy, and feared His punishment.

True *tawhīd* is to know that God has many rights over us in which no created being has any share: He alone is to be worshiped, trusted, feared, revered, and obeyed without any condition. This has been stated in the Qur’ān at many places, such as, “Take not with God another object of worship, or you (O man!) will sit in disgrace and destitution” (17:22); “Verily it is He Who has revealed the Book to you setting forth the truth; so serve God offering Him sincere devotion” (39:2); “Say: Verily, I am commanded to serve God with sincere devotion” (39:11)...

With regard to trust, God has said, “In God put your trust if you have faith” (5:26); “And in God let all men of faith put their trust” (14:11); “Say: Sufficient is God for me! In Him trust those who put their trust” (39:38); “If only they had been content with what God and His Messenger gave them, and had said, ‘Sufficient for us is God; He will soon give us of His bounty and (will cause) His Messenger (to give us, too);’ verily to God do we turn with hope (that would have been the correct course)” (9:59)....

With regard to fear, reverence and piety, He has said, “And those who obey God and His Messenger fear God, avoid His displeasure and obey Him; they will triumph (in the end)” (24:52). He has thus demanded obedience to Himself and His Prophet, but reserved fear, reverence, and piety for Himself alone. Noah has reiterated the same truth in these words, “My people! I am to you a warner, clear and open, that you should worship God, fear Him, and obey me” (71:3). He thus reserved worship and piety for God alone. At another place God has said, “So fear not men; fear Me” (5:47); “Do not be afraid of them, but fear Me, if you have faith” (3:175)....

The Prophet said the same things in his own words, for example once in a sermon he said, “Whoever obeys God and His Messenger is on the right path, but whoever disobeys Him harms himself only, and does not harm God.”<sup>225</sup> On another occasion, he said, “Don’t say, ‘If God and the Prophet will this.’ Say ‘If God wills,’ and then, ‘if Muḥammad wills.’”<sup>226</sup> He has thus joined his name with the name of God in obedience with the conjunction “and” (*wāw*), but in the case of will he has directed that his name be mentioned after mentioning God’s name using the conjunction “then” (*thumma*). This is because obedience to the Prophet is obedience to God, and whoever obeys him obeys God; moreover, to obey God there is only one way - to obey the Prophet. This is not the case with will, for the will of any created being is not the will of God, nor does God’s will imply the will of any of his creatures. What God wills happens, even though none of His

creatures may will it, and what His creatures will does not happen unless He wills it.

The second principle of the Faith concerns things that are due the Prophet. We are to believe in him, obey him, please him, love him, submit to his rulings, and so on... God has made these things clear in various statements such as, “He who obeys the Messenger obeys God” (4:80); “It is more fitting that they should please God and His Messenger” (9:62); “say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, or your kindred, (or) the wealth that you have acquired, or the trade in which you fear decline, or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than God or His Messenger, or striving in His cause, then wait until God brings about His decision” (9:24); “But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but submit to it absolutely” (4:65); “Say: If you do love God, follow me; God will love you” (3:31); and so on.

[*Fatāwā* 3:98-110]

### **(3.2) Faith in God’s *qadr* and His *shar‘*.**

*We must believe in God’s creation and fore- ordainment, as well as in His command and prescription. There is no contradiction between the two. Those who believe in His commands but deny His fore-ordainment, or those who believe in His fore-ordainment and deny His commands, or think that one contradicts the other, are wrong.*

Everyone knows that we must believe in God’s creation as well as command, in His fore-ordainment as well as prescription. People who have gone wrong on the issue of fore-ordainment (*qadr*) are divided into three groups: those who take the line of take the line of the Magians (*mujūsīyyah*), those who take the line of the polytheists (*mushrikīyyah*), and those who follow the Devil

(*Iblīsīyyah*). The *mujūsīyyah* are those who deny God's fore-ordainment and believe only in His commands. The extremists among them even deny God's fore-knowing and fore-writing. However, the moderates among them only deny that God wills everything or creates and ordains everything. They are the Mu'tazilah and those who agree with them.

The *mushrikīyyah* believe in fore-ordainment but they oppose it to God's command and prohibition. God has referred to them in these words, "Those who give partners (to God) say: If God has wished we should not have given partners to Him, nor would our fathers, nor should we have had anything forbidden" (6:148). Hence those who negate His commands on account of His fore-ordainment belong to this group. A number of Ṣūfīs who claim to have realized the truth (*al-ḥaqīqah*) fall into this group.

The third group, the *Iblīsīyyah*, affirm both truths but hold that one contradicts the other and find fault with God's wisdom and justice as did Satan their leader at first. Writers on the history of doctrines (in Islam) have listed all these views. These views have also been held by the People of the Book and many others who have gone astray.

The people of right guidance and happiness (in the Hereafter), on the opposite side, believe in both truths sincerely. They believe that God is the Creator of everything and its Lord and Ruler, that what He wills happens and what He does not will does not happen, that everything is in His power, and that He knows everything and has written them down in a clear Book. This is affirming God's knowledge, power, will, unity, and lordship, as well as His creation, rule, and ownership - truths that are the essential parts of faith. Along with this they also affirm causality (in nature), and never deny that God has made one thing the cause of another thing. They affirm what God has affirmed in various statements, such as, "When they have carried the heavy-laden clouds, we drive them to a land that is dead, make rain to descend thereon, and produce every kind of harvest therewith" (7:57); "With it God guides all

who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety” (5:16); and, “By it He causes many to stray, and many He leads to the right path” (2:26). He thus made it absolutely clear that He acts through causes.

Those who say that God does not act through (*bi*) causes, but only in their presence (*‘ind*), run in the face of the Qur’ān, and deny that things have a power and a specific nature which God has given them. They deny that God has given in animals and in men some powers with which they work. Equally mistaken are those who consider human power to be creative, attribute the work of God to one who is not God, and commit *shirk*. They are mistaken because there is no cause which does not need another cause in order to produce an effect; moreover there are also factors which prevent its happening unless God removes them. Hence there is nothing in the world which can produce anything by itself except God. He has said, “Of everything We have created pairs, that you may receive instruction. (51:49); that is to say, that you may know that the Creator of the pairs is one...

The point I want to make is that one must believe in the fore-ordainment (*taqdīr*) of things; for without that the affirmation of God’s unity (*tawhīd*) is not complete. Ibn ‘Abbās has rightly said, “To affirm fore-ordainment (*taqdīr*) is to perfect *tawhīd*, and one who affirms God’s unity and upholds His fore-ordainment completes His *tawhīd*. But if one affirms unity and denies fore-ordainment one impairs one’s *tawhīd*.”

One must also believe in the *shar‘*, in the commands and prohibitions, rewards and punishments which God has conveyed through His messengers, and expounded in His Books. To live our lives properly we need the *shar‘*. We have to secure what is useful and avoid what is harmful, and it is the *shar‘* which tells what is useful and what is harmful. The *shar‘* is God’s justice among His creatures, and the light He has provided for His servants. There can be no human society without a *shar‘*, a code that tells them what to do and what not to do....

A part of the *shar‘* some people know from their own nature, just as they know that they will benefit from eating food or drinking water, or just as they know some necessary truths from their reason. Others know them from arguments which their reason works out; still others know them only from the teachings of the messengers and their statements and instructions. People have debated the issue of how we know what acts are good and what acts are bad. Do we know them through reason, or is it that they do not possess anything like goodness or evil which we may discover through our reason? We have discussed this issue at length elsewhere and pointed out the causes that have led people to different views. We will state the matter here only briefly.

Everyone agrees that we know by our reason things that please or displease us. Actionss that lead to things which we like or which give us pleasure or those that lead to things which we dislike or which cause us pain, are known sometimes through reason, sometimes through the *shar‘*, and sometimes through both of them. But a detailed knowledge of these things, or of the consequences of our acts in the life to come, whether happiness or misery, are known only through the *shar‘*. Hence the details which the messengers of God have given regarding matters on the Day of Judgment or regarding the code of life cannot be known through reason, just as the details about the names and attributes of God which they have conveyed cannot be known through reason, even though we can have some idea of them on the basis of reason.

[*Fatāwā* 3:111-115]

### **(3.2) The error of the theologians and the Ṣūfīs regarding *tawḥīd*.**

*To formulate the doctrine of God’s unity (tawḥīd) in a way which negates His attributes and names, as many theologians do, or to reduce it to the unity of the Creator-Lord (tawḥīd ar-*

rubūbiyyah) which *Ṣūfīs* do and which they call *tawḥīd al-af'āl*, are both wrong.

Various groups who indulge in speculative theology or engage in devotions and spiritual practices have developed wrong notions of *tawḥīd* and altered its meaning. One group that loves to call itself “the people of *tawḥīd*” thinks that to affirm God’s unity, they have to negate His attributes and even His names. In fact, they only affirm a bare essence stripped of all attributes, a being without any qualities. But both reason and revelation clearly pronounce that such a being exists nowhere except in mind. They think that if you affirm God’s attributes you make Him a composite being, which in their view reason can never allow. I have discussed this point elsewhere, and shown that these people simply ignorant and have been misled by the notion of universals.

The other group thinks that *tawḥīd* is to affirm the unity of *rubūbiyyah*, that God creates everything and performs every act. They give it the name *tawḥīd al-af'āl*, affirming the unity of acts. Some theologians have advanced arguments in its support. They have said that we cannot say that acts are performed jointly (by God and men), for that would be impairing God’s omnipotence and perfection; nor can we say that both can perform the act, each one independently of the other, for that (in the case of man) is unthinkable. By arguments like this they think they have established *tawḥīd* and affirmed that there is no god (*ilāh*) other than Allah, and that divinity (*ilāhiyyah*) means nothing but the power to originate and so on. Hence, once it is established that no one other than God has the power to originate and that none participates with Him in creation, they feel satisfied that they have borne witness to the truth that there is no god except Allah. But they do not know that the pagans of Arabia did also believe in this *tawḥīd*. God has emphasized it in these words, “If you ask them who is that created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, ‘Allah’” (31:25); “Ask them: To whom belong the earth and

all beings therein? (Say) if you know! They will say, ‘To God!’ Say: Yet will you not receive admonition? Ask: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Throne Supreme? They will say, ‘They belong to Allah.’ Say, Will you not then be filled with awe? Ask (them): Who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things, who protects (all) but is not protected (by any)? (Tell me) if you know. They will say, ‘(It belongs) to Allah.’ Say, Then how are you deluded? (23:105). Commenting on the previous verse Ibn ‘Abbās said, “If you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth they will say, ‘Allah.’ But even then they worship other deities.”

This *tawhīd* is only a part of the *tawhīd* which is required of us, not the whole of it. By affirming this part on, no one can rise above *shirk*, the most heinous sin that God will not condone. One must also devote all worship and obedience to Allah, must serve none except Him, and must serve Him the way He has ordained. Only then shall one be sincerely dedicating one’s religion to Allah.

*Ilāh* means *ma’lūh*, the object of love and devotion, whom one worships and serves. That Allah is *ilāh* means that He is qualified with all the attributes of perfection. Hence none can be God, the object of worship and love in himself, except He. This means that any act that is not done to please Him is null and void. In fact, the root of all evil and disorder is worship and love of beings other than God. This has been stated by God Himself: “If there were in the heavens and the earth other gods besides Allah there would have been confusion and disorder in both” (21:22)....

Those who expound *tawhīd* in mystical terms hold the realization of the oneness of the Creator-Lord (*tawhīd ar-rubūbiyyah*) as their goal, and absorption into it as the ultimate end. They think that when you attain it you are no longer required to differentiate between the good and the evil. This leads them to the negation of the commands and prohibitions of the *shar‘* as well as the rewards and punishments thereon. They fail to distinguish between the creative will of God, which encompasses everything,



and His love and pleasure, which only obedience to His Command merits; they fail to distinguish between God's creative words, which encompass everything and which no one, pious or wicked, can frustrate, and His prescriptive words, which only the prophets and the friends of God carry out in full.

It is necessary, therefore, that one not only perceive the *rubūbiyyah* of God, which encompasses the Believer and the non-believer, the obedient and the disobedient alike, but also observe His *ilāhīyyah*, which only the Believers who worship and serve Him and follow the messengers He sends observe.... Let everyone realize that whoever does not distinguish between God's friends and God's enemies, or between things He has commanded and things He has forbidden, or between faith and unfaith, obedience and disobedience, good and evil, the approved and the disapproved, even though each one is brought into being by His power, will and creation, he follows a religion in no sense different from the religion of the pagans of Arabia who said, "If God had wished, we would not have given partners to Him, nor would our fathers; nor would we have had any taboos." (6:148).

[*Iqtiḍā aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* 459-61]

### **(3.3) Refutation of the monism of Ibn 'Arabī, Al-Qūnawī and Al-Tilimsānī.**

*The essence of their monism (at-tawḥīd al-wujūdī) is that the existence of God is one with the existence of the universe. From this it follows that there is neither a creator nor anything created, that none but God is the object of worship in whatever is worshiped since He has a presence (wajh) in everything, and that the call of the prophets to worship and serve no one except Allah is nothing but a trick which they play on their people. This is absolutely wrong; no early Ṣūfī had ever subscribed to it before.*

These people have misconstrued the *tawḥīd* which God has

expounded in His books and sent down at the hands of His prophets. They have identified it with union (*ittihād*) and mislead people by calling it *tawhīd*. In fact, they have denied any Maker or Creator. In the beginning, I was very much impressed by Ibn ‘Arabī<sup>227</sup> and held him in great esteem as I had found many of his discussions in the *Futūḥāt*, *Al-Kunh*, *Al-Muḥkam al-Marbūt*, *Ad-Durrat al-Fākhīrah*, *Maṭāli‘ an-Nujūm* and other such works very illuminating and useful. I was not aware at that time of his esoteric ideas as I had not read the *Fuṣūṣ* and other like works. I used to sit with friends and discuss things so that we could find out the truth and follow it. We tried hard to know the essence of the *ṭarīqah*. When things became clear, we knew what we had to do. Then there came a number of leading Ṣūfīs from the East, and people began to question us about the Way and the faith of Islam, on the one hand, and about the lives and experiences of these people, on the other. We had no choice except to tell the truth about them...’

Both union (*ittihād*) and incarnation (*ḥulūl*) have been either confined to a particular person or extended to the whole world. Examples of particularized union and incarnation (*ittihād* and *ḥulūl al-mu‘ayyan*) are the beliefs which Christians hold about Jesus, or extremist Shi‘īs hold about their imāms, and ignorant Ṣūfīs about their preceptors. It is conceived either as a union on the pattern of water mixing with milk, as the Jacobites from among the Sudanese, Ethiopians and Copts believe, or as a form of incarnation, as the Nestorians believe, or as a kind of partial union in some respect or the other as the Catholics believe. As for universal incarnation (*al-ḥulūl al-muṭlaq*), or the doctrine that the divine Self dwells in everything, it is reported of the earliest Jahmīyyah by the Ahl as-Sunnah and the Elders, who called them infidels on that ground.

But the universal union (*al-ittihād al-‘āmm*) which these people (Ibn ‘Arabī, Al-Qunāwī, Al-Tilimsānī and the like) have expounded was not set forth by anyone before them except

Pharaoh (of Moses) and the Karamathians who denied the existence of a Maker. The essence of their belief is that God is one with the world, that the existence of God, the Creator of the heaven and the earth, is identical with the existence of the created world. Hence they cannot think that creates anything other than Him, nor that He is the Lord of the Worlds, nor that he is sufficient in Himself and everything else depends upon Him. This much is agreed upon by all the monists; in detail, however, they have taken three different lines, which most leading Ṣūfīs fail to distinguish as these doctrines are quite abstruse.

#### **The first view**

The line that Ibn ‘Arabī has taken is that the essence of all things, living and non-living, even their movements and rests are there in a state of existence, eternal and unending before they come into existence. They emerge into existence when the divine existence flows into them. Hence their existence is the existence of God, even though their essences are different from the divine essence. Subsistence is different from existence, but what emerges in existence is what is there in existence. Ibn ‘Arabī and those who follow him in this regard say that God does not give anything to anyone. He neither makes anyone rich and happy, nor poor and wretched. It is only His existence that flows to these essences already shaped in one form or the other. Hence one should not praise or condemn except oneself. This is the truth of fore-ordainment. God knows things by perceiving their essences existing in their pre-existential state, outside His own essence. They say that God has no power to effect any change even in a particle, that they themselves know things in the same way as God knows them, both knowledges proceeding from the same source. They claim that they can excel the Seal of the Prophets in some respects, since they receive ideas from the same source from which the Angel receives and delivers them to the prophets.

They say that they worship none other than God, that none other than God is ever worshiped, that those who worship idols

worship none but Him. His words, “*qaḍā rabbuka an lā ta‘budū illā iyyāhu*,” which means ‘your Lord has ruled that you *should* not worship any except Him’ (17:23), they take to mean that you *would* not worship any except Him, taking the ruling not as an imperative but as an existential decree. Hence, for them, whenever anything is worshiped it is God Himself in that thing who is worshiped, for when God decrees anything, they argue, it necessarily happens.

They say that calling people to God (by the prophets) is only playing a trick on them, for God is never absent from them that they are to be reminded of Him. When the people of Noah said to their brethren, “Abandon not your gods, abandon not Wadd nor Suwā‘...” (71:23), they said so because they feared that if they abandoned them they would abandon God to the extent they abandoned them, for God has a presence (*wajh*) in everything which is worshiped; this is admitted by those who know it, and denied by those who are ignorant of it. Difference or multiplicity which is there in the world is like the difference and multiplicity of organs in an organic body, or of faculties in the soul. Gnostics know who is worshiped and in what forms He appears and is worshiped. The ignorant says, “This is a stone; that is a plant.” But the Gnostic says, “This is a form wherein God is manifested, and hence it commands our respect.” However, it is not the only form wherein He is manifested; there are other forms, too. The error of the Christians lies in that they limit God’s manifestation to one particular being, and the error of the idol worshipers lies in that they limit it to some forms and leave out the others. The Gnostic worships and serves all forms.”<sup>228</sup>

God also worships and serves all things, because they are food for His names and attributes, just as He is food for their existence. He needs them and they need Him; He is thus on intimate terms with everything.<sup>229</sup> In the view of these people, divine names are merely relations between existence and existence, yet they are not sheer non-beings.<sup>230</sup> They wonder about God’s name Al-‘Alī, the

Transcendent, for they say that there is nothing in existence except Him; He cannot therefore be said to transcend anything; there is nothing there except Him;<sup>231</sup> As bearing different names, things are contingent in themselves, however they are transcendent, and in that respect, they are one with God. Hence God marries none other than Himself, and slaughters none other than Himself; He is the One Who speaks as well as the One Who hears.<sup>232</sup>

They say that Moses scolded Aaron because the latter was so short-sighted and narrow-minded that he forbade the Israelites to worship the calf.<sup>233</sup> Moses, on the contrary, had a broader vision and a larger heart; he knew that the Israelites did not worship anything other than God. The greatest thing one can possibly worship is one's own desires; for one who takes his desires as his god does not worship except God. Pharaoh, in the view of these people, was one of the greatest gnostics of God,<sup>234</sup> for he claimed, "I am your Lord, Most High" (79:24), and "I do not know any god for you except myself" (28:38), a claim which was wholeheartedly supported by the magicians.

To ascertain the truth about the doctrine of these people, I talked to some learned men among them, and said that the essence of what they said was not different from what Pharaoh had said earlier, namely that there was nothing like a creator or a maker of the world. Hearing this, one of them said that a number of their great men had admitted it explicitly and confessed that they did not differ from Pharaoh on that point.

All what I have mentioned above has been expounded by the author of the *Fuṣūṣ*. God knows better on what faith he died; may He forgive all the Muslims and all the faithful, men and women, living and dead. "Our Lord, Forgive us and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancor against those who have believed. Our Lord, You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful" (59:107).

What I want to say is that every Muslim who reads the *Fuṣūṣ* - which its author claims was inspired by the Prophet - and

understands it will surely pronounce that all the prophets and messengers of God, all His pious friends, even all Jews, Christians and Sabaeans, will certainly dissociate themselves from each and every view I have mentioned above and attribute to them.

We know that even the polytheists who worship idols and the People of the Book who deny Islam affirm that there is a Creator Who conceives, makes and brings into being the heavens and the earth, and creates light and darkness, that He is their Lord and the Lord of their ancestors, Lord of the East and Lord of the West. None of them has ever said that God is one with the world, or one with the things that are created, as these people claim. They even go a step further and say that if we imagine the heavens and the earth to vanish, God will also vanish with them.

Their doctrine is based upon two propositions. One that the not-yet-existent (*al-ma'dūm*) is something which exists in pre-existence (*al-'adam*) as many Mu'tazilah and Rāfiḍah believe. This is wrong rationally as well as in the light of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the consensus of the scholars. Many theologians like Qāḍī Abū Bakr have pronounced them infidels (*kāfir*) on this account. Their error is due to their failure to distinguish between God's idea of things before they come into existence as He has written them down in the Mother of Books, the Preserved Tablet, and between their existence outside the mind of God. The Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe that God writes down in the Preserved Tablet the measure of all things before He brings them into existence. Hence they distinguish between mental existence and external existence. Look at these verses of the Qur'ān which were first revealed to the Prophet: "Read in the name of your Lord and Cherisher who created, created man out of a mere clot of congealed blood. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful. He taught (the use of) the pen, taught man who what he knew not" (96:1-5). They refer to all four levels of being real existence (*al-wujūd al-'aynī*) created by God, the being in writing (*al-wujūd al-lafzī*), which leads to the being in mind (*al-wujūd al-'ilmī*). God

has clearly stated in these verses that He has taught man, and taught him through the pen, which involves the three levels of being.

The proposition that the not-yet-existent is something that exists in itself outside the knowledge of God is false, and its falsity can be easily demonstrated. In Islam it was first expounded some four hundred years ago, and Ibn Arabī agreed with it and made it a basic proposition of his philosophy.

The second basic proposition of Ibn Arabī's philosophy is that the existence of things, contingent and created, is one with the existence of the Creator, neither different from nor other than the latter. This was a new proposition which he propounded, none of the earlier scholars or Ṣūfī saints had ever suggested it. All the monists (*ittihādīyyah*) who came after him reiterated this proposition. However, of all of them he is closest to Islam, as he has also many good things to say, for example, he distinguishes between the Real and its manifestations, and this provides room for God's commands and prohibitions, affirms the Sharī'ah as it is, and emphasizes in *sulūk* the observance of morality and adherence to prescribed forms of worship. That is why many people follow his teachings in their *sulūk* and benefit from them, even though they may not understand his real ideas. Only those who understand them as he expounds them realize their truth.

#### **The second view**

Ibn Arabī's disciple, Aṣ-Ṣadr Ar-Rūmī,<sup>235</sup> a so-called philosopher, was comparatively more removed from the Sharī'ah and Islam. That is why At-Tilimsānī,<sup>236</sup> the profligate (*fājir*) strangely enough called "pious", used to say, "My earlier master was a fickle-minded philosopher, and the latter one was a philosopher with unsettled ideas." He was referring to Aṣ-Ṣadr Ar-Rūmī, since he had studied with him, and had not seen Ibn 'Arabī. In his *Miftāḥ Ghayb al-Jam' wa al-Wujūd* and other works (Ṣadr ad-Dīn) says that God is both being as such and a particular being.

He distinguishes likewise between an animal as such and particular animals, and between body as such and particular bodies. But anything as such does not exist out there; it exists only as an individual. Hence the consequence of his doctrine is that God has no existence, no essence or existence of His own; His being is identical with the being of created things. That is why he and his master say that God cannot and will not be seen or that he does not really have any name or attributes. They clearly say that the dog, the pig, urine and stool are one with Him in existence. May He be exalted from these blasphemies.

### **The third view**

At-Tilimsānī, the profligate, is the worst of all the monists; he is deeper in misbelief (*kufr*) than others; he differentiates neither between existence and existence, as Ibn ‘Arabī did, nor between the universal and particular, as Ar-Rūmī did. For him, there is no other or different being in any sense; one perceives the other long as one has a veil on one’s eyes. The moment it is removed he sees that there is no “other,” and realizes the truth.

This is why he legalizes all forbidden things. Many a reliable person has reported him saying, “Daughters, mothers or any other women are just the same for us. It is those who are veiled who say that this one or that one is forbidden. We would say to these people that they are forbidden only to you.” He used to say, “The Qur’ān is full of *shirk*; there is absolutely no *tawhīd* there; one can find *tawhīd* only in our books.” He has also said that he does not stick to one *sharī‘ah*. When he was more considerate, he used to say, “The Qur’ān takes you to Paradise; our books take you to God.” He has explained God’s names in the light of the philosophy he has worked out.

At-Tilimsānī was a poet and had published a collection of poems, which seen from the point of view of art are very fine. But as the saying goes, they are like bacon in a silver pot. He wrote a creed for the Nuṣayrīyyah, who believed that God is like an ocean and the things of the world are like its waves.



### Ibn Sab‘īn and other monists

As for Ibn Sab‘īn<sup>237</sup> he expounded in his *Al-Budū* and *Al-Iḥāṭah* the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, that there is no being other than God. Ibn Al-Fārid,<sup>238</sup> too, sets forth the same doctrine in the last part of his ode on *sulūk*, though he is not so explicit as At-Tilimsānī, Ar-Rūmī or Ibn ‘Arabī. He is nearer to At-Tilimsānī than the others. Anyway, I have not seen any monist proclaiming *kufr* as loudly as At-Tilimsānī or the one called Al-Balyānī,<sup>239</sup> from among the Ṣūfīs of Shirāz. I will quote here some couplets of At-Tilimsānī:

There is a sign for Him in everything  
Which tells that it is one with Him.  
You are not other than the world, but one with it.  
This profound truth he understands who experiences it.  
My hand enjoys when it moves on my body,  
For in reality I am not other than you.  
Why does your camel not take rest!  
How long will your shadow continue to move!  
You will soon know that your journey was to none  
Except to yourself when you reach the end.  
All things are on the same level;  
One is not for praise, nor the other for blame.  
It is only the custom, or one’s nature  
Or the Law-giver that make these distinctions.  
My admonisher! You forbid me and command me!  
But ecstasy is the best forbidding and commander.  
If I obey you and defy ecstasy I shall turn blind  
To realities I perceive and engage in superstitions revealed.  
When you realize the truth, the thing you enjoin,  
You will find one with what you forbid.  
What is the ocean except its waves and nothing else,  
Even though the multiplicity of things has made them different.

*Ad infinitum.* As for prose pieces expounding these ideas, they are beyond count. Ignorant people think that these people are the leaders of Islam, the torch-bearers of truth, for whom the *ummah* has nothing but praise, who belong to the category of people like

Sa‘īd Ibn Al-Musayyīb,<sup>240</sup> Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz,<sup>241</sup> Mālik Ibn Anas,<sup>242</sup> Al-Awzā‘ī,<sup>243</sup> Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham,<sup>244</sup> Sufyān Ath-Thawrī,<sup>245</sup> al-Fuḍayl Ibn ‘Iyād,<sup>246</sup> Ma‘rūf Al-Karkhī,<sup>247</sup> Ash-Shāfi‘ī,<sup>248</sup> Abū Sulaymān,<sup>249</sup> Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbāl,<sup>250</sup> Bishr Al-Ḥāfi,<sup>251</sup> ‘Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak,<sup>252</sup> Shaqīq Al-Balkhī,<sup>253</sup> and many others from the predecessors; and al-Junayd Ibn Muḥammad Al-Qawārīrī,<sup>254</sup> Sahl Ibn ‘Abdullah At-Tustārī,<sup>255</sup> ‘Amr Ibn Uthmān Al-Makkī,<sup>256</sup> as well as Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī,<sup>257</sup> ‘Abdul-Qādir Al-Jīlānī,<sup>258</sup> Shaykh Adiy,<sup>259</sup> Shaykh Abū Al-Bayān,<sup>260</sup> Shaykh Abū Madyan,<sup>261</sup> Shaykh ‘Aqīl,<sup>262</sup> Shaykh Abū Al-Wafā’,<sup>263</sup> Shaykh Raslān,<sup>264</sup> Shaykh Abdur-Raḥīm,<sup>265</sup> Shaykh ‘Abdullah Al-Yunīnī,<sup>266</sup> Shaykh Al-Qurashī,<sup>267</sup> and others like them from among the successors who came from various places - Hijāz, the Levant, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, and Khurāsān. With one word they all denounce these people as *kāfir* as well as those who are a little better than they. They are agreed that God is not one with the world, nor a part or an attribute of it, that He exists in Himself independently of the world, completely separate from and transcending the creation, that this is what the four heavenly books – the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms and the Qur’ān – teach, that this is the Faith on which God has created man, and that this is what their reason upholds.

I always think that the emergence of people like these is one of the major reasons why the Tartars wrought the devastation they wrought or why the Sharī‘ah has disappeared. I also think that these people are the forerunners of the Anti-Christ, the blind of one eye, the fraud who would claim that he is God, just as they identify everything with God, big or small. For the author of the *Fuṣūṣ*, some forms of God’s manifestation or appearance are higher than others because their essences in pre-existence are higher than the essences of the others. Ar-Rūmī would put the thing in a different way; he would say that some individuals are greater than others, just as some members within a universal category are greater than

others. The rest would say that everything is part of God, though some parts are bigger than others.

The Anti-Christ in the eyes of these people is one of the greatest gnostics of God, like Pharaoh (of Moses), and a greater person than all the prophets except Muḥammad, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them. Moses fought against Pharaoh

since he claimed lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) for himself, and God will give victory to the real Christ, who was deified even though he never claimed divinity for himself, over the false Christ who will claim that he is God. It is because of this claim he made that some people have doubted whether the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet has said that the Anti-Christ will be blind of one eye,<sup>268</sup> or the *ḥadīth* in which he has told us that we would not see our Lord until we die,<sup>269</sup> are true. Ibn Al-Khatīb,<sup>270</sup> for example, has denied that the Prophet ever said such things; he says that the signs associated with the Anti-Christ demonstrating his mortality are too clear to need any further sign, such as blindness in an eye.

Now that we have learned the ideas of these monists and seen how the Christians and the incarnationists have fallen into this error, we can appreciate why the Prophet pointed out to his people that the Anti-Christ will be blind of one eye. The Prophet was a blessing for all the peoples, those who were present in his time and those who would come afterwards. Since many people believed that God could appear as a human being, or that He was one with a particular human being, the Prophet argued from the fact that the Anti-Christ would be blind in one eye that he could not be God. A very good friend of mine was inclined towards monism in the beginning but recanted from it afterwards. He once mentioned this *ḥadīth* to me, and I explained to him at length what it really meant.

Another person came to me claiming that he was “the seal of the saints,” and that when Al-Hallaj said, “I am God,” it was God Who spoke through his mouth, just as a jinn speaks through the mouth of the person who is under his influence. He also said that when the Companions of the Prophet heard the words of God from

the mouth of the Prophet the case was the same. I pointed out that if the case had been as he said, the Companions would have been in the position of Moses son of ‘Imrān, and the person whom they refer to would be greater than Moses, because Moses heard God’s words coming from the bush while these people hear it from a living jinn. This is what a section of the monists believe. Most of them are ignorant people; they cannot differentiate between the absolute universal identity (between God and the world) which At-Tilimsānī the profligate and his followers expound, and the limited particular identity in which the Christians and the extremists among the Shi‘īs believe. The Elders of the *ummah* and its leading *a’immah* consider the faithlessness of the Jahmīyyah more perverse than that of the Jews; this is the opinion of ‘Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak, Al-Bukhārī and others. However, the Jahmīyyah have only alluded to and never explicitly stated that God is in a particular space. In comparison to them, these monists are much worse infidels and certainly more wretched. The Elders of the *a’immah* were, to be sure, better aware of Islam and its ideas, but many people do not realize the significance of their condemnation of the Jahmīyyah unless they contemplate it properly with guidance from above. The Elders came to know of their secret doctrines and denounced them.

Some people have observed that the theologians among the Jahmīyyah worship nothing, and the devotees among them worship everything. This is because their theologians have no urge for worship and devotion, since they describe their Lord in negative terms and attribute to Him the characteristics of the dead. Their devotees, on the other hand, have an urge for worship and devotion which can only be satisfied when it is directed towards some existing rather than non-existing being. They are therefore led to worship created beings, whether it is the universal being or any particular one, the sun, the moon, a person, an idol, etc. With their philosophy the monists justify all forms of *shirk* and fail to affirm God’s unity. They only affirm what is common between God and

the world, and elevate created beings to the level of divinity. This is the reason why, as a reliable person said to me, Ibn Sab‘īn wanted to migrate to India. The Islamic world, he complained, could not accommodate him; India, on the other hand, was the land of polytheists who worshiped everything including trees and animals.

This is what monism is. I know some people who delve into philosophy and *kalām* and engage in spiritual practices on the *ṭarīqah* of these monists. When they describe God they say that He is not this, not that. They say that He is not the Lord of the World, contrary to what Muslims believe, and negate the attributes which the prophets predicate of Him. When any of them has a mystical experience or ecstasy, he deifies himself on the lines of the monists. He says, “God is all that exists. When he is asked, “How does your description of God in negative terms stand with this affirmation? he replies, “This is what my experience and ecstasy say.” We would say to this misguided person: When any mystical or ecstatic experience does not agree with the Faith, either one or both of them are false. Experiences and ecstasies come out of ideas and beliefs; since knowledge and feeling involve each other, your love, ecstasy and experience will be commensurate to your knowledge and insight.

Had these people followed the way of the prophets and messengers (peace be upon them) who taught the worship of one God without associating anyone with Him, and described Him in terms He has described Himself, and had they followed the method that the first Elders followed, they would have moved on the right path and attained conviction and peace of heart. The truth, as some have said, is that the messengers of God described Him in positive terms in detail and in negative terms in brief. The Sabaeans, who negate divine attributes, on the contrary, describe Him in negative terms at length and in positive terms very briefly. Look at the Qur’ān; it abounds in positive statements such as, “God knows all things” (2:231); “He has power over everything” (2:20); “He is

Hearing and Seeing” (58:1); and, “He encompasses everything in knowledge and mercy” (40:7). But when it describes Him in negative terms, it only says, “There is nothing like Him” (41:11); “There is none equal to Him” (112:4); “Do you know of any who is worthy of the same names as He” (19:65); “Glory to your Lord! the Lord of Honor and Power! (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him! And peace be upon the messengers! (37:180).

[*Majmū‘at ar-Rasā’il wa al-Masā’il* 1:171-183]

**(3.5) The doctrine of one actor is wrong, and no one can excuse himself on the ground of fore-ordainment.**

*Fore-ordainment provides no justification or excuse for anyone. A number of Ṣūfīs who are held in great esteem perceive the fore-ordainment of things, and are occupied with it to the negligence of God’s commands and prohibitions; they generally go astray. Similarly, those who say that there is only one being, or that there is only one actor, and human actions are in reality the actions of God, are greatly mistaken. Ibn Taymīyyah refutes the arguments which these people adduce from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah in their support.*

Fore-ordainment provides no justification or excuse for anyone. it is to be believed and not to be offered as an excuse. He who argues from it in support of his evil acts is wrong on the ground of reason as well as revelation. If it were an excuse for an evil deed no one would be blamed for any misdeed, punished for any crime, or avenged for any wrong. It would also mean that if the person who seeks justification for his acts in fore-ordainment is to suffer any wrong in his body, honor, family or property at the hands of any other, he should not blame him, be angry with him, or take revenge on him. Obviously no one will like that or allow that. It is wrong from the point of view of reason as well as the *shar‘*.

If people were to be excused on the ground of fore-ordainment, Iblīs should not have been condemned nor should Pharaoh, the people of Noah, ‘Ād, Thamūd, and others who denied faith and have been punished. Nor should *jihād* against the infidels be instituted, nor sentences carried out, nor thieves amputated, nor adulterers stoned or lashed, nor murderers hanged, nor any violation of law punished.

Since men know from their nature and reason that the argument from fore-ordainment is wrong, no people in any age or country has ever upheld it. No person worthy of mention has ever endorsed it. The reason is obvious. Neither peace nor happiness in this world or the next can be established on this ground. No two men can live together for an hour if they do not follow any code. The Code of Law that God has given is His light on the earth, and His justice for His people...

People make fore-ordainment an excuse when they pursue evil desires, or when under the influence of passions, feelings and past associations they indulge in actions in which they see no good or which they cannot justify. The pagans of Arabia said “If God had wished, we would not have associated anyone with Him, nor would our forefathers; nor should we have proclaimed anything forbidden.” Commenting on this God has said, “So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted our wrath. Say: Have you any knowledge? If so, produce it before us. You follow nothing but conjecture. You do nothing but lie. Say: With God is the argument that reaches home. If it has been His will, He could indeed have guided you all” (6:148-9)...

Had fore-ordainment provided any argument, the Prophet and his companions would have made use of it. Since whatever was happening in the world was preordained not only the wicked but also the righteous could argue from it, had the argument been really correct. What happened is that everyone was pursuing whatever part of his religion he thought was true, although he was

pursuing nothing but conjecture. He had no knowledge and was only running after guesses.

As for the *ḥadīth* that Moses complained to Adam that he led himself and his people out of Paradise and that Adam pleaded that he was not to be blamed, for God had decided on that destiny forty years in advance, defeating Moses in argument,<sup>271</sup> the truth is that Adam did not justify his violation of God's command on the grounds that it was pre-ordained, nor did Moses ever refer to Adam's violation when he talked to him. How could Adam or Moses refer to something which even an ordinary Muslim would not refer to? Adam repented for what he had done and God accepted his repentance, and put him on the right path. And Moses knew his Lord too well to rebuke even an ordinary person who does wrong and then repents, not to speak of one who was a prophet. Adam, too, knew that if fore-ordainment had been an excuse he would not have to repent or go out of Paradise. Had fore-ordainment been an argument it would have been so also for Iblīs and others. Moses likewise knew that if fore-ordainment were an argument, Pharaoh would not have been drowned, nor would the Children of Israel have been chastised with thunder and other things. How could Moses use that argument when he himself had once said, 'My Lord! I have indeed wronged myself. Do you then forgive me!' (and) He forgave him" (28:16). On another occasion he said, "You are our Protector; so forgive us and give us Your mercy; for You are the best of those who forgive" (7:55).

The reason Moses blamed Adam was that people had to suffer since Adam had eaten from the forbidden tree. That is why he asked, "Why did you take us and yourself out of Paradise?" The blame for inviting the suffering that human beings must experience is something different, and the blame for committing a sin by violating God's command is something different. If a man does something which lands him in poverty and subjects his family to suffering, prompting them to blame him for it, this cannot be taken to mean that they blame him for committing a sin.



Human beings are required to be patient in what is ordained, do what is commanded, and seek forgiveness when they sin. God has said, “Patiently then persevere, for the promise of God is true; and ask forgiveness for your faults.” (40:55); and, “No kind of calamity can occur except by the leave of God, and if anyone believes in God He guides his heart aright” (64:11). These verses, the Elders have pointed out, refer to those people who believe that whatever befalls them is from God, and bear it with calm and patience. Those who find an excuse in fore-ordainment and neglect their duties or complain about what is ordained violate faith and religion and join the ranks of the heretics and hypocrites. This is what those people come to who argue from fore-ordainment.

Many of those who claim to be *Şūfīs* and command great respect perceive the fore-ordainment of things, and occupy themselves with it to the negligence of God’s commands and prohibitions. When they fail in their duties or indulge in forbidden things they justify themselves on the ground of fore-ordainment. This is a most serious mistake. Those who take this course and persist in it are worse than the Jews and Christians. However, most of them contradict themselves and do not pursue the line very far.

One of the contradictory ideas is that Adam was secretly asked to eat, and therefore he ate (from the tree). The other is that since *Iblīs* was not sincere in his commitment to *tawhīd* he was asked to bow down to Adam; but when he saw that Adam was an “other” he did not prostrate, whereupon God punished him and said, “Get out of Paradise” (7:18). These ideas are plainly devilish, sheer lies against Adam and *Iblīs*. Adam did confess that he had committed a sin and that he had wronged himself, and he consequently repented of it. He did not say that God was not fair to him, or that He had commanded him in secret to eat. The Qur’ān says, “Then Adam received words (of guidance) from his Lord, Who accepted his repentance, for, verily, He alone is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Dispenser of Grace” (2:37). Or “They (Adam and Eve) said: ‘Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and

bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be lost” (7:23). Iblīs, on the other hand, persisted in his folly and tried to justify himself on grounds of fore-ordainment. He said, “My Lord! Because You have put me in the wrong, I will make wrong appear fair to them on earth, and I will guide them into error” (15: 39).

As for the idea that Iblīs saw an “other”, and hence did not bow down to him, it is far worse than the first. It is only a monistic interpretation of the event, and a sheer lie against Iblīs. He did not refuse to bow down because Adam was an “other”; his plea was, “I am better than he. You did create me from fire, and him from clay” (7:12). Again, the angels were not commanded to bow down to Adam because Adam was not an “other”. No, the angels and Adam were altogether different beings and their difference was something quite apparent. The Qur’ān says, “He taught Adam the name of all things, then he placed them before the angels, and said: Tell me the name of these if you are right! They said, ‘Glory to You, of knowledge we have nothing save what You have taught us. In truth it is You Who are Perfect in Knowledge and Wisdom’” (2:32-2). The angels and Adam confessed that God was other than they and that they were other than He; that is why they prayed to Him as a servant prays to his Lord. Adam said, “Our Lord! We have indeed wronged ourselves...,” and the angels said, “We have no knowledge save what You have taught us;” or, “Our Lord! Your reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in repentance and follow Your path; and save them from the penalty of the blazing fire” (40:7)....

The idea that verses like, “Not for You is the decision” (3:128); or “When You threw (a handful of dust) it was not You who threw but God who threw” (8:17); or, “Verily those who plight their fealty to you do no less than plight their fealty to God: The hand of God is over their hands” (48:10; underline the Prophet’s identity with God, is only a monistic interpretation of these verses. The claim that the words “not for you is the decision” simply meant

that the Prophet's act was the act of God) since they negate any difference between the two, is sheer folly.

First, these words are part of the verse which runs like this: "No help can come except from God, the Almighty the Wise. He might cut off a part of the unbelievers or put them to humiliation so that they withdraw in frustration. Not for you is the decision whether He turns in mercy to them or punishes them; for they are indeed wrong-doers" (3:126-8). As reported in an authentic *hadīth*,<sup>272</sup> the background of these verses is that the Prophet prayed against a group of infidels and cursed them in the *qunūt* prayer for some time. But when these verses came down he stopped praying against them. He realized that it is only for God to decide about them, and that he had absolutely no say in the decision. If God willed He would destroy a part of the infidels, or subject them to defeat and cause them heavy losses. If He willed, He would forgive them, or if He willed He would punish them. He had said elsewhere, "Say: I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as God wills. Had I knowledge of the Unseen, I would have multiplied all good, and no evil would have touched us" (17:78; or, "They say: 'If we had had anything to do with this affair we should not have been in the slaughter here.' Therefore the Prophet is directed, Say you: 'Indeed the decision is wholly God's'" (3:154).

Second, the verse, "You did not throw when you threw, but God threw it," does not mean that the Prophet's act was not his act but God's act, as these misguided people suggest, for were it so, it would be true of every act. Whenever any person walks we should say that he does not walk, rather it is God Who walks, or when anyone rides a horse we should say that it is not he but God Who rides, or when anyone speaks we should say that it is not he but God Who speaks. We should say the same thing about anyone who eats, drinks, fasts and prays. Not only that, we should also say in the case of an unbeliever that it is not he but God Who disbelieves, or of a liar that it is not he but God Who lies. Obviously, if anyone

says so, he is definitely an infidel who has lost his reason as well as faith.

What the verse actually means is that during the battle of Badr when the Prophet threw a handful of dust at the enemy and said, “May the faces of these people be disfigured,”<sup>273a</sup> it was not in his power to hit the face of everyone with the dust. Only God could do that with His power. His words simply mean that the Prophet did not hit them when he threw the dust, rather it was God Who hit them. The throw which is affirmed of the Prophet is different from the throw which is denied of him; otherwise the verse would be contradicting itself. What has been denied of him is hitting the faces with the dust, and what has been affirmed of him is throwing the dust. Similarly, when he shot an arrow at the enemy it was God Who caused it to reach them by His power in a miraculous way.

Third, if the verse is taken to mean that God is the Creator of human acts, it is correct. Abraham earlier said, “Our Lord! Make of us Muslims bowing to Your (Will)” (2:128). Hence it is God Who makes someone submit to Him. But from this it does not follow that God and the servant are one, or that the being of God is the being of man, or that God enters into him. The saying that God is the Creator of human acts is true, but the saying that the Creator enters into the creation, or His existence is the existence of the world is wrong. These people move on from the unity of Lordship to incarnation and identity, which is sheer error and blasphemy.

Fourth, the verse, “those who plight their fealty to you only plight their fealty to Allah” (48:10), does not at all imply that the Prophet and God are one. It only means that since he is the Messenger of God and the conveyor of His commands, whoever plights his fealty to him plights his fealty to Allah, just as whoever obeys him obeys God. It does not at all imply that he is God. The Prophet commands only what God asked him to command. Hence, when one obeys his commands one obeys God. He said, “Whoever obeys me obeys God, and whoever obeys my governor obeys me; and whoever disobeys me disobeys God, and whoever disobeys my

governor disobeys me.”<sup>273</sup> It is plain that he and his governor are not one.

If anyone infers from the verse that an act of the Prophet is an act of God or that God has entered into him, or any other thing like that, he is not only a fool but also guilty of faithlessness and blasphemy. Besides, he robs the Prophet of his honor and position and brings him down to (the level of) an ordinary person or thing, for if the verse meant that God is the One Who does the Prophet’s deed it is no honor for the Prophet, for God would be equally doing a deed anyone else does. It would follow, then, that whoever plighted his fealty to Abū Jahl plighted fealty to Allah, or whoever plighted his fealty to Musaylimah (the liar) plighted fealty to Allah, or whoever plighted his fealty to the leaders of the Quraysh and other tribes which participated in the battle of the Ditch plighted fealty to Allah. It would also follow that whoever plights fealty is God, or that it is God Who plights fealty to God, for as He has created one He has created the other. This is what follows from the doctrine of incarnation, unity and identity, because if it is true of one it is true of another. This is exactly what leading incarnationists and monists have explicitly said. When they have been asked to fight the enemies of God, they have said, “Should we fight God?” or “Can we fight God?” We have heard words like these from their leaders, and told them that they are absolutely mistaken....

As for the verse, “Verily those who plight their fealty to you plight their fealty to Allah, the hand of God is over their hands” (48:10), we know that the hand of the Prophet was with the hands of the people who plighted their fealty to him, that they were giving their hand in his hand in plighting their fealty. But when the verse says that God’s hand was over their hands, it means, first, that it was not the hand of the Prophet (pbuh); however, since the Prophet was God’s servant and messenger, he took the pledge on behalf of God. Hence the people who plighted fealty to him plighted fealty to Allah, who had sent him and asked him to take

the pledge. Don't you know that when a person whom you appoint as your agent takes a pledge, it is in fact you who take the pledge? Similarly, when a deputy concludes a pact with some people it is regarded as a pact with the authority who appoints him as his assistant.

[*Fatāwā* 2:323-334]



#### 4. **SHIRK: ASSOCIATING OTHERS WITH GOD**

##### 4.1 The root cause of *shirk*

*Shirk appears mainly in peoples who do not have any heavenly book to guide them.*

The root cause of *shirk* in polytheistic nations is that they do not possess any revealed book; on the other hand, the main reason for people to believe in one God is that they have a revealed book. This is because people need revelation in order to mold and perfect themselves according to their primordial nature (*fitrah*). This is also the reason why God launched mankind on the earth with a prophet. The Qur'ān says, "God taught Adam all the names" (2:31). Therefore, those who deviated from the prophetic path fell into *shirk*. Non-believers who do not have any Book are generally polytheists. Their *shirk* is primarily due to the fact that they have no faith in prophets, about whom God says, "We did send among every people a messenger (with the message): 'Serve God, and escape the evil.'" (16:36).

In the beginning human society was free from *shirk*. Adam and his children, who followed his religion believed in one God, for they adhered to the prophetic teachings. God has said, "Mankind was but one nation, thereafter they differed" (10:19). Between Adam and Noah ten generations passed; the religion of all of them was Islam. When they moved away from the prophetic *shari'ah* they fell into *shirk*. The reverse was not the case; they did not move away from the prophetic religion because they fell into *shirk*, for Adam had taught them to believe and practice what God commanded him to do. God said to him, "And if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. But those who reject faith and belie Our signs shall be companions of the Fire. They shall abide therein" (2:38-9). On another occasion He said,



“Whosoever follows My guidance will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. But whosoever moves away from My message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say: ‘My Lord! Why have You raised me up blind while I had sight (before)?’ (God) will say: Thus did you, when Our signs came unto you, disregard them so will you this day be disregarded” (2:123-6).

These words which God addressed to Adam, when He brought them down on earth, show that He wanted them to follow the guidance which He would be sending to them and which constitutes the message He would be revealing to His prophets. They also mean that those who move away from it or reject it will suffer a grievous penalty on the Day of Judgment, and their life in the world, in the grave, and in the Hereafter will be miserable, grievous and painful. On the other hand, those who will believe in His message and do good deeds will enjoy a life of peace and joy.

Whoever follows the prophetic teaching does not fall into *shirk*, for all the prophets taught *tawhīd* just as they were taught. God has said, “Not a messenger did we send before you without this revelation sent by Us to him that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me (alone)” (21:25). He has thus made it clear that He will send every messenger with *tawhīd*. In another verse He has said, “You question Our messengers whom We sent before you: Did We appoint any deities other than (God) Most Gracious to be worshiped?” (43:45). This makes it absolutely clear that God never commanded *shirk*. These two verses, as well as many others, underline the truth that God has commanded His messengers nothing but *tawhīd*, that He has forbidden *shirk* completely, and that when He sent Adam down to earth, He commanded him and his children to follow what He would be revealing to His prophets. It follows that humans indulged in *shirk* because they deviated from the teachings of the prophets and messengers regarding the belief in one God and devotion to Him alone. The reverse is not the case, that they rejected the teaching of

the prophets because they indulged in *shirk*. *Shirk* and rejection of prophethood go together; when you have one you have the other.

[*Fatāwā* 20:105-7]

#### (4.2) Forms of *shirk*

*Shirk in Divinity (ilāhīyyah), shirk in Lordship (rubūbīyyah), and shirk hidden and subtle.*

The *shirk* for which one is declared an unbeliever (*kāfir*) is of two kinds: *shirk in ilāhīyyah* and *shirk rubūbīyyah*. *shirk in ilāhīyyah* is to associate someone else with God in worship, love, fear, hope and prayer for forgiveness. This is the *shirk* which God will not forgive till one recants from it. He has said, “Say to the unbelievers, if (now) they desist (from unbelief), what they have done in the past will be forgiven them” (8:38). It is because of this *shirk* of the pagans of Arabia that the Prophet declared war against them. He fought them because they had made partners in divinity (*ilāhīyyah*). The Qur’ān says, “Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides God, as equal (with God), loving them as they should love God. But those of faith are overflowing in their love for God” (2:165); “Those who take protectors other than God (say): ‘We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to God’” (39:3); “The associationists say: ‘Has (this Prophet) made (all) the gods into one God?’ Truly this is something strange” (38:5).

The prophet questioned Ḥaṣīn, “How many (gods) do you worship?” He replied “Six on the earth, and one in the heavens.” He then asked “Who is the one whom you worship because you expect his favor or fear his wrath?” He said, “The one who is in the heavens. Thereupon the Prophet said, “Would you not then submit (to one God only) so that I teach you some words. Ḥaṣīn submitted to Islam and the Prophet taught him to say, “My Lord, give me guidance, and guard me against the evils of my soul.”<sup>274</sup>

As for *rubūbiyyah*, the pagans of Arabia believed that Allah is the Cherisher Lord (Ar-Rabb). The Qur'ān says, "if you ask them who it is who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: 'Allah.' Say: To whom belong the earth and all the beings therein? (Tell me) if you know. They will say: 'To God!' Say: Will you not then receive admonition? Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Throne Supreme? They will say: '(They belong to) God.' Say: Will you not then be filled with awe? Say: Who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things, who protects (all), but is not protected (of any)? Tell (me) if you know. They will say: 'It belongs to God.' Say: Then how are you deluded?" (23:84-9). None of them ever believed that it was the idols who sent down rain, fed the people, or governed the world. Their *shirk*, as I have said above, was that they had set up personalities like God whom they loved just as they loved God. This implies that whoever loves anything other than God just as he loves God he is guilty of *shirk*. God has referred to this in these words: "They will say then in their mutual bickering: 'By God, we were, to be sure, in manifest error when we held you as equals with the Lord of the Worlds'" (26:96-8). The same is true of one who fears another as he should fear God, or pins his hopes on someone as he should pin hopes on God, and so on.

The second kind of *shirk* is *shirk* in *rubūbiyyah*. God is the Owner and the Ruler; it is He Who gives and takes, causes suffering and gives happiness, elevates and degrades, honors and humiliates. Hence, whoever associates anyone with Him in any of these things commits *shirk* in His *rubūbiyyah*. He can save himself from this *shirk* only if he first turns to God, his real benefactor, and thanks Him for the good he receives, and then turns to the person through whom he receives and thanks him. The Prophet has said, "If someone does good to you, do him a similar good. When you have nothing to give in return, then pray for him till you feel that you have paid him back."<sup>275</sup> All good comes from God, as He has said, "You have no good thing but it is from God" (16:53); and,

“Of the bounties of your Lord We bestow freely on all, these as well as those” (17:20). God is in reality the bestower of every good. It is He Who creates all provisions and allots them, and it is He Who makes them available to whom He wills. He is also the real benefactor, for He moves the heart of one who gives. He is the First and He is the Last.

This was endorsed by the Prophet when he said to Ibn ‘Abbās, “Know that if all the people gathered together to do any good to you they would not be able to do except what God has written for you; and if they all combined to cause you harm they would not be able to cause except what God has written for you. The pens have been withdrawn and the pages have dried up.”<sup>276</sup> At-Tirmidhī, who recorded the *ḥadīth* said that it is a *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*. This means that the one who really causes good or evil is God. The same is true of all the things that we have mentioned explaining *rubūbiyyah*.

Those who believe in this and live it are free from servility to any created being like them; they stop looking towards anyone else and showering on him praise or blame. Their witness to God’s unity is sincere and their faith in His Lordship strong; they have peace of mind and tranquility of heart. For him who trusts God, God is sufficient for him. That is why Fuḍayl Ibn ‘Iyāḍ<sup>277</sup> has said, “One who knows people is at peace.” In other words, he knows that they can neither do him any good nor cause him any harm.

As for the subtle *shirk*, it is very difficult for people to free themselves from it completely. It is difficult, for example, not to love anyone along with God. Let me make it clear here that if you love anyone for the sake of God as you love any prophet, any righteous person or as you love good deeds, this love is not *shirk*, for this love is part of your love for God. To love God is to love all that He loves, and hate all that He hates. When you love God truly you do not do anything against His will; you fail in this duty when your love for God is not perfect. This is what God has Himself said: “Say: If you do love God, follow me; God will love you and

forgive your sins” (3:31). Obviously we are not discussing here the love which is for the sake of God. The love that involves a subtle *shirk* is the love which is for the sake of other beings or things. This love is undoubtedly a defect in your love for God. When your love for God becomes perfect, you love none other than Him. This, however, does not bar you from loving the prophets and other persons mentioned above; in fact, that is part of your love for God. The touchstone of true love of God is this: the stronger your love for God, the fewer and the less important are the things that you love besides; conversely, the weaker your love for God, the greater in number and importance become the objects you love.

Similar is the case with fear, hope and other virtues. When your fear of God becomes perfect, you fear none other than Him. God has Himself said, “Those who preach the messages of God and fear Him, and fear none but God” (33:39). But when you fear God less, you fear created beings more. Your fear of other beings is inversely proportional to your fear of God. The same is true of hope and other virtues. This is the subtle *shirk* from which none is free except those whom God may save. A *ḥadīth* says that *shirk* in this *ummah* is more subtle than the movement of the ants.<sup>278</sup>

The way out of these difficulties is to turn sincerely to Allah. He has said, “Whoever expects to meet his Lord let him work righteousness, and admit no one as partner in the worship and service to his Lord” (18:110). And no one turns to God in all sincerity without cultivating disinterestedness (*zuhud*) in things, and no one attains disinterestedness without cultivating piety (*taqwā*) which is to submit oneself to God’s commands and prohibitions.

[*Fatāwā* 1:91-4]

### (4.3) Calling upon anyone other than God is *shirk*.

*To call upon any being other than God, be he a prophet or a saint, living or dead, or to prostrate before him or before his grave, even towards his grave, is shirk.*

Ṣūfī saints whom people follow are like imāms in the *ṣalāh* who lead the *ṣalāh* whereas others offer *ṣalāh* behind them. Or they are like the guides in *ḥajj* who take people to the House of God, perform *ḥajj* with them, and guide them in various rites. They have absolutely no share in divinity (*ilahīyyah*). Those who give them a share in divinity are guilty of *shirk*, like the Christians, whom God has castigated in these words, “They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of God, and (they take as their lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but one God: There is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him; (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)” (9:31). Peace and blessings be upon Noah who so clearly said of himself, “I do not say that I have the treasures of God, nor that I know what is hidden, nor that I am an angel” (11:31). In almost the same words Muḥammad (pbuh) has explained his own position, at the command of God (6:50).

In the presence of these statements, no one should call upon any saint, dead or absent, even upon a prophet in his absence or after his death. He should never say to anyone, “Master, I am under your care,” or “in your protection,” “I beseech you,” or “I take shelter in you.” Nor should he say when he blunders, “O Muḥammad,” “O ‘Ayl,” O Lady Nafīṣah,<sup>279</sup> O Shaykh Aḥmad,<sup>280</sup> “O Shaykh Adīy,<sup>281</sup> O Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qādir.<sup>282</sup> He should not utter a word that means calling someone, dead or absent, or begging something of him, or seeking his protection or help. These are the acts that the pagans and the polytheists used to indulge in.

We know that Muḥammad (pbuh) is the best of the creation. But even so ‘Umar did not seek his mediation (after his death). He rather requested his uncle ‘Abbās to pray for rain. He said, “God, when we did not have rain in the time of the Prophet we prayed to

You through him, and You would give us rain. Now we pray to You through the uncle of our Prophet, give us rain.” And they were given rain.<sup>283</sup> Al-Bukhārī has recorded this *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. During the lifetime of the Prophet people prayed to God through him and asked him to intercede for them, just as they will ask him to intercede for them with God on the Day of Judgment, and he will do that with God’s permission. Don’t you know that God has said, “Who is there who can intercede with him except after His permission” (2:255); or, “Say: Call upon other (gods) whom you fancy besides God. They have no power, not even the weight of an atom in the heavens or on the earth. No (sort of) share have they therein; nor is any of them a helper to God. No intercession can avail in His presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission” (34:22). Thus God has made it perfectly clear that He has no one to share in His rule and no partner or assistant. He has also made it clear that He will not allow any intercession without His permission.

On the Day of Judgment people will approach Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, one after the other beseeching them to intercede for them with God, but no one of these honorable personalities will intercede. In the end they will come to Muḥammad (pbuh) who will approach God, offer praises and fall before Him in prostration. Then God will give him permission to intercede, and he will intercede<sup>284</sup> When this is the case with the best of creation what do you think of others?

After the Prophet died, people neither called upon him nor sought his help. They did not ask him for anything, either at his grave or away from it. They did not even offer prayer near his grave or near the grave of anyone else. They only prayed for him, invoked God’s blessings on him, obeyed his instructions, followed his Shari‘ah, and did what God had asked them to do to Him, to His Prophet and to His faithful servants. The Prophet had instructed them, “Do not exalt me as the Christians exalted Jesus son of Mary. I am simply a servant of God, so call me the Servant

of God and the Messenger of God.”<sup>285</sup> Praying to God he once said, “Lord! Let not my grave be taken as an idol and worshiped.”<sup>286</sup> To his people, he instructed, “Do not make my grave a place for your festivities. Send me your *salām* and invoke God’s blessings on me from wherever you are; it will reach me.”<sup>287</sup> He warned them against following the example of the Jews and Christians in these words: “God has cursed the Jews and the Christians who offered prayers at the graves of their prophets.”<sup>288</sup> When a person said to him, “Just as God and you will,” he scolded him, saying, “You have made me equal to God! Just say, ‘As God wills.’”<sup>289</sup> On another occasion he said, “Don’t say, ‘As God and Muhammed will.’ Instead, say, ‘As God wills,’ and then ‘as Muḥammad wills’.”<sup>290</sup>

Aḥmad has recorded a *ḥadīth* that once when Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabāl bowed down before him, the Prophet said, “What is this, Mu‘ādh?” Mu‘ādh said, “Messenger of God, I saw people bowing down to their bishops in Syria. They claimed that it was the teaching of their prophets.” The prophet said, “Mu‘ādh, had I commanded prostration to anyone, I would have commanded women to bow down to their husbands, since they owe them a great deal.”<sup>291</sup> On another occasion, he asked Mu‘ādh, “If you happen to pass by my grave would you bow down?” He said, “No.” Thereupon the Prophet said, “So, prostration is for none except God.”<sup>292</sup> These are exactly the words that he said, or almost the same.

Now, if prostration is not to be offered to the Messenger of God, alive or dead, or to his grave, how can it be offered to anybody else? The *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections contain the *ḥadīth* that the Prophet said, “Do not sit on graves, or offer *ṣalāh* towards them.”<sup>293</sup> He definitely forbade *ṣalāh* towards a grave, just as he forbade prayer at it. That is why when people put his grave inside the Mosque the time they enlarged the Mosque, they put it on one side so that no one would face it during the *ṣalāh*. If this is the case with the grave of the Prophet, what to say of prostrating to any other grave, whosoever it may be.



[*Fatāwā* 11:499-502]

**(4.4) Satan impersonates the person whom one calls upon.**

*When one calls upon a being other than God, Satan appears in the form of that being and immerses the supplicant deeper still into shirk.*

One is guilty of a kind of *shirk* when one calls upon anyone other than God, dead or absent, and seeks his help in danger, illness, or hunger, as for example when one addresses him by his name when he is absent or dead and rotting, seeks his protection or blessing or help as one seeks from God. This is a form of *shirk* which God and His Prophet have clearly forbidden, as is known to every Muslim.

Sometimes Satan appears to a person when he invokes someone other than God in the form of the person he invokes. The one who invokes believes him to be the saint he invoked, or an angel in his form. But it is Satan who impersonates him and immerses the supplicant deeper into error. When the pagans of Arabia worshiped their idols, the evil ones spoke to them and appeared to them and gave them information about various things unknown. As that information contained a part that was false and untrue it indicated that the informers were the evil ones. God has said, “Shall I inform you (people,) on whom it is that the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying and wicked person” (26:221-2). This often happens with the pagans of India, Turkey and Ethiopia. Some so-called Muslims who follow in their footsteps claim that they have power to transform dust and various other things by using blood, saffron and laudanum, and that they can demonstrate it to anyone. Some enter into fire and eat snakes; others blow upon people and make them sick or cause them to die.

These things happen when they engage in acts that are commanded by Satan, such as listening to evil music or clapping hands. Those who perform these things as rites believe that they are greatly stirring and moving. Often on these occasions they quiver and tremble and give out shrieks. At this time the evil ones descend upon them, just as Satan enters the body of a possessed person. They foam at the mouth just as one does in an epileptic seizure and shout and shriek aloud, which is nothing but the shriek of Satan from their mouths. That is why one does not know what is going on with him until he becomes normal. Satan also speaks through the mouths of these people in a language unknown to them. Sometimes, persuaded by Satan, they enter into fire. You can see this in the Christians of the West and other people whom Satan has misled.

The people who indulge in unjustified innovations and act against the Qur'ān and the Sunnah cannot be credited with experiences with which God blesses the righteous. Miracles with which pious men are graced are given to the friends of God who fear Him and obey Him. God has said, "Behold! Verily on the friends of God there is no fear, nor shall they grieve, those who believe and keep themselves away from displeasing Him" (10:62). They are the people who seek God's nearness by doing obligatory duties which God has placed on them, as well as supererogatory works to which He has called them.

[*Fatāwā* 11:663-5]

**(4.5) To make offerings (*nadhar*) to the dead is *shirk*.**

To make offerings (*nadhar*) to the dead, be he a prophet or a saint or anybody else, or to their graves, or to those who look after them or visit them, is *shirk* offering and a sin against God. It matters little whether you offer any money or anything in kind. This is like the offerings that people make to churches and temples or to anchorites in cloisters. It has been authentically reported that

the Prophet said, “If one vows to carry out the will of God one should do it; but if one vows to violate His will one must not do it.”<sup>294</sup> Scholars are agreed that one must not fulfill a vow that involves disobedience to God. But on whether one should atone for default in such a case, opinions differ. Some scholars think that one should atone for the default, but this is considered necessary only in case one has vowed to God. But if one has vowed to anyone else, he will be in a way swearing in the name of someone other than God, which is *shirk*. He must repent of it and seek God’s forgiveness; he should not fulfill the vow, nor should he atone for it. However, if he has given something in charity to the poor or to people in debt, he may be rewarded for it by God.

In principle, *nadhār* has been discouraged. It is reported in an authentic *ḥadīth* that the Prophet disapproved of making vows (*nadhār*), saying, “It does not produce any good, except that it takes money from the pocket of a miser.”<sup>295</sup> However, when one vows to do something which means obeying rather than defying the will of God, such as offering *ṣalāh*, giving charity, fasting, making *ḥajj*, etc, one should fulfill that vow.

[*Fatāwā* 11:504-5]

**(4.6) To swear by anyone other than God, whether an angel, a prophet, a saint, or a king, is *shirk*.**

As for swearing in the name of any being other than God, whoever he may be - an angel, a prophet, a *Ṣūfī* sheikh, or a king, it is strictly prohibited and the oath is null and void. There is consensus of opinion on this issue among eminent scholars. They have only differed with regard to swearing in the name of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). However, the majority view is that all oaths made in the name of anyone other than God, including the Prophet, are null and void. The Prophet himself has said, “When you swear, swear by Allah or keep silent;”<sup>296</sup> and, “Whoever swears by anyone other than God commits *shirk*.”<sup>297</sup> Hence if you swear by your

sheikh, by his grave, by his life, by his rights on God, or if you swear by a king, by the favors bestowed by a king, or by your sword, or by the Ka‘bah, or by your father, or his grave, all these are wrong and forbidden, and your oath will not be valid. On this there is complete agreement among the Muslims.

[*Fatāwā* 11:506]

#### **(4.7) Closing the doors to *shirk*.**

*Shirk originated with the worship of pious people or their statues. The Prophet closed this door when he forbade offering prayers at the graves of prophets and pious men.*

*Shirk* in the world began with the worship of pious men and their statues. Another cause of *shirk* was the worship of heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and other stars; statues of these bodies were carved out and worshiped. The *shirk* of the people of Abraham was of this kind and partly of the other kind. The third cause of *shirk* was the worship of angels and jinns; they, too, were represented in statues. To be sure, statues are not worshiped for their own sake; they are worshiped for other reasons. In the case of the Arabs, the main reason for their *shirk* was the first, although other factors also contributed to its growth.

The man who first changed the religion of Abraham (pbuh) was ‘Āmr Ibn Luhayy.<sup>298</sup> He visited Syria and saw that people at Balqa prayed to idols to avert evil and secure good. Returning to Makkah, he introduced the same practice. This was the time when the tribe of Khuza‘ah ruled Makkah, that is to say, before the Quraysh supplanted them. ‘Āmr was the head of the Khuza‘ah. We have a *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections that the Prophet said, “I saw ‘Āmr Ibn Luhayy Ibn Jam‘ah Ibn Khundaf crawling on his belly in the Fire.”<sup>299</sup> Luhayy was the one who introduced changes in the religion of Abraham. He let loose, for example, a she-camel for free pasture, or set free one whose ears were slit. Among the

people of Noah *shirk* spread in the same way; it began with the worship of the holy men of the community. Satan incites people to take sometimes one way and sometimes the other way. However, the worship of holy men is the most common way, for people know them very well, see that their prayers are answered, and enjoy their blessings. When they die they visit their graves and pray at them; sometimes they beg from them, and sometimes they beg from God, and sometimes they offer *ṣalāh* near their graves under the impression that it is better to offer *ṣalāh* and pray for one's needs near their graves rather than in the mosques or at home.

Since this is the door from which *shirk* has entered various communities the Prophet set out to close it, as he closed many other doors, such as the worship of stars. Muslim has recorded the *ḥadīth* that five days before his death the Prophet addressed the people and said, "People before you used to say prayers at graves. Beware, do not turn graves into mosques; I forbid it absolutely."<sup>300</sup> Both Muslim and Al-Bukhārī have recorded that once when it was mentioned to the Prophet that churches in Ethiopia were extremely beautiful and exquisitely adorned with pictures (on the walls), he said, "People there used to build mosques near the graves of their holy men and draw figures (on the walls). To be sure, they will be among the most wretched people on the Day of Judgment."<sup>301</sup> They have also reported that on his deathbed the Prophet said, "God has cursed the Jews and the Christians who have turned the graves of their prophets into mosques. You must keep away from what they have done."<sup>302</sup> Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, 'Ā'ishah said, "Had the Prophet not warned people in this way, they would have opened his grave to the people. But they did not do that because they feared that people might turn it into a mosque."<sup>303</sup> Aḥmad in his *Musnad* and Abū Hatim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* have also recorded these words of the Prophet: "The worst people on earth are those who will see the Hour (of Judgment) coming and will be offering prayers at graves."<sup>304</sup> Abū Dāwūd has recorded in his *Sunan* that

the Prophet warned, “Do not hold any festive function at my grave; send your blessings to me from where you are, for your blessings will be conveyed to me.”<sup>305</sup> Mālik has recorded in his *Muwattā* this prayer of the Prophet: “Lord! Let not my grave be turned into an object of worship. Surely your wrath falls on the people who turn the graves of their prophets into a place of worship.”<sup>306</sup>

Muslim has recorded that Abū Al-Hayyāj Al-Asadī said that ‘Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib (raa) once asked him whether he could send him on a mission like the one the Prophet had sent him earlier. And then he commanded him to level all the graves which he would come across, and knock down all statues that he would find. He also commanded him to erase the pictures of dead people and remove the images that were set up on their graves.<sup>307</sup> Both are causes of *shirk*. It is reported that once on a journey ‘Umar passed by a place which people used to visit and offer *ṣalāh*. He inquired about it, and was told that it was the place where the Prophet once offered some prayers. Thereupon ‘Umar said, “People before you were annihilated for acts like this; they offered prayers to things associated with their prophets. When the time for *ṣalāh* comes here, make that *ṣalāh* here; otherwise move on.”<sup>308</sup> He also came to know that people were visiting the tree where the Companions of the Prophet had pledged their fealty (at the time of Ḥudaybiyyah). He commanded it to be cut down.<sup>309</sup> Abū Mūsā<sup>310</sup> wrote to him that people had discovered the grave of the prophet Daniel at Tustar. It had a book which told of future events and what would happen to the Muslims; it foretold that they would have a draught and come to the grave and open it up and get rain. ‘Umar commanded him to dig thirteen graves at daytime and bury the remains of that grave in one of them at night so that people might be saved from a great evil.

To sum up: God and His Prophet prohibited praying towards graves, even if no mosque is built on them. That act is certainly a greater evil. That is why scholars have not allowed the construction of mosques over graves, and have commanded them

to be dismantled if they are constructed. They have also said that if a body had been buried in a grave inside a mosque and a long period had lapsed, the grave must be leveled so that it may not be recognized. If any signs remain, *shirk* may raise its head any time. The land where we have the Prophet's Mosque now had a graveyard earlier where pagans would bury their dead. There were also some date trees and ruins there. When the Prophet wanted to build the mosque, he had the graves removed, the trees cut down, and the ruined structures leveled. Only then did he build the mosque on that ground

Neither the Companions nor their successors built a mosque on the grave of any prophet or holy man, nor did they build any tomb or shrine there. Nor did they put up anything on any place associated with any prophet, where he might have spent some time, or done any thing. They never thought of building any mosque on the relics of the prophets or holy men. The majority of them never made it a point to visit a place which the Prophet did not deliberately choose to encamp or offer *ṣalāh* and had done so just incidentally. In fact, leading personalities among them, such as 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb and others, would stop people from visiting those places and offering *ṣalāh* there where the Prophet had prayed incidentally and not deliberately. It is of course reported of Ibn 'Umar<sup>311</sup> that he would deliberately take the way the Prophet had walked or ridden on his journeys, stop at the places where he had stopped, offer *ṣalāh* where he had offered *ṣalāh*, even though he knew that the Prophet did not do so deliberately but just incidentally. Ibn 'Umar would do that as he tried to imitate the Prophet as closely as he could. However, his father, the other three rightly-guided caliphs, the rest of the ten Companions promised Paradise, and many others like Ibn Mas'ūd,<sup>312</sup> Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal,<sup>313</sup> and Ubayy Ibn Ka'b<sup>314</sup> would not do what Ibn 'Umar used to do. And the practice of the majority of the Companions is right.

The reason is clear. To follow the Prophet means to do as he did, in the way he did, and because he did it. If he planned to offer

*ṣalāh* or perform any rite at a particular place, offering or performing that rite at that place would be following him. But if he did not plan to do any such thing at a particular place, for us to plan on doing it there would be opposing rather than following him.

[*Fatāwā* 17:460-467]





## 5. PROPHET AND PROPHECY

### (5.1) The meaning of *nabī* and *rasūl*

*A nabī - prophet - is one to whom God reveals a message to communicate to his people. If he is sent to a people who are non-believers and pagans he is a rasūl - messenger. but if he is sent to those who have faith already, he is a nabī. It is not necessary that a rasūl be given a new sharī'ah - code.*

A *nabī*, prophet, is one to whom God communicates a message, and he communicates that message to the people. If he is sent to those who are opposed to the religion of God that he may give them His message, he is *rasūl*, a Messenger. But if the people already follow a *sharī'ah* given earlier, and he is not sent with a particular message to anyone, he is a *nabī*, not a *rasūl*. God has said, "We never sent a *rasūl* or a *nabī* before you, but when he formed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire..." (22:52). Here both *rasūl* and the *nabī* have been mentioned to have been sent, but only one has been called *rasūl*, for he is *the* envoy (*ar-rasūl al-muṭlaq*), who is commissioned to convey God's message to the people who are opposed to His religion. Noah was *rasūl* in this sense. It is said of him in an authentic *ḥadīth* that he was the first *rasūl* to be sent to people on the earth.<sup>315</sup> Many *nabīs* had gone before him such as *Shith* and *Idrīs*, and of course Adam whom God had addressed. Ibn 'Abbās said that between Adam and Noah ten generations had passed all of whom had faith in Islam. Everyone of these prophets received revelations from God telling him what he should do, and what he should command the faithfuls of his time to do. To be sure, they had faith in them just as the followers of a *Sharī'ah* believe in what its scholars tell of their *rasūl*. The same was the case with the prophets of Israel; they were asked to expound the law of the Torah. They did sometimes

receive revelations in particular cases; but with regard to the *sharī'ah* of the Torah they acted just as a scholar from among us who has insight into the Qur'ān acts. An example is the insight which God gave to Solomon in the case that came up to him and David. Hence a *nabī* is one to whom God communicates something, whether an imperative to do or not to do something, or information about some reality, and he in turn communicates that information to those who would believe in what God has communicated to him.

But when they are sent to non-believers, they are asked to call people to believe in one God, to worship Him alone, without associating anyone with Him. What usually happens in this case is that a group of people denies them and belies them. God said, "Similarly, no messenger (*rasūl*) came to the people before them, but they said (of him), in like manner, 'a sorcerer or one possessed'" (51:52); or, "Nothing is said to you that was not said to the messengers before you" (41:43). The messengers (*rasūl*), therefore, are sent to the people of opposing beliefs, some of whom usually reject them... The words, "We did not send before you a *rasūl* or *nabī* but," show that a *nabī* is also sent, but he does not enjoy the title of *rasūl* for he is not sent to people who are unaware of God's message. The *nabī* preaches to the believers what they know to be true, just as their scholars do. That is why the Prophet said, "The scholars (*'ulamā*) are the successors of the prophets."<sup>316</sup>

It is not necessary for a *rasūl* to give a new *sharī'ah*. Joseph was a *rasūl*; but he followed the *sharī'ah* of Abraham; and David and Solomon were *rasūls*, but they followed the *sharī'ah* of the Torah. Proof of the former is the verse, "And to you there came Joseph in times gone by, with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt of the (mission) for which He had come. At length when he died, you said: 'No messenger will God send after him'"(40:34). And proof of the latter is the verse, "We have sent you revelation as We sent to Noah and the prophets after him. We sent revelation

to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon, and to David we gave the Psalms. Of some messengers (*rasūl*) We have told you the story; of others We have not; and to Moses God spoke direct' (4:163- 4).

[*An-Nubūwwah* 172-4]

## (5.2) Signs of Prophethood

*The signs of prophethood are only associated with the prophets and prove their veracity. They contravene natural phenomena, lie beyond the powers of human beings and jinns, and are incontestable. However, contravention of the natural law is not part of their definition, but only a necessary implication.*

The property of a sign is that it necessarily implies the object it signifies. Whatever necessarily implies a thing is its sign; and it cannot be a sign unless it necessarily implies the object it signifies. Again a sign implies its object just as a proposition implies its consequence; and this implication is necessarily or almost necessarily known.

Signs proving the veraciousness of the prophets, peace and blessings of God be upon them, cannot belong to a category of signs which also signify others. The Mu'tazilah and other theologians have defined miracle (*mu'jizah*) as a contravention of *'ādah*, common phenomena. Since they are not able to explain what it actually means, and since they cannot distinguish them from the wonders performed by the sorcerers, diviners, and saints, some have recanted from that definition. Others have added the qualification that the miracle must be incontestable. They make this condition the differentia of prophetic miracles. They say that prophetic miracles (*mu'jizah*) contravene natural phenomena and are accompanied with a challenge that no one else can reproduce them. On this definition they feel free to allow nonprophets to work miracles as the prophets, provided they can be reproduced.

They put the wonders of the sorcerers and the diviners in the same category with prophetic miracles with the difference that the latter are not contestable.

This is obviously wrong, for we know that the miracles of Musaylamah<sup>317</sup> and Al-Aswad Al-‘Anasī<sup>318</sup> and other false prophets were not contested. One would also like to know what is meant by saying that they are incontestable? Do you mean to say that they are not contested by anyone at the time and place they are performed? On that meaning, the miracles of the sorcerers and the diviners are (*mu’jizah*) since they are not contested, and the miracles of Musaylamah and Al-Anasī were (*mu’jizah*) since they were not contested when they were performed. The other sense in which the qualification may be understood is that the miracles cannot be contested ever. But how can you know that? If it is asked what are the signs that prove the veraciousness of the prophet, the answer is that they are signs that are known to be associated with the prophets alone proving their veraciousness, and can only happen at the hands of true prophets. They have to contravene the natural phenomena, lie beyond the power of men and jinns, and have to be incontestable. But the condition that they contravene natural phenomena or are incontestable is a necessary consequence of miracle, not a part of its definition.

The knowledge that miracles prove the veracity of the prophets may be necessary, as it is in the case of the splitting of the moon, the turning of the club into a python, or the emergence of the she-camel from the mountain. Simply by observing these signs one can know with certainty that God has made them the proof for the veracity of the person who offers them. It also means that these are contraventions of natural phenomena, and that they cannot be contested. These things are part of their characteristics, but not the only characteristics. Suppose a person says that someone has sent him to you, that he comes to you with something which is regarded as a sign. And a sign (*‘alāmah*), a proof (*dalīl*) or evidence (*āyah*) is what implies its object, and the *āyāt* of prophethood prove the

veracity of the prophets. Obviously this would not happen unless they necessarily imply the veracity of the prophets. This means that they cannot be associated with non-prophets and that they cannot be reproduced by them. However, this does not rule out that another prophet may perform them, or that one who witnesses the veracity of the prophet produces something similar, for his witnessing them is proof of their veracity, and will only follow it. Sometimes signs prove the veracity of prophethood in general, and since they prove the veracity of the prophets in general, they prove the veracity of a particular prophet who claims that he is a prophet. This proof, however, cannot be adduced for a false prophet.

[*An-Nubūwwāt* 189-190]

#### **(5.4) How the signs of prophethood differ from sorcery and divination.**

First, what the prophets say is absolutely true; they neither lie nor say something false. On the other hand, what the sorcerers and diviners say contain things that are false, even pure lies. God has said, “Shall I tell you (O people!) on whom it is that the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying, wicked person” (26:221-2).

Second, as to their life and mission, the prophets preach nothing except the establishment of a just order (in this world), the pursuit of happiness in the next life, and the worship of the one and only God; and theirs is a life of virtue and piety. Others preach injustice, worship of many gods, and the pursuit of worldly goods alone; and theirs is a life of sin and crime.

Third, there is nothing unusual about sorcery, divination or things of this kind; they are quite well known and common practices. The miracles of the prophets, on the other hand, are for them alone, or for their true followers.

Fourth, divination or sorcery is something which is learned and acquired; this is known to all peoples. Prophethood, on the other hand, is not something to be acquired or learned.

Fifth, if prophethood is at all acquired, it is acquired through good deeds, honesty, justice and faith in one God. One who lies, even in matters human, not to say divine, cannot be a prophet. Hence, the way to achieve prophethood, if at all one can achieve it by one's efforts, requires that one is true in whatever one says of God.

Sixth, the wonders which the diviners and the sorcerers work are within the power of men or jinns who are required to believe in the prophets and follow them. On other hand, the miracles of the prophets lie beyond the power of men and jinns; rather they contravene the common practices their people are accustomed to. The Qur'ān says to the Prophet, "Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed each other with help and support" (17:88).

Seventh, the wonders of diviners and the sorcerers can be reproduced by others; but the miracles of the prophets cannot be reproduced by anyone.

Eighth, the wonders of the non-prophets do not contravene the ways known to human beings; in fact, all of them are performed by some human being or the other. The miracles of the prophets, on the other hand, are only performed by the prophets or those who believe in them.

Ninth, some prophetic miracles are absolutely beyond the power of any created beings, angels or otherwise, such as the revelation of the Qur'ān or the address to Moses. Non-prophetic wonders, on the other hand, are within the power of human beings and jinns.

Tenth, if some prophetic miracles be within the power of angels, they never say anything of God which is not true. For example, they never say to a human being that God has made him a messenger whereas He has not. This is done only by the evil ones. As for the wonders that pious men in our *ummah* or in the *ummahs* before us have done or do, they do not go beyond the

practice of pious men; but the miracles of the prophets do transcend them. The former is attained through piety, through supplication and devotion; but the latter is not attained through these things. It does not happen even when it is demanded by the people until God permits it: “Say: Certainly (all) signs are in the power of God” (6:109; or, “Say: God alone has the power to send down a sign” (6:37).

Eleventh, the Prophet does not institute anything except what is good for the people in this life or the next. He commands only what is good and right and forbids only what is evil and wrong. He commands belief in one God and sincere service to Him, and forbids assigning partners to Him, and prohibits what is false and unjust. Human nature and reason uphold and support whatever the Prophet has said, or what any prophet before him has said. What is approved by reason and what is authentic in tradition support each other, as they support the prophet.

[*An-Nubūwwāt* 127-8]

#### **(5.4) Revelation and its forms**

*Wahī* means fast and secret communication. Sometimes one sees a light or hears a voice which does not come from anywhere outside the viewer, but only from within himself. This form of *wahī* is given to prophets as well as non-prophets. Another form of *wahī* is that the voice one hears comes from outside oneself, from God through any of His angels or through something else. The third form of *wahī* is that God Himself speaks to the recipient from behind a veil. The last two forms of *wahī* are the privilege of the prophets; no one else shares in them.

Speech (*kalām*) and conversation (*taklīm*) may take place in different ways and at different levels. Similarly, the communication of somebody’s words to a third person or persons may occur in different forms and at different levels, each with its own characteristics. Some people comprehend only some of these



forms, others comprehend only the lowest form and deny higher ones. Hence they believe in some parts of the prophetic message and deny others. Each group believes in the reality of what it itself comprehends, and denies the reality of what the other comprehends.

God has described the forms of *wahī* in His Book. He has said, “It is not given to (mortal) man that God should speak to him except by *wahī*, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal, with His permission, whatever He wills (to reveal)” (42:51). At another place He has said, “We sent you *wahī*, as We sent it to Noah and the messengers after him. We sent *wahī* to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms. Of some messengers We have already told you the story; of others We have not; and to Moses God spoke directly” (4:63-4). At a third place He has said, “These messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others: To one of them God spoke; others He raised to degrees (of honor); to Jesus son of Mary We gave clear (signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit” (2:253).

In the last verse, God has stated that He chose someone to speak to directly (*taklīm*); in the verse quoted before He has clearly mentioned that it was Moses to whom He spoke directly. There are also a lot of traditions to this effect. Obviously this address (*taklīm*) with which God honored Moses, but not Noah, Jesus or any other prophet, must be different from the general *taklīm* available to others which is referred to in the verse, “It is not given to (mortal) man that God should speak to him except by *wahī*, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal, with His permission, whatever He wills (to reveal)” (42:51).

The Elders have correctly said that this verse comprehends all the levels of *taklīm*. Abū Naṣr As-Sijzī in his *Al-Ibānah*, Al-Bayhaqī and many other writers have noted on the authority of ‘Uqbah that when Ibn Shihāb<sup>319</sup> was asked about this verse, he said that it refers to all human beings whom God has honored with His

revelation (*waḥī*). Hence the *kalām* which God addressed to Moses directly was from behind a veil, and the *waḥī* which God reveals to any of His prophets (pbut), strengthening whatever He has put in his heart and which he commits to writing, is the *kalām* of God and His *waḥī*. A third *waḥī* is that which is between God and His prophets. A fourth *waḥī* is that which the prophets preach but neither put in writing for the benefit of others nor ask anyone to write down, although they communicate it to the people and expound on it to them since they have been commanded by God to communicate it and to expound on it to them. A fifth *waḥī* is that which God sends through any of His angels whom He wills, and the angel delivers it to the prophet whom God has chosen from among the people. There is still another *waḥī* which God sends by an angel He chooses, and that angel reveals it as *waḥī* to the heart of the prophet He has appointed.

I will explain. First, *waḥī* means fast and secret communication either in waking or in sleep; the dream of a prophet is also a *waḥī*, and the (good) dream which the Believers see is forty-sixth part of prophethood. There is a *ḥadīth* to this effect in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections.<sup>320</sup> ‘Ubādah Ibn As-Samit, too, has reported that the Prophet said, “The dream of the Believers is a speech by which the Lord speaks to His servants in sleep.”<sup>321</sup> With regard to *waḥī* while awake, have another *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* in which the Prophet said, “Among the people gone before you there were men who had been addressed (*muḥaddathūn*). Were there any in my *ummah* it would be ‘Umar.”<sup>322</sup> In another version of the *ḥadīth*, also authentic, the word is *mukallamūn*,<sup>323</sup> those who are spoken to. In the Qur’ān God says, “Behold! Is not *waḥī* to the disciples (*al-hawariyyūn*) to have faith in Me and My messenger” (5:114); “I sent *waḥī* to the mother of Moses to suckle him” (28:7); “(God) sent *waḥī* to each heaven (telling) its duty” (41:12); and “Your Lord sent *waḥī* to the bee” (16:68).

From these texts it is clear that this form of *wahī* may be sent to non-prophets, while awake as well as in sleep. Further, it may be sent in the form of a voice from “above” but inside the self of the person receiving it rather than from outside him, in a dream as well while awake. Similarly, the light that he sees may also be within him. This *wahī* which takes place within the self and in which the voice of an angel is not heard is the lowest form of *wahī*. However, it is the first form of *wahī* which is given to the salik, the traveler (to God). This is the *wahī* which metaphysicians from among the philosophers of Islam that have both Islam and non-Islam (*aṣ-ṣubū*) in them have discerned. It has led them to acknowledge some of those attributes of the prophets and messengers which are common between them and others and deny the rest. That is why some of them have said that prophethood is something acquired, that one can dispense with prophets, or that non-prophets may prove better than prophets. They also claim that this was the way God spoke to Moses, that He spoke to him from the heaven of the latter’s intellect, that the voice which Moses heard came from within himself, or that he heard it as an idea coming from the Active Intellect, and that it is quite possible for anyone else to attain the status of Moses.

One of these people has also claimed that he has secured a position which is above Moses, because whereas Moses heard the speech through the medium of an oracle within himself, he and his colleagues hear the words purely, without any sound. Some of them have said that Gabriel, who used to come to Muḥammad (pbuh), was nothing more than a bright image appearing to him from within himself just as one sees an image in a dream. They say that Muḥammad (pbuh) received the Qur’ān from this image which people call Gabriel. That is why Ibn ‘Arabī, the author of the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Fuṭūḥāt Makkīyyah*, has said that he receives ideas from the same source from which the angel who reveals them to the prophet receives, and that prophethood (*nubawah*) ranks lower than sainthood (*walāyah*) though higher than messengerhood

(*risālah*). This is because in their mistaken opinion Muḥammad (pbuh) received revelation from this internal image which they call angel, whereas they receive ideas from Pure Intellect from whom this internal image itself gets them.

These people do not believe in the reality of God's speech, for them, He does not have an attribute of speech, nor has He ever willed to convey any word to anyone. They even say that He has no knowledge of particular things, as His knowledge and will is directed to universals not to particulars. Their basic doctrine is that God knows only the universals, and does not know the particulars except in a general way. Close or somewhat close to their view is the one that extends God's knowledge to accidents. This view, which is denounced as faithlessness by Muslims in general, has found its way into the thought of many people who have a place of honor in *kalām* and *taṣawwūf*. Had I not abhorred the idea of identifying them, I would have mentioned their names.

The second form of *wahī* is that in which the sound one hears comes from outside; it comes from God either through the medium of an angel or any non-angelic being. This is how the Jahmīyyah, the Mu'tazilah, and some others conceive *wahī*. They say that this is the only way God speaks to people. But the truth is that it is just one form of *wahī*, only one of many ways in which God speaks to people or to His prophets. It is the second form of *wahī* which God has mentioned in verse 42:51 in these words: "Or He sends a messenger who reveals, with His permission, what He wills (to reveal)." This is a revelation through a messenger, a revelation which is different from the first revelation (*wahī*) which proceeds directly from God, and which is a form of God's address (*taklīm*) in general.

Revelation through a messenger is also of different kinds. We have in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim the *ḥadīth* reported by 'Ā'ishah (may God be pleased with her) that Al-Ḥārith Ibn Hishām asked the Prophet how revelation comes to him. The Prophet said, "Sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell,

and that is hardest on me; then it stops and I get what (the angel) conveys. Sometimes, the angel appears to me in the form of a man and speaks to me and I get what he says.”<sup>324</sup> ‘Ā’ishah (raa) adds that she saw a revelation coming down to the Prophet on a chilly day; when it stopped, his forehead burst out into sweat.<sup>325</sup> The Prophet has made it clear that the angel would sometimes appear to him with the sound of a bell, and sometimes appear to him in the form of a man and speak to him. It is reported that Gabriel would come to him in the form of Dihyah Al-Kalbī.<sup>326</sup> The Qur’ān says that Gabriel appeared to Mary in the form of a man in all respects (19:17), and that angels came to Abraham (11:69, 29:31) and to Lot (11:77, 29:33) in the forms of human beings. God has referred to both these forms of revelation, the delivery of a message by the angel (*liqā’ al-malak*) and his talk (*khiṭāb*), as *wahī*, as they had an element of mystery in them, for when the Prophet saw the angel he needed to be told that it was an angel, and when he came with the sound of a bell he needed to comprehend what was conveyed along with it.

The third kind is speech from behind a veil, just as God spoke to Moses (pbuh) That is why God has used the terms *nidā’*, calling from a distance, and *nijā’*, conversing for it. His words are, “But when (Moses) came to the Fire, a voice called out (*nūdiya*): Moses! I am your Lord! Therefore put off your shoes; you are in the sacred valley (of) Ṭuwā. I have chosen you. Listen, then, to what is revealed (*yūḥā*)” (20:11-3). This kind of address is granted to some messengers only. God has said, “These messengers we endowed with gifts, some above others: with some of them God conversed” (2:253); or, “When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and His Lord addressed him” (7:143). Again, after mentioning that He has sent revelations (*iyḥā’*) to many prophets, God says, “We conversed with Moses directly” (4:164). A group of people include this conversation in the first form of *wahī*. We have in this group some philosophers as well as some writers on Ṣūfism who take this line. You may find it in works like *Mishkāt*

*al-Anwār*<sup>327</sup> and *Khal' an-Na'layn*).<sup>327a</sup> The author of the *Fuṣūṣ* and other monists take the same line. That this view goes against the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the scholars, as well as against reason is quite clear.

Mistaken, too, are those who say that God's conversing with Moses was a kind of inspiration (*ilham*) and revelation (*waḥī*), and that they themselves hear God's words just as Moses heard them. They belong to the Jahmīyyah, the Kullābīyyah and to groups like them. It is also quite clear that they are absolutely mistaken.

The terms *waḥī* and *kalām* are used in the Qur'ān in a wide sense, as well as in a narrow sense. When *waḥī* is used in a wider sense, it includes *kalām*; and, just the reverse, when *kalām* is used in its wider sense it includes *waḥī*. An example where *waḥī* is included in *taklīm*, in its wider sense is the verse 42:1 under discussion; on the other hand, the verse where *taklīm* is included in *waḥī* in the wider sense is this: "Listen to what is revealed (*yūḥā*)" (20:13). However, when *taklīm* is used in its limited and perfect sense, *waḥī* in the wider sense of secret communication given to prophets and non-prophets is not part of it. Similarly, when *waḥī* is used in its general sense common to prophets and others, *taklīm* in its limited and perfect sense is not a part of it. Look at the words which God first said to Zacharias, "Your sign shall be that you shall speak to no man for three nights, although you are not dumb," and what He said next, "He (Zacharias) came out to his people from his chamber and told them by signs (*awḥā*) to celebrate God's praises" (19:10-11). It is clear from these two verses that *iyhā'*, to give *waḥī* is not part of *taklīm*, speaking. At another place God has said, "Your sign shall be that you shall speak to no man for three days, but with signals" (3:41). If the clause beginning with "but" (*illā*) is taken as a separate sentence, *taklīm* in both verses 19:10 and 34:41 will mean the same; but if it is taken as an exceptional clause, *taklīm* will mean what it means in verse 42:51, that is, in its wider sense. The way God spoke to Moses was a

special way of speaking, speaking in its perfect sense; that is why He has referred to it in these words: “There is one to whom God spoke directly” (2:253), though we know that God sent *wahī* to every prophet and spoke to him in the wider sense of the term. We also know that God has distinguished between His speech to His prophets and His revelation (*iyhā’*) to them. The same is the case with *taklīm* when used as infinitive. We further know that He has not included *taklīm* from behind a veil in *iyhā’*, but has rather mentioned it separately. This is supported by many *aḥādīth* of the Prophet and various sayings of his Companions which limit God’s speech (*taklīm*) to Moses. They underline the fact that God spoke to him with a voice which Moses heard. This is stated in a number of sayings of the Elders and the *a’immah* of Islam which are in perfect agreement with the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

[*Fatāwā* 12:396-403]

### **(5.5) False prophets**

*False prophets and how their experiences differ from the experiences of the friends (awliyā’) of God.*

Some experiences are devilish. ‘Abdullah Ibn Ṣayyād who appeared at the time of the Prophet had some such experiences on account of which some companions of the Prophet thought that he was the anti-Christ (*ad-Dajjāl*). The Prophet himself watched his case for sometime, till he came to the conclusion that he was not the anti-Christ, but only a diviner (*kāhin*). He hid something in his hand and asked him to tell him what it was. Ibn Ṣayyād said, “*Ad-Dukh, Ad-Dukh,*” but could not say that it was the Sūrat Ad-Dukhān of the Qur’ān, which the Prophet had held in his hand. Thereupon the Prophet said, “Down with you! You can never go beyond your limits.”<sup>328</sup> That is to say, he could not do more than what a diviner does. Every diviner of that time had an agent from

among the devils who used to tell him of things unknown since they could steal some information (from the heavens) and mix them with false ideas of their own. Al-Bukhārī has recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet said, “Angels come down to the clouds and talk about things that are decided upon in the heavens. The evil ones steal some of this information and pass them on to the diviners, adding to them hundred things of their own fabrication.”<sup>329</sup>

Muslim has another *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Abbās, “One day the Prophet was sitting with the Anṣār when all of a sudden a small comet shot through the air and there was light all around. The Prophet asked the people, “What did you use to say about such a thing when it happened in the days of ignorance (*jāhiyyah*)? They said, “We used to say that some great person might have died or was going to be born.” Thereupon the Prophet said, “Comets do not fall because someone dies or someone is born. When God decides upon something, the bearers of His Throne praise Him, then the angels of the nearest heaven praise Him, and then the angels of the next heaven, and so on till the angels of the last heaven praise Him. The angels at the seventh heaven ask the bearers of the Throne what the Lord has decided, and they tell them. Then the angels of the sixth heaven and then those of the next heavens in turn ask about it and are told what the Lord has decided, till the angels of the lowest heaven come to know it. At this time the evil ones steal some part of the news, for which they are struck (with a comet). It is this information that they pass on to their human agents. What they convey as such is true, but often they add to it many things.”<sup>330</sup> In a variant of the *ḥadīth*, one of the narrators asked Az-Zuhrī, who has reported the *ḥadīth*, whether the evil ones were struck (by comets) in the days before the Prophet was sent. Az-Zuhrī said, “Yes they were, but now since the Prophet was there the vigilance has been tightened”<sup>331</sup>

Al-Aswad Al-Ansī,<sup>332</sup> who claimed that he was a prophet, had some agents from among the evil ones who used to give him information about unknown things. When Muslims started fighting



him, they were afraid the evil ones might inform him of their moves. It happened that his wife came to know the truth about him and helped the Muslims against him, and they succeeded to kill him. Musaylamah,<sup>333</sup> the liar, also had some agents from the evil ones who would tell him of unknown things and help him in different ways. There were some other impostors, too. One by the name Al-Ḥārith Ad-Dimishqī<sup>334</sup> appeared at the time of ‘Abdul-Mālik Ibn Marwān and laid claim to prophethood in Syria. The evil one would set him free from chains, shield him against the sword and other weapons, produce sounds glorifying God from marbles when he touched them, and create the spectacle of men walking on foot or riding on horses in the air, whom he called angels, even though they were jinns. When Muslims caught him and intended to kill him, a man thrust his lance into him but could not pierce into his body. ‘Abdul-Mālik said that it happened because the man did not say the name of Allah in the beginning. Thereupon the lancer said God’s name and thrust the lance into him and killed him.

This means that the evil ones leave their human agents when things that counter their spell, such as the Verse of the Throne (2:255) are read out to them.... It has been seen that when this verse is read with conviction the spell is broken. It has also been observed that when people are under the influence of the evil ones, they may enter into a fire, or when they hear whistles and clappings, the evil ones come down upon them, speak through their mouths words that are strange and unintelligible, or tell what is going on in the mind of someone around, or speak different languages, just as a jinn speaks through the man who is possessed. People who have these experiences are not aware of what is going on within them. They are just like a possessed person from whose mouth the jinn speaks, but when he becomes normal he does not know what he was saying before. This is why when a possessed person is beaten he does not feel it, nor does he say when he becomes normal that he had the beating, for it was the jinn who had it.

Some of these people also receive from the evil ones foods, sweets, fruits and many other things which are not produced in their own area. With some the evil ones fly to Makkah or Jerusalem or other places; some they take to Arafat at the time of *ḥajj*, but bring them back in the same night with the result that they do not complete the *ḥajj*. Often they take away their *iḥrām* clothes when they reach the *mīqāt* or carry them away so that they are not able to pray at Muzdalifah, or make circumbulation (*tawāf*) of the Ka'bah, or do the *sa'ī* between Aṣ-Ṣafa and Al-Marwah, or throw stones at Satan at Minā, and so on, so that they are not able to perform the *ḥajj* properly.

[*Fatāwā* 11:283-286]

#### **(5.6) How philosophers interpret prophethood and revelation.**

*The view of Ibn Sīnā and Al-Fārābī regarding waḥī and prophethood, its refutation.*

A number of people who say that they believe in the Prophet and the prophets before him and in what has been revealed to them have an element of hypocrisy in them. To be sure, they do not belie the Prophet in everything he said; on the contrary, they hold him in honor, and believe that they should obey some of his commands, though not others. Of these those who are farthest removed from the prophetic religion are the so-called philosophers, esoterics and heretics. They do not recognize prophethood except insofar as it is common between the prophets and the non-prophets, namely dreams. Aristotle and his students did not speak on prophethood. Al-Fārābī<sup>335</sup> treated it as a form of dreams; that is the reason he exalted the philosophers above the prophets.

Ibn Sīnā<sup>336</sup> had a greater regard for prophethood. To him a prophet must have three characteristics. First is that he gets knowledge without learning. He calls this a holy faculty (*al-*

*qawwah al-qudsīyyah*), and identifies it with intuition (*al-qawwah al-ḥadsīyyah*). Second, the prophet conjures in his mind images of various things he knows. He can see within himself bright forms and hear voices just as one sees in sleep figures who speak to him and whom he hears. They exist in his mind rather than out there. In short, for these people what the prophet sees or hears without anyone around perceiving it, he just sees only within himself and hears only within himself. He is no different from a person under hallucination.

Third, the prophet has the power to work wonders in the world. This is what the miracles of the prophets mean to them, for in their view all that happens is caused by a spiritual, angelic or physical power, such as the souls of the heavens or of human beings, the spheres, and the natural forces that reside in the four elements and their compounds. They do not believe that beings above the heavens can do or produce anything, or speak or move in any sense, be they angels or non-angels. The Lord of the World is obviously farthest removed from these things. The intelligences which they posit have no movement from one state to another, whether in terms of will, speech, action or anything else. The same is true of the One, the First Cause. Hence, all that the prophets receive comes from the Active Intellect.

This is in essence the doctrine of the philosophers. However, when they learn the teachings of the prophets they try to reconcile them with their doctrines. They take the words of the prophets and use them in their discourses and writings, so that those who are not aware of what the prophets meant by them think that they have only used them in the prophetic sense and thus go astray. This may be found in the writings of Ibn Sīnā and those who have taken their ideas from him. Al-Ghazālī has referred to this fact when he states their doctrines and has often cautioned people against them. However, some of their ideas have also found their way into his writings, such as *Al-Maḍnūn bihi 'alā Ghayr Ahlihi* and others. Even in the *Ihyā'* he uses concepts like *al-mulk*, *al-malakūt*, and

*al-jabarūt* by which he means the worlds of physical bodies, souls, and intelligences respectively, as we have in the philosophers. Similarly, he mentions the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*) and identifies it with the Universal Soul; and so on and so on. We have discussed these things elsewhere in detail, which may be consulted. It is strange that in the *Tahāfut* and other works he taxes the philosophers with faithlessness, but in *Al-Maḍnūn Bihi* he expounds on their own doctrines, even their view of prophethood and God.

The three qualities which the philosophers mention as distinctive qualities of prophethood are also found in the non-prophets, even in infidels from among the pagans and the People of the Book. We have among them people who are distinguished for their knowledge and devotion, by virtue of which they have extraordinary intuitions and insights not found in common people. As for the imaginative faculty, all human beings have it; that is why they have dreams. What distinguishes the prophet is the fact, they say, that he “sees” while awake what others see in dreams. But this quality is also found in many non-prophets who also see many things an ordinary person sees in dreams. They themselves admit it when they attribute it to sorcerers and men who are possessed. The only difference, they point out, is that the motive of the sorcerer is not good, and the man possessed by a jinn is not in control of his reason. Thus, according to them, the prophets belong to the same class as sorcerers and the insane. This is what the infidels have always said about the prophets as God has mentioned: “Similarly, no messenger came to the people before them, but they said (of him) in like manner (that he is) a sorcerer or one possessed” (51:2).

To these people the visions which the prophet sees and the voices which he hears are similar to what the sorcerers and the insane see and hear. The only thing in which they differ is that whereas the prophet preaches good, the sorcerer preaches evil, and the insane has lost his reason. But in this respect not only the

prophets but also ordinary men and women differ from the sorcerers and the insane. Hence the prophets would have no distinction in their view; they would be on a par with all other believers.

Similarly, the power to influence the ordinary course of events which the philosophers attribute to the prophets is also available to sorcerers and others. Since they do not recognize the existence of jinns and devils, they attribute the strange things that happen in the world they know of to some power of the human soul. Hence the miracles of the prophets and the wonders of the sorcerers and diviners, and the information which a possessed person gives, are the work of some power in the human soul. The soul gets information from its contact with the Universal Soul which they call *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*, the Guarded Tablet, and effects changes in the course of events through its own psychic powers. When Ibn Sīnā was told of wonders which he could not deny he tried to explain them in the light of these principles. In the *Ishārāt* he writes that at first he did not recognize these events, but when he ascertained that such things did happen in the world he tried to find out the cause.

Aristotle and his students were not aware of these wonders, hence they did not discuss them or the miracles of the prophets. But magic and sorcery were present in their society, and they knew them, however, they were the least knowledgeable people on such matters. Other peoples such as the Indians, the Turks, and many others who believed in a variety of gods, worshiped idols, and engaged in talismans and spells were more knowledgeable on these matters; they knew that they were caused by jinns and demons at the hands of the sorcerers and the diviners who were in contact with them. These people, on the other hand, did not know that; that is why they believed that prophethood was something within the power of men. No wonder then, Suhrawardi Maqtul<sup>337</sup> aspired to be a prophet, as did Ibn Sabʿīn and others.

True *nubūwwah*, or prophethood, is a favor from God. It is a revelation from God to a servant of His choice; the prophet is one whom He chooses to receive the revelations, and the revelations come to him from none but God. The revelations of the non-prophets, on the other hand, come from the evil ones; and their recipients are false prophets like Musaylamah the imposter, and many others even worse than they, for Musaylamah and the like were in contact with spirits who would speak to them and tell them of unseen things, and who were out there, not inside them, a fact which these people do not know. Jinns and devils exist out there, and their words have been heard by countless numbers of people. The same is true of those whom they have possessed and from whose mouths they have spoken.

The difference between a prophet and a sorcerer is even greater than the difference between day and night. The prophet gets his revelation from an angel whom God appoints to communicate His message; the sorcerer gets his messages from the evil one whom he asks what to do or not to do. God has said, “Shall I inform you (people) on whom it is that the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying, wicked person (into whose ears) they pour hearsay vanities, and most of them are liars” (26:221-3). One message is not like the other message, nor is one command like the other command; similarly, one communicator is not like the other communicator, nor is one commander like the other commander; again one recipient of messages is not like the other recipient. That is why speaking of the agent who brought the Qur’ān to Muḥammad (pbuh), God has made it clear that he is an angel existing in himself, separate from the Prophet and not an idea in the latter’s mind as philosophers think. His, words are, “Verily this is the word of a most honorable messenger, endued with power, with rank before the Lord of the Throne, with authority there (and) faithful to his trust. And (people,) your companion is not one possessed; without doubt he saw him in the clear horizon. Neither does he withhold grudgingly a knowledge of the Unseen, nor is it

the word of a spirit evil and accursed. Then whither go you? Verily this is no less than a message to (all) the worlds (with profit) to whoever among you wills to go straight. But you shall not will except as God wills, the Cherisher-Lord of the Worlds” (81:19-29). Thus the Qur’ān is the word of a messenger whom God and not the Evil One has sent, who is an angel, honorable and powerful, with a position of honor with the Lord of the Throne, who wields an authority and is obeyed, and who is faithful and trustworthy. His commands are obeyed by those who constitute the Grand Assembly to which the evil ones have no access. ‘Iblīs, too, did not have entry into it after he was driven out from it.

These so-called philosophers could not form a correct view of prophethood and went astray. A group of Ṣūfīs who boast to have true knowledge, such as Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn Sab‘īn and many others also went astray. They took up the philosophers’ ideas and put them in their own mystical language. This is why Ibn ‘Arabī claimed that saints were better than prophets, that the prophets and saints took their theological doctrines from the Seal of the Saints, and that he in turn received them from the same source from which the angel would receive them and pass them on to the prophets. The angel, in his view, is the imaginative faculty (*khayāl*) of the soul which is subject to the authority of the intellect. This is what he thinks Gabriel is. To these people the Prophet receives from his *khayāl* whatever voice he hears within himself. That is why they say that Moses was addressed from the heaven of his intellect, and the voice that he heard came from within him and not from outside. Some of them even claim superiority over Moses, just as Ibn ‘Arabī claims superiority over Muḥammad, since he receives, he says, directly from the Intelligence from whom the prophet’s *khayāl* receives its ideas, for him the *khayāl* is the Angel from whom the Prophet receives his revelations. That is why he has said that he receives from the same source from which the Angel receives what he reveals to the prophets.

[*An-Nubūwwāt* 168-72]

**(5.7) The authority of the prophet.**

*The way to truly obeying God passes through the Prophet. He is infallible in whatever he conveys from God; he must be believed in whatever he says; and must be obeyed in whatever he commands. All other authorities, religious and political, are to be obeyed so long as they do not enjoin anything which goes against the command of God, and no one other than the prophet is infallible.*

Our duty is only to obey God, but there is no way to know His words and commands except through His messengers. Whoever speaks on His behalf, conveys His words and His commands, is, therefore, to be obeyed in whatever he says. Others are to be obeyed sometimes and sometimes not. Political authorities, for example, are to be obeyed within their jurisdictions so long as they do not order anything contrary to God's commands. Similarly, religious scholars are to be obeyed by common men in the injunctions they issue, since they either communicate from God or find out His will in matters which come up, and tell them; their verdicts are binding on people. The same position is enjoyed by spiritual leaders (*mashāyikh*) in religious matters, and worldly authorities in secular affairs, such as the imāms in prayers or in *ḥajj*, or the commanders in battle, or officers in government, or preceptors in spiritual matters: their orders are to be carried out and their precepts are to be followed.

The point I am making is that whoever sets up an authority and follows his words without any restriction in matters of belief or practice is wrong. Imāmīte Shi'īs set up an infallible imām whose orders they say must be carried out. They are certainly wrong, for there is no infallible authority other than the Prophet, whose orders have to be followed in every matter. The imāms who they have set up from among the family of the *Prophet* (ahl al-bayt) were of



different statures. One of them, ‘Alī, was a rightly guided caliph; he was to be obeyed just like any other rightly guided caliph before him. Some of them, such as ‘Alī Ibn Al-Ḥusayn, Abū Ja‘far Al-Bāqir, Ja‘far Ibn Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣādiq were religious scholars and leaders; to them we owe what we owe to any other religious scholar and leader. others rank even lower than them.

Similarly wrong are those who preach absolute and unqualified submission to a preceptor (*shaykh*) in a Ṣūfī *tariqah* exalting him over other preceptors like him, such as Shaykh ‘Adīy,<sup>338</sup> Shaykh Aḥmad,<sup>339</sup> Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qāḍir,<sup>340</sup> Shaykh Ḥayāt,<sup>341</sup> or who enjoin the following of any particular religious scholar such as any one of the four imāms in all that he says, enjoins or forbids without exception, or who preach obedience to kings, governors, judges, and officials in whatever they command to do or not to do without any reservation or qualification. Of course, they do not regard these authorities to be infallible, except for some extremists among the disciples of the Ṣūfī masters like Shaykh ‘Adīy and Sa‘d Al-Madīnī Ibn Ḥammawayh<sup>342</sup> and the like who believe them to be infallible, just as the extremists among the followers of the of Banū Hāshim believe their imāms to be. Some even claim them to be superior to the prophets, and ascribe to them a kind of divinity.

Most of the followers of a religious scholar or a preceptor do not differ in their feelings and wishes from their friends who believe that people must submit to their leader; they only do not say it openly, or assert it as a matter of belief. Their practice does not tally with their faith just as we have in the case of the sinners; however, they are better than those who believe that submission to their leaders is obligatory. The case with the followers of kings and rulers is no different. God has depicted their condition in these words: “We obeyed our chiefs and great men (blindly) and they took us away from the right path” (33:67). They follow their instructions, and obey their commands without taking it as an article of faith; however, some of them consider it as a part of faith.

Submission to the prophet depends upon knowledge of his teachings and the power to act upon them. When that knowledge and power vanishes it is the time of *fatrah* - interregnum. Before our Prophet (pbuh), whenever such a time came a new message was revealed and a new prophet was sent. Think over this statement; it is very important.

The philosophers, theologians and Ṣūfīs who elevate analogy, reason or intuition (*dhawq*) into an absolute principle, and give precedence to the leaders of *kalām*, logic, philosophy, or mysticism over the Prophet are just like those who submit absolutely to a personality. Let it be clear that absolute submission is due only to the Prophet.

[*Fatāwā* 19:69-71]

**(5.8) The way to knowledge of the Unseen is through prophethood.**

*No one can dispense with the revelations to the Prophet in matters unseen. His word guarantees the truth. The experience of a mystic, or his reason cannot sit in judgment over his word.*

The view held by various esoteric groups, such as the authors of the *Rasā'il Ikhwan Aṣ-Ṣafā'* from among the Shi'īs, Ibn Sab'īn, Ibn 'Arabī and others from among the Ṣūfīs, and expounded by Abū Ḥāmid<sup>343</sup> and many others in their writings, that those who engage in spiritual exercises and purify their hearts, and adorn their souls with noble virtues know the truth about such realities as God, angels, the Books, the prophets, the Last Day, jinns and devils independently of what prophets say, and want us to believe is based upon a wrong premise. The assumption is that when one purifies one's soul, it receives knowledge from the Active Intellect or from another source.

Abū Ḥāmid speaks of it a lot. It is one of the points on which people have found fault with him. They have charged him with

dispensing with the agency of prophethood in knowing unseen realities, and of saying that the Qur'ān and Sunnah do not tell the real truth about them, that we cannot know from their words what they really mean, or what is to be taken literally and what is to be interpreted metaphorically as well as of claiming that when a person engages in spiritual exercises things appear to him as such; hence what agrees with his vision should be confirmed and what does not should be interpreted. That is why his writings, they say, undermine faith in prophethood. His ideas are derived from the philosophers, In his *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and *Kīmiyā' as-Sa'ādah*, for example, he simply restates their doctrines. He says, for example, that for one who engages in spiritual exercises it is possible to hear the word of God just like Moses son of 'Imrān (pbuh). This and other similar ideas that he has expounded on in his writings have been condemned by various Muslim scholars better aware of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah from various schools of thought: Shāfi'īs, Mālikis, Ḥanafīs, Ḥanbalīs, Ṣūfīs faithfully following the Prophet, the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, and theologians of the Ahl as-Sunnah.

Some theologians and rationalists have also found fault with those ideas of Abū Ḥāmid which are true. They have said, for example, that purification of the heart and spiritual exercises have nothing to do with knowledge. This is wrong. The truth is that piety and purification of the soul is one of the most important ways to acquire knowledge. This does not, however, dispense with faithful adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in belief and in practice. No one can know independently by himself what the Prophet has said of the Unseen; he is indispensable in these matters. His word categorically tells the truth, and neither the intuition of a mystic nor the logic of a philosopher can be set in judgment over it. It verifies the intuition and the reason it agrees with and negates the ones it differs from. In fact, every so-called "intuition" and "reasoning" which goes against the word of the Prophet is a false reasoning and a false intuition. With regard to

things like this we say, “We take shelter in God from the reasoning of the philosopher and the intuition of the mystic.”

It often happens that a person purifies his soul, but Satan drops in it different ideas. If he does not stick to the message of the Prophet, Satan takes charge of him, as God has said, “If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of (God) the Most Glorious, We appoint for him an evil one to be an intimate companion to him” (43:36). On the other hand, He has made it clear, “Whoever follows My guidance will not lose his way, or fall into misery” (20:123).

[*Ar-Radd ‘alā al-Mantiqīyyīn* 509-11]

### **(5.9) Infallibility of the prophets**

*(a) Prophets neither default nor commit any error in communicating God’s revelations to the people. But they may err in judgment (ijtihād); however, they are soon corrected. They are completely innocent of major sins, but may commit some minor mistakes; however, they never persist in them. This is the view of Muslim scholars in general.*

Scholars are agreed that prophets neither default nor commit any error in communicating their message; however, in forming opinions or making judgments in matters of law (*ijtihād*) they may err sometimes, but they are not left uncorrected. Scholars similarly agree that all the decrees which the prophets promulgate on behalf of God are to be obeyed, and all the statements they make are to be believed. They further agree that their own injunctions, commands or prohibitions have to be complied with. This is what all the schools of thought in the *ummah* believe. Only the Khawārij differ; they say that the prophet is infallible in whatever he communicates from God, but not in what he himself enjoins. They have been denounced for this heresy by the entire body of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah....

Most of the scholars, or at least many of them rule out the commission of major sins on the part of the prophets. But they do not rule out minor faults. However, the majority which allows them and those who allow major sins say that the prophets do not persist in them. They immediately repent, and their repentance raises their status in the sight of God....

As for error in judgment, there are two views on the subject; but all are agreed that the prophets are not left uncorrected, and that they are to be obeyed in what they are confirmed, and not in what is disapproved of them and rectified.

[*Minhāj as-Sunnah* 2:82]

*Ibn Taymīyyah was asked about a person who was denounced by another as infidel (kāfir) on saying that the prophets never commit major sins but they may commit minor ones, was he right or was he wrong; has any scholar said that the prophets are innocent of all sins, major and minor. What is the correct view on the subject? Ibn Taymīyyah wrote this answer:*

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The person (whom you have mentioned) is not a *kāfir* this is agreed upon by all religious scholars. Nor is this matter a question of abusing the Prophet, on which opinions differ as to whether the abuser would be allowed to recant or not; there is also no disagreement on this issue. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ<sup>344</sup> and other scholars have clearly stated it. Although they greatly stress the innocence of the prophets and call for punishing the one who abuses them, they are agreed that one who holds the view mentioned above is not guilty of abusing prophets and is not liable for any punishment, what to say of being condemned as infidel (*kāfir*) or transgressor (*fāsiq*), for the view that the prophets are free from major rather than minor sins is held by the majority of Islamic scholars and all the schools of thought. This is also the view of most theologians. Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Āmidī<sup>345a</sup> has written that this is what most Ash‘arīs as well as

most scholars of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* believe. This has been reported of the *Salaf* and the *a'immaḥ*, the Companions, the Successors, and their Successors

The view which the great majority of scholars hold is that the prophets are not free from minor sins but they do not persist in them. They do not say that they never commit any minor sin at all.

The first group of people to uphold absolute innocence and to stress upon it greatly was the Rāfiḍah. They even claim that the prophets never forget anything, nor make any mistake nor interpret anything wrongly. They also assert these things of the imāms in whom they believe, such as 'Alī and the rest of the Twelve-Imām Shi'īs. The same *'iṣmah* is asserted of their imāms by the Ismā'ilīs who once ruled over Egypt, and claimed to have descended from 'Alī through Fāṭimah, even though scholars hold that they are descended from 'Ubaydullah Al-Qaddāh.<sup>345</sup> The truth about them, as Al-Ghazālī has written in the book he wrote in refutation of them, is that openly their religion is *rafḍ*<sup>345a</sup> but in reality it is pure faithlessness.

Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā and many other scholars have discussed the view of these people in their writings. They and those who think like them are very much extremists; they dub as infidels those who differ from them. The truth is that these extremists themselves are infidels as Muslims in general believe. Those who condemn as infidel one who allows minor sins for the prophets are very much like these Ismā'ilīs, Nuṣayrīs, Rāfiḍah, and Ithnā-'Ashariyyahs. They have no support from anyone form among the followers of Abū Ḥanīfah or Mālik or Ash-Shāfi'ī, nor from anyone form among the theologians of the Ahl as-Sunnah, whether a follower of Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullah Ibn Sa'id Ibn Kullāb.<sup>346</sup> or Abū Al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Ismā'il Al-Ash'arī, or Abū Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Karrām,<sup>347</sup> or any other, nor even from any renowned commentator of the Qura'n, *muḥaddith* or Ṣūfī. None of them has charged any person with faithlessness on this account. Hence, if

anyone does so he should be asked to recant; if he recants he should be left alone; otherwise he should be punished severely so that it may deter him as well as others from repeating the charge. Certainly if anyone commits a thing which is faithlessness, or *zandaqah*, he will be charged accordingly. Similarly, if anyone calls *fāsiq*, transgressor, the holder of the view in question he will also be chastised after he is shown that he is mistaken for his stand amounts to charging all the *a'immah* of Islam with transgression.

[*Fatāwā* 4:319-21]

(c) Opinions differ as to whether a prophet may say something which is incorrect and which God would correct afterwards and would not leave him to persist therein. It has been claimed that the Prophet once said about the gods of the Makkans, “These are great stars, and their intercession will be acceptable.” Thereupon God repudiated these words which Satan had put in the mouth of the Prophet, and made him reaffirm the words that He had revealed to him.<sup>348</sup> Some scholars do not allow for such things while others do, since they think that it does not involve anything repugnant, and since God has Himself says, “Never did We send a messenger or a prophet before you, but when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire. But God will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, and God will confirm His verses, for God is full of knowledge and wisdom, that He may make the suggestions thrown in by Satan simply a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and who are hardened of heart. Verily the wrongdoers are in schism far (from the truth)” (22:53-54). However, all of them agree that prophets are not left to continue in their error or fault. They are not prepared to attribute anything to them which is not consistent with their duties and their mission as the preachers of God’s messages. Moreover, the majority of those scholars who allow for the commission of minor sins on their part say that they do not persist in those sins. They soon repent; hence their sins do not reduce their status. A tradition says that David was better than

before after he had repented. God certainly loves the penitent and the pure in heart; sometimes one does an evil which paves the way for entry into Paradise.

As for forgetting in *ṣalāh* or outside *ṣalāh*, it does happen with the prophets, and may serve some good purpose, namely that their followers may learn what to do in such cases. Mālik has noted in his *Muwattā* that the Prophet said “I forget or I am made to forget so that I may show them what to do in such cases.”<sup>349</sup> He is also reported to have said, “I am a human being; I forget as you do, hence remind me when I forget.”<sup>350</sup> This has been recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[*Minhāj as-Sunnah* 1:130]

### **(5.10) Approaching God through the Prophet**

*The wasīlah, the means which God has asked us to take in order to approach Him, only means that we should perform obligatory and supererogatory works. It means nothing else. Furthermore, what obligatory duties and what supererogatory works we should engage in has been defined by the Prophet. Hence, to take the wasīlah means nothing but to follow what the Prophet has taught. As for approaching God through the Prophet (tawassul bi al-nabī), it is, first of all, through belief in him and obedience to his commands. Next, it is through his prayers and his intercessions, the former in this life and the latter on the Day of Judgment. Both are perfectly right, and completely agreed upon among the Muslims. But if it is taken to mean adjuring God in the name of the Prophet or beseeching Him in his name, none of his Companions ever did that in his life or after his death.*

*Wasīlah* and *tawassul* are ambiguous terms and have been used in different senses. To do justice to them we have to define various senses in which they have been used. We have to see how they have been used in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah and what they have



meant there, what the Companions have meant by them and how they have practiced them, and finally what they have come to mean in our times. Much of the confusion people have with regard to these terms is due to their ambiguous nature as we have said. The result is that they are not able to find out what the truth is.

*Wasīlah* occurs in the Qur’ān in the following verses: “You who believe! Do your duty to God, seek the means of approach unto Him” (5:35); and, “Call on those besides Him whom you fancy. They have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them. Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access (*wasīlah*) to their Lord, even those who are nearest. They hope for His mercy and fear His wrath, for the wrath of your Lord is something to take heed of” (17:56-7).

This means that the *wasīlah* which God has asked us to seek, and which He has advised His angels and prophets to seek is the performance of obligatory and supererogatory works. Everything which is obligatory or desirable is included in the *wasīlah*, and what does not fall into these two categories is not part of *wasīlah*, that is, things that are forbidden, undesirable or permissible. Moreover, the obligatory and the desirable are defined by the Prophet and enjoined as duty or commended by him. All this follows from faith in the Prophet. In short, the *wasīlah* which God

has asked us to seek is to approach Him through submission to what the Prophet has taught; there is no way to God other than that.

As for the *ḥadīth*, the word *wasīlah* occurs in some authentic *aḥādīth*. In one *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (pbuh) says, “Pray to God to grant me *wasīlah*, which is a particular position in Paradise reserved for a servant of God, and I hope to be that servant. Whoever of you asks it for me, shall intercede for him on the Day of Judgment.”<sup>351</sup> In another *ḥadīth*, he said, “On hearing the call for *ṣalāh* whoever says, ‘O God, the Lord of this perfect call and this ensuing *ṣalāh*, grant Muḥammad *wasīlah* and honor, and raise him

to the laudable position that You have promised him; certainly You do not violate your promise,' he shall have my intercession."<sup>352</sup>

*Wasīlah* in this sense is for the Prophet alone; our duty is to pray to God to bless him with this honor. He has said that God will grant it to one of His servants, and has expressed the hope that he shall be that servant. He has asked us to pray to God to grant it to him and said that we shall be rewarded for that prayer with his intercession on the Day of Judgment. Since reward is usually in terms of the things calling for the reward, when we are called to pray for the Prophet we shall be rewarded with the Prophet's prayer for us, his intercession. He has said, "Whoever invokes God's blessing on me one time, God will bless him ten times."<sup>353</sup>

In the language of the Companions, *tawassul bi al-nabī* means approaching God through the Prophet's prayer and intercession. But in the language of many later scholars it came to mean adjuring God in the name of the Prophet or beseeching Him in his name, as they adjure in the name of any other prophet or pious man, or one whom they consider to be pious. In short, *tawassul bi al-nabī* is used in three different senses; two of them are correct and agreed upon among the *ummah*, but the third has no support from the Sunnah. Of the two correct meanings, one is approaching God through faith in the Prophet and obedience to his commands; the other is approaching God through prayer and intercession, as mentioned above. *Tawassul* in these two senses is approved by all the Muslims. You may refer, for example, to the words of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb when he said "O God! Earlier when we had drought we would approach You through the Prophet (*tawassal-nā ilayka bi nabīyyinā*), and You would give us rain. Now we approach You through the uncle of the Prophet, so give us rain."<sup>354</sup> In other words, through his prayer and intercession. God's words, "seek the means to approach Him," mean that we should approach Him through obeying His commands as well as the commands of His Prophet, for obedience to the Prophet is obedience to God, as God

has Himself has said, “He who obeys the Messenger obeys God”(4:80).

This *tawassul* is the heart of Islam, and no one has ever denied it. As for *tawassul* through the prayer and intercession of the Prophet, as is referred to by ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, it is a *tawassul* through his prayer, not through his person. That is why after the death of the Prophet, ‘Umar moved away from *tawassul* through the Prophet to *tawassul* through his uncle, ‘Abbās. Had *tawassul* through the person of any being been allowed ‘Umar would have referred to the person of ‘Abbās. So when he left the *tawassul* through the Prophet and took to *tawassul* through ‘Abbās, it means that what was possible in the Prophet’s life was no longer possible after his death. This is why the second *tawassul* is different from the first *tawassul*, through faith and obedience to the Prophet, which is available all the time.

To sum up, *tawassul* may mean three different things. One is *tawassul* through obedience to the Prophet; this is a duty and your faith is not complete without it. The second is *tawassul* through his prayers and intercession; it was possible in his life and will be possible on the Day of Judgment. The third is *tawassul* through his person, in the sense that you adjure God in his name and ask of Him in his name. This was never done by the Companions, whether praying for rain or anything else, neither in the life of the Prophet nor after his death, neither near his grave nor away from it. Nothing of this kind is referred to in their prayers that have come down to us through authentic channels. However, in weak traditions going back to the Prophet (*marfū’*) stopping at the Companions (*mawqūf*), or emerging from persons whose words carry no authority, we do have some things of this kind.

It is this third kind of *tawassul* which Abū Ḥanīfah and his students have pronounced unlawful and forbidden. They have said, “God should not be prayed to in the name of any creature. Nobody should say for example, ‘Lord! I pray to You in the name (*bi ḥaqqi*) of your prophets.’” Abu-Ḥanīfah’s words are, “Nobody

should pray to God except in His name. I dislike that anyone should say ‘in the name of this or that servant of Yours (*bi ḥaqqi khālqika*).’ Abū Yūsuf has said that he disliked the words “in the name of Your prophets, or messengers, or the Sacred House (*Bayt al-Ḥarām*), or *Mash‘ar al-Ḥarām*.”<sup>355</sup> Al-Qudūrī has written, “Prayer in the name of any creature is not permissible, for no one has any right over God.”<sup>356</sup>

The verdict of Abū Ḥanīfah, his disciples and many other scholars that God should not be prayed to in the name of any creature, be he a prophet or a messenger or anyone else, means two things: One adjuring God in anyone’s name (*iqsām ‘alā Allah*) for doing something. This is forbidden according to the overwhelming majority of scholars, as we have mentioned before; the same is true about adjuring God in the name of the Ka‘bah, or the *mashā‘ir*;<sup>357</sup> scholars are also agreed on that. Second, it means praying to God in the name of someone. This is permitted by some scholars; it is also reported that some Elders have allowed it, and many people have been heard praying to God in this way. However, every report from the Prophet to this effect is without exception weak or even fabricated; we have nothing authentic from him which may be cited as an argument, except the *ḥadīth* of the blind man whom the Prophet taught to pray in this way: “Lord! I pray to You, and turn to You through Your Prophet, Muḥammad, the prophet of mercy.” But this *ḥadīth* does not support their view; it simply means that the blind man approached God through the Prophet’s prayer and intercession. He requested the Prophet to pray for him, and the Prophet instructed him to say, “O Lord! Accept his (i.e. the Prophet’s) intercession in my favor.” When the Prophet prayed for him, God gave him back his sight.<sup>358</sup> This is counted as one of the miracles of the Prophet.

[*Fatāwā* 1:199-203. 222-3]



## 6. THE QUR'ĀN

### (6.1) The Qur'ān is the word of God

*Texts telling that the Qur'ān is God's speech, and not the speech of any human being or angel.*

From the words, “This is verily the word of an honorable messenger” (69:20; 8:19), it is wrong to infer that the Qur'ān was composed by a messenger. This is because God has said these words at two different places in the Qur'ān. In one, the messenger is Muḥammad, and in the other, it is Gabriel. The first verse is, “This is verily the word of a respectable messenger. It is not the word of a poet; little it is you believe. Nor is it the word of a soothsayer; little admonition it is you receive. (This is) a message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds” (69:40-3). The messenger referred to here is Muḥammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. The second verse is, “This is verily the word of a most honorable messenger endued with power, with rank before the Lord of the Throne, with authority there, (and) faithful to his trust” (81:19-21). The messenger here is Gabriel. Now if the words, “This is verily the word of an honorable messenger” meant that the messenger was the author of the Qur'ān or any part of it, one verse would contradict the other, for if either of the two messengers had composed the Qur'ān the other could not have done so.

Second, the verse says, “This is verily the word of an honorable messenger”; it does not say, “It is the word of an angel or a prophet.” The word “messenger” means that he has been sent by someone, that he is conveying the message of his sender. If the message is ascribed to him it is in the sense that it is delivered by him, and not in the sense that it is composed or initiated by him.

Third, God has condemned as an infidel a person who says that the Qur'ān was the word of a human being: “He thought and

plotted! And woe to him how he plotted! Yes, woe to him how he plotted! Then he looked round; then he frowned and he scolded; then he turned back and was haughty; then he said, ‘This is nothing but the word of a mortal!’ Soon will I cast him into Hell-Fire!” (74:18-26). Since Muḥammad was a human being, whoever says that the Qur’ān is the speech of Muḥammad is an infidel. It makes no difference whether he says that it is the speech of a man or a jinn or an angel; on every count he commits infidelity. And since, refuting his claim, God has affirmed that the Qur’ān is the word of an honorable messenger, it can only mean that the messenger is its conveyor, that he delivers the words of the One Who has sent him, and not that he himself has composed it. It is the word of God, Who has appointed him as messenger, as He has said elsewhere, “If anyone among the pagans asks you for asylum grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of God” (9:6). This clearly shows that what the messenger conveys is the word of God, not the word of the messenger.

This is the reason why the Prophet would say to the people of the various tribes who came to Makkah at *ḥajj* time, “Is there anyone among you who can take me to his people that I may preach to them the words of my Lord; the Quraysh do not allow me to preach the words of my Lord.”<sup>359</sup> This *ḥadīth* is recorded by Abū Dāwūd and many other traditionists. Obviously, words are the words of the person who says them first, not of the person who conveys or delivers them. Moses heard the word of God directly from Him, not through any medium. The Believers, on the other hand, hear God’s words, one from the other. Moses’ hearing was direct hearing, without any intervening medium; people’s hearing, on the other hand, is indirect hearing through a medium. God has made this difference clear when He has said, “It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by revelation (*wahī*) or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with God’s permission, what God wills” (43:51). He has thus differentiated between speaking from behind a veil, which he did

in the case of Moses, and speaking through the medium of a messenger, as He did in the case of all the prophets to whom He sent a messenger.

[*Fatāwā* 12:135-37]

## **(6.2) What we should believe regarding the Qur’ān.**

*The Qur’ān is the word of God, and it is uncreated. It has originated from Him, and to Him it shall return. It is with God in a Guarded Book, as it is remembered by men in their hearts, or written in books, or recited by tongues. However, the ink with which it is written, the voice in which it is read, as well as the acts of writing and reading, all are created.*

What one should believe with regard to the Qur’ān or, for that matter, with regard to any other thing, is what the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) say on the subject and what is agreed upon by the Elders, who and whose followers have received God’s applause, whereas those who have diverged from their path have received His condemnation. One should believe

- that the Qur’ān which God has revealed to His Servant and His Messenger is His word; that even though it has been sent down, it is uncreated;
- that it has originated from God and shall return to Him;
- that it is, as God has said, “an honorable reading, in a Book well-guarded which none shall touch but those who are clean” (56:77-9), or “a glorious reading (inscribed) in a Preserved Tablet” (85:21-2) or, “(inscribed) in the Mother Book, in Our presence, high (in dignity) full of wisdom” (43:4);
- that it is preserved in the hearts as the Prophet has said, “Keep on reciting the Qur’ān for it slips out of one’s heart much more easily than a camel from the cord that hobbles it;”<sup>360</sup> or, “The heart which has nothing of the Qur’ān is like a house in ruin.”<sup>361</sup>



- that what was written within the covers of the *muṣḥaf*, the sacred scripture which the Companions compiled, was the word of God, as the Prophet has said. “Do not travel with the Qur’ān to the land of the enemy, lest they seize it.”<sup>362</sup>

This is, I think, what a Muslim should believe with regard to the Qur’ān....

To this I will add a few words by way of explanation. Whoever believes that the ink used in the *muṣḥaf* or the voice of the person who recites the Qur’ān is eternal and everlasting is wrong and mistaken; he goes against the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, as well as the consensus of the Elders and all the scholars of Islam. No doctor of Islam either from among the followers of Imām Aḥmad or any other imām has ever said that these things are eternal. Whoever attributes it to any doctor from among the followers of Aḥmad is either misinformed or deliberately lying. What has come down authentically from Imām Aḥmad and from his followers in general is that one who says that his reading of the Qur’ān is uncreated is guilty of *bid’ah*; on the other hand, one who says that his reading of the Qur’ān is created is a Jahmī.

Abū Bakr Al-Marwazī,<sup>363</sup> a great disciple of Imām Aḥmad, wrote a book on this subject, and Abū Bakr Al-Khallāl<sup>364</sup> reproduced it in his *Kitāb as-Sunnah* in which he quoted the words of Imām Aḥmad and other imāms on creedal issues. Some scholars of *ḥadīth* at that time used to say that their reading of the Qur’ān was uncreated. They said so in reaction to those who had said that their reading of the Qur’ān was created. When Imām Aḥmad was informed of it he condemned it in strong terms, denounced the people who had said it as heretics (*mubtadi’*) and declared that no scholar had ever said that. If this is his verdict on those who say that their reading of the Qur’ān is uncreated, you can imagine what he would say about those who say that their reading of the Qur’ān is eternal (*qadīm*)! Certainly far more mistaken are those who say that the ink in the *muṣḥaf* is eternal. The entire galaxy of imāms

belonging to the school of Aḥmad as well as other schools has unanimously condemned this statement. I am not aware of a single scholar who upholds it, except some ignorant people from among the Kurds. God Himself has differentiated between His words and the ink used in writing His words. He says, “Say: If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it for its aid” (18:109). Hence, those who say such things are mistaken.

Similarly mistaken are those who say that the Qur’ān is learned by the heart the same way as God is apprehended by it, or that it is recited with the tongue just as “God” is spoken with it, or that it is written in the *muṣḥaf* just as God is written in the hearts, on the tongues, or in the books at the same level as God’s existence in these places, for the existence of a being in the *muṣḥaf* is clearly different from the existence of a word in it. You know that things exist on four different levels: (1) out there; (2) in mind; (3) in speech; and (4) in writing. The idea in mind corresponds to the thing outside; the spoken word corresponds to the idea in mind, and the written word corresponds to the spoken word. Hence, when it is said that a thing is in the Book of God, as we have in the verse, “Everything that they have done is in the books (of their deeds) (52:54),” it only means that the thing which is inscribed in the books corresponds to the words that are used to express the ideas in mind of the things done. Hence between the thing out there and the *muṣḥaf* there are two levels of being, the spoken word and the written word. As for speech (*kalām*) itself there is no ontic stage between it and the *muṣḥaf*, for it is the speech (*kalām*) itself which is there in the book, even though the spoken word differs from the written word in some respects. However, if by the statement, “X is in the *muṣḥaf*” you mean that X is mentioned in it, then this is something different. In the Qur’ān we have, “Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds; the Trustworthy Spirit has brought it to your heart so that you may be among those who

preach and admonish in perspicuous Arabic. Without doubt, it is (announced) in the books of former peoples. Is it not a sign to them that the learned among the Children of Israel know it?” (26:192-6). Obviously, what is in the books of the former people is not the Qur’ān itself, which was revealed to Muḥammad (pbuh) and not to anyone before him, but only an announcement about it. People’s deeds provide another example. The Qur’ān says, “All that they do is noted in their books (of deeds)” (54:52). Hence we must distinguish between saying that something is in the books and saying that a word or speech (*kalām*) is in the books. God has said, “This is indeed a Qur’ān most honorable, in a Book well-guarded” (56:72-8); and, “A messenger from God rehearses the Scripture kept pure and holy wherein are decrees right and straight” (98:2-3). Hence, whoever says that the ink is eternal is wrong, and whoever says that the word of God is not in the *muṣḥaf*, but only the ink which is what one means by the word of God, is also wrong. The correct view is that the Qur’ān is in the *muṣḥaf*, as any other word or speech is in the pages of a book. This is agreed upon in the *ummah*, and is part of the Muslim faith. Every ontic state has its own specific characteristics.

The existence of speech in the Book is not like the existence of a quality in an object such as knowledge or life in a being, so that you may say that an attribute of God has entered into something other than Him, or that it has left Him. Nor is it simply a sign among other signs, as the existence of the world is a sign of its Creator. You are not justified in saying that what is there in the Book is only a sign for the speech of God; it is something completely different. If you do not distinguish between one ontic state and another referred to by different adverbs of place, or if you do not differentiate, for example, between a body being in a space or place, or an accident being in a body, or an image being in a mirror, or if you do not distinguish between seeing a thing with the eyes while awake and seeing it mentally or in sleep, and so on, you will be confusing everything.

The question whether what is in the *muṣḥaf* is contingent or eternal (*al-qadīm*) is ambiguous. The Elders have not used the word *qadīm*; they have only said that the Qur'ān is God's speech (*kalām*) and uncreated, and that it is His speech whether it is recited or written. It is just one Qur'ān and one speech irrespective of the forms it takes in recitation or in writing, and irrespective of the sounds and the ink that are involved, for speech is the speech of the person who first makes it, and not of the one who rehearses or transmits it. When a traditionist reports that the Prophet said, *innama al-a'māl bi al-nīyyāt*<sup>365</sup> (actions shall be judged according to the intentions) we say that this is the speech of the Prophet, in word and in meaning, even though we know that the voice of the transmitter is not the voice of the Prophet (pbuh). The same is true for every piece of prose or poetry which someone other than the author relates.

When we hear God's speech recited or see it in a *muṣḥaf* and say it is God's speech we point to the speech itself without referring to the voice of the reciter or the ink of the writer. Hence, if someone says that the voice of the reciter or the ink of the writer is God's uncreated speech he is wrong. We should rather say that the Qur'ān is the uncreated speech of God, and that it is in the *muṣḥafs* as all other speech acts are in books. We should never say that the ink or the paper is uncreated; we should rather say just the opposite; the paper and the ink, like every other paper and ink, are created. We may also say that the Qur'ān which is in the *muṣḥaf* is God's speech and uncreated or that the Qur'ān which Muslims recite is God's speech and uncreated.

The Elders are united on the point that the whole of the Qur'ān is God's word, its language and its ideas; that no part of it is composed by anyone else; that He has simply sent it down to His messenger; and that it is not ideas only or words only; it is both ideas and words combined, as is all speech, which is neither ideas only nor words only but both of them combined. It is just like a human being living and speaking; you cannot say that he is merely

a soul or that he is merely a body; he is the two combined in one. God does speak with a voice as is mentioned in authentic *aḥādīth*, though His voice is not like the voice of any created being, reciter or otherwise, for God is unlike any being in His essence, attributes and acts. Just as His knowledge, power, and life are unlike the knowledge, power and life of a creature, similarly His speech is unlike the speech of any creature in its ideas, words and voice. Whoever likens God with His creatures misinterprets His names and words; and whoever denies the attributes which He has affirmed of Himself, also misconstrues His names and words.

[*Fatāwā* 12:235-244]

### **(6.3) The Qur'ān is the uncreated speech of God.**

The most important thing with regard to this issue is to study the statements of the Qur'ān itself, for what the Elders and the leading scholars among the Companions, their righteous Successors, and the whole *ummah*, such as the four imāms as well as others, have said on the issue is nothing other than what is stated in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Rational arguments also support the same view. The Qur'ān is the word of God, sent down by Him and uncreated; it originated from Him and will return to Him. It is God Who has composed it and uttered it, just as He has composed and uttered the Torah, the Gospel, and all other words which He has spoken. It is not something created and existing separately from Him. Moreover, He has spoken it of His free will and with His power. No one among the Elders has ever said that God's word is created, or that it exists separate from Him; or that the Qur'ān, the Torah or the Gospel are necessary to His Essence, eternal and everlasting; that He has not said them of His free will and with His power; or that the words He addressed to Moses or any other particular word of His is eternal or everlasting. They have only said that God has been speaking from eternity as and when He has

willed. His speech is eternal only in the sense that He has been speaking from eternity as and when He has willed...

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbāl (raa) has said, “(The Qur’ān) has originated from Him; that is to say, He is its composer and utterer (*mutakallim*).” When some people started saying that the Qur’ān is created and that God has created it in something other than Himself whence it has come down, the Elders said that it originated from God, that it is God Who is its author and articulator. He did not create it in some other being so that one may call it the speech of that being. When God creates an attribute in any object, it is an attribute of that object, not an attribute of God. When, for example, He creates a taste or a color in some body, it is that body which is qualified with that taste or color. Similarly, when He creates life, will, power, knowledge or speech in some body, it is that body which is living, willing, powerful, knowing, or speaking with that speech. God, on the other hand, is qualified with those attributes only which inhere in Him, and not with those which He creates in other beings. He is Living, Knowing, Powerful, Hearing, Seeing, Merciful and Speaking the Qur’ān or any other speech in virtue of His own life, knowledge, power, or speech existing in Him, and not in virtue of any such attributes as He has created in other beings. Whoever says that God’s speech is created has to admit that it was a created being who said to Moses, “Verily, I am God; there is no god but I. So serve Me alone and establish regular prayer (*ṣalāh*) for celebrating My praise” (20:14). Obviously, this cannot be the word of anyone except the Lord of the Worlds.

Now, when it is established that God is the One Who has composed the Qur’ān, the Torah, and all other Books (of His) with their ideas and words formed out of their letters, no part of them can be called created; the whole of them must be believed to be the speech of God...

[*Fatāwā* 12:37-38, 40-41]

**(6.4) Our recitation of the Qur’ān is something created, even though the Qur’ān itself is uncreated.**

*The Qur’ān which people read and write is the word of God, and, as the word of God, it is uncreated. However, their act of reading or reciting, and the sound which they make in the process are created. Similarly, the ink which they use in writing the Qur’ān is also created.*

The Qur’ān is God’s speech. He composed it, words as well as ideas, and He spoke it out in His own voice. But when reciters or readers recite or read it they do so in their own voice. When one pronounces, for example, *al-ḥamdu li Allāhi, Rabbi al-‘ālamīn, Ar-Raḥmāni Ar-Raḥīm* (1:1-2), the speech which is heard from him is the speech of God, not his own speech, though he recites it in his own voice, not the voice of God. The speech is the speech of God, and the voice is the voice of the reciter. That is why the Prophet has said, “Embellish the Qur’ān with your voice,”<sup>365a</sup> or, “Is there no one among you (pilgrims to the House of God) who takes me to his tribe that I may preach to them the words of my Lord!”<sup>366</sup> Both *aḥādīth* are authentic; they prove that the word which the Prophet wanted to preach was the word of his Lord, but when a reciter recites it he recites it in his own voice. The Prophet has also said, “Whoever does not chant (*yataghannā*) with the Qur’ān is not of us.”<sup>367</sup> Aḥmad, Ash-Shāfi‘ī as well as others have explained the word *yataghannā* to mean rendering the voice sweet and beautiful in reading the Qur’ān. Aḥmad’s words are “*yuhassinuhu bi ṣawtihī*,” that is, one should make the Qur’ān sound beautiful through his voice. This means that to Aḥmad the voice with which the reciter recites the Qur’ān is his own voice....

Man and everything that belongs to him, his voice, his movements, etc. is created; it comes into existence after it was not there. On the other hand, God and all that He is qualified with,

attributes, words and deeds, is uncreated. When people read God's words, the words they read are His words, not those of any other person, and the words that He utters cannot be something created; but the movements they make and the sounds they produce in reading His words are created.

Similarly, the speech of God which is written in the *muṣḥafs* is His speech written in them, and His speech is uncreated; but the ink with which His speech is written is created. This distinction has been drawn by God Himself when He has said, "Say: If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it for its aid" (18:109). The word of God is uncreated, and the ink with which it is written is created. The Qur'ān written in the *muṣḥaf* is uncreated, as is the Qur'ān written in the Preserved Tablet. God has said so in many verses, such as, "No, this is a glorious Qur'ān (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved" (85:21-2); "Let whosoever will keep it in remembrance. (It is) in Books held (greatly) in honor, exalted (in dignity), kept pure and holy" (80:12-14). A messenger from God rehearses the Books (*ṣuḥuf*) kept pure and holy, wherein are (decrees) right and straight" (90:2-3); and, "This is indeed a Qur'ān most honorable, in a Book well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean" (56:77-9). [*Fatāwā* 12:53-6]

#### **(6.5) The letters that are in the Qur'ān are uncreated.**

*The letters that are in the Qur'ān are different from the letters that represent human speech; the former are uncreated while the latter are created.*

These and other things taken in the abstract as undifferentiated and unindividuated universals have no existence outside the mind; what exists out there is something particular. Out there we have either the Creator or the objects created. Moreover, each created



object has its own specific existence, even though the word existence is applied to everything that exists. The same is true of knowledge and power; they are universals which comprehend all the individuals that belong to their class. They do not exist out there; what exists out there is either the knowledge of the Creator, or the knowledge of any created being. Moreover, the knowledge of one created being is specific to it and exists only in it. Similarly, the terms speech sound or letter comprehend every individual speech sound or letter, but out there you have either the speech of the Creator or the speech of created beings, each created being with its own specific speech. Out there you have either the sounds that you get in the speech of the Creator or the sounds that you get in the speeches of created beings. Now if it is said that God's knowledge, power and speech are uncreated, or that the sounds that form His speech are uncreated, it does not follow that the knowledge, power or speech of man are also uncreated, or that the sounds that constitute human speech are uncreated.

Again, the term letter (*ḥarf*) refers both to the speech sound and the written letter. So when it is said that God has spoken with the spoken sounds, as He did in the case of the Arabic Qur'ān, and uttered, for example, the words *Alif-Lām-Mīm*, or *Ḥā-Mīm*, or *Ṭā-Sīn-Mīm*, or *Qāf* or *Nūn*, and so on, they form His speech and His speech is uncreated. Similarly, when they are written down in the *muṣḥafs*, whatever makes up the speech of God is uncreated, even though the ink, or the shape (*shakl*) that it takes is created.

Also, when people read God's speech, the speech itself is uncreated since it is God's speech. Its reading by a human preacher does not rob it of its status as the speech of God; for speech is the speech of the person who made it first, irrespective of whether it is an injunction or a statement; it is certainly not the speech of the person who preaches it. The task of the messenger is to deliver God's message. When he recites God's words we may refer to it in different ways. We may refer to the word itself as the word of God and say, "This is the word of God," without looking to the

attributes of the messenger who recites it. We may refer, in the second place, to the activity of the messenger involved, his action and movement. We may also refer to both of them together. Obviously, what we have referred to first is uncreated, and what we have referred to next is created, and what we have referred to last, part of it is created and part of it is uncreated. Things that go to make up a human speech similar to those which make up the divine speech are like all other human attributes, and are not like divine attributes. One might think that the letter *qāf* in the verse ‘*aqimū aṣ-ṣalāt li dhikrī*, “Establish *ṣalāh* for celebrating My praise” (20:14) is like the letter *qāf* in the line of the poet, *qifā nabkī min dhikrā ḥabīb-in wa manzili*,<sup>368</sup> (‘let us stop here and weep in remembrance of our love and her house’), but what God has uttered and is heard from Him is not like what a human being says and is heard from him. However, when we transmit God’s word, we transmit it through our medium, our acts and attributes, which are created. One created thing is like the other created thing....

Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbāl and other imāms of the Ahl as-Sunnah used to say that he who says *al-lafẓ bi al-Qur’ān*, ‘recitation of the Qur’ān’, or *lafẓī bi al-Qur’ān*, (‘my recitation of the Qur’ān’) is created he is a Jahmī; whereas one who says that it is uncreated is a heretic (*mubtadi*). This is also reported in a slightly different way. Whoever says that his recitation of the Qur’ān is created, while he means by it the Qur’ān itself, is a Jahmī, for *lafẓ* may be taken as an infinitive and refer to the action of the person which is something created, but it may also be taken to mean the words which he speaks, and which is the word of God, not the word of the speaker. So when one says that it is created one says in effect that the Qur’ān is not the word of God, and what Muslims recite is not His speech, which obviously goes against what is definitely known of the religion of the Prophet.

As for the human voice which is involved in reading the Qur’ān, it is definitely created. Aḥmad and others have clearly

stated that the sound which is heard is the sound of the man who recites. Aḥmad has never said that whoever says that his voice in reading the Qur’ān (*ṣawtī bi al-Qur’ān*) is created is a Jahmī. He has only said, “Whoever says his recitation of the Qur’ān (*lafzī bi al-Qur’ān*)”; and the difference between the two expressions is clear. When we transmit the speech of another person in the words of the latter, we transmit his words, rather than our words, but we transmit it in our voice not in his voice.

[*Fatāwā* 12:70-4]

#### **(6.6) Views of different schools of thought regarding the Qur’ān.**

*Ibn Taymīyyah lists the views of different factions of the Muslims regarding the Qur’ān, and points out what the Elders believed in this matter.*

With regard to the Qur’ān many views, seven or more, have been held by people who take Ka’bah as their *qiblah* (*ahl al-qiblah*). One is held by philosophers, like Ibn Sīnā, and Ṣūfīs, like Ibn ‘Arabī Aṭ-Ṭā’ī, Ibn Sab‘īn and others. They endorse in a way the view of the Sabaeans that the word of God has no existence outside the mind of its recipient, that it comes to him only in the form of ideas, assertive or prescriptive, either from the Active Intellect, as most philosophers say, or from an unidentified source as their mystical-minded brothers think. This is the belief of the Sabaeans, whereas this group says that the words that Moses heard existed only in his mind. The author of the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*<sup>369</sup> and other works of the kind has said things very much similar to these although at times he condemns their authors. This view is far more removed from truth than the one that the Qur’ān is created.

The second view is held by the Mu’tazilah and others that toe the Jahmī line that God’s speech is created, that He creates it in

some body whence it proceeds and not from God, for them, God has neither a speech nor a will. This view was first expounded by Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham<sup>370</sup> whom Khālid Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Qasrī<sup>371</sup> slaughtered on the day of *'Īd al-Qurbān*. In his sermon to the people who had gathered on that day he said, "Offer your sacrifices, and may God accept them. I, on my part offer the sacrifice of Al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham, for he says that God did not take Abraham as friend, nor spoke to Moses in words. Exalted is God far above what Al-Ja'd says about Him." Then he came down from the pulpit and slaughtered him.

It is these people who won the caliphate over to their ideas and instituted trials on the issue of the Qur'ān during the reigns of Al-Mā'mūn, Al-Mu'taṣim and Al-Wāthiq, and tortured people until God came to the aid of the scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah like Imām Aḥmad and their followers, exposed the errors of this group in the reign of Al-Mutawakkil, and made the view of the Elders dominant that the Qur'ān is the speech of God and uncreated, and that it proceeds from Him and will return to Him. In other words, it is the word of God, composed by Him, and that it has issued from Him and not from any other being as the Jahmīyyah say. It is God Who has revealed it, as He has said, "The revelation of this Book is from God, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom" (37:1); and, "Those to whom We have given the Book know full well that it has been sent down from your Lord in truth" (6:14); *'Hā-Mīm*, a revelation from (God) Most Gracious, Most Merciful" (141:1-2); and, "Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the Revelation from your Lord in truth" (16:02).

The third view is held by Abū Muḥammad Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Kullāb Al-Baṣrī,<sup>372</sup> Al-Qalansī,<sup>373</sup> Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Ash'arī and others. They say that God's speech is an idea which exists in His Essence; it is an injunction enjoining everything He has enjoined as it is a statement regarding everything He has stated; it appeared in the form of the Qur'ān when it was expressed in Arabic, in the form of the Torah when it was expressed in Hebrew, and in the

form of the Gospel when it was expressed in Syriac; commands, prohibitions and statements which form God's words do not stand in relation to it like species to a genus into which it is divided, but as attributes which qualify a single person, just as we call some person the son of Zayd, the uncle of 'Āmr, or the father of Bakr.

Some of those who hold this view say that God's word is one from eternity and that it is command, prohibition and statement altogether from eternity. This is the view of Al-Ash'arī. Others say that it becomes command or prohibition at the time when the people to whom it is addressed come to exist. Still others say that it is not one single thing but a multiplicity of ideas - commands, prohibitions, statements, and questions. A consequence of this view, which people have been quick to point out, is that it makes knowledge, power, will and life one and the same thing, and the more learned among the expounders of this view admit that charge. The absurdity of this view is obvious to all sections, the Ahl as-Sunnah as well as the heretical groups...

The fourth view is held by different groups from among the theologians and the scholars of *ḥadīth*, such as the Salīmīyyah<sup>374</sup> and others. They say that God's speech consists of eternal words and sounds, and that they have meanings which exist in His essence. They agree with the Asha'irah and the Kullabīyyah in saying that when God speaks to a person He only creates knowledge in the person He addresses, that His speech has no existence separate from its recipient. However, they abstain from saying that the sound (of God's eternal speech) is the sound which is heard from any reciter (of His speech) as they distinguish one from the other. Some of them, however, say that the eternal sound (of God's speech) is heard from the reciter. Sometimes they identify the eternal sound with the sound of the reciter, and sometimes they distinguish between the two and say that they hear from the reciter two sounds, one eternal and one contingent. However, many or most of them do not say that the eternal dwells in the contingent; they only say that the eternal appears in the

contingent just as a face appears in the mirror. But others do say that the eternal dwells into the contingent.

None of the views stated above was ever held by the Elders or the *a'immaḥ* of the *ummaḥ*, neither Imām Aḥmad nor any of his leading followers, nor any other imām. All of them are agreed in denouncing any person who says that his recitation of the Qur'ān is uncreated. They condemn all the more any person who says that his voice is uncreated, or that it is eternal....

God has said, "If anyone among the pagans asks you for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the words of God" (9:6). The Prophet (pbuh), it is reported, would offer himself to peoples visiting Makkah and say, "Would any of you come forward and take me to your tribe so that I may preach to you the word of my Lor;"<sup>375</sup> or, "Beautify the Qur'ān with your voice;"<sup>376</sup> or, "Allah listens more carefully to the person who reads the Qur'ān in a beautiful voice than the owner of a maid singer does to her song."<sup>377</sup> Thus God and His Prophet have made it quite clear that the Qur'ān which is heard is God's speech, not the speech of any being from among His created beings, but when people read it they read it in their own voices. Therefore, if anyone says that the Qur'ān which is heard is not the word of God or that it is the word of the person who recites it, he says what is obviously wrong, in the sight of both reason and the *shar'*. Similarly, whoever says that the voice which is heard is not the voice of a man, or that it is the voice of God, also says what is wrong in the sight of reason and the *shar'*. The correct view is that the Qur'ān is the speech of God, not that of any other being. Gabriel heard it from God; the Prophet heard it from Gabriel; the Believers heard it from the Prophet; they transmitted it to those who came after them. In this process of transmission no one did or does anything except transmit the Qur'ān through his action and in his voice, without effecting any change in its words, syntax or meaning. All is the word of God.

The fifth view is the one which is expounded by the Hishāmīyyah,<sup>378</sup> the Karrāmīyyah,<sup>378a</sup> and some others. It says that

God's speech does exist in His essence but it is something contingent, since God did not speak it before the time He actually spoke it, though He had the power to speak from eternity. To put it otherwise, God has been speaking from eternity only in the sense that He has the power to speak from eternity. We cannot think, they say, of eternal speech on the part of God as we cannot think of an eternal act on His part just as the Mu'tazilah and their followers say. They point out that God's speech consists of words and sounds, and assert that He brings it into being in Himself by His own power and will. They shy away from saying that the sounds that are heard and the ink which is used in the *muṣḥaf* are eternal. They rather say the contrary that they are contingent.

The sixth view is the view of all the people of *ḥadīth* and their leading scholars (*a'immaḥ*). They say that God has been speaking from eternity as and when He has willed, that He speaks with a voice as it is said in the traditions, that the Qur'ān and other books of God are His speech which He has made with His power and will, and which are not different from Him as things which He has created are. They do not say that He was not speaking from eternity and only came to speak at a particular time, nor do they say that His speech is contingent. On the contrary, they say that He has been speaking from eternity as and when He has willed, and that even though He spoke to Moses and called him of His free will and power, His word is infinite, as He has Himself said, "Say: If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, soon would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid" (18:109).

[*Fatāwā* 12 163-73]

## **7. THE LIFE HEREAFTER**

### **(7.1) Qur'ānic arguments for resurrection**

*The arguments which the Qur'ān advances for resurrection and the life hereafter appeal to human nature and are convincing.*

God has discussed the life hereafter in detail and has demonstrated conclusively the possibility of resurrection. But His method differs from the method of the scholastic theologians, who in their effort to prove that it is really possible only succeed in showing that it is theoretically possible. For example, they say that it is possible because our belief in it does not involve anything impossible. The point is: how do you know that your belief in it involves nothing impossible? It is a negative proposition, and there is no way to ascertain its truth....

Furthermore, that a proposition is theoretically possible only means that we do not know that it is impossible, but our inability to know that it is impossible does not mean that it is really possible. A thing may not be said to be impossible in theory but not also be claimed to be possible in reality; this is what theoretical possibility means. This is the line which theologians take in proving resurrection. God does not take this line; He is not interested in just proving its theoretical possibility, for a thing may not be impossible in itself, but it may be impossible for an external reason. But this is not the case with a thing which is really possible; for if we know it to be really possible it cannot be impossible.

That something is really possible we know only when we find it existing, or when we find a thing of the same kind in existence, or when we find a thing existing which is greater than it, for the existence of a thing is proof that a thing which is lesser than it is more likely to exist. Now when it is shown that something is possible, we have only to show that God has power to bring it into



existence; otherwise, merely the knowledge of its possibility will not mean that it can really happen.

All these points have been taken care of in the statements on resurrection which we have in the Qur'ān. Read, for example, these verses: "Do they not see that God, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them? Only He has decreed a term appointed of which there is no doubt. But the unjust refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude" (17:99); "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof? Yes, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme of skill and knowledge (infinite)" (36:81); "Do they not see that God, Who created the heavens and the earth and never wearied with their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Yes, verily He has power over all things" (46:33); "Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater (matter) than the creation of men" (40:57). It is quite evident that the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater matter than the creation of man, that the former requires more powers than those needed for the latter, and that the latter is far easier to be brought into being as compared to the former.

Read the other argument which is based on the creation of man for the first time. God says, "It is He Who creates first, and then repeats it, and this is all the more easy for Him" (30:27). That is why He goes on to add, "To Him belongs the loftiest similitude (we can think of) in the heavens and the earth" (30:27). At another place He says, "Mankind! If you have a doubt regarding the resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a lump of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that we may manifest (Our power) to you" (22:5).

Read these words also: "And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) creation. He says: 'Who can give life to (dry) bones that are decomposed?' Say: He will give them life Who created them for the first time" (36:78-9). The words,

“Who can give life to bones that are decomposed,” contains an argument from which one of the premises is dropped because it is too obvious, and of which the second premise is a general negative and implies the inference. It is actually a parable introduced with the words, “And he makes comparison for Us, and forgets his own creation. He says: ‘Who can give life to (dry) bones that are decomposed?’” This question is in fact a denial, a negation, for it means that there is none who can give life again to the bones which have decomposed. The objector thinks that their decomposition entails the impossibility of their revival since they are dry and cold, while life requires something which is wet and warm; furthermore, they have disintegrated and mixed with other elements, a fact which is also not conducive to revival. His argument can be paraphrased in this way: These bones are dry and decomposed, and no one can give life to dry and decomposed bones; therefore, no one can give life to these bones. But the middle proposition which denies revival is a negative proposition and is false. God has shown the possibility of resurrection on many grounds. First, He has power over what is a much more difficult task, namely, the creation of man for the first time. He has said, “He will give them life Who created them for the first time!” Also, He has created man from dust. Further, He is well versed in every kind of creation, which means that He knows all the smallest particles into which the bones may disintegrate. Again, He is the One Who produces for you fire out of the green tree” (36:80). In other words, the One Who produces fire which is dry and hot from a thing which is just its opposite, cold and wet ... will find it easier to produce a living being from dust. Moreover, “Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the life thereof?” (36:81). The truth of the first proposition in this argument is evident to everyone. This is why the argument has been stated in the form of a question which implies that the proposition is part of common knowledge. Finally, the argument is concluded by saying,

“Verily, when He intends a thing, His commands is ‘Be’, and it is!” (36:82).

We do not need to elaborate on these arguments and show in detail how they prove the truth (of resurrection); moreover, this is not the proper place for it. Our purpose here is only to draw attention to the importance of the Qur’ānic arguments.

[*Dar’ Ta’āruḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql* 1:30-35]

## (7.2) The life between death and resurrection

*Texts concerning the life between death and resurrection, and the reward and punishment therein.*

(a) The *Salaf* and the *a’immah* believe that people meet some kind of reward or punishment after death, that they experience it in the soul as well as in the body, that the soul, after it has separated from the body, continues to live and experience pleasure or pain, and that sometimes it joins the body and experiences along with it pain or joy. When the Day of Judgment comes, the souls will be returned to their bodies and people will be raised from their graves to face the Lord of the Worlds. The resurrection of the body is an integral part of the Muslim faith, as it is a part of the Jewish and the Christian faiths. All this is agreed upon by the scholars of Ḥadīth and Sunnah.

As for the questioning by the angels, Munkar and Nakir, in the grave and punishment therein, there are many *mutawātir aḥādīth* on the subject. For example, the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections have the *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet once passed by two graves and said, “The men in these graves are being punished, and not for something great. One used to move about slandering, and the other did not take proper care in passing urine. Then he asked for a green branch of date palm, split in two and planted one on each grave. People asked him why he did that and he said, “It may lessen their pain for as long as they do not dry up.”<sup>379</sup> We also have

in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and other *Sunan* collections the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said, “When you finish the last *tashahhud* say, ‘I take shelter in God from four things: the torments of Hell, the torments of the grave, suffering during life and at the time of death, and the seductions of the anti-Christ.’”<sup>380</sup> ... Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have noted the *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī that one evening after the sun had set the Prophet came out and said, “The Jews are being punished in their graves.”<sup>381</sup> They have also the *ḥadīth* in which ‘Ā’ishah (raa) says that an old Jewish woman of Madinah came to her and said that people are punished in their graves. She did not believe in her statement nor did she endorse it. She went to the Prophet and said that an old Jewish lady had come to her and said that people are punished in their graves. He said, “She was right. People are punished in such a way that animals hear their shrieks.” Thereafter, ‘Ā’ishah said, she saw the Prophet praying to God in every *ṣalāh* to save him from the torments of the grave.<sup>382</sup>

There are many more *aḥādīth* on the subject. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* as well as the *Sunan* collections we have the *ḥadīth* reported by Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (raa) that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “When a Muslim is questioned in the grave and says that he witnesses that there is no god except Allah and that Muḥammad is His messenger, it is what is referred to in the verse, ‘God establishes in strength those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world and the Hereafter’” (14:27).<sup>383</sup> ... The two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections also have a the *ḥadīth* reported by Qatādah and Anas Ibn Mālīk that the Prophet said, “When a person is put in the grave and his people depart, and he still hears the shuffling of their shoes, two angels come to him and make him sit up and ask they him, ‘What do you say about this man (i.e. Muḥammad)?’ If he is a Believer, he says, ‘I witness that he is Muḥammad, the servant of God and His messenger.’ Then they say, ‘Behold your seat in the Fire. God has replaced it with one in Paradise.’ He will then look at both seats.... The two angels

will also come to the infidel and the hypocrite and ask the same question: ‘What do you say about this man?’ He will say, ‘I do not know. I just used to say what others would say (about Him), that I do not recognize him.’ He will then be beaten with iron rods on his head; he will cry out so loudly that everything will hear him except men and jinns.”<sup>384</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 4:284-293]

(b) The dwelling of the soul in the dead body in the grave will be different from its dwelling in the body alive in this world. In some respects, it will be more perfect, just as life in the Hereafter will be more perfect than this life. In fact, every stage of life in this world, in the grave, and on the Day of Judgment, will be different from one another. That is why the Prophet said, “Graves will first be widened for the dead, and then they will be interrogated.”<sup>385</sup> Even if the earth is not changed the souls will be returned to the body of the dead and then taken out.

[*Fatāwā* 4: 274]

### **(7.3) The next life**

*The life after death will be different from this life.*

The next life will be different from this life; whereas this life comes to an end, the next life will continue forever. Moreover, people in the next life will not excrete anything foul. It is authentically reported that the Prophet said, “The people of Paradise will pass neither urine nor stool, neither spit nor blow mucous out of their noses, except a sprinkle of musk.”<sup>386</sup> We also have a *ḥadīth* recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections that the Prophet said, “Men will be raised barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised.” Thereafter he quoted the verse, “Even as We produced the first creation, so shall We produce a new one. (It is) a promise We have undertaken, and We shall fulfill it truly”

(21:104).<sup>387</sup> Hence people will be raised from their graves uncircumcised.

Commenting on this verse, Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī and Mujāhid say that the words, “Even as We produced the first creation” mean that as God created men in this world while they were nothing at all He will raise them again on the Day of Judgment. Qatādah says that men have been created from earth and to earth they will return, just as God has said, “From the (earth) did We create you, and unto it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again” (20:55); or “Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be taken out at last” (7:25).

[*Fatāwā* 17:249-50]

#### **(7.4) Calling the unbelievers to account.**

*Will the unbelievers be called to account (ḥisāb) on the Day of Judgment? The answer is both yes and no, depending on what is meant by calling to account (ḥisāb).*

Ibn Taymīyyah was asked if the unbelievers will be called to account for their deeds or not. He answered that it was a controversial issue, and scholars of later times in the school of Aḥmad as well as other schools had held different views. Some, like Abū Bakr ‘Abdul-‘Azīz,<sup>388</sup> Abū Al-Ḥasan At-Tamīmī,<sup>389</sup> Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā,<sup>390</sup> and others believe that they will not be called to account. Others like Abū Ḥafṣ Al-Barmakī<sup>391</sup> from among the followers of Aḥmad, as well as Abū Sulaymān Ad-Dimishqī<sup>392</sup> and Abū Ṭālib Al-Makki<sup>393</sup> believe that they will be called to account.

In fact, *ḥisāb* may either mean that their deeds will be reviewed before them and they will be interrogated about them, or it may mean that their good and evil deeds will be weighed against each other. If you take the first meaning, the unbelievers will certainly be called to account; but if you take the second meaning and think that they will have good deeds which may possibly qualify them

for Paradise, it is not correct. However, if you think that they will differ in their punishments, and the punishment of one who has committed more sins will be greater than the punishment of one who has committed fewer, or that the one who has done some good deeds will have his punishment reduced, it is true. Certainly, the punishment of Abū Ṭālib<sup>394</sup> will be less than the punishment of Abū Lahab.<sup>395</sup>

This is supported by a number of texts, for example, God has said, “Those who reject God and hinder (men) from the path of God, for them will We add penalty to penalty” (16:88); or, “Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief” (9:37). And it is well known that Hell will have different strata. Hence, if some unbelievers will receive a more severe punishment than others since they had done more evil and less good, then *ḥisāb* in their case will mean the determination of their punishment, rather than whether or not they should be sent to Paradise.

[*Fatāwā* 4:305-6]

### **(7.5) The children of the unbelievers**

*Opinions differ as to what will happen to the children of the unbelievers. In Ibn Taymīyyah’s view, the best thing that we can say in this regard is that God knows better what they would have been doing.*

The best thing to say on the issue is that God knows better what they would have been doing. This is the answer which the Prophet gave, when he was questioned about it, as we have in an authentic *ḥadīth*.<sup>396</sup> However, a group of *ḥadīth* scholars is of the view that they all will go to Hell. This view has been attributed to Aḥmad, but it is not correct. Another group is convinced that they will go to Paradise. This is the opinion of Abū Al-Fāraj Ibn Al-Jawzī<sup>397</sup> and others. They argue from the *ḥadīth* which says that the Prophet saw Abraham (pbuh) in a dream and saw that he had the

children of the Believers with him. When the Prophet was asked about children of pagans he said, “also children of pagans.”<sup>398</sup>

However, the correct thing to say on the issue is that God knows better what they had been doing, and abstain from saying who among them will go to Paradise or who will go to Hell. In a number of *aḥādīth* we have that (on the Day of Judgment when people gather on the open ground they will be asked to do some things and refrain from some others. Those who obey will enter Paradise, but those who disobey will enter Hell.”<sup>399</sup> Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Ash‘arī: has said that this is the view of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah. He has further added that the obligations of religion come to an end with entry into Paradise or Hell; they will be tried before that on the Judgment ground as they will be tried in the life between death and resurrection by being asked questions as to who their Lord is, what their religion is, and who their prophet is. In the Qur’ān we have, “That day the shin shall be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to bow in adoration, but they shall not be able to do so” (68:42).

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections we have the *ḥadīth* reported through different channels that when people assemble on the Judgment ground, God will appear and there will be an announcement: “Let every group follow the one whom they were worshiping,” whereupon the pagans will follow their gods. When only the Believers are left, God will appear to them in a form they were not aware of, so that they will not recognize Him when they see Him. Then He will appear to them in the form they were aware of, and they will fall on the ground in prostration, but the backs of the hypocrites will stay straight like the horns of a bull; they will try to prostrate themselves before Him but will not be able to. Saying that, the Prophet recited the verse, “That Day the shin will be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to bow in adoration, but they shall not be able to do so”<sup>400</sup> (68:42). For a more detailed treatment of the subject, the reader should consult other writings.

[*Fatāwā* 4 303 4]



**(7.6) The joys of the people in Paradise.**

*The people of Paradise will enjoy the pleasures of the spirit as well as the body.*

That people in Paradise will eat and drink is stated in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and is agreed upon among the Muslims. This is a well-known article of the Islamic faith. It is also known that there will be birds and mansions in Paradise. This has been stated in many authentic *aḥādīth*. Similarly, it is known that people there will not pass urine or stool, nor will they spit. No one who believes in Allah and His Messenger has ever contested these things; only the unbelievers and the hypocrites deny them.

Among those who deny this, mention may be made of the Jews and the Christians. They say that people of Paradise will not eat or drink or have sexual intercourse, that they will only hear sweet voices and smell sweet smells, even though they believe that resurrection will be the resurrection of the spirit as well as the body, and that reward and punishment will happen to both. Other deniers, such as the Sabaeans, the philosophers and the like, believe only in the resurrection of the spirit; they say that it is the spirit alone which will suffer punishment or enjoy reward. Many groups of infidels and pagans deny resurrection altogether, of the body as well as the spirit. In His Book as well as through His Messenger, God has clearly affirmed the resurrection of both spirit and the body, and refuted the views of the unbelievers and the infidels in most clear and definite terms.

As for the hypocrites of this *ummah* who do not abide by the words of the Qur'ān or the statements of well-known *aḥādīth* and interpret them in their own ways, they say that they only convey in symbolic language the idea of spiritual resurrection. This group includes the esoteric Karmathians, who have taken their ideas from the Magians and the Sabaeans, the philosophers who follow the

Sabaeans though they call themselves Muslims, and various writers, physicians, theologians and mystics like the authors of the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, as well as avowed hypocrites. All of them are infidels. The *ummah* is agreed that they should be killed. The Prophet has clearly and definitely stated the verdict in this regard, which has come down to us and is known to all, the learned as well as the common man. Some Jews came to the Prophet and said, “Muḥammad, you say that the people of Paradise will eat and drink, but you know that whoever eats and drinks goes to the toilet,” whereupon the Prophet said, “Yes, but they will only pass something like musk.”<sup>401</sup> It is the duty of the ruler to put to death whoever denies the resurrection of the body even though he may subscribe to the texts on the subject, and more so the one who denies them too.

[*Fatāwā* 4:313-15]

**(7.7) To gaze upon the face of God will be the greatest joy of Paradise.**

Paradise is the name for all the good one will have in the next life, and the best of all that good will be to gaze upon the face of God. Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* has noted the *ḥadīth* reported by ‘Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Laylah through Ṣuḥayb that the Prophet said, “When the people of Paradise enter it a voice will call, ‘People of Paradise! God has given you a promise which He would now like to fulfill.’ They will say, ‘What is that? Has He not brightened our faces, tilted down our scales, put us into Paradise, and saved us from the Fire?’ At that moment the veil will be removed from God’s face and people will look upon it; they will not have any joy greater than to look upon His face.”<sup>402</sup> This is what is referred to as an additional joy (*ziyādah*) in the Qur’ān (10:36).

This explanation, I hope, will remove the confusion which the person (you have referred to) may have caused by his words, “I have not worshiped You for the love of Your Paradise, or for fear

of Your Hell. I have worshiped You only to have a look at You.” This man and his followers have thought that Paradise only means eating, drinking, donning clothes, having intercourse, hearing sweet voices, and so on - only the pleasures of created things. This is also the view of Paradise which the Jahmīs and many other theological and juristic groups who deny the possibility of the Beatific Vision have formed. They think that Paradise will have nothing except the pleasures of created things. That is why when a misguided Ṣūfī *shaykh* heard the verse, “Among you are some who hanker after this world, and some who work for the Hereafter” (3:52), he said, “Where are those who want only God. Commenting on the verse, “God has purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise)” (9:111), another Ṣūfī has said, “If we sell our life and property for Paradise how will we get a look at God’s face? “All this is due to the misconception that a look at God’s face is not part of Paradise.

The truth is that Paradise is the abode for all kinds of joys, including the greatest joy of all, looking upon the face of God. That favor will be granted only in Paradise, as has been stated in a number of texts. It will be denied, on the other hand, to the people of Hell. If the person that has said the words mentioned above has said them with good intention, it can be taken to mean that even if God had not created Hell or Paradise it would have been the duty of the people to worship Him, seek His pleasure, and love to see Him. But he has, we must add, a poor idea of Paradise; he thinks that it is just a name for some ordinary pleasures.

We cannot imagine that any living being would act without a motive or will. Those ascetics and devotees who say that man’s perfection lies in negating his will altogether are absolutely wrong. They only say such things while in the state of *fanā*; they are not aware that the Ṣūfī who is lost in his love still has will and desire, even though he is not conscious of it, for love is one thing and will is another, and the consciousness of it a third thing. When they are

not conscious of their will they think they do not have it, which is obviously wrong. We cannot imagine human beings moving without love or aversion for something or without will. That is why the Prophet has said, “The truest name for a man is Ḥārith, the cultivator, or Hammām, the aspirant.”<sup>403</sup> Everyone cultivates one thing or another, which is his work, and everyone has some aspiration, which is what he strives for. It may happen, however, that one’s love for God impels him to obey God’s command, or one’s respect and awe for Him may prevent him from defying His will. ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb referred to this possibility when he said about Ṣuḥayb, “How good Ṣuḥayb is! He would not disobey God even if he were not to fear Him.” That is to say, even if he did not have to fear God he would not disobey Him; but now when he fears God you can imagine how obedient he would be. His regard and reverence for God prevents him from disobedience to His will.

When a person feels pain on losing sight of God, or feels pleasure on seeing Him, it is certainly due to his love for Him. It is love that has made him look for a vision of His face or fear of His being hidden, even though the thing which he fears or looks for is the pain or pleasure which is produced by something created. He seeks them through worship and obedience to God which involves His love. And when he tastes the love of God he is sure to find it sweeter than any other love. That is why the seeing of God for the people of Paradise will be the greatest joy they shall have. The Prophet has said. “The people of Paradise will receive inspiration to celebrate God’s glory just as they will receive inspiration to breathe.”<sup>404</sup> This means that their best pleasure will be in remembering God and loving Him.

[*Fatāwā* 10:62-64]

**(7.8) Condonation of punishment in the next life.**

*There are ten grounds on which punishment in the next life is condoned.*

Sins expose the Believers to punishment in Hell in the Hereafter, but it may be condoned on ten grounds. One is repentance. The person who repents of his sins is like one who has no sins. One may repent of all kinds of sins: faithlessness, intransigence and disobedience; and his repentance may be accepted. God has said, “Say to the unbelievers, if they desist (from unbelief) their past will be forgiven them” (8:38); and, “They do blaspheme who say: God is one of the three in a Trinity, for there is no god except one God. If they desist not from their words (of blasphemy) verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them. Why turn they not to God, and seek His forgiveness? For God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (5:76-7)....

The doors of repentance are always open for every Believer. God has said, “But man undertook it (the responsibility); he was indeed rash and foolish. (This was done) so that God might punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the unbelievers, men and women, and that God might turn in mercy to the Believers, men and women, for God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (33:72-3). He has also stated in His Book how the prophets repented and prayed for forgiveness. Of Adam, for example, He said, “Then Adam learned from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful” (2:37). Of Moses He said that he prayed to Him: “You are our Protector, so forgive us and give us Your mercy; for You are the best of those who forgive. And ordain for us that which is good in this life and in the Hereafter, for We have turned unto You” (7:155-6).... We all know that repentance is for everyone, prophets and non-prophets, that God exalts a man after repentance, that when He tests a person with sin and the latter repents of it, He lifts

him up rather than bring him down. He loves those who repent again and again and keep themselves pure, and replace their evil acts with good ones....

The second ground for the condonation of punishment is *istighfār*, that is, beseeching forgiveness. *Istighfār* is a prayer; often it accompanies *tawbah*, repentance, but not necessarily every time, for one may repent but not pray for forgiveness, as one may pray and may not repent.... Repentance wipes out all kinds of sins, which nothing else can do, for God “will not forgive that partners be set up with Him, He may forgive anything else” (4:48).... About repentance, on the other hand, He has said, “My servants who have transgressed against their souls, despair not of the mercy of God, for God forgives all sins, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful” (39:53). This is for those who repent. That is why God has said that one should not despair of His Mercy; one should rather repent and turn to Him. Following the words quoted above God has said, “Turn You to Your Lord (in repentance), and bow to (His will), before the penalty comes to You. After that You shall not be helped” (39:54). On the other hand, prayer for forgiveness without repentance does not bring forgiveness, although it may contribute to it.

The third ground is good works (*al-a‘māl aṣ-ṣāliḥah*). God has said, “Good works remove evil” (11:114). And the Prophet, addressing Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal, said, “Fear God wherever you are; do good after you have committed evil, for it may wipe out the latter, and behave well with people. In an authentic *ḥadīth* reported by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Prophet has said, “The five prayers (in a day), the congregational prayers on Fridays, and the fasting in Ramaḍān wash away the sins that you commit in between them, so long as you refrain from the major sins,”<sup>405</sup> He has also said, “One who performs *ḥajj* to this House (of God) and does not abuse anyone, or commit any transgression becomes free from his sins like a new-born child.”<sup>406</sup> And, “Charity wipes out the sin just as water extinguishes the fire.”<sup>407</sup> This *ḥadīth* has been reported by

At-Tirmidhī with the remark that it is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*). God Himself has said, “You who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that shall save you from a grievous penalty? Believe in God and His Messenger, strive (your utmost) in the cause of God, with your property and your persons. That would be best for you, if you only knew it. He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity. That is indeed the supreme achievement” (61:11-12). We have also the authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth*, “The martyr shall be forgiven all sins except default in paying debts.”<sup>408</sup>...

The works for which God forgives sins and wipes out evil deeds are the works which He accepts. And He accepts only from the righteous ... and only such acts as are done in the prescribed way. The *Sunan* collections have the *ḥadīth* reported by, ‘Ammār (raa) that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “One finishes his *ṣalāh* and what is credited sometimes to his account is only half of it, or a third, or a fourth, even a tenth.”<sup>409</sup> Ibn ‘Abbās has said that of the *ṣalāh* what is credited to one’s account is what one has done with understanding. The Prophet is also reported to have said, “Many people who fast do not get of their fasting except thirst; and many who offer *ṣalāh* in the night get nothing except staying awake.”<sup>410</sup> The same is true for *ḥajj* and *jihād*. In short, sins are forgiven or wiped out on account of such acts only as are accepted by God, but many people do not perform their acts properly, not even *ṣalāh*.

The fourth factor which contributes to the condonation of punishment is prayer by other believers. When believers pray at the funeral of a Believer, it contributes to the forgiveness of his or her sins. Their prayers at other times also contribute to that end....

The fifth factor is the prayer by the Prophet in his lifetime for the forgiveness of any Believer, and after his death on the Day of Judgment in the form of intercession on his behalf....

The sixth factor is the good deed which someone does and offers for the benefit of a person who is dead. It may be charity, *ḥajj* or fasting on behalf of the other. There are authentic *aḥādīth*

which say that the benefits of these deeds reach the dead. This is different from the case of prayers by sons or daughters for their parents, which is in a sense a part of their own deeds. The Prophet has said, “When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except three of them: charity, knowledge which benefits the people, and a righteous son (or daughter) who prays for him.”<sup>411</sup> This *ḥadīth* is reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The son/daughter is his own work, and his/her prayers are credited to his own account. This is not the case with the prayer of any other person; one is only awarded the benefit of one’s own deeds.

The seventh reason is the trouble that one suffers in life. God condones the sins of a person on account of his sufferings. The Prophet has said, “Whatever illness, hardship, pain, or grief you suffer, even the smallest thorn that pricks you, God condones of your sins on that account.”<sup>412</sup>...

The eighth reason is the hardship the dead experiences in the grave at the hands of the two angels sent to interrogate him or her.

The ninth reason is the hardship one will suffer on the Day of Judgment.

The tenth reason is the affliction that believers will experience when they cross the Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāṭ*) and stand on the ground between Hell and Paradise for a period in which they will be punished for the harms they have inflicted upon others. After justice is done and they are cleansed and purified, they will be led into Paradise.

[*Minhāj as-Sunnah* 3:179-186]

### **(7.9) Deeds which benefit the dead.**

*There is consensus on the point that charity on behalf of a dead person benefits the deceased. The same is true of ḥajj, sacrifice, and the freeing of a slave done on his behalf, as well as of praying and seeking God’s forgiveness for him. With regard to fasting, supererogatory ṣalāh and recitation of the Qur’ān on his behalf,*



*there are two opinions among the scholars. But as for hiring someone to read the Qur'ān and offering its benefits to the dead, it is not right; similarly to prepare food and invite people to it in order to benefit the dead is also unlawful, it is a wrong innovation (bid'ah).*

All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. On the question of charity on behalf of a dead person, there is complete agreement among the *ummah* that it does profit the deceased. There are a number of prophetic sayings to that effect. For example, it is reported that Sa'd said to the Prophet, "My mother could not speak at the time of her death; if she could have she would have given something in charity. Will it benefit her if I give something in charity on her behalf? "The Prophet said, "Yes."<sup>413</sup> A lot of things may similarly benefit the dead, such as *hajj*, sacrifice, setting slaves free on his or her behalf, as well as praying and seeking God's forgiveness for him or her. There is no disagreement on this point among the *a'immah* (of the *ummah*).

As for fasting or performing supererogatory *ṣalāh* or reciting the Qur'ān on behalf of the dead, there are two opinions among the scholars. One is that the dead will benefit from it. This is the view of Aḥmad and Abū Ḥanīfah and a group of Shāfi'ī scholars as well as others. The other view is that he will not benefit from it; this is what is commonly known to be the opinion of Mālik and Ash-Shāfi'ī.

However, to hire someone to recite the Qur'ān and offer the benefit to the dead is not correct. Scholars have debated the idea of taking wages for teaching the Qur'ān, making the call for *ṣalāh*, leading the *ṣalāh*, or making *hajj* on behalf of others; the man who is hired is paid for his work. However, Mālikī and Shāfi'ī scholars in general justify it, while others do not; they say that these works must be performed only to please God; moreover, they must be performed only by a Believer, not a non-believer. Since in this case they have been performed for the sake of money they will not be

rewarded by God. He only accepts the deed which is done for His sake and not for some worldly gains.

There is a third opinion on the issue, which is held by some scholars among the followers of Aḥmad. They say that remuneration may be paid to a person who is poor. They argue from the fact that God has permitted the guardian of an orphan to take a part of the latter's money for his sustenance if he is poor. This view is better than the other; for if a poor man does these things for God and takes some money for it in order to meet his needs and prepare himself for carrying out God's commands, God will reward him for his intention. He will be earning what is right, as well as doing what is meritorious.

However, if he does not recite the Qur'ān except for money, there is no merit in it, and when there is no merit in it, nothing can be passed on to the dead. The dead benefits from the merit of an action, not from the action itself. Therefore, when one gives something in charity to a person who deserves it, the dead will benefit from it. If one does it to help someone by reading the Qur'ān or teaching it one will be doing a more meritorious act. Helping a Muslim personally or through money by learning the Qur'ān, reading it, or teaching is one of the most meritorious acts.

For the relatives of the dead to prepare food and invite people is not lawful; it is an unlawful innovation (*bid'ah*). The practice of the Companions was just the opposite. Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullah says that for us to join the relatives of the deceased in the food which they had cooked for people was part of mourning (which is forbidden). The proper thing for people to do on such occasions is to prepare food and send it to the relatives of the dead. When the news of the death of Ja'far Ibn Abī Ṭālib came, the Prophet said, 'Prepare food for the family of Ja'far; they cannot do it in this situation.'<sup>414</sup>

As for reciting the Qur'ān on the graves, as a matter of practice the Elders did not do it. Should we recite the Qur'ān on graves? Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik disapprove of it; this is also what is

usually reported of Aḥmad. However, a report of later origin says that he permitted it when he came to know that ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar said that the first and last verses of Sūrat Al-Baqarah should be read when the dead is put in the grave. Some Companions from the Anṣār have also been reported to have willed that Sūrat Al-Baqarah be read at their grave at the time they are buried. However, on the issue whether the Qur’ān should be read after the burial nothing has been reported of them. That is why Aḥmad has differentiated between reciting the Qur’ān at the time of burial and reciting it after the burial. The latter is an unjustified innovation; there is nothing to support it.

Those who say that the dead benefit from hearing the Qur’ān and are rewarded on it are wrong. The Prophet (pbuh) has said, “When someone dies, his deeds come to an end except three of them: charity, a contribution to knowledge which continues to benefit, and a righteous son who prays for him.”<sup>415a</sup> Hence, the dead is not rewarded for hearing the Qur’ān or for anything else, even though he does hear the shuffling of the shoes when people leave him after burial, or the greetings of peace (*salām*) which the visitors offer. He also hears other things, but none of them are counted as his deeds except the ones mentioned in the *ḥadīth* above.

[*Fatāwā* 24:314-17]

### (7.10) Intercession

Prayers of the prophets or their intercession are not to be equated with faith in them and compliance with their commands, for faith in them and obedience to their commands do secure deliverance from punishment in the Hereafter and guarantee happiness there, whereas their intercession and prayer cannot benefit anyone unless he fulfills certain conditions. They cannot, for example, save any person from the Fire or do him any good unless he believes in them. However, they may lessen their

suffering, as will happen with Abū Ṭālib; we have an authentic *ḥadīth* to that effect. For the Believers, on the other hand, they will certainly do a lot of good; they will benefit them in various matters, worldly and religious, add to their merits, and elevate their position on the Day of Judgment. The sinners from among the followers of any prophet will certainly benefit from the intercession of that prophet; there is complete consensus among the *ummah* on this point. The intercession which the Qur'ān has rejected is intercession in favor of those who are guilty of committing *shirk* against God from among the People of the Book or from among the Believers who think that there are beings with positions of honor with God who can intercede with Him on their behalf without His permission.

(a) The *ummah* agree that Prophet (Muḥammad) has a very high position of honor with God, that no one else is more honorable to God than he, or in a better position to intercede with Him on their behalf. However, it is also true that the intercession of a prophet is not like faith in him or obedience to his commands. Faith in him and obedience to him definitely guarantee salvation and happiness in the Hereafter. One who dies with faith in God and His prophet, and has obeyed Him and His prophet is certainly among the happy ones; on the other hand, one who dies not believing in His prophet will be consigned to Hell.

As for the prayer or intercession of a prophet, one must fulfill certain conditions to qualify for it. Anyone who does not believe in him will not have his intercession to relieve him from the Fire, and will not benefit from his prayers if he persists in his unbelief, however great a position the prophet may have with God. There is no one more honorable to God than Muḥammad (pbuh), and Abraham is next to him. But when the latter prayed for his father's forgiveness in these words, "Our Lord! Cover (us) with Your forgiveness, me, my parents, and the Believers on the Day the Reckoning will be established" (14:41), and when following his

example, the Prophet intended to pray for his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, and some Muslims wanted to pray for their relatives, God admonished them, “It is not fitting for the Prophet and those who believe that they should pray for forgiveness for pagans, even though they be kin, after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire” (9:113). With regard to Abraham’s prayer, He observed, “Abraham prayed for his father’s forgiveness only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy to God, he dissociated himself from him. Abraham was most tender-hearted, forbearing. God does not let people go astray after He has guided them till He makes clear to them what to fear (and avoid)” (9:114-5).

The greatest of all intercessors, the Prophet Muḥammad is also on record as saying, “I sought the permission of my Lord to pray for the forgiveness of my mother, but He did not permit me; then I sought permission to visit her grave, which He permitted.”<sup>415</sup> This has been recorded by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. In another version of the *ḥadīth*, it states that the Prophet visited the grave of his mother and wept, as did others around him, and then he said, “I sought God’s permission to pray for forgiveness for my mother, but He did not permit me. Then I sought permission to visit her grave and He permitted me. So you may also visit the graves; it will remind you of death”<sup>416</sup> Anas (raa) narrated a *ḥadīth* recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections that a man asked the Prophet where his father was. He said “In the Fire.” When the man departed he called him back and said, “My father and your father are both in the Fire.”<sup>417</sup>

The intercession of the Prophet and his prayers for the Believers will also benefit them in various matters, worldly and religious; his intercession may even add to their merit on the Day of Judgment and raise their position and status. There is full agreement on bothse counts among the *ummah*. It is, however, said that some heretical sects do not believe in it.

As for the Prophet’s intercession for the sinners of his *ummah*, this is also agreed upon by the Companions, their righteous

Successors, the four *a'immaḥ* of the Muslims, as well as others. Only some heretical sects such as the Khawārij, the Mu'tazilah and the Zaydiyyah deny it; they say that when one enters the Fire one will no get out of it on account of any intercession or any other reason. For them no one who enters Paradise will ever enter the Fire, and no one who enters the Fire will ever enter Paradise, and no one can be both rewarded and punished. But the Companions, the righteous Successors, the four *a'immaḥ* as well as other imāms, on the other hand, agree on what is stated clearly in a number of *aḥādīth* that God will take some people out of the Fire after they have suffered there for some time. Some He will take out due to the intercession of Muḥammad (pbuh), and some due to the intercession of others, and some without any intercession. The heretical sects which deny intercession argue from the following verses: "Then guard Yourself against a day when one soul shall not avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from it, nor shall compensation be taken from it" (2:48); "Neither shall compensation be accepted from it, nor shall any intercession profit it" (2:113); "You who believe! Spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you before the Day comes when no bargaining (will avail), nor friendship, nor intercession" (2:254); "The wrongdoers will have no intimate friend or intercession which could be listened to" (40:18); and, "Then no intercession of (any) intercessors will profit them" (74:48).

The Ahl as-Sunnah answer this argument in this way: First, these verses only say that no intercession will profit those who set up partners with God, for at one place God has said that when they are asked, "What led you into Hell-Fire?" they will say, 'We were not of those who prayed, nor were we of those who fed the indigent. We (also) used to talk vanities with vain talkers, and used to deny the Day of Judgment until there came to us (the Hour) that is certain.' Then no intercession of (any) intercessors will profit them" (74:42-8). It is clear, therefore, that they will not get anyone to intercede for them because they were unbelievers. Second, these

verses negate the kind of intercession which is claimed by those pagans who set up partners for God, or those heretics among the People of the Book and the Believers who believe that there are men who have the authority to intercede with God without His permission, just as some men intercede with their fellow human beings who accept their recommendations for various reasons: they either fear them or expect some favor from them, or they want to secure something from them in exchange. The pagans would take angels, prophets and pious men as intercessors, make images of them and pray to God in their name. They believed that since they were dear to God they could approach Him through them by worshiping them and praying to them to intercede with God in their favor, just as common people approach kings through those who are near and dear to them, who recommend them to the latter without their permission, and at times even knowing that he would not like it, nevertheless would grant their request because he either fears them or needs their help.

God has negated this kind of intercession on many occasions, for example, “Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He permits” (2:255); “How many soever be the angels in the heavens, their intercession will avail nothing except after God has given leave for whom He pleases and that he is acceptable to Him” (53:26). Referring particularly to the angels He has said, “They say: ‘God Most Gracious has begotten offspring.’ Glory to Him! They are servants raised to honor; they speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His command. He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His (glory)” (21:26-28). He has further said, “Say: Call upon other (gods) whom you fancy besides God. They have no power - nor the weight of an atom - in the heavens or on the earth. No (sort of) share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper to God. No intercession can avail in His presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission” (34:22-3). And,

“They serve, besides God, things that harm them not, nor profit them, and they say these are our intercessors with God. Say: Do you indeed inform God of something He knows not in the heavens or on earth? Glory to Him! And far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)!” (10:17-8)... “And those whom they invoke besides God have no power of intercession, except those who testify to the truth and know it” (43:86)... “All sounds shall humble themselves in the presence of (God) Most Gracious. Nothing shall you hear but the tramp of their feet (as they march). On that Day no intercession shall avail except for those for whom permission has been granted by (God) Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him” (20:108-9).

This is the intercession which the pagans attributed to the angels, prophets, and pious people. They put up their images, and believed that to pray to them is to pray to the beings whom they represented. They visited their graves in the belief that if they asked them to intercede on their behalf they would intercede with God. They also carved their statues and worshiped them. It is this kind of intercession which God and His Messenger have rejected, condemned its perpetrators and dubbed them infidels. Speaking about the people of Noah, for example, God has said, “They say (to each other): Do not abandon your gods, abandon neither Wadd nor Suwā‘, neither Yaghūth nor Ya‘ūq, nor Naṣr. They have already misled many” (71:23-4). Ibn ‘Abbās and other commentators have said, “These were the most righteous men among the people of Noah. When they died people haunted their graves, made images of them and worshiped them.” This is what is mentioned in many commentaries on the Qur’ān as well as works of *ḥadīth* by Al-Bukhārī and others.

The Prophet has rejected this *shirk* altogether and destroyed its root and branch. He has cursed the people who visit the graves of their prophets and pious men and offer *ṣalāh* near them, even though they may not invoke them. He forbade *ṣalāh* in the direction of the graves, and sent ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib with the order



to level every grave which was raised and knock down every image which was set up. He also cursed those who made the images. Abū Al-Hayyāj Al-Asadī says that ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib told him that he wanted to send him on the same mission the Prophet had sent him. He had commissioned him to destroy every image (*timthāl*) he would come across, and level every grave that had been raised high. In another version of the tradition we have the word *sūrah* - ‘figure’ - instead of *timthāl* – ‘image or statue’. Muslim has mentioned this tradition in his book.<sup>418</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 1:145-52]

(b) There are a number of *aḥādīth* on the intercession of the Prophet. Some say that when people assemble on the Ground of Judgment, and there will be among them Believers as well as non-believers, they will request him to intercede on their behalf. This means that there may be some kind of intercession for the non-believers also. There is also the *ḥadīth* which says that Abbās Ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭālib asked the Prophet if he could do any good for Abū Ṭālib, who used to defend him (against his enemies) and help him. The Prophet said, “Yes, he is only in a thin layer of Fire. Were it not for him, he would have been immersed deep into the Fire.”<sup>419</sup> Abū Sa‘īd Al-Khudrī says that once when Abū Ṭālib was mentioned to the Prophet he said, “Maybe my intercession will do him some good on the Day of Judgment and he is put in a thin layer of fire which reaches up to his ankles only, even though it would still be enough to make his brain boil.”<sup>420</sup>

These texts clearly say that the Prophet will intercede on behalf of some non-believers, and that his intercession will reduce their punishment and make them the least sufferers among the people of Hell. Ibn ‘Abbās has also reported these words of the Prophet recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections: “The person who will suffer the least of all the people of the Fire will be Abū Ṭālib; he will be wearing only shoes (of fire) that will make his brain boil.”<sup>421</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 1:116-7]





## **PART III**

# **TERMINOLOGY**



## 8. TERMINOLOGY OF THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH

### (8.1) The correct way to understand Qur'ānic terms.

*There are three kinds of terms: one whose meanings can be determined in light of the Arabic language, e.g. shams (sun), and qamar (moon); second, those whose meaning is determined in light of the conventions ('urf) of a society, e.g., fahash (obscene), and (ma'rūf) good practices; third, those whose meaning is determined in light of the Shar', such as ṣalāh, zakāh. To this category belong also such terms as īmān, islām, nifāq, and kufr. When the Prophet explains them and states what is meant by them, we no longer need a scholar of language or any other person to give their meaning.*

Let it be clear that when the terms occurring in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are explained by the Prophet (pbuh) we no longer need to need to refer to the explanations of the lexicographers or any other persons. This is the reason why jurists have as classified terms into three categories.: One whose meanings are known through the statements of the *shar'*, such as *ṣalāh* and *zakāh*; second, terms whose meanings are known through their use in language, such as *shams* (sun), and *qamar* (moon); and third, terms whose meanings are determined in the light of the conventions of society, such as *fahash*<sup>422</sup> or *ma'rūf* in the verse, "Behave with them according to the *ma'rūf*," (the good practices of society) (4:19)

What terms like *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, *ṣiyām*, and *ḥajj* mean in the language of God and His Messenger have been fully explained by the Prophet. The same is true of *khamr*, wine, and other, similar terms. Their meanings can be fully ascertained from his statements. If anyone tries to give them a meaning different from what the Prophet has given, his suggestion will not be accepted. However, as for the derivation of a term, or variation in its

meaning, it is part of the science of linguistics. Similarly, the discussion of its significance or the reasons of its choice by the Qur'ān from among other similar terms may provide an additional insight; but our knowledge of what is meant by it does not depend on these things.

The most important words in this category are *īmān*, *islām*, *nifāq* and *kufr*. The Prophet has explained their meanings so thoroughly that we do not need to look at their derivations or the way the Arabs had used them before; we have only to look at their uses in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to determine what is meant by them; that will be more than enough. In fact, the meanings of these terms is known in their essence to everyone, the elite as well as the common folk. Take, for example, *īmān*. If you look at what the Khawārij and the Murji'ah have said with regard to it you will know that it definitely goes against the pronouncements of the Prophet. You will also know that obedience to Allah and His Prophet is part of *īmān* or that everyone who commits a sin is not to be dubbed a *kāfir*. Suppose some people said to the Prophet that they believed in what he taught, that they were convinced that it was true, and had no doubt about it at all, and that they openly confessed that God was one and he was His messenger, nevertheless they would not comply with any of his commands, they would not offer *ṣalāh*, or fast, or perform *ḥajj*, or they would not speak the truth, keep trusts, fulfill promises, do good to kin, or carry out anything he had commanded, or they would instead drink wine, marry those who are prohibited, kill his companions and the people of his *ummah* and take their property, even wage war against him along with his enemies and kill him, would the Prophet say to them that they were true believers perfect in faith, that he would intercede in their favor on the Day of Judgment, that none of them would enter the Fire? Every Muslim knows that the Prophet would say to them that they were the worst rejectors of faith, and that they would be killed unless they repented.

Similarly, every Muslim knows that the Prophet would not treat those who drink, commit adultery, slander or steal as apostates who deserve to be killed. The Qur'ān and the *mutawātir aḥādīth* from the Prophet have prescribed definite punishments for these crimes different from what is prescribed for apostasy. The Qur'ān, for example, says that the slanderer and the adulterer shall be lashed, that the thief's hand shall be chopped off. We also know definitely that the Prophet enforced these punishments. Had their perpetrators been apostates, the Prophet would have beheaded them. In short, the views of the Khawārij or the Murji'ah are not at all part of the religion of the Prophet.

When heretical sects deviated from the right path, a disease overtook them. They started building up the structure of Islam on the basis of propositions which they thought to be correct from the point of view of language or reason and ignored the statements of God and His Prophet. They did not realize that a proposition which conflicts with any statement of God or His Prophet is wrong. This was the reason why Aḥmad wrote his famous work<sup>423</sup> on the refutation of those who adhere to what they suppose to be the view of the Qur'ān without referring to the statements of the Prophet, his Companions and their Successors on the subject. He elaborated the same position in the letter which he wrote to Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān Al-Jurjānī<sup>424</sup> refuting the views of the Murji'ah. He was pursuing the method which all the *a'immaḥ* of the *ummah* had followed, namely that one should not, so far as possible, diverge from the elucidations of the Prophet on any point. Whoever deviates from this path lands himself in heresy (*bid'ah*), which means to ascribe something to God and His Prophet what one has no knowledge of, or to say what is not true. God and the Prophet have clearly forbidden this. Speaking of Satan, for example, God has said, "He commands you what is evil and shameful, and that you should say of God that of which you have no knowledge" (2:169); and speaking of the People of the Book, He has said, "Was not the Covenant of the Book taken from them, that they would not ascribe



to God anything but the truth?” (7:169). These verses in effect condemn any interpretation of the Qur’ān solely in the light of one’s reason. The Prophet has issued a clear warning against this stance: “Whoever speaks about the Qur’ān solely in the light of his reason shall have his seat in the Fire.”<sup>425</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 1 7:286-8]

**(8.2) One should not interpret the words of God and the Prophet in the light of their usage in later times.**

*To understand a term of the Qur’ān and the ḥadīth, the first thing one should do is to look for its usage in the Book of God and the aḥādīth of the Prophet, and then its usage in the language of his people and his Companions. Never should one interpret it in the light of its usage in the language which developed later and was not known to the Prophet or his Companions. The main reason heretical sects misinterpreted Qur’ānic terms is that they based themselves on literary and theological writings of later times or resorted to metaphorical interpretations and conjectures and did not turn to the Qur’ān and the aḥādīth themselves or to their elucidations by the Companions and their Successors.*

In order to understand a term that occurs in the Qur’ān and the ḥadīth you should first look for similar instances of its use in their pages and find out what God and His Prophet meant by it. This will help you understand the language of the Qur’ān and the ḥadīth, and the way God and the Prophet address people, their style and their method. Thereafter, if you find similar instances in the language of the Arabs and get them in considerable number, you may conclude that the meaning of the term and the way it is used is part of the common language and not something peculiar to the Prophet; it is rather the language of his people. You should not interpret his words in the light of the usage of later times not known to him or to his Companions. Many people make that

mistake without knowing that the usage of the later times did not exist in his time.

You cannot use analogy to establish the meaning of a word, though you can use it to express an idea. It is quite permissible to use a word to express an idea similar to what people use to express it, provided you clarify the point with which you differ, but you cannot use a word in a sense or senses other than those in which people commonly use it, and say that they understand it in the sense similar to the one you give to it. This will certainly be altering and distorting the language. For example, when the Prophet says, “*al-jār aḥaqqu bi ṣāḥibihi*”<sup>425a</sup> (‘the neighbor should be given priority in case of the house in his neighborhood’) the *jār* is *jār*, neighbor, not a *sharīk*, partner, for *jār* does not mean partner in the language of the Arabs. There is nothing in the language to suggest that the *jār* has a right over the part of the house which is for sale prior to any other (as is the case with the partner); it only means that it is better that the house be sold to him than to any other....

Before interpreting the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* we must know how God and the Prophet use the words to express their ideas, and how we should understand their language. We must know the Arabic in which they have addressed us, so that we may understand what they want to say. We should also know the way in which words convey ideas. The major reason that heretical sects erred lies here. They began interpreting the words of God and His Prophet in light of what they thought them to mean, while they did not mean that, and on the basis of their understanding, they called some meanings literal and some metaphorical. A case in point is the interpretation of the word *īmān* by the Murji’ah. They claim that its real meaning is *taṣḍīq*, that is, belief or faith; as for action, its inclusion in *īmān* is only metaphorical.

In response to this, we will say that if we reject the distinction between the real and the metaphorical meanings the matter ends; but if we allow it, even then the Murji’ah will not profit from it, for

it will go against them. For the real meaning of a word is the one which it conveys when it is taken by itself, without considering any related factor, and the metaphorical meaning is that which it conveys when the related factors are considered. It is clear that when *īmān* is used by itself in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah actions are included in its connotation, but they are not included when it is qualified. That this is true is proved by the *ḥadīth* that *īmān* has more than seventy parts.<sup>426</sup>

As for the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel,<sup>427</sup> if by *īmān* the Prophet meant what he said with regard to it as well as what he said with regard to *islām*, then actions are part of *īmān* and, I am sure, this is what the Prophet really meant. For in a similar way he meant by *iḥsān* what he said with regard to it as well as what he had said earlier with regard to *īmān* and *islām*. Obviously he could not have conceived *iḥsān* without *īmān* and *islām*. However, if *īmān* in the *ḥadīth* is taken in the sense of *taṣḍīq*, belief or faith, it is not possible to take it in that sense without taking into consideration any related factor, which will make the inclusion of actions in *īmān* metaphorical. If you read the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* you will find it too obvious to be contested. The opposite view that *īmān* in language means *taṣḍīq* and that the Prophet did not change or alter its meaning and only meant by it what people speaking the language meant by it without qualifying its sense, is not true. None of these two propositions can be established; in fact, they are false, and can be easily shown to be false....

In interpreting *īmān* the Murji'ah have deviated from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the statements of the Companions and their righteous Successors. Aḥmad has often said that most of the errors that people make are due to the symbolic interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) they indulge in. You will see that the Mu'tazilah, the Murji'ah, the Rāfiḍah and other heretical sects explain the Qur'ān solely by means of their reason, using their so-called rational ideas and symbolic method of

exegesis. They do not base their explanations on the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, or the sayings of the Companions and their Successors, or the *a'immah* of the *ummah*. They refer neither to the Sunnah nor to the consensus of the Elders and their traditions. They base them only on reason and language. They hardly consult commentaries which are based upon traditions, which cite *aḥādīth* and the sayings of the Elders. They only consult literary books or theological works which are their own creations. This is the way of renegades. They believe only in the ideas that are set forth in the books of philosophy, literature and language, without referring to the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* or the traditions of the *Salaf*. They either ignore prophetic texts in the belief that they do not yield knowledge, or interpret the Qur'ān symbolically in light of what their reason and understanding dictate without referring to the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet and the traditions of the Companions. We have already mentioned that Aḥmad has refuted these people and condemned them as heretics.

[*Fatāwā* 47:115-91]

### (8.3) *Īmān*

*The word īmān is sometimes used by itself and sometimes along with other words such as islām, submission, or 'amal ṣāliḥ, righteous action. When it is used alone, islām, and 'amal ṣāliḥ are included in its connotation. But when it is used along with islām, islām stands for external actions, and īmān stands for actions of the heart, such as faith in God, His angels, prophets and the Hereafter.*

The word *īmān* is sometimes mentioned alone without mentioning the word *islām* or the word *'amal ṣāliḥ*, or any other such word. But sometimes it is mentioned along with *islām*, as we have in the *ḥadīth* where Gabriel questions the Prophet about *islām*

and *īmān*<sup>428</sup> or in the verse, “The Muslim men and Muslim women, the *mu'min* men and *mu'min* women...” (33:35), or the verse, “The desert Arabs say: ‘We believe (*āmannā*). Say: You have no faith (*lam tu'minū*); you should (only) say, We have submitted (*aslamnā*)” (49:14), or the verse, “Then we evacuated those of the Believers who were there, but We found not there any Muslims except in one house” (51:5).

*Īmān* has also been mentioned along with ‘*amal ṣāliḥ*’ at various places in the Qur’ān. For example, “Those who believe and do *as-ṣāliḥāt*, righteous acts” (10:9)”... Or it has been mentioned along with *al-lazīna utū al-‘ilm*, those who are endued with knowledge. For example, “Those who are endued with knowledge and faith say...” (30:56), or “God will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe (*āmanū*) and who have been granted knowledge (*‘ilm*)...” (58:11), or, “But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge and the Believers (*al-mu'minūn*) believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before You” (4:162).

When *īmān* is mentioned along with *islām*, *islām* stands for visible external actions: the two *shahādahs*, witnessing to the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad, ṣalāh, zakāh, fasting, ḥajj. *Īmān* stands for what is in the heart: faith in God, His angels, books, prophets, and the Last Day. An example is the ḥadīth which Aḥmad has noted from Anas that the Prophet said, “Islam is something open, and *īmān* is in the heart.”<sup>429</sup>

But when *īmān* is mentioned alone, *islām* and righteous actions enter into its connotation. A clear example is the ḥadīth which tells of different parts of *īmān*: “*Īmān* consists of more than seventy parts, the greatest being the declaration that there is no god except Allah and the smallest being to remove an obstacle from the road.”<sup>430</sup> There are also many *aḥādīth* in which particular acts of virtue have been mentioned as parts of *īmān*.<sup>431</sup> Again, there are *aḥādīth* in which *īmān* is denied when a particular action is not

forthcoming,<sup>431a</sup> which shows that it is an essential part of *īmān*. But when the faith of the person who practices any such action is praised rather than negated it shows that that action is commendable. God or His Prophet never deny an epithet to anyone or to anything unless he or it fails to fulfill the essentials of that epithet. Examples are the following *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, “There is no *ṣalāh* without the *umm al-Qur’ān*,<sup>432</sup> i.e. the first *sūrah*, or, “He has no faith (*īmān*) who does not keep the trust,”<sup>433</sup> or, “He is not a religious man who does not fulfill his promise”<sup>434</sup> ....

There are numerous verses in the Qur’ān which underline the fact that *īmān* as such includes actions. For example, “Only those believe in Our signs who when they are recited to them fall down in adoration and celebrate the praises of their Lord, and are not puffed up with pride” (32:15). This means that God denies *īmān* to those who do not have these qualities. If the Qur’ān is read to someone and he does not prostrate when prostration is mentioned, he is not a believer (*mu’min*). Prostration in the five daily prayers is obligatory; the *ummah* is agreed upon it. As for prostration in the process of recitation, opinions differ. Those who hold it to be obligatory argue from the verse mentioned above. For a discussion on the point, however, the reader should consult relevant works.

Other verses of this kind are, “Only those are Believers who have believed in God and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of God” (49:15); “Only those are Believers who, when God is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts..” (9:2); “ Only those are Believers who believe in God and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave” (24:62); God forgive you! Why did you grant them exemption until you could know those who told the truth and those who were liars. Those who believe in God and the Last Day do not ask you for exemption from fighting with their goods and persons. And God knows well those who do their duty. Only those ask you for

exemption who believe not in God and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed in their doubts to and fro” (9:43-5).

There are many more verses like the last one mentioned. For example, “You will not find any people who believe in God and the Last Day loving those who resist God and His Messenger” (58:92), or “If only they had believed in God, in the Messenger, and in what has been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors” (5:84). Thus God has made it clear that certain things necessarily follow from *īmān*, that others are diametrically opposed to it, and that its presence necessitates the existence of the former and the non-existence of the latter. One of those things which are opposed to *īmān* is love for those who resist God and His Messenger; another is to seek exemption from *jihād*. God has also made it clear that the only ones who seek exemption from *jihād* are those who do not believe in Him and the Last Day. The words, “God knows those who fear Him,” (9:44), further indicate that those who fear Him are those who are the Believers. You may put in the same category the following *aḥādīth* of the Prophet: “One does not commit adultery when one is a believer (*mu'min*).”<sup>435</sup> “One does not have faith if his neighbors are not secure from his transgressions.”<sup>436</sup> “You will not have faith unless you love each other.”<sup>437</sup> “None of you will have faith unless I am dearer to him than his children, his parents and all the human beings.”<sup>438</sup> “None of you will have faith unless you love for your brother the same good that you love for yourselves,”<sup>439</sup> and, “He who cheats us is not of us; and he who takes up the sword against us is not of us.”<sup>440</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 7:13-5, 160-1]

**(8.4) *Īmān* of the heart is not simply *taṣḍīq*, belief and confession.**

*Īmān differs from taṣḍīq in word as well as meaning; even imān of the heart is not the same as taṣḍīq except when it is accompanied by love and obedience.*

*Īmān* of the heart does not simply means *taṣḍīq*, belief or confession which is not accompanied by the action of the heart and its causes, such as love of God and His Messenger. Again, it is not *imān* if it is simply an idea or a wish; it has to be a commitment of the heart as well as action of the heart (*‘amal al-qalb*).

*Īmān* is not a synonym of *taṣḍīq*, as some people think. *Taṣḍīq* is used in the context of every kind of statement. If you say something which is very well known such as, “one is half of two,” or “the sky is above the earth,” we would say *ṣadaqta* - ‘you are right’, and *ṣaddaqnā bi dhālika* – ‘we confirm it’. But we would not say *āmannā laka* – ‘we believe you’, or *āmannā bi hādihā*, ‘we believe in it’. We say these words only when the thing which is asserted is not seen. Only then we say *āmannā laka* or *āmannā bihi* - ‘we believe him, or we believe in it. The brethren of Joseph said to their father: *‘mā anta bi mu’min lanā* (12:17), ‘you will not believe us,’ that is, you will not accept or confirm what we say (*muqirr lanā wa muṣaddiq lanā*). They said these words because they had told of something which happened in the absence of their father. There are many other examples, such as “Shall we believe in you (*a nu’minu laka*) when it is the meanest people who follow you” (26:111); “Shall we believe in (*a nu’min lī*) two men like ourselves, and their people are subject to us” (23:47); “If you believe me not (*lam tu’min lī*), at least keep yourselves away from me” (44:21); “But none believed in (*fa mā āmana lī*) Moses except some children of his people (10:83), that is, *aqarra lahu*, believed in him.



This is because *īmān* is different from *taṣḍīq* in word as well as meaning. One may say, *ṣaddaqtuhu*, I testify that he is right, for *taṣḍīq* is a transitive verb and has an object. But one would not say, *\*āmantuhu*, except when one wants to say, “I gave him shelter.” One would rather say, *āmantu lahu* – ‘I believe in him’. It is possible to say, *mā anta bi muṣaddiq lahu*, ‘you are not going to testify that it is true’; for when the object precedes its verb, or when we have a participle which is in principle weaker than the verb, the practice is to support it with a preposition. We say *arāftu hādihā*, but *anā bihi ‘ārif*, ‘I know it’. Or *ḍarabtu hādihā*, but *anā lahu ḍārib*, I beat him... Similarly, we say, *ṣaddaqtuhu* but *anā lahu muṣaddiq*, ‘I testify that he is true’. But we do not say, *\*ṣaddaqtu lahū or bihi*. The case of *āmāna*, on the other hand, is different. When we want to say, *ṣaddaqtuhu*, ‘I testify that he is true’, we cannot say, *\*āmantuhu*, though we can say *aqrartuhu*. However, just as we say *āmantu lahu*, we may say *aqrartu lahu*. This is one difference between *īmān* and *taṣḍīq* from the point of view of language.

The other difference between them, as we have said earlier, is that the former is not used in the case of all kinds of statements, but only in the case of statements about things which are not in sight and about which one may entertain doubt. When, in a case like this, the listener approves of the statement we say, *āmāna*, he believes it. *Taṣḍīq*, on the other hand, can be used in the case of every kind of statement.

This was with regard to the usage. As for meaning, *īmān* is derived from *amn*, which means peace and tranquility (*ṭamanīyyah*) and *iqrār* is derived from *qarra*, which conveys almost the same sense. The *ṣādiq*, i.e. one who speaks truth, feels peace of heart in speaking the truth, whereas the liar does not have that peace. That is why we have the saying, “Truthfulness is peace and lying is agony.” The *mu’min* enters into peace as the *muqirr* enters into tranquility (*qurr*). The word *iqrār* implies commitment,

and is of two kinds, one informative, which conveys the sense of confirmation, and *shahādah*, confession, or witnessing which you get in the works of *fiqh*, in the section on confession (*kitāb al-iqrār*) The second is declarative. We have in the Qur’ān, “Do you agree (*aqrartum*), and take this My covenant as binding on you? They said: We agree. He said: Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses” (3:81). Here *iqrār* is not merely informative, for just before the words quoted above God has said, “Behold! God took the covenant of the prophets saying, If I give a Book and wisdom and then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and render him (all) help. Do you agree (*aqrartum*), and take this covenant as binding on you?” Hence *iqrār* here is a commitment to believe in the Messenger and help him.

Similarly, in *īmān* there is an element informative and another declarative which is not the case with simple *taṣḍīq*. if you make a statement to someone, it does not necessarily mean that he will confide in you. Nor is it necessary to say that he will believe (*āmana*) in you. But the case will be different when the statement implies confidence in you. At times your statement may win compliance with what you say, and at times only faith in its truth. When it wins compliance from the listener, he will not simply believe in what you say but also obey what you command, implying faith (*taṣḍīq*) and obedience (*tā’ah*) together. That is why *kufr*, which is the opposite of *īmān*, is also used for abstaining from compliance and obedience. It is clear that *īmān* should be taken like *iqrār* in the sense of commitment and compliance. A verse that underlines the action part of *kufr* is, “We said to the angels, ‘Bow down to Adam’, and they bowed down. Not so Iblīs; he refused and was haughty, He was of the *kāfirūn*, the defiant” (2:34).

[*Fatāwā* 7:529-31]

### (8.5) The difference between *islām* and *īmān*

*Islām is to surrender to God, submit to Him, worship Him and serve Him. It is a matter of action, action of the heart and the body. Īmān on the other hand, is to believe, confess, and acknowledge; it is a commitment of the heart involving the action of the heart.*

The difference arises from the fact that *islām* is *dīn* submission. *Dīn* is the infinitive of the verb *dāna*, *yadīnu* which means to submit and surrender. The religion of Islam which God has ordained and promulgated through His prophets is to submit to Him alone. It is nothing but submission, worship and service to God and to Him alone. Hence if one serves Him and serves another god besides Him, he is not a Muslim; similarly one who does not serve Him, and refuses out of pride to serve Him, is not a Muslim. One becomes Muslim when one submits to God; hence *islām* is a matter of action, action of the heart and the body.

As for *īmān*, it is essentially *taṣḍīq*, belief and confession, *iqrār*, consent and commitment, *maʿrifah*, knowledge and realization. It is a commitment of the heart, implying action of the heart. Its essence is *taṣḍīq* and action follows from it. That is why the Prophet described *īmān* as faith of the heart (*īmān al-qalb*) and its submission, faith in God, in His angels, books and messengers. On the other hand, he described Islam in terms of submission and observance, observance of the five fundamentals. In the same way he has characterized *islām* and *īmān* at other occasions. For example, he has said “*Islām* is something visible, and *īmān* is in the heart.”<sup>441</sup> Actions are visible and we can see them; but belief, knowledge, love, fear, and hope are invisible. However, they do have their signs which demonstrate their presence; and since a sign cannot prove the existence of the thing it signifies unless it is a necessary consequence of the latter, it follows that the actions which a believer does are the necessary consequences of his faith.

In a *ḥadīth* reported by ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar and Abū Hurayrah the Prophet has said, “A *muslim* is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe, and a *mu’min* is one from whom people feel secure with regard to their life and property.”<sup>442</sup> This means that he has described *muslim* in terms of something which is visible, safety of the people, whereas he has described *mu’min* in terms of something invisible, the feeling of security with regard to life and property. Obviously, the latter epithet is more noble than the former, for the one who inspires in you a feeling of security, you will certainly not receive any harm from him. The converse is not true: if one does not do any harm to you, it does not mean that you should feel secure from him. He does not cause you any harm, but you may not feel secure from him, for it is possible that he has refrained from harming you in hope or fear of something, and not because he believes in his heart that he should not harm you.

Take another *ḥadīth*, which is reported by ‘Āmr Ibn ‘Absah. A man asked the Prophet, “What is Islam?” He said, “Feed people and to be soft in speech.” Then he asked, “What is *īmān*?” He said, “Magnanimity and patience.”<sup>443</sup> Feeding is an external action which one does for various reasons; similarly, soft speech is an external action. Magnanimity and patience, on the other hand, are virtues which are hidden in the soul. God has also said, “They enjoin patience and they enjoin compassion to each other” (90:17). Obviously, magnanimity and patience are better than feeding people and speaking softly. [*Fatāwā* 7:263-41]

### **(8.6) *Īmān* increases and decreases**

*Eight reasons showing that īmān increases and decreases, and that men differ in their īmān.*

Eight reasons can be cited to show that the *īmān* which God enjoins, as well as the *īmān* which the Believers have, increases

and decreases. First, the *īmān* which is enjoined may be *īmān* in principle and may be *īmān* in details. Whoever believes in God and His Messenger must submit in principle to whatever they command. Obviously, the duties of the people when the Qur'ān began to be revealed were not the same as when the revelation was completed. It is also clear that the things in which one has to believe when they are told to him by the Messenger are not same as those that are told by someone else. Similarly, when one knows the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and understands them fully he has to believe in things in greater detail than one who does not know them. Again, if a person has sincere faith in God and in His Messenger, but dies before he comes to know the details of the Shari'ah, he will die in the faith which is incumbent on him. Obviously, what he is obliged to believe or what he actually believes cannot be like the faith of one who knows the details of the Shari'ah, believes in them and acts upon them. The faith of the latter will be more perfect, both in the sense of what he should believe and in the sense of what he does believe...

Second, the distinction between faith in principle and faith in detail is also applicable to what people actually believe in. One may in principle believe in whatever the Messenger says and never deny anything, but not care to know in detail what he says, enjoins or forbids, though knowledge of these things is a duty; he does not acquire that knowledge, or act upon it; rather he pursues whatever he likes. Another tries to know what the Messenger has commanded and act upon it; and a third tries to know it, and comes to know it and believe in it, but does not act upon it. All of them are one with respect to their duty to know the teachings of the Messenger, but one who acquires knowledge in detail and acts upon it, has faith more perfect than one who knows what his duties are, believes in them and commits himself to them, but fails to act upon them all. The one who believes in the teachings of the Messenger but commits sins and admits them, and fears punishment from God, is better than the one who does not try to

learn his teachings or act upon them, nor fears punishment for his sins. He is, in fact, ignorant of the Messenger's teachings, even though in his heart he believes in his prophethood and confesses it openly.

When one knows what the Messenger has said and believes in it, and knows what he has commanded and acts upon it, it adds to his faith what he did not have before, even though he had the faith and the confession in principle. Similarly, one who knows the names of God and what they mean, and believes in them, has faith more perfect than that of one who does not know them in detail and only knows them in outline or knows only a few of them. The better one knows God's names, attributes, and signs the more perfect shall be his faith.

Third, knowledge and faith may themselves vary in strength. Some of them may be stronger, more established, and freer from doubt than others. This is something which everyone experiences within himself. Everyone sees the moon, but one sees it more clearly than another. The same is the case with regard to hearing, smelling, and tasting, as well as knowing and believing, which one experiences in the heart. They also vary much more than sensuous things in various aspects. People differ more widely in their understanding of God's names and His words than they do with regard to any other thing.

Fourth, the faith that moves the heart into action is more perfect than the faith that does not, and the knowledge on which one acts is more perfect than the knowledge on which one does not act. Of two men, the one who believes in God, His Messenger, Paradise and Hell, and whose faith produces in him love for God and fear for Him, or longing for Paradise and aversion for Hell - his faith will be stronger than the faith of the one who does not have these things: the stronger the effect, the stronger the cause which produced it. All these things are the products of knowledge. When you know that something is lovely, you try to have it; when you know it is dangerous, you flee from it. But, if the effect is not

forthcoming, it only means that the cause was weak. That is the reason why the Prophet said, “A hearer is not like a seer.”

Fifth, the above-mentioned things also vary according to the factors that cause them. For example, the faith which is produced by arguments that generate conviction and dispel doubt is different from the faith which is produced by arguments that do not generate conviction. If the arguments can produce necessary knowledge, the faith that they generate will be different from the faith which arguments can produce that are doubtful and need to be supported by further arguments and reflection. No one doubts that a thesis which has been established by a number of weighty arguments, and whose counter-thesis has been disproved and the arguments in its favor countered, is not like the thesis which is supported by only one argument and not defended against various objections. Obviously, the more numerous and weighty the arguments in favor of an idea and the fewer and weaker the arguments on the opposite, more sound and true is the idea....

Sixth, *īmān* also increases or decreases accordingly as the acts of the heart increase or decrease. Every Muslim knows from experience that people differ in their love for God and His Prophet, in their fear, trust and sincerity of devotion to Him, in the purity of their heart from self-conceit, pride and pretensions, in the love and sympathy they have for others, and many other similar virtues. Both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded that the Prophet said, “One who has three things in him gets the joy of faith: that he loves God and the Prophet more than anyone else, that he loves none except for the sake of God, and that he hates to return to unfaith after God has taken him out of it as much as he hates to be thrown into fire.”<sup>444</sup> God has said, “Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, or your kindred, or the wealth that you have acquired or the commerce in which you fear decline, or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than God or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause, then wait until God brings about His decision; and God guides not the

rebellious” (9:24). And the Prophet has said, “By God, fear God more than any one of you, and know more than any one of you the limits that He has set (in everything).”<sup>445</sup> Once he said, “You will not have true faith unless I am dearer to you than your children and your parents, and the rest of mankind.” Hearing this ‘Umar said, “Prophet of God, you are indeed dearer to me than anything except myself,” whereupon the Prophet said, “No, ‘Umar, not until I am dearer to you than your own self.” ‘Umar then said, “Now, yes, you are dearer to me than my own self.” The Prophet then said, “Now, ‘Umar (you have the true faith).”<sup>446</sup>

All these *aḥādīth* are in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections, and there are many more besides. They speak of differences in love and fear which people feel. In the Qur’ān we have, “Those who have faith are overflowing in their love for God” (2:165). This is something everyone can feel in himself, for it happens that one loves a thing more at one time than at another, or fears a thing more on one occasion than on another. That is why people who know God most have said that faith and love increase and decrease; they experience it in themselves. The following verse also testifies to it: “People said to them (the Muslims): ‘A great army is gathering against you, so you should fear them.’ But it (only) increased their faith; and they said: ‘For us God is sufficient, and He is the best disposer of affairs’” (3:170). In other words, the alarming news did not cause panic in them; on the contrary, it only increased their faith. This fact is also supported by many *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, such as, “Those Believers are most perfect in their faith who are most virtuous.”<sup>447</sup>

Seventh, those who remember God and mind His commands, and never forget them, are more perfect in faith than those who believe in them yet often forget them. Forgetfulness does not go along with perfect knowledge and conviction. That is why a companion of the Prophet, ‘Āmr Ibn Ḥabīb,<sup>448</sup> said, “When we remember God, praise Him or glorify Him, our faith increases; but when we do not remember Him, or forget Him, or lose sight of His



commands our faith decreases.” This is true. Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal<sup>449</sup> used to say to his friends, “Let us sit together for a while and strengthen our faith (*nu‘min*).” In the Qur’ān we have, “Do not obey one whose heart We have rendered neglectful of Our remembrance, one who follows his own desires” (18:28); “Teach the message; for teaching benefits the Believers” (51:55); and, “The admonition will be received by those who fear God, but it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones” (87:10-11). Whenever you recall what you knew before and act upon it, you realize something new which you did not realize before and understand God’s name and signs better than before. There is also a tradition that supports this: “Whoever acts upon what he knows, God bestows upon him the knowledge of what he does not know.” This truth every Believer can experience within himself....

Eighth, people sometimes deny or reject things when they do not know whether the Prophet has said or commanded it. Had they known it they would not have denied or rejected it. In their heart of hearts they know that the Prophet does not say anything but what is true and does not command anything but what is right. But after they have heard a verse or a *ḥadīth* and understood its meaning by reflecting upon it, or after someone has explained it to them, or by some other means, they come to believe what they had previously denied or accept what they had first rejected. This is a new acknowledgment (*taṣḍīq*) and a new commitment (*īmān*) which strengthens their faith obviously, they were not disbelievers before; they were only ignorant.<sup>450a</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 7:232-237, 562-568]

### **(8.7) *Kufr, shirk, fisq and zulm***

*Kufr is of two kinds: one on account of which a person goes out of the millah of Islam; the other on account of which he does not. The same is true of shirk, fisq and zulm.*

There is the essence of *īmān* and there are its consequences. *Kufr* is opposed to *īmān* in both respects. The essence of *īmān* is belief (*taṣḍīq*) and confession (*iqrār*), and the actions of the heart or the body are its consequences. The opposite of *iqrār* and *taṣḍīq* which is the essence of *īmān* is the rejection (*kufr*) of God and what He has said, and the refusal to believe (*taṣḍīq*) in Him and in His words. The opposite of *īmān* which is action and not confession is the *kufr* on account of which one does not go out of the *millah*, but a *kufr* which renders the actions worthless...

Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn Rāfi‘ narrates from ‘Abdur-Razzāq, from Ma‘mar, from Ibn Ṭawūs, and he from his father that when Ibn ‘Abbās was asked about the words “Those who fail to judge in terms of what God has revealed are unbelievers (*kāfirūn*)” (5:44), he said that they were guilty of *kufr* on that account. Ibn Ṭawūs adds that this does not mean that they are like those who deny God, His angels, His books and His messengers.... In a different version of the tradition which Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā has narrated from ‘Abdur-Razzāq, from Sufyān, from a man and finally from Ṭawūs, we have it that Ibn ‘Abbās said, “He is guilty of *kufr* but not in the sense that he goes out of the *millah*.<sup>450</sup> Ibn Ishāq has said that Wakī‘ narrated from Sufyān, from Ibn Jurayj that ‘Aṭā’<sup>451</sup> said that he was guilty of a lesser *kufr*, a lesser *ẓulm* and a lesser *fiṣq*.

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr<sup>452</sup> says that what ‘Aṭā’ has said is right; people do sometimes call an unbeliever (*kāfir*) *ẓālim*, wrongdoer, just as they call a sinning Muslim *ẓālim*. There are different kinds of *ẓulm*, wrong acts. The perpetrator of one *ẓulm* may cease to be a Muslim, but the perpetrator of another *ẓulm* may not. On one occasion God has said, “It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with *ẓulm*...” (6:82); on another occasion He has said, “Verily, associating someone with God is a great *ẓulm*” (31:13). A *ḥadīth* which is reported by Ibn Mas‘ūd says that when the words, “those who believe and confuse not their belief with *ẓulm*” (6:82) were revealed, the Companions of the Prophet were perturbed and

said to him, “Who of us is there who has not done any *ẓulm* (wrong)!” The Prophet said, “This is not what is meant here. Have you not heard the words of a pious man (quoted in the Qur’ān): ‘Verily *shirk* is a great *ẓulm*’ (31:13). *Ẓulm* here means *shirk*.”<sup>453</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā narrates from Ḥajjāj Ibn Al-Minhal, from Ḥammād Ibn Salamah, from ‘Alī Ibn Zayd, from Yūsuf Ibn Mahrān that Ibn ‘Abbās said that whenever ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb entered his house, he would open the *muṣḥaf* and read a few verses from it. One day when he entered his house and began reading he came to the verse “those who believe confuse not their faith with any *ẓulm*...” (6:82). He put on his shoes, flung his sheet on his shoulders, and went to Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b and said, “‘Abā Al-Mundhir, have you read the verse, ‘Those who believe and confuse not their faith with any *ẓulm*’? Don’t we commit *ẓulm* (wrong) and many other things?” Ubayy said, “‘Amīr al-Mu’minīn, this is not what is meant here. God has said, ‘Verily *shirk* is a great *ẓulm*’ (31:13), and this is what *ẓulm* here means.”<sup>454</sup>

Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr says that *fisq* likewise is of two kinds: one on account of which one goes out of the *millah*, and the other on account of which one does not. A *kāfir* maybe called *fāsiq*, just as a Muslim may be called *fāsiq*. God has said of Iblīs that “he defied (*fasaqa ‘an*) the command of his Lord” (18:50). This defiance was *kufr* on his part, as God has said elsewhere: “And those who defy and do wrong (*fasaqū*), their abode will be in the Fire” (32:20). Obviously He is referring here to the unbelievers, for following these words He says, “Every time they wish to get away from there they will be forced into it, and they will be told, ‘Taste you the penalty of the Fire which you were wont to reject as false’” (32:20). God has also called the defiant among the Muslims *fāsiqūn*, but He has not excommunicated them. For example, “And those who launch a charge against chaste women and do not produce four witnesses (to support their allegations), flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their evidence ever after, for such

men are *fāsiqūn*” (24:4); or, “If anyone undertakes to perform *ḥajj* during these (months) let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness (*fusūq*), nor wrangling in the *ḥajj*” (2:197). Scholars have said that *fusūq* here means sin (*ma ‘ṣīyah*).

Now, if *ẓulm* is of two kinds, and *fisq* is of two kinds, *kufr* is also of two kinds. On account of one *kufr*, one goes out of the *millah*; on account of the other one does not. Similarly *shirk* is of two kinds: one is to associate someone with God and violate His unity, on account of which one goes out of the *millah*. The other *shirk* is *riyā’*, dissimulation. God has said, “Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and admit no one as partner in the worship of his Lord” (18:110). In other words, he should not work righteousness to please someone else. It is this kind of *shirk* in action which is what is meant in the *ḥadīth*, “Augury is *shirk*.”<sup>455</sup>

[*Fatāwā* 7:324-29]

### (8.8) *Nifāq*

*Nifāq, hypocrisy, is of two kinds. One is to belie the Prophet, reject any part of his teachings, hate him, refuse to follow him, rejoice at the reverses of his religion, or grieve over its victories, and so on. This is the major hypocrisy. Minor hypocrisy, on the other hand, is hypocrisy in various actions, for example, lying when one speaks, breaking the promise one makes, violating the trust one should keep, and abusing the person one quarrels with, as is mentioned in the aḥādīth.*

Some forms of hypocrisy are very grave, and their perpetrators will be cast into the lowest depths of Hell. The hypocrisy of ‘Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and his colleagues belong to this category. They belied the Prophet, rejected some of his teachings, hated him, denied that he had to be followed, rejoiced when he met reverses, and felt sad when he had victories, and so on - things which you

can only expect from an enemy of God and His Prophet. This kind of hypocrisy was present at the time of the Prophet and continued after him; in fact, it increased and multiplied. Even though factors promoting faith were quite strong in his time, this kind of hypocrisy was also there. After him, it naturally increased and became stronger.

The Prophet knew only some of the hypocrites and not all. God has said, "Certain of the desert Arabs round about you are hypocrites, as well as among the people of Madinah. They are obstinate in hypocrisy. You know them not; We know them" (9:101). Similarly, the caliphs who succeeded him and followed in his footsteps knew some of them and did not know others. Many of those who are called Muslims are hypocrites; they are found in all sections of the population, the elite as well as the laity. They are called *zindīqs*, heretics who are engage in undermining Islam. Scholars differ as to whether or not their repentance - if at all they repent - should be accepted, since it is difficult to ascertain if they are sincere, for they never cease to profess Islam.

They are found mostly among the philosophers, astronomers and physicians, in that order, and least among the scribes. They are also found among the so-called *Şūfīs* and jurists (*fuqahā'*) as well as men of arms, rulers and common folk. However, the majority of them come from the various heretical sects, particularly the *Rāfiḍah*, who have among them more *zindīqs* and hypocrites than any other sect. This is why you see that the *Khurramīyyah*,<sup>456</sup> the *Bāṭinīyyah*, the *Karmathians*, *Ismā'ilīs*, *Nuṣayrīs*, and other, similar hypocritical *zindīqs* are *Rāfiḍah*.

Many of these hypocrites in our days love the rule of the Tatars since they do not ask them to follow the *Sharī'ah* of Islam, and allow them to do whatever they like. Others, however, dislike them because they mismanage their affairs, confiscate their properties, shed blood, and take men and women as slaves on non-religious grounds. This is certainly a kind of major hypocrisy.

Minor hypocrisy, on the other hand, is a matter of common life, for example, lying, breaking promises, violating trusts and using abusive language in disputes. The *Ṣaḥīḥayn* have recorded that the Prophet said, “A hypocrite is known by three things: he lies when he speaks, breaks the promise he makes, and violates the trust which is reposed in him.” In another version of the *ḥadīth* we also have the words, “Even though he may offer *ṣalāh*, engage in fasting, and claim that he is a Muslim.”<sup>457</sup> They have also recorded the *ḥadīth* which ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Āmr has reported. The Prophet said, “Whoever does four things is a perfect hypocrite, and whoever does any one of them is a hypocrite to that extent unless he gives it up: telling lies, breaking promises, violating pledges and using abusive language in disputes”<sup>458</sup>

In this category you may also count fleeing from *jihād*, which is one of the known traits of the hypocrites. The Prophet has said, “Whoever dies and has not joined a *jihād* campaign or wished to join it dies with a sort of hypocrisy.”<sup>459</sup> Muslim has recorded this *ḥadīth*. The (ninth) *sūrah*, Barā’ah, was revealed about the hypocrites; it was also called Al-Fāḍiḥah as it exposed the evil traits and designs of the hypocrites. Ibn ‘Abbās says that it is called the Exposer (Al-Fāḍiḥah) because it went on exposing one kind of hypocrite after another until people began to think that none of them would be left unexposed. Al-Miqdad Ibn Aswad<sup>460</sup> said that this is a *sūrah* of probing (*buhūth*), since it probes into the hidden traits of the hypocrites. Qatādah<sup>461</sup> says that it is infuriating (*muthīrah*) because it arouses the enmity of the hypocrites.

Sūrat Barā’ah was revealed on the occasion of the final campaign of the Prophet to Tabūk in the ninth year of the Hijrah. Islam had become a dominant force by that time, so God decided to expose the hypocrites and state that they were cowards, that they backed away from *jihād*, that they did not spend anything in His cause and only loved to hoard their money like misers. They suffered from two major evils, cowardice and niggardliness. It has

also been authentically reported that the Prophet said, “The worst evil that one may suffer from is appalling niggardliness and shameless cowardice.”<sup>462</sup> That is why they may at times be counted as grave sins which will land you in the Fire. There is a suggestion to this effect in the verse, “Let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which God has given them of His grace think that it is good for them. No, it will be the worse for them. Soon shall the things which they covetously withhold be tied to their necks like a twisted collar on the Day of Judgment” (3:180). And in the verse, “If any do turn his back to them on such a day - unless it be in a strategy of war or retreat to a troop (of his own) - he draws on himself the wrath of God, and his abode is Hell, an evil refuge (indeed)” (8:16).

As for their cowardice and fear, God has referred to it in these words, “They swear by God that they are indeed of you, but they are not of you; they are afraid” (9:56).... “When a *sūrah* of clear and categorical meaning is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein, you will see those in whose heart is a disease looking at you with the look of one in a swoon at the approach of death; may they perish!” (47:20). And, “Those who believe in God and the Last Day ask you not for exemption from fighting with their goods and persons. And God knows well those who fear Him and do their duty. Only those ask you for exemption who believe not in God and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed in their doubts to and fro” (7:45). This is a warning from God that a Believer should not ask for exemption from *jihād*, for only those who do not have faith ask for exemption. If this is the case, you may think of those who stay away from *jihād* without taking permission.

With regard to their niggardliness, God has said, “The only reasons their contributions are not accepted are that they reject God and His Messenger, that they come to prayer but have no interest in it, and that they offer contributions unwillingly” (9:54). This is the remark about those who contribute unwillingly; you may

imagine what God would say about those who refuse to contribute anything. Elsewhere He has said these frightening words, “You who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and the anchorites who in falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the way of God. And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God. Announce unto them a most grievous penalty” (9:4).

[*Fatāwā* 28:434-9]





**PART IV**

**ISLAMIC LIFE**



## 9. WILL AND RESPONSIBILITY

### (9.1) The Human soul is created.

*The Elders and the a'immaḥ of the ummah are agreed that the human soul is a created object. Those who say that it is something eternal include some Sabaeen philosophers and a group of heretical Ṣūfīs, theologians, and traditionists. They argue from the verse, "Say the spirit (rūḥ) is a command of my Lord" (17:85), but their argument is incorrect.*

The human soul is something created and originated. The Elders and the *a'immaḥ* of the *ummah* are agreed on this truth. A number of scholars have written that there is complete consensus among the *a'immaḥ* on the point that the spirit is created. Of them mention may be made of Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī,<sup>463</sup> a renowned scholar, most knowledgeable on the consensus of the scholars and their disagreements, and Abū Muḥammad Ibn Qutaybah,<sup>464</sup> another distinguished scholar. The latter says that people are agreed that God is the Creator of all the bodies and all the spirits. A third scholar, Abū Ishāq Ibn Shāqallā<sup>465</sup> says that the spirit is one of those things which is created. Many other leading scholars and Ṣūfī masters (*mashā'ikh*) have written on this issue and refuted the view that the spirit is uncreated.

Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Abdullah Ibn Mundah<sup>466</sup> has written a voluminous book, *The Spirit and the Soul (Ar-Rūḥ wa an-Nafs)*, and quoted great many *aḥādīth* and traditions on the subject. Imām Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr Al-Marwazī and others before him, as well as Shaykh Abū Ya'qūb Al-Kharrāz,<sup>467</sup> Shaykh Abū Ya'qūb An-Nahrjūrī,<sup>468</sup> Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā<sup>469</sup> and others have also written on the issue, and clearly stated that the soul is created...