The Light of the Qur'ān

An Explanation to Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ and Sūrah al-Kāfirūn

Items of over twenty classical commentaries of the Qur'ān

Ṭabarî, Sama’ānî, Baghawi, Zamakhshari, ibn ’Atiyyah, ibn al-Jawzī, Qurtübî, ibn al-Qayyîm, ibn Taṣâ’îyyah, ibn Kathîr, Suyûtî, Aṭâ‘î, Shawkânî, Sa’dî, Sharoṭî and others
DĀR AS-SUNNAH CLASSIC
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
Also coming in this series:

*Tafsir Ayatu’l-Kursi*

*Tafsir al-Mu‘awwidhatayn*

*Tafsir Sūrah al-Kahf*

*Tafsir Sūrah Yūsuf*

*Tafsir Sūrah Yā Sin*

*Tafsir Sūrah Qāf*
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد
ولل وليد عن له كله أحد
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قل يا أبا الكافرون لا أعبد ما أعبدت و لا أظلم
عابدين ما أعبد لا أظلم ما أعبد ل لا أظلم
عابدين ما أعبد لا يدريكم ولي الدين
The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a person reciting *al-Kāfirūn* and remarked, "*He has been saved from shirk.*" He passed by another person reciting *al-Ikhlāṣ* and remarked, "*Paradise has become obligatory for him.*"
The Light of the Qur’ān
An Explanation to Sūrah al-Ikhlās
and Sūrah al-Kāfirūn

A summary of over twenty classical commentaries of the Qur’ān
Tabarī, Sama‘ānī, Baghwā, Zamakhsharī, ibn ‘Aṭiyyah, ibn al-Jawzī, Qurtubī, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Taymiyyah, ibn Kathīr, Suyūṭī, Ālūsī, Shawkānī, Sa‘dī, Shanqīṭī and others

Prepared and translated by
Abū Rumaysah

Dār as-Sunnah Publishers
BIRMINGHAM
First Published in Great Britain in May 2010 / Rabi al-Thani 1431H
by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers

DĀR AS-SUNNAH PUBLISHERS
P.O. Box 9818, Birmingham, B11 4WA, United Kingdom

T/F: + 44 (0) 121 243 1772
W: www.darassunnah.com
E: info@darassunnah.com
E: daar-us-sunnah@mail.com

© Copyright 2010 by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers

All rights reserved Worldwide. No part of this publication may be reproduced
including the cover design, utilized or transformed in any form or means, electronic
or mechanical, including photocopy, recording of any information storage and
retrieval system, now known or to be invented without the express permission in
writing from the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or
cover other then that in which it is published and without a similar condition being
imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

British Library Cataloguing in publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Title:
The Light of the Qur‘ān - An Explanation to Sūrah al-Ikhlās and Sūrah al-Kāfūrūn

Prepared and translated from the original Arabic by Abū Rumaysah

ISBN 1-904336-31-0
Paper-back

First Edition 1431AH/2010CE
Typeset by: Dār as-Sunnah Publishers
Printed in Malta by Melita Press

While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of this book neither the authors,
translators, nor Dār as-Sunnah Publishers, shall have any liability with respect to any loss or
damages caused nor do the views expressed in this book are necessarily held by the publisher
directly or indirectly by the instructions or advice contained in this book.
CONTENTS

Surah al-Ikhlaş

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: THE FOUNDATION
Say: He is Allâh, the One and only!
    Allâh
    The One and only (Ahad)

CHAPTER TWO: SUCCOUR
Allâh, the Everlasting Sustainer of all

CHAPTER THREE: UNIQUENESS
He fathered none, nor was He born

CHAPTER FOUR: PURITY
And no one is comparable to Him

CHAPTER FIVE
Conclusion
CHAPTER SIX
Points of Benefits 70

*Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* 85

CHAPTER SEVEN
Introduction 87

CHAPTER EIGHT
Repetition 93

CHAPTER NINE: DISBELIEF
Say: “O disbelievers! 100

CHAPTER TEN: ABSOLUTION
I do not worship what you worship. 104

CHAPTER ELEVEN: PAGANISM
And you are not servants of who I worship. 109

CHAPTER TWELVE: PURITY OF FAITH
I am not a servant of what you worshipped and you are not servants of who I worship. 113

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: DISAVOWAL
You have your religion and I have mine 118

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
Who is being Addressed? 124
With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

Qul Huwa Allāh Ahad

1) Say: He is Allāh, the One and only!

Allāh al-ṣālih

2) Allāh, the Everlasting Sustainer of all.

Lā ilāha illā Anta, wahdāna 'l-ūlā,
3) He fathered none, nor was He born.

4) And no one is comparable to Him.
INTRODUCTION

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

In the view of ibn Mas‘ūd, ibn ‘Abbās, al-Ḥasan, ‘Aṭā’, ʿIkrimah and Jābir, this Sūrah is Makkī. Another view of ibn ‘Abbās, as well as the view of Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk is that it is Madanī.1 In the Meccan and Syrian recitations, the number of verses are five and in the rest, four with the former ending the third verse at, “He fathered none,” the fourth verse being, “Nor was He born.” The chapter consists of eleven words and forty seven letters.2

Rāzī and Fayrozabādī list a total of twenty titles for this chapter such as al-Tawḥīd, al-Tajrīd, al-Tafrīd, al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Najāb, al-Wilāyāt, al-Ṣamad, al-Asās and Nūr al-Qur’ān.

Aḥmad recorded, on the authority of Ubayy bin Ka‘b, that the polytheists asked the Prophet (ﷺ), “Muḥammad, tell us the lineage of your Lord,” whereupon Allāh revealed “Say: He is Allāh, the One

1 Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān

2 Fairozabādī
and only! Allāh, the Everlasting Sustainer of all; He fathered none, nor was He born. And no one is comparable to Him.”

Bukhārī recorded, on the authority of 'Amrah bint 'Abdu'l-Rahmān - a woman who used to stay in the apartment of 'Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), that 'Ā’ishah said, “The Prophet sent a man as the commander of a war expedition who would lead his companions in prayer. He would complete his recitation by reciting, ‘Say: He is Allāh, the One and only.’ When they returned they mentioned this to the Prophet (ﷺ) who said, “Ask him why he did that.” They asked him and he replied, ‘It contains the description of the All-Merciful and I love to recite it.’ So the Prophet said, “Inform him that Allāh, Most High, loves him also.”

Bukhārī recorded, on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd, that a man heard someone reciting “Say: He is Allāh, the One and only,” repeating it over and over again. When morning came, the man went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and mentioned this to him, speaking as though he thought the act insignificant. The Prophet said, “By Him in whose hand is my soul, it is equivalent to a third of the Qur’ān.”

Mālik records that Abū Hurayrah said, ‘I went with the Prophet (ﷺ) and he heard a person reciting, “Say: He is Allāh, the One and only,” and said, “It is obligatory.” I asked him what was obligatory, he replied, “Paradise.”’

---

3 Aḥmad #21219 and Tirmidhī #3364.

It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by Hākim #3987 with Dhahabī agreeing, and ḥasan by Albānī.

4 Bukhārī #7375

5 Bukhārī #5013-6643-7374

6 Mālik, vol. 1, pg. 176, Tirmidhī #2899 who said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb.

It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by Albānī, Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī
al-Ḥasan said, 'This chapter is pure, it does not mention anything to do with this world or the next.'

Dāruquṭnī said, 'In terms of authentic narrations, this Sūrah has the most dealing with its excellence.'

---

7 Ṭabarî

8 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr*
CHAPTER I: THE FOUNDATION

قل هو أَنَّهُ أَحَد

Say: He is Allāh, the One and only!

"Say" with certainty, unwavering belief and firm understanding that "He is Allāh, the One and only," absolute oneness is something unique to Him. He is the One, the one true God. He is not subject to plurality and neither is there more than one god. As such the verse repudiates the doctrine of trinity, the doctrine of the dualists who believe in the gods of light and dark, the doctrine of those who believe in divination through stars and celestial zones, and polytheism in general.9 He is also singular in His perfection, He is singular in possessing the Most Beautiful Names and perfect Lofty Attributes, and He is singular in His pure deeds. There is nothing comparable to Him or like Him.10

In this verse, Allāh has announced His Tawhīd and ordered the

---

9 Sa'dī

10 Rāzī, Baqā'ī
addressee to proclaim it. Therefore, when the servant says, "Say: He is Allāh, the One and only," he has singled out Allāh in the same way that He singled out Himself. He ( سبحانه) was commanded to say the word, "Say" to actualise this reality, and to highlight that his only duty was to convey; he would communicate exactly what was related to him.\textsuperscript{11}

Ibn al-Qayyim said, while explaining the \textit{Mu‘awwidhatayn},

If it is then asked: Why is it that the order (in these chapters) is implemented by reciting the order and the ordered? It is known that when one commands, ‘Say: Alhamdulillah. Say: Allāhu Akbar. Say: SubhānAllāh’ the person ordered responds by saying, ‘Alhamdulillah, Allāhu Akbar and SubhānAllāh’ without repeating the word, ‘Say.’ However, in these chapters one recites them by saying,

\begin{center}
\textit{Qul 'A'udhu bi Rabbal-Falqī}
\end{center}

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak."\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{center}
\textit{Qul 'A'udhu bi Rabbil-Nasīs}
\end{center}

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind."\textsuperscript{13}

I reply by saying: this is the exact same question that Ubayy ibn Ka‘b asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Bukhārī records that Zīr ibn Ḥubaysh said, 'I asked

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} Ibn al-Qayyim, \textit{Badā‘i‘ al-Fawā'id}, vol. 2, pg. 659
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{al-Falaq} (113):1
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{al-Nās} (114): 1
\end{flushright}
Ubayy ibn Ka‘b concerning the Mu‘awwiḍahatayn and he said, “I asked the Messenger of Allāh concerning this and he replied, ‘This is how it was said to me, so I recite (the word): Say’ so we recite as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited.’”

Bukhārī then records that Zirr ibn Hubaysh asked Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, ‘Abū Mundhir, your brother ibn Mas‘ūd says such and such.’ He replied, ‘I asked the Messenger of Allāh and he replied, “This is how it was said to me, so I recite (the word): Say” so we recite as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited.’

The reason is that the duty of the Prophet (ﷺ) was to convey the Qur’ān as it was revealed from Allāh and he had no say whatsoever as to its content or recitation. Therefore when Allāh said, “Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak,” the dictates of conveying in a complete way demanded that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say, “Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak.”

This is the meaning of his words, “This is how it was said to me...” i.e. I do not say this of my own accord rather I say what is said to me for I only convey the words of my Lord as He revealed them to me.

So abundant peace and blessing be upon him for he did indeed convey the message, completely fulfil his duty and trust and said as was said to him. This fact alone suffices us from the deviancy of the Jahmiyyah, the Mu‘tazila and their brothers who say, “This is an Arabic Qur’ān whose wording and phraseology was conceived by the Prophet.” The ḥadīth quoted here clearly repudiates their stance and explicitly states that the Prophet

---

14 Bukhārī #4976-4977.
conveyed the Qurʾān exactly as it was revealed to him to the extent that when it was said to him, ‘Say’ he conveyed this word as well. The duty of the Messenger is only to convey.\(^{15}\)

The purpose of the message is to call mankind to Allāh, in order to achieve this one must know what he is being called to and calling to, as such some form of definition is required. Commencing the Ġūráh with “Say,” points to the Messenger’s duty of conveying this message, it provides the definition for him, clears him of those who accused him of falsehood or madness by indicating that he is merely passing on what has come to him, and alludes to the fact that the intellect by itself cannot come to know Allāh as is required.\(^{16}\)

The primary addressee of “Say” is the Prophet, and then all who read it and can pass the message on, for this reason the object of the address has been left unmentioned in order to generalise it. As such, the address proves the universality of the message and that it is not just restricted to the Arabs or a particular people or a particular tribe.\(^{17}\)

Generalising the recipients of the address also proves that the statement that is commanded to be said is clear and understandable to all.\(^{18}\)


\(^{16}\) Baqāʿī

\(^{17}\) Baqāʿī

\(^{18}\) Baqāʿī
The personal pronoun, *huwa*, is also called a concealed noun since its significance is not shown by itself alone. Here it is acting as the *damir al-sha'ān,* which is employed to stress the importance of the information following and direct the readers’ attention to it, since the personal pronoun itself is explained by what follows.

By commencing the sentence with this personal pronoun, the verse is effectively, in the first instance, abstracting the subject matter and thereby highlighting that the essence or nature of Allāh is unseen, *ghayb,* and that He is the necessary existent since the personal pronoun is the most definite of definite nouns. Also highlighted is the fact that His existence is so well-known and widely accepted that each and every person can bring Him to mind.

In a direct sense, since the verse was revealed in response to the question posed, it is as if it reads ‘Say: (In answer to your question, the One you are asking about) is Allāh.”

---

19 Abū Su‘ūd, Abū Ḥayyān, Qāsimī, ibn ‘Uthaymin

20 Baqā‘ī

21 Abū Su‘ūd.

22 Ṭabarī, Sama‘ānī, Shawkānī
This name has been explicitly mentioned here because it subsumes all the Attributes of perfection: all those pointing to His magnificence and beauty.\(^{23}\)

He is the Lord, the One who is worshipped, the One deserving of being singled out for worship due to the Perfect Godly Attributes that He is described with.\(^{24}\)

Ṭabarî said,

‘Allâh is derived from al-ilâh, the hamzâb which is the fa of the noun has been removed and so the lâm, which is the ‘ayn of the noun, meets with the lâm which is additional and has a sukûn on it, hence this lâm mixes with the other and becomes one with a shaddâb. As regards the meaning of Allâh, it has been reported to us on the authority of ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs who said, “He is the One who everything takes as deity (ilâh) and is worshipped by every object of creation.” He then quotes his isnâd to Dâhîk who said that ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs said, ‘Allâh is the One possessing divinity (dhâ‘-ilâhiyyah) and deserving worship (‘ubûdiyyah) from all His creation.’ He then said, ‘If someone were to ask: what is the proof that ulâbiyyah is worship (‘ibâdah), and that the word al-ilâh

\(^{23}\) Baqâ‘î

\(^{24}\) Ṭabarî, vol. 1, pp. 82-83; Sa‘dî
means al-ma'bud (one who is worshipped), and that it follows the form fa'ila yaf'alū? He said, 'The word ta'alluh is undoubtedly on the form tafa'il deriving from aliba ya'labu and the meaning of aliba, when spoken, is 'abada (to worship). The verbal noun of this word has also been mentioned proving that the Arabs articulated it upon the form fa'ila yaf'alu without adding anything. Sufyān ibn Wāki' narrated to us; ...; that ibn 'Abbās recited,

"...and abandon you and your ilāba?"

and said, "i.e. and your worship," and he said, "He was one who was worshipped and did not worship." He also quoted another isnād to ibn 'Abbās where he said of this verse, 'Pharaoh was worshipped and did not worship,' and he quoted a similar narration from Mujāhid. Then he said, 'The opinion of ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid clearly shows that the meaning of aliba is 'abada and that the word ilāba is the verbal noun.' He then quoted a ḥadith on the authority of Abū Sa'id that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "The mother of 'Īsā gave him to a scribe that he may teach him. The teacher said, 'Write bismillāh.' 'Īsā said, 'Do you know what Allāh is? He is the God of the gods (ilāha-l-ālīha).’"

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said,

'This Noble Name has ten characteristics in its physical

---

25 al-A'raf (7): 127, i.e. ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid read it with the reading ilāha as opposed to the more standard aliba. The full verse reads, "The ruling circle of Pharaoh’s people said, 'Are you going to leave Mūsā and his people to cause corruption in the earth and abandon you and your aliba?'"

26 Tabari, vol. 1, pp. 122-124 as quoted from Āli al-Shaykh, Fathu'l-Majid, pp. 21-22
wording that are specific to it,' he mentioned them and then said, 'as regards its specific characteristics with regards to meaning, the most knowledgeable of creation (الله) said, "I cannot enumerate praise of You, You are as You have praised Yourself." How is it possible to enumerate the specificities of a Name, the object of which has every single perfection without restriction, who deserves all commendation and praise, all lauding and veneration, who possesses all magnificence and perfection, and all nobility and beauty? All goodness, beneficence, generosity, grace and gifts belong to Him and come from Him. This Name is not mentioned over something paltry except that it becomes plentiful, nor at a time of fear except that it removes it, nor at a time of hardship except that it lifts it, nor at a time of distress and worry except that it alleviates it, nor at a time of constraint except that it liberates it. No weak creature depends upon it except that it grants him strength, nor one undergoing humiliation except it grants him honour, nor one who is poor except that it leads him to richness, nor one who is left alone except that it grants him comfort, nor one who is overcome except that it aids him and supports him, nor one in a state of dire need except that it lifts his need, nor one who is run astray except that it draws him back. It is the Name through which hardship is removed, through which blessings descend, through which supplications are answered, through which the foot does not slip, through which evil is repressed and good is promoted. It is the Name through which the heavens and earth stand, because of which the heavenly scriptures descended, the Messengers were sent, the legal laws legislated, the legal punishments established, and Jihād legislated. Through this Name is creation divided into the felicitous and the wretched, and through it does the Undeniable Reality come to pass and the Final Convulsion occur. Because of it are the
Scales erected, the Path laid out, and the Paradise and Hell made ready. Through it is the Lord of the worlds worshipped and praised, and to establish its rights were the Messengers sent. It is about it that the questions will be asked in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection. Because of it did the dispute arise and to it one goes for judgment. Love and hate is based on it. Felicitous is one who has come to know it and establish its right, wretched is one who is ignorant of it and leaves off its right. It is the core of the creation and the command and through it do both stand and become firm, and to it do they end. ...

“Ours Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Transcendent are You! Safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire.”

---

27 **Āli ʾImrān** (3): 191

28 cited in Āli al-Shaykh, *Fath al-Majid*, pg. 15
The One and only (Abad)

The majority have stated that Abad has the same meaning as Wāhid, and this is proven by the recitation of ibn Mas'ūd, 'Say: He is Allāh, the Unique (Wāhid). He is the One and only (Abad), i.e. Unique (Wāhid), singular and unparalleled in every aspect, and there is nothing like Him. He has no peer, no companion, no son and no partner; He is One with regards lordship, rubūbiyyah, and One with regards divinity, ulūbiyyah. Allāh, Most High, says,

وَلَآ أَعْمَلُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُونَ وَخَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَخَلَقْنَاهُمْ حَصَصُونَ

"Your God is One God; there is none worthy of worship save Him, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful."

[al-Baqarah (2): 163]

29 Sama'ānī

30 Baghwā. Ibn 'Atiyyah also quotes this from 'Umar and Rabi' ibn Khaytham.

31 Tha'ālabī, Ibn 'Atiyyah, Abū Ḥayyān

32 Qurṭubi, ibn Kathīr

33 Ibn Rajab, Qāsimī
“They have taken their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah son of Mary as lords beside Allāh, when they were bidden to worship only One God. There is none worthy of worship save Him. Be He Glorified from all that they ascribe as partner (to Him)!”

[al-Tawbah (9): 31]

“Say: I am only a warner, and there is none worthy of worship save Allāh, the Unique, the All-Conquering.”

[Sād (38): 65]

“And no one is comparable to Him.”

[al-Ikhlāṣ (112): 4]

“Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”

[al-Shūrā (42): 11]

Ibn ‘Aṭiyah said, ‘The whole of the Qur’ān, all of Muḥammad’s
message, rather all the messages, came with this purpose: to affirm that Allah is Unique, the One and only. Everything in creation actually points to this reality. Allah, Most High, says,

هَذَا أَلَّاَّ بُلْغُ النَّاسِ وَلَسْتُمْ يَهِيٓ وَلَعَلَّمُونَا أَنَّهُمْ هُوَ الَّذُّنِي أَنْصَبَ وَلَيْدَهُ كَرَوْلُوْا الأَلْبَابِ

“This is a clear message for mankind in order that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that He is only One God, and that men of understanding may take heed.”

[Ibrāhīm (14): 52]

الرَّكْنِينَ أَحْكَمَتْ إِنْ شَاءَهُمْ فَصِلَّتْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ حَكْمُ خَيْرَ

أَنْصَبَ وَلَيْدُهُ كَرَوْلُوْا الأَلْبَابِ

“A Book whose verses are perfectly constructed and then demarcated, coming from One who is All-Wise, All-Aware. ‘Do not worship anyone but Allah, I am a warner and a bringer of good tidings to you from Him.”

[Hūd (11): 1-2]

وَلَقَدْ بَعَضُنا فِي سَمَٰعِ أَمُورٍ سُلَٰلَآ أَبً أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ

وَأَحْسَنُوا الْطَّغْوَى فِينَهُمْ مِنْ هَذِهِ اللَّهَ وَنَهْمُهُمْ مِنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَفِي الأَرْضِ فَأَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ

“We sent a Messenger among every people saying:
‘Worship Allāh and avoid all that is worshipped besides Him.’ Among them were some whom Allāh guided but others received the misguidance they deserved. Travel about the earth and see the final fate of the deniers.”

[al-Nahl (16): 36]

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

The Tawḥīd that the Messengers called to, and with which the Books were revealed, is of two types: Tawḥīd al-Ma‘rīfah wa‘l-Ithbāt and Tawḥīd al-Ṭalab wa‘l-Qaṣd. The first deals with affirming the being of the Lord, Most High, His Attributes, His Names, His actions, His speaking, His Books and His conversing with whoever He wills of His servants; it also deals with affirming His decree and destiny and His infinite wisdom. This category has been articulated in the Qur‘ān with complete clarity as can be seen in the beginning of Sūrah al-Hadīd, Sūrah Tā Hā, the end of al-Ḥashr, the beginning of Tāvālīl Sajdah, the beginning of Ṭālī‘ Imrān, the whole of Sūrah al-Īkhlāṣ, and others.

The second category is dealt with in His sayings,

قَلْ يَدْعُونَهَا أَلَّا أَعْبَدُ مَا أَصْبَدُونَ

“Say: ‘Disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship....’”

[al-Kāfirūn (109): 1-2]
"Say, 'People of the Book! Come to a proposition which is the same for us and you - that we should worship none but Allāh and not associate any partners with Him and not take one another as lords besides Allāh.' If they turn away, say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'"

[Ālī Imrān (3): 64]

and can be found in Tanẓīl al-Kitāb and its end, the beginning of Sūrah al-Mu'āmin, its middle and its end, the beginning and end of Sūrah al-A'rāf, the generality of Sūrah al-An'ām, and the generality of the chapters of the Qurān.

Indeed every Sūrah in the Qurān deals with both types of Tawhīd and calls to them. This is because the Qurān either contains information about Allāh, His Names and Attributes, and His actions and words, this then is Tawhīd dealing with knowledge and information [about Allāh]; or it calls man to worship Him alone without any partner and to relinquish all that is worshipped besides Him, this then is Tawhīd dealing with intent and goal; or it contains command and prohibition and the injunction to obey Him, His prescriptions and proscriptions, this then is the rights of Tawhīd and those matters that complete it; or it deals with honouring the people of Tawhīd and informing about how they were dealt with in this life and the honour they will receive in the Hereafter,
this then is the recompense of Tawhid, or it deals with information about the people of shirk and how they were dealt with in this life and what will be unleashed against them of punishment at the final destination, this then is the recompense of those who left the bounds of Tawhid. Therefore, the whole Qurʾān deals with Tawhid, its rights and its recompense, and it deals with shirk, its people and their recompense.³⁴

Ibn Taymiyyah said,

The Tawhid that the Messengers came with affirmed divinity (ilāhiyyah) for Allāh alone such that a person bears witness that là ilāha ill-Allāh, none is to be worshipped save Him, his tawakkul is only placed in Him, his love and hate is only for His sake, and any deed he does is only for His sake. That Tawhid also comprised affirming the Names and Attributes that He affirmed for Himself. Allāh, Most High, says,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{وَإِنَّهُ مُحَرَّمَةُ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْرَّحْمَانُ الرَّحِيمُ}
\end{align*}
\]

"Your God is One God. There is none worthy of worship besides Him, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful."

[al-Baqarah (2): 163]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{وَقَالَ اللهُ لَا إِلَهَ إلاُّهُ وَهُوَ الْهَدِيُّ النَّظِيمُ}
\end{align*}
\]

"Allāh says, 'Do not take two gods, He is only One God. So dread Me alone.'"

[al-Nafi (16): 51]

³⁴Āli al-Shaykh, Fathu’l-Majid, pp. 25-26
“Whoever calls on another god together with Allāh, has no grounds for doing so at all and his reckoning is with his Lord. Truly the disbelievers have no success.”

[al-Mu’minūn (23): 117]

“Ask those We sent before you as Our Messengers: Have We ever designated any gods to be worshipped besides the All-Merciful?”

[al-Zukhruf (43): 45]

He informs us that every Prophet called man to the worship of Allāh alone without any partners,

“You have an excellent example in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, ‘We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allāh, and we reject you. Between us and you there will be enmity and hatred for ever unless and until you have faith in Allāh alone.’”

[al-Mumtažanah (60): 4]
and He says about the polytheists,

إِنَّهُمْ كَالَاَوَات جَاءَنا فِيل فَطْرِمُ َّلا إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يُسَتَّكِبَرُونَ ُوَيَغْلَوْنَ أَيْنَ لَنَتَكُوَّرُ أَلْهَيْنَا ٍ لَّيْسَ عَلَيْنَا مَجْنُونٌ

“When they are told, ‘There is none worthy of worship save Allāh,’ they were arrogant. They said, ‘Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?’”

[al-Ṣāfāt (37): 35-36]

There are many verses like these in the Qur’ān. The meaning of Tawhīd is not restricted to Tawhīd al-Rubūbiyyah: the belief that Allāh alone is the creator of the worlds as thought by the people of theological rhetoric (ahlul-kalām) and the Sūfis. These people thought that if they were to affirm this aspect, along with its proof, they would have affirmed the pinnacle of Tawhīd, that if they were to witness this and were to obliterate themselves in it they would have done so in the pinnacle of Tawhīd.

In reality, if a man was to accept the Attributes of His Lord as was deserving and was to absolve Him of everything He should be absolved of, and affirmed that He alone is the creator of everything, he would not be a muwahhid until he bore witness that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh alone, accepting that He is the only God deserving of worship, and then affixed himself to the worship of Allāh alone without any partner. The ilāh is one who is taken as god and worshipped (malūh ma‘būd), who deserves worship, it does not mean one who is able to create from nothing. If someone were to explain al-ilāh to mean one who was capable of creating from nothing and believed that this meaning
was the single distinguishing meaning of the word, and thought that affirmation of this was the pinnacle of Tawhid, as was the way of those who affirmed the Attributes and delved into kalām - and this is what they say of Abū'īl-Hasan and his followers - then he does not know the reality of the Tawhid with which Allāh sent His Messenger (ﷺ). This is because the polytheist Arabs affirmed that Allāh alone was the creator of everything, yet despite this belief they remained polytheists. Allāh, Most High, says,

وَماَيْتَمُّونَ أَسْتَرَّهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلاْ وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

"Most of them do not have faith in Allāh without associating others with Him."

[Yūsuf (12): 106]

A group of the Salaf said, "If you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth,' they would answer, 'Allāh,' yet despite this they would worship others besides Him."35 Allāh, Most High, says,

35 Ibn Kathīr relates this from ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', 'Ikrimah, Sha'bī, Qatādah, Ḍāḥīk, and 'Abdūl-Rayḥān ibn Zayd ibn Aslām.
“Say, ‘To whom does the earth belong, and everyone in it, if you have any knowledge?’ They will say, ‘To Allāh.’ Say, ‘So will you not pay heed?’ Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?’ They will say, ‘Allāh.’ Say, ‘So will you not have taqwa?’ Say, ‘In whose hand is the dominion over everything, He who gives protection and from whom no protection can be given, if you have any knowledge?’ They will say, ‘Allāh’s.’ Say, ‘So how have you been bewitched?’”

[al-Mu’minun (23): 84-89]

Not everyone who affirms that Allāh, Most High, is the Lord of everything and its creator necessarily worships Him and only Him, supplicating to Him and no one else, placing his hope and fear in Him and no one else, loving and hating for His sake only, obeying His Messengers and enjoining what He enjoins and prohibiting what He prohibits. The generality of the polytheists believed that Allāh was the creator of everything but they set up intercessors through whom they committed shirk, and they set up partners with Him. Allāh, Most High, says,

٠٨

“Or have they adopted intercessors besides Allāh? Say, ‘Even though they do not control a thing and have no awareness?’ Say, ‘Intercession is entirely Allāh’s affair. The kingdom of the heavens and
earth is His.’...”

[al-Zumar (39): 43-44]

“They worship, instead of Allāh, what can neither harm them nor help them, saying, ‘These are our intercessors with Allāh.’ Say, ‘Would you inform Allāh of something about which He does not know either in the heavens or on earth?’ May He be glorified and exalted above what they associate with Him!”

[Yūnus (10): 18]

“You have come to Us all alone just as We created you at first, leaving behind you everything We bestowed on you. We do not see your intercessors accompanying you, those you claimed were partners with Allāh.”

[al-An‘ām (6): 94]
“Some people set up equals to Allāh, loving them as they should love Allāh.”

[al-Baqarah (2): 165]

This is why you will find amongst the followers of these people those who prostrate to the sun, moon and stars and invoke them, fast for them, sacrifice to them, and try to draw close to them. They then claim that this is not shirk and that “shirk can only be committed when one believes that these objects regulate and control my affairs, but if I was to take them as a mere means (sabab) and intermediary (wāṣiţa), I would not be a mushrik.” However, it is known by necessity in the religion of Islām that this is shirk.37

Aside from textual proofs directing a person to His oneness, Allāh also provides rational proofs:

“Say: If there had been other gods with Him, as they say, they would certainly have sought out a way to the Master of the Throne! Glory to Him! He is high above all that they say in greatness and sublimity!”

[al-Isrā’ (17): 42-43]

36 i.e. those who think that Tawhīd is restricted to this meaning.

37 Āli al-Shaykh, Ṭabḥu’l-Majīd, pp. 26-29
“If there had been any gods beside Allāh in heaven or earth, they would both be ruined. Glory be to Allāh, the Lord of the Throne, beyond what they describe!”

[al-Anbiyā’ (21): 22]

“Allāh has not chosen any son, nor is there any god along with Him; else would each god have assuredly championed that which He created, and some of them would assuredly have overcome others. Glory be to Allāh above all that they allege.”

[al-Mu’minūn (23): 91]

Others said that al-Abad and al-Wāhid are not synonymous; rather each has its own specific meaning. Azharī said that only Allāh is ever described as being Abad, one does not say rajul abad or dirham abad, rather one says rajul wāhid and dirham wāhid. In affirmation one would say, ra’aytu rajulan wāhidan and in negation one would say, mā ra’yatu aḥadan. Therefore, Khaṭṭābī said, ‘The difference between the two is that al-Wāhid is One with respect to His essence and nothing resembles Him in it; al-Abad signifies that He is One with respect to His Attributes and qualities and none shares with Him in

38 Rāzī, Shawkānī
them.’ Halîmî said, ‘al-Ahad is One whom nothing resembles and al-Wâhid is One who has no partner or equal.’39 Others said that al-Ahad denotes that He is not limited or subdivided or apportioned whereas al-Wâhid signifies that He has no partner or like.

Ibn Rajab said, ‘The people of theological rhetoric, abhu’l-kalâm, explained al-Ahad to mean one who could not be subdivided or apportioned. If what they mean is that He is not composed of separate individual components or that He cannot be split up into constituent parts, this is correct. But if they mean that one (quality) cannot be discerned from another - and this is what they mean when they use the term mujassim, anthropomorphist - this is completely false.’

In the verse, the Name Ahad follows Allâh because Allâh signifies His being the one deserving worship, one whom all creation needs yet needs no one, and such can only be One. Therefore divinity, ilâhiyyah, dictates Oneness but oneness does not necessarily dictate ilâhiyyah, hence the sequence of Names here.40

The Name Ahad cannot be unrestrictedly applied to any besides Allâh in an affirmative context since He is the One who is perfect in all His Attributes and actions.41

39 Qurṭubi, al-Asnâ, ibn Rajab.

40 Baqâ’î

41 Ibn Kathîr, ibn Rajab, Shawkânî who quotes this from Azhari
CHAPTER II: SUCCOUR

Allāh, the Everlasting Sustainer of all.

Allāh is the One who is sought for the fulfilment of all needs. The inhabitants of the lower and upper world all stand in dire need of Him. They ask Him for their needs and they place their hope in Him to fulfil their desires. This is because all His Attributes are perfect: He is the All-Knowing whose knowledge is perfect, the Forbearing whose forbearance is perfect, the Most-Merciful whose mercy encompasses everything and so on.\(^1\) The verse affirms His generosity and mercy because one is not recoursed to unless he is someone who grants grace.\(^2\) It also negates all defect from Him as this is implied by the word \textit{al-Šamād}, just as it negates the fact that

---

\(^1\) Sa‘dī

\(^2\) Qurṭubī, \textit{al-ʾAsmā}, vol. 1, pg. 184
there is anyone above Him who could overcome Him.\(^3\)

Linguistically, the word *al-Ṣamad* has two essential meanings: intent and objective (*qaṣd*), and hardness and rigidity (*salābaḥ*). It is the first that is meant here for all of creation turn to Allāh and seek Him in supplication and entreaty.\(^4\) Ibn al-Anbārī stated that all linguists agreed that this was the correct meaning.\(^5\)

Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī said,

In the language of the Arabs, *al-Ṣamad* is one who is sought or betaken to, to whom one recourses and One who has nothing above him... Since this is the case, the most befitting explanation of this word should be that which conforms to its well-known meaning in the language of those whose tongue the Qur’ān was revealed in.\(^6\)

One says: ‘ṣamada ilayhi,’ i.e. he betook himself, directed himself, aimed towards him, recoursed to him. ‘ṣamada ilayhi fi’l-hawā’ij,’ he betook himself to him or took recourse in him in exigencies. ‘ṣamada al-amr,’ he betook himself to the thing, aimed at it, sought it. A *ṣamad* is also a lord or chief because one repairs, betakes himself, or has recourse to him in exigencies; or because he is one to whom obedience is rendered, without whom no affair is accomplished; or

\(^3\) Rāzī

\(^4\) Ibn al-Fāris, *Mu’jam Maqāyis al-Lughā*

\(^5\) Abū Ḥayyān

\(^6\) Ṭabarī.

cf. Qurṭūbī who attributes this view to Khaṭṭābī, Tha‘ālabī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ḥalabī and Ālūsī
one to whom lordship ultimately pertains.\textsuperscript{7}

Therefore, in exegesis to this word, Suddî said, 'He is the One who is sought to fulfil all desires, whose succour is pleaded for in calamity.'\textsuperscript{8} Ibn 'Abbâs said, 'The One to whom creation resorts in times of need and asks of to fulfil requests.'\textsuperscript{9} Abû Hurayrah said, 'He is One who stands in no need of anyone yet everyone is in dire need of Him.'\textsuperscript{10} Allâh, Most High, says,

\begin{quote}
\textit{ يتمَّ نِعَمَّاهُمَا لِلنَّاسِ أَنْتُمُونَ يَتَّقُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْخَيْرُ الْمَعَمُّودُ}
\end{quote}

"Mankind! You are the poor in need of Allâh whereas Allâh is the Rich Beyond Need, the Praiseworthy."

\textit{[Fâ’îr (35): 15]}

\begin{quote}
\textit{ وَمَا îکُمْ مِن}

\textit{ يُعَمَّرُ فَقَ بِمَآ إِنَّهُ يُسِيرُ}

"Any blessing you have is from Allâh. Then when harm touches you, it is to Him that you cry for help."

\textit{[al-Nahl (16): 53]}

\textsuperscript{7}Lane's Lexicon, summarised

\textsuperscript{8}Baghwârî, Qurṭûbî

\textsuperscript{9}Ibn Kathîr
The Salaf illustrated the meaning of al-Samad in various ways, all of them revolving around its essential meaning:

1) He neither hungers nor thirsts and is not hollow

Ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘al-Samad: the One who is not hollow.’

Mujāhid said, ‘al-Samad: solid and not hollow.’

This same view was quoted by Ṭabarī from al-Ḥasan, Sa‘īd ibn al-Jubair and Daḥḥāk.

Ṣa‘bī said, ‘al-Samad: One who does not eat food and does not drink.’

Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyib said, “The One who has nothing to fill.”

Allāh, Most High, says,

قَلْ أَعَيْنَيْ اللَّهُ أَوَّلًا وَلِيْكَ أَيْدِيَ الْسَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْيَطْمَطُرُ

“Say: ‘Am I to take anyone other than Allāh as my protector, the Bringer into Being of the heavens and the earth, He who feeds and is not fed?”

[al-An‘ām (6): 14]

10 Qurṭubī

11 Ṭabarī, Bayhaqī, al-Asmā’ wa-l-Sifāt #100, ibn Abī ‘Āsim, al-Sunnah #665

12 Ṭabarī, ‘Abdu’l-Razzāq, ibn Abī Ḥātim, and ibn Abī ‘Āsim #673-674-676

13 Ṭabarī, ibn Abī Ḥātim, Bayhaqī #103, ibn Abī ‘Āsim #682-683-684

14 Ṭabarī, ibn Abī ‘Āsim #677
"I only created jinn and man to worship Me. I do not require any provision from them and I do not require them to nourish Me. Truly Allâh, He is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Sure."

[al-Dhâriyât (51): 56-58]

2) The One from whom nothing comes out.

‘Ikrimah said, ‘al-Šamad: the One from whom nothing comes out, He does not give birth and is not born.’\(^{15}\)

3) The One who does not give birth and is not born

Abû’l-‘Âliyâh said, ‘al-Šamad: the One who does not give birth and is not born. There is nothing that gives birth except that it is inherited from, and nothing that is born except that it will die. So He, Most High, informed them that He will not be inherited from, nor will He die.’\(^{16}\)

Abû Sa’d al-Šaghânî said in commentary to the first two verses, ‘This is because nothing is born except that it will die, and nothing will die except that it will be inherited from, but Allâh will not die and will not be inherited from.’\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\)Ṭabarî, ibn Abî Ḥâtim, ibn Abî ‘Āṣîm #667-668-670. Bayhaqî #102 from al-Hasan

\(^{16}\)Ṭabarî

\(^{17}\)Ṭabarî, ibn Abî Ḥâtim, ibn Khuzaymah, al-Tawhîd, pg. 30, Tirmidhî #3364
So in this case the next verse would serve as an explanation to this word.\textsuperscript{18} Ibn Kathîr was of the opinion that this was a good exegesis.

\begin{quote}
\textit{بِيَبَعَ الْسَمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
وَلَمْ تَنَٰكُنْ لَهُ صَبْرٌ وَخُلَقَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْكَبِيرُ الْعَلِيمُ}
\textit{ذَلِكَ الْعَزِيزُ الْقُدُرُ الَّذِي لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْغَيْبَ}
\textit{قَاعِدُ الْقُرْنِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْخَمِيسُ}
\end{quote}

"He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things and He has knowledge of all things. That is Allâh, your Lord. There is none worthy of worship but Him, the Creator of everything. So worship Him. He is responsible for everything."

\textit{[\textit{al-An‘âm} (6): 101-102]}

4) The absolute Master or Chief

Shaqîq\textsuperscript{19} and Abû Wâ’il\textsuperscript{20} said, \textit{\textit{al-Šamad}: the absolute master.’} This is also recorded from ibn Mas‘ûd.\textsuperscript{21}

Ibn ‘Abbâs said, \textit{\textit{al-Šamad}: the one with perfect mastery, the Ex-

\textsuperscript{18} Baghawî, Qurṭubî, ibn Kathîr

\textsuperscript{19} Tabarî, ‘Abdu’l-Razzâq, ibn Abî Hâtîm, ibn Abî ‘Âsim #666- 671-672, Bayhaqî #99

\textsuperscript{20} Tabarî, ibn Abî ‘Âsim #672

\textsuperscript{21} Ibn Kathîr.
altered whose greatness is perfect, the Forbearing whose forbearing is 
perfect, the Rich whose self-sufficiency is perfect, the Compeller 
whose compelling is perfect, the All-Knowing whose knowledge is 
perfect, the All-Wise whose wisdom is perfect. All aspects of ex-
cellence and mastery are perfected in Him, He is Allâh, this is His 
description and it applies only to Him.\textsuperscript{22}

Sa‘îd ibn Jubayr said, ‘The One who is perfect in all His At-
tributes and actions.’\textsuperscript{23} Rabî‘ and Maqâtil said that it meant One who 
is free from all defect and blemish.\textsuperscript{24}

5) The Everlasting who will never perish

al-Ḥasan and Qatādah said, ‘al-Ṣamâd: the One who continues 
forever after His creation perishes.’\textsuperscript{25} Qatādah said, ‘The ever-
enduring.’\textsuperscript{26} Allâh, Most High, says,


du‘ā

“Everyone on it will pass away but the Face of your 
Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and 
Generosity.”

\textit{[al-Raḥmān (55): 26-27]}

\textsuperscript{22} Ṭabarî, ibn Abî Ḥātim #19535, Abûl-Shaykh #98, Bayhaqi #98

\textsuperscript{23} Baghawî

\textsuperscript{24} Baghawî

\textsuperscript{25} Ṭabarî, ibn Abî Ḥâtim, ibn Abî ‘Āṣim #679, Abûl-Shaykh #92-95-99-100, 
Bayhaqi #104

\textsuperscript{26} Ṭabarî, Ibn Abî ‘Āṣim #681 and ‘Abdu’l-Razzâq also record it from al-Ḥasan
6) The governor of affairs and the Most High

Mujāhid, ‘al-Ṣamad: One who is in charge of everything.’
‘Alī and ‘Ikrimah said, ‘The One above whom is no-one.’
Allāh, Most High, says,

\[
\text{‘He is the Absolute Master, over His servants.’}
\]

\[\text{[al-An‘ām (6): 18]}\]

Ṭabarānī, Kitāb al-Sunnah, after quoting most of the above opinions said,

All of these (views) are correct and they are all the qualities of our Lord, Mighty and Magnificent. He is the One who is resorted to in exigencies, He is the absolute master, He is not hollow, He does not eat and drink and He is the One who will remain after His creation perishes.

Ibn al-Qayyim summarised the meaning as follows:

al-Ṣamad is a master or chief whose mastery is perfect, and it is for this reason that the Arabs would apply this name to their nobles due to the plenitude of their praiseworthy qualities. The Ṣamad is one to whom hearts recourse and betake in hope and fear, this is because of his many good traits and praiseworthy qualities. It is for

\[\text{27} \text{Ṭabarī, Abū'l-Shaykh, al-'Azāmah #96}\]

\[\text{28 Baghawī}\]

\[\text{29 Ibn Kathīr.}\]
\[\text{cf. Shanqīṭī to 6:14}\]
this reason that the majority of the Salaf, amongst them, ibn ‘Abbās, explained it to mean, ‘The master with perfect mastery, the Exalted whose greatness is perfect, the Forbearing whose forbearing is perfect, the Rich whose self-sufficiency is perfect, the Compeller whose compelling is perfect, the All-Knowing whose knowledge is perfect, the All-Wise whose wisdom is perfect. All aspects of excellence and mastery are perfected in Him, He is Allāh, this is His description and it applies only to Him.’ Those who said that it meant that He was not hollow did not contravene this exegesis for the word signifies a gathering, someone who gathers the attributes of perfection. No one is comparable to Him because He is perfect in His being al-Šamad.\textsuperscript{30}

The word Šamad is preceded by the definite article prefix (al), this is because the initial addressees accepted and knew of His Self-Sufficiency, however they did not accept, or know of, His absolute Oneness and it is to express this that Abad is left as an indefinite noun.\textsuperscript{31} It is also said that the word Abad, in any context outside of enumeration and negation, is only ever applied to Allāh, hence it’s being left indefinite since it does not need the definite article to particularise it. Šamad is applied to others besides Allāh, and hence it is given the definite article prefix to highlight that He is the one and absolute Šamad.\textsuperscript{32}

The word Allāh is repeated again to emphasise the fact that anyone who does not have the quality of absolute oneness and the

\textsuperscript{30}Ibn al-Qayyim, \textit{al-Šawā‘iq al-Mursalah}, pg. 1023

\textsuperscript{31}Bayḍāwī, Rāzī

\textsuperscript{32}Ibn Taymiyyah, \textit{Daqā‘iq al-Tafsir}, Ibn Rajab, Baqā‘ī, Ālūsī
quality of self-sufficiency is not deserving of divinity, \textit{ulūbiyyah}.\footnote{Bayḍāwī, Ālusī, Shawkānī}

The two sentences are not connected by a connecting particle because one is like a conclusion to the other, when looked at from one perspective, and an evidence for it, when looked at from another.\footnote{Bayḍāwī, Baqāʾī, Ālusī} Absolute oneness necessitates total self-sufficiency and independence, therefore the second verse is a conclusion of the first. The One who is self-sufficient in and of Himself, in whom the whole creation stands in dire need, can only be one, everything besides that one is needy and its existence is dependent on another; as such the second verse is also evidence for the first.\footnote{Ālusī}
CHAPTER III: UNIQUENESS

He fathered none, nor was He born.

Ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘He fathered none He has not sired a son, nor was He born: He does not comes from something else.’ He also said, ‘He fathered none as Maryam did, nor was He born as were ‘Īsā and ‘Uzayr.’ The claims of the polytheists, the beliefs implicit in the questions they asked the Prophet (ﷺ) are now tackled and explicitly negated. It is for this reason, the reason that the claims made are not new, that the verbs employed are in the past tense. The

---

1 Ibn Abī Ḥātim #19534

2 Qurṭubī

3 Thaʿālabī

4 Bayḍāwī, Rāzī, Abū Suʿūd, Ālūsī, Shawkānī
verse negates all lineage from Him from each and every perspective. He is the first before whom was nothing and He is the last, after whom will be nothing. Anything that is born is generated (ḥādīth), and anything that is generated cannot be divine and does not deserve to be worshipped. Hence, the verse further emphasises the absoluteness and perfection of his being Āḥad and al-Ṣamad.

Ibn Taymiyyah said,

It is impossible that He give birth or be born. This is because it is impossible to give birth or be produced, or any other words bearing these meanings, without having two sources, or parents. Whatever is born, an object that exists in and of itself, must have a source substance from which it comes out. Whatever is an accident (‘araḍ) i.e something that can only exist in something else must have a substance to exist in. The first is negated by His being Āḥad because this signifies that no one is comparable to Him and none is equal to Him. Therefore it is impossible that He have a companion and giving birth requires the communion of two. Allāh, Most High, says

بِدْيِعُ الْسَّمَّاَرِبِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلْدٌ
وَلَوْ تَنْكُنَّ أَنَّهُ صَالِحٌ حَلَّ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

"...How could He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things and He has knowledge of all
things."

Here He, Glorious is He, negated His having a son by stating the impossibility of the implications thereof. Negating the consequence negates the cause. He also states that He created everything, i.e. everything is created by Him, nothing is born of Him.

The second is negated by His being \textit{al-\c{S}amad} because something is born when portions separate from two sources, such as the birth of a child coming from the sperm and egg of the mother and father. As such one portion is dependent on the other in order to actually produce something and all of this is impossible for Allāh, Most High. He is \textit{Aḥad}: there is no one comparable to Him who could be a companion or equal, and He is \textit{al-\c{S}amad}: nothing splits away from Him. Therefore both of these Names negate His having a son and being born.\footnote{Ibn Taymiyyah, \textit{Daqā'iq al-Tafsīr}}

Ālūsī said,

\textbf{He fathered none}, this is to be negated from Allāh, Most High, because giving birth dictates that some portion of Him separate from Him. The consequence of accepting this would be to accept that Allāh is composite which in turn negates His qualities of being \textit{al-\c{S}amad} and \textit{al-Aḥad}. Additionally, the son is of the same genus as the father whereas nothing is like Allāh, Most High: He is the necessary existent and everything else is a possible existent. A son is usually sought for support and aid and to continue one's lineage, but Allāh is ever-existent and not in need of anything.\footnote{cf. Bayḍāwī, Nasafī}
Uniqueness

The above words highlight some of the reasons why one would desire or require a child: to continue one's line and to preserve oneself through descendants, but Allāh has no need of this:

وَقَالَوْا أَنْتُمُ الَّذِينَ صَبَحَتُوا بِهِنَّ وَأَلْرَاضُ كُلُّهَا قَدْ نَيْنَ مَحَلٌ

“They say, ‘Allāh has taken a son.’ Glory be to Him! No, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him. Everything is obedient to Him.”

[al-Baqarah (2): 116]

and He owns everything,

وَمَا يَنِيعُ لِلرَّحِمِينَ أَنْ يَنْخُذَ وَلَدًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُلُومٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ جَبَلُ عَبْدٍ

“It is not fitting for the All-Merciful to have a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth who will not come to the All-Merciful as a slave.”

[Maryam (19): 92-93]

Another reason is to have the child inherit him but Allāh says,

كُلُّ مِنْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَإِنَّ أَنَّهُمْ وَسَقُونَ وَجَهَّالٌ ذُو إِكْرَامٍ وَالإِكْرَامُ

“Everyone on it will pass away but the Face of your Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and Generosity.”

[al-Rahmān (55): 26-27]
"Allāh is the inheritor of the heavens and the earth and Allāh is aware of what you do."

[Āli 'Inrān (3): 180]

Abūl-Âliyah said, 'al-Ṣamad: the One who does not give birth and is not born. There is nothing that gives birth except that it is inherited from, and nothing that is born except that it will die. So He, Most High, informed them that He will not be inherited from, nor will He die.'

Abū Sa'd al-Ṣaghānī said, 'This is because nothing is born except that it will die, and nothing will die except that it will be inherited from, but Allāh will not die and will not be inherited from.'

Allāh has praised Himself for all of this with His words:

“...And say: 'Praise be to Allāh who has no son and who has no partner in His kingdom and who needs no one to protect Him from abasement.' And proclaim His greatness repeatedly!" [al-Isrā (17): 111]

---

10Ṭabarī

11Ṭabarī, ibn Abī Ḥātim, ibn Khuzaymah, al-Ṭawhīd, pg. 30, Tirmidhi #3364

12Sālim
Uniqueness

Allāh highlights the sheer depravity of the claim that He has a son with His words:

"They say, 'The All-Merciful has a son.' They have devised a monstrous thing. The heavens are all but rent apart and the earth split open and the mountains brought crashing down, at their ascription of a son to the All-Merciful! It is not fitting for the All-Merciful to have a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth who will not come to the All-Merciful as a slave. He has counted them and numbered them precisely. Each of them will come to Him on the Day of Rising all alone."

[Maryam (19): 88-95]
command.”

[al-Anbiya’ (21): 26-27]

“He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things and He has knowledge of all things. That is Allāh, your Lord. There is none worthy of worship but Him, the Creator of everything. So worship Him. He is responsible for everything.”


Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “There is none who is more patient upon hearing blasphemy than Allāh, they claim He has a son whereas He provides for them and grants them good health.”

Bukhārī records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, says, ‘The Son of Adam denies me and he abuses me though he has no right to do either. He denies Me by saying, ‘He will not resurrect me as He created me,’” whereas the first creation is not any easier for Me than repeating it. He abuses Me by saying, ‘Allāh has taken a son,’ whereas I am the One, the Everlasting Sustainer who has fathered none and

13Bukhārī #6099 and Muslim #2804
was not born, and no one is comparable to Him.”\textsuperscript{14}

Not only was the claim made that He had a son, daughters and general kinship were also claimed and repudiated by Allâh,

\begin{verse}
وَجَعَلَوْا إِلَيْهِ شَرَكَاءَ أَلَّهَهُ وَخَلَقَهُمُ
وَخَرَفُوا لِلَّهِ بَنَّيْنِ وَبَنَاتٍ يَغْيَرُونَ عَلَى سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا
يَصْفَعُونَ
\end{verse}

"Yet they make the jinn co-partners with Allâh when He created them! And they attribute sons and daughters to Him without any knowledge. Glory be to Him! He is far above what they describe!"

\textit{[al-An`âm (6): 100]}

\begin{verse}
وَجَعَلَوْا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ أَجْنَبَةَ
نَسَبَ وَلَدَادُ عَلَمَ لَهُمْ أَبَيْنَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَمَحِضَّرُونَ ١٥١٥ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا
يَصْفَعُونَ
\end{verse}

"They claim there is a blood-tie between Him and the jinn but the jinn know very well that they will be arraigned. Glory be to Allâh above what they describe."

\textit{[al-Ṣaffât (37): 158-159]}

A proof that He does not give birth is that He was not born, and this is what is mentioned next.\textsuperscript{15} Abû Su’ûd said,

\textsuperscript{14}Bukhârî #4974-4975

\textsuperscript{15}Râzî, Baqâ’î
“Nor was He born,” nothing comes from Him because He is eternal *a parte post* and *a parte ante*, and is never absent. This has been explicitly negated here, even though the addressees accepted the import of this statement, to further affirm the previous negation and to emphasise it by alluding to the fact that both go hand-in-hand.\(^{16}\) Experience proves that everything that gives birth must, in turn, be born; whatever does not give birth is not born.\(^{17}\)

It is also for this reason, the reason that “nor was He born,” is generally accepted, that negation of giving birth was mentioned first since this was the claim current amongst them, and therefore the claim that should have been immediately dealt with.\(^{18}\)

The verse also shows that He is Rich Beyond Need and as such His grace and beneficence is granted, not because He needs creation or fears harm from them, but through pure mercy and generosity.\(^{19}\)

\(^{16}\) cf. Shawkānī, Sālim

\(^{17}\) Refer also to ibn Rajab

\(^{18}\) Rāzī, ibn Rajab, Ālūsī, Sālim

\(^{19}\) Rāzī
CHAPTER VI: PURITY

And no one is comparable to Him.

There is nothing like Him in His Names, His Attributes and His Actions, Blessed and Exalted is He.\(^1\) He does not have an equal, and He does not have an opposite: \(^2\) “Nothing is like Him, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”\(^3\)

In Arabic, the words *kafur*, *kafir*, *kifā’a* all mean comparability, likeness or equality.\(^4\) This is one of its two basic meanings; the other is to incline or lean towards something.\(^5\) In light of this mean-

---

\(^1\) Sa‘dî

\(^2\) Râzî, Ibn ‘Aṭiyyah, Tha‘ālabî

\(^3\) *al-Shūrâ* (42): 11

\(^4\) Ṭabarî

\(^5\) Ibn Fāris
ing the Salaf illustrated this by giving two general cases:

1) There is nothing like Him

Abü’l-‘Āliyah said, “There is nothing comparable to Him, nothing equal to Him, there is nothing like Him.”6 Ka‘b said, ‘Allāh, Most High, founded the seven heavens and the seven earths on this chapter. Not one of Allāh’s creation is like Him.”7 Ibn ‘Abbās said, “There is nothing like Him, so Glory be to the One, the Subduer.”8

2) That it comes from kifā’ah or suitability in marriage.9

Mujahid said that it meant wife or companion.10

The import of this verse is further clarified in other verses,

wałā ta$tárībū ʿalā ‘an-nashāl ʿan ‘llāh ā’sūbū ʿan ‘llāh ta$tárūn

“Do not try and make metaphors for Allāh, Allāh knows and you do not know.”

[al-Nabi (16): 74]

fīkā lā t$tárībū ʿalā ‘an-nashāl ʿan ‘llāh ā’sūbū ʿan ‘llāh ta$tárūn

“Do not, then, knowingly make others equal to

6 Ṭabarī,

7 Ṭabarī, ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abu’l-Shaykh #895

8 Ṭabarī

9 Zamakhsharī

10 Ṭabarī
Purity

Allāh.”

[al-Baqarah (2): 22]

“Praise belongs to Allāh who created the heavens and the earth and appointed darkness and light. Then those who disbelieve make others equal to their Lord!”

[al-An‘ām (6): 1]

and exemplifies one of the pillars of our faith in Allāh. Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Wāsitiyyah,* said,

Part of faith in Allāh is to believe in what He has described Himself with in His Book and what His Messenger, Muḥammad (ﷺ), has described Him with without distorting,11 denying,12 questioning how,13 or liken-


11 ar: ṭabrīs. In the context of ‘aqīdah, this is the term given to ṭa’wil, or figurative interpretation which is ‘to turn a wording away from its more obvious meaning to one that is less obvious and weaker, such as in the case of those who stated that istawā’ means istawlā.’ This is because one is effectively, ‘Divesting the word of what it signifies of meaning,’ cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, Dar’ Ta‘ārūd, vol. 5, pg. 385 and Majmū‘ Fatāwā, vol. 3, pg. 165.

12 ar: ta‘tīl. In the context of ‘aqīdah this terms refers to the negation of Allāh’s Attributes. cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, Dar’ Ta‘ārūd, vol. 8, pg. 247.

13 ar: takyīf, meaning to ‘ask after the manner and form of something’ and ‘to seek out the reality and nature of something,’ cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, Bayān Talbis al-Jahmiyyah, vol. 3, pg. 139 and Dar’ Ta‘ārūd, vol. 7, pg. 328
ing,¹⁴ rather they believe that “nothing is like Him and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”¹⁵ As such they do not negate what He has described Himself with, they do not distort words from their proper places, and they do not desecrate His Names and Signs.¹⁶ They do not ask after the how and they do not liken His Attributes with the attributes of His creation.¹⁷ This is because He has no namesake; there is none who is comparable to Him, and none who is equal to Him.¹⁸

He, Glorious and Most High, is not to be compared to His creation for He best knows Himself and others; He is more truthful in speech and better in discourse than

¹⁴ ar: *tamthil*, meaning to equate Allāh with something else in that which is obligatory or permissible or disallowed (to affirm for Him) because ‘Allāh, Most High, is to be absolved of being described with anything that is from the specific qualities of creation, or that there be anything comparable to any of His Attributes of perfection.’ cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān Talbīs al-Jabmiyyah*, vol. 1, pg. 53 and *al-Safadīyyah*, pg. 101.

¹⁵ *al-Shūrā* (42):11

¹⁶ Desecration of Allāh’s Names occurs in a number of ways: 1) To name idols after the Names of Allāh such as al-Lāt, derived from *al-‘Ilāhiyyah*, or al-‘Uzzah, derived from al-‘Azīz. 2) Calling Allāh names that are unbefitting such as the Christians calling Him father 3) Describing Him with things that He is far removed from such as the saying of the Jews that He is poor 4) Divesting the Names of Allāh of their meanings and to deny their realities 5) Likening the Attributes of Allāh with those of His creation.


¹⁷ Imaām Ahmad said, ‘Allāh is only described with what He described Himself with, or with what His Messenger (ﷺ) described Him with. One does not go beyond the Qur’ān and the hadīth.’ cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 5, pg. 382

Purity

His creation. Moreover His Messengers are truthful and entrusted (to accurately convey the revelation) and therefore stand in contrast to those who speak about Him without knowledge. It is for this reason that He says,


cbq x bR x bG w'll x bS

\"Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of Might, beyond anything they describe. And peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to Allâh, the Lord of the worlds!\"

[al-\$affât (37): 180-182]

Here, He glorified Himself above what the opponents of the Messengers described Him with, and He invoked peace and safety on the Messengers because what they said was safe from shortcoming and flaw.

He, Glorious is He, has combined negation\(^{19}\) and affirmation\(^{20}\) in what He described and named Himself with. Consequently, Ablu'\$ Sunnah wa'\$ Jama'ah have no recourse but to turn to what the Messengers brought for that is the Straight Path: the path of those whom Allâh favoured: the path of the Prophets, the sincerely truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous.\(^{21}\)

---

\(^{19}\) Negation of any defect, or any attributes that give a meaning that suggests defect such as sleep, tiredness, inability etc. cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhâj al-Sunnah, vol. 2, pg. 253

\(^{20}\) Affirmation of Attributes of perfection, none of his creation is like Him in any of His Attributes. cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhâj al-Sunnah, vol. 2, pg. 253

\(^{21}\) cf. al-\$isâ' (4): 69
When negating the comparison, the negation made is that creation is not comparable to Him, not that He is not comparable to creation. This is because it does not befit His praise and glory that He be compared to something as relatively insignificant as His creation. If someone were to say, ‘The king is not like an animal,’ the simile, articulated like this, would not actually be regarded as something meritorious; if one were to say, however, ‘There is no one comparable to the king,’ this would be a statement of praise.\footnote{Ibn al-Qayyim, \textit{Ighāthatu'l-Lahfān}, vol. 2, pg. 231. cf. Ibn Abī'l-'Izz, \textit{Sharh 'Aqidah al-Tahāwīyyah}, pp. 387-388}

In normative speech one would expect the sentence to read, \textit{lam yakun ahadun kufuwan lahu}, but here the word \textit{kufuwan} has been brought forward to highlight and stress the fact that nothing is comparable to Him. The personal pronoun has been placed before \textit{kufuwan} to give emphasis to the essence of Allāh and to further highlight His dissimilarity to anything.\footnote{Zamakhsharī, Bayḍāwī, Rāzī, Tha'ālabī, Abū Su'ūd, Abū Ḥayyān, Ālūsī, Qāsimī, Shawkānī}

It is for this reason that ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘Contemplate everything but do not contemplate the essence of Allāh,’ because the intellect cannot comprehend it.\footnote{Tha'ālabī, ibn 'Atiyyah}

These last three phrases are all connected with the particle, \textit{waw}, unlike the rest of this chapter because they have all been stated with the same purpose in mind: to negate a comparison and likeness to Allāh, Most High, in all aspects: this is because things that are comparable are either a parent, a child or a peer, all have been
negated here.\textsuperscript{25}

The meaning of \textit{ahad} at the end of this chapter is not the same as that of \textit{Abad} in the beginning.\textsuperscript{26}

There are two authentic recitations of this verse, reading \textit{kufuwan} and \textit{kuf\'an}; both are correct and valid dialects of the Arabic language.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Baq\'\text{"a}‘i, \={A}\l\={u}\={s}i

\textsuperscript{26} Sama‘\={a}n\={i}

\textsuperscript{27} \={T}abar\={i}
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter, despite its brevity, negates each and every type of *shirk* and affirms all the foundations of *Tawḥīd* and absolving of defect.¹

Nasafi's recapitulation of this *Sūrah* is as follows:

In response to their request to describe Allāh, He revealed a chapter that encapsulates His qualities. "*He is Allāh,*" alludes to the fact that He is the creator of all things and their originator; implicit in this is that He is Able, Omnipotent and All-Knowing since these qualities are necessary pre-requisites for an act of creation, the finesse of which left all creation in perfect harmony. Also implicit in this is that He is Ever-Living since someone who knows and is able must also be living. Affirmation of this then leads to accepting that He is Hearing, Seeing, one who has an intent, one who speaks and all other attributes of perfection since, were He not to be described with these, He would be described with the opposite which in turn are defective qualities. Defi-

¹ Qāsimī
ciency is the hallmark of something generated or something contingent and to ascribe it to the pre-existent is a logical impossibility. "The One and only," He is One and all aspects of polytheism are negated. He alone brought all things into existence and He alone knows all hidden affairs. "The Everlasting Sustainer of all," He is the Rich Beyond Need, needing no one at all whereas everything is in need of Him. "He fathered none," negates the existence of a like, kinship or something of the same genus. "Nor was He born," negates His being generated and affirms His pre-existence and His preceding everything. "And no one is comparable to Him," negates that anything be similar to Him. Whoever thinks that this negation, composed in the past tense, excludes a negation in the present tense, whereas the claim of the unbelievers is current, in the present, is wandering aimlessly in misguidance. This is because if (the claimed gods) were not existent in the past, there would be no need to negate them in the present since something generated, something contingent, can never compare to something pre-existent. The words of the unbelievers revolve around polytheism, anthropomorphism and nullification and this chapter repudiates all of these.

Ibn al-Qayyim penned the following in summary to this chapter,

This chapter encapsulates Tawhid of belief and cognisance. It establishes what is obligatory to affirm for the Lord, Most High: His Absolute Oneness which negates each and every aspect of polytheism, and His being the Everlasting Sustainer which subsumes all of His Attributes of perfection, qualities that are not subject to any type of defect. It negates His having a parent or a child which are both consequences of His being the Everlasting Sustainer and His Oneness. It negates a comparison to Him which in turn dictates that there is nothing like Him,
nothing similar to Him and nothing equivalent to Him. Therefore, this chapter affirms all perfection for Him and it absolves Him of all defect. It negates anything being close or comparable to His perfection and it negates His having any partner in any form or fashion. These are the pillars of *Tawhīd* of belief, the one who holds to this belief is clearly demarcated from the misguided and the polytheists in all their various hues and shades. This is why this chapter equates to a third of the Qurʾān for it is either constructive in its style or it is informative. Its being constructive subsumes command, prohibition and permissibility. Its being informative subsumes its informing about Allāh, His Names, His Attributes and His commands, and its informing about His creation. This chapter devotes itself entirely to Him and His Names and commands, as such it is like a third of the Qurʾān.²

Explaining the flow and structure of this *Sūrah*, Baqāʿī wrote,

First He established His pure and unblemished reality through stating the (personal pronoun), *huwa*, there can be no name to describe that reality save this pronoun. Therefore one realises that He, in Himself and for no reason save this, is the necessary existent. Following this is an exposition (of the pronoun) stating His divinity which is the most immediate consequence of that reality and is the most definite of all names: (Allāh). Since divinity dictates oneness, being an expression of total independence coupled with the complete dependence of everything else on Him, this was stated by mention of the ensuing Name, *al-ʾĀḥad*. The meanings covered by the Names Allāh and *al-ʾĀḥad* were then further rein-

²Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zādūl-Maʿād*, vol. 1, pg. 168
Conclusion

forced by stating that He is *al-Šamad* which again points to His being the necessary existent and His being the Master of all existence such that nothing resembles Him. Both these meanings are then further clarified by stating that He does not give birth and is not born and that nothing is comparable to Him. So the *Sūrah*, from its beginning to *al-Šamad* expounds on His reality, Glorious is He, its absolute oneness and uniqueness and the implications thereof in a well ordered, logical manner. From that point to the end, the *Sūrah* explains that there is nothing comparable to Him, He has no kin and there is nothing of the same genus as Him. He is not a species such that He is born of something or that something is born of Him. This then leads to a complete cognisance of His essence.
CHAPTER VI

Points of Benefit

a) The points of creed covered thus far are mentioned by Ṭahāwī in the beginning of his famous treatise on creed:

Allāh is one, without partner. Nothing is like Him. Nothing incapacitates Him. Nothing should be worshipped besides Him. He is pre-existent without beginning, eternal without end. He neither perishes nor ceases to exist. Nothing will be except what He wills. Imaginations cannot attain Him; comprehensions cannot perceive Him. Creatures do not bear any similarity to Him. Alive, He never dies; all-sustaining, He never sleeps. He is a creator without any need to create and a provider without any stores of provision.

b) Qurṭubī said,

This chapter combines two of Allāh's Names which subsume all types of perfection, and they are not found in
any other chapter: al-Abad and al-Šamad. They prove the absolute oneness of the Divine Essence which is described with every quality of perfection.¹

c) Qurṭubî said,

It is said that this Sūrah equates to a third of the Qur’ān because of the presence of these two Names which are not found in any other Sūrah, Allāh knows best. It is also said that the Qur’ān was revealed dealing with three general areas: rules and regulations, promise and threat, and Names and Attributes. This chapter deals with the Names and Attributes which is one of the three areas, as such it is said that it equates to a third of the Qur’ān. This explanation is proven by the ḥadīth of Abū’l-Dardā’ in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Allāh has apportioned the Qur’ān in three sections and made ‘Say: He is Allāh, the One and only,’ one of those sections.”²,³

Discussing the issue of whether one part of the Qur’ān can be regarded to be better than another, ibn Taymiyyah said,

This is an important issue and people have differed about it greatly. Some opine that some of Allāh’s words are better than others and this has been stated by the Prophetic texts such as the ḥadīth stating that a Sūrah comparable to al-Šāfiḥah has not been revealed in

¹ Ibn Ḥajr, Fath, vol. 9, pg. 61
² Muslim #811
³ Qurṭubî, al-Asnâ, vol. 1, pg. 185
the three Divine Scriptures.\footnote{Ahmad #8682-9345-9788-21094-21095. It was declared şâhîh by ibn Hibbân #775, ibn Khuzaymah #500-501, and Albâni, \textit{Şâhîh al-\textit{Jāmī}} #5560} He informed us that \textit{Sūrah al-Ikhlās} equates to a third of the Qur'ān\footnote{Bukhârî #5013} and this must refer to something other than the number of letters it contains. He announced that \textit{Āyatu'l-Kursi} is the greatest verse of the Qur'ān as is also established in the Şâhîh. Şâhîh Muslim records that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, “Abū’l Mundhir, do you know which verse in the Book that is with you is greatest?” He replied, ‘Allāh and His Messenger know best.’ He asked again, “Abū’l Mundhir, do you know which verse in the Book that is with you is greatest?” I replied, “\textit{Allâh, there is none worthy of worship besides Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining...}”\footnote{\textit{al-Baqarah} (2): 255} He then struck me on my chest and said, “Abū’l-Mundhir, may knowledge be made easy for you!”\footnote{Muslim #810} Ibn Abi Shaybah also records this ḥadīth with the same isnād as that of Muslim with the additional wording, “By the One in whose hand is my soul, this verse has a tongue and two lips...”\footnote{Ahmad #21278 and ‘Abdu’l-Razzāq #6001} It is also reported that it is the chief of the Qur'ān.\footnote{Tirmidhî #2878 and Ḥâkim #2059 said it was şâhîh with Dhhahabî agreeing. However, Tirmidhî pointed out its weakness and it was ruled da‘īf by Albâni, \textit{al-\textit{Da‘īfah}} #1348} He said about the \textit{Mu‘awwídhatayn} that the likes of them has never been
seen.10

Allāh, Most High, says,

"Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or equal to it."

[al-Baqarah (2): 106]

hence informing us that He replaces it with something better or similar, this then proves that some verses are similar and others differ in excellence. Moreover, the Tawrāt and the Injl are both the speech of Allāh, yet all Muslims know that the Qur'ān is the best of the three Books. Allāh, Most High, says,

"It is We Who have sent down the Reminder and We who will preserve it."

[al-Hijr (15): 9]

"And We have sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming and conserving the previous Books."

[al-Mā'idah (5): 48]

10 Muslim #814
"Say, ‘If both men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could never produce anything like it, even if they back each other up.’"

[al-Isra’ (17): 88]

Allāh, Most High, says,

“Allāh has sent down the Best Discourse, a Book consistent in its frequent repetitions. The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble at it and their skins and hearts yeild softly to the remembrance of Allāh.”

[al-Zumar (39): 23]

thereby informing us that it is the best discourse of all discourses, be they revealed by Allāh or not. Allāh says,

“We have give you the Seven Oft-repeated (verses) and the Magnificent Qur’ān.”

[al-Hijr (15): 87]
Regardless of what is referred to here, al-Fātiḥah or the whole Qurʾān, the verse proves that the Qurʾān has been particularised with this quality. Allāh has called the Qurʾān, Glorious, Noble and Great. He has challenged creation to produce something like it, or ten sūrah like it, or even one sūrah like it,

فَلَيْتَ أُوتِّيْهِمْ حَدِيثٌ مِثْلُهُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقُونَ

“Let them bring a discourse like it if they are telling the truth.”
[al-Ṭūr (52): 34]

فَأَتْوَا عِمَّن يَسْتِرُّهُمْ مَا مَثَلَهُ

“Then produce ten invented sūrah like this...”
[Hūd (11): 13]

فَأَتْوَا عِمَّن يَسْتِرُّهُمْ مَا مَثَلَهُ

“...produce another sūrah like it.”
[al-Baqarah (2): 23]

He has specified that only it can be recited in the prayer, none can recite anything else alongside it, none can recite something else altogether and prayer cannot be performed without recitation of the Qurʾān. As such nothing can take its place and nothing can take the place of al-Fātiḥah in every aspect by agreement of the Muslims. This is regardless if one opines that it is a pillar that if one leaves off, the prayer must be repeated, or that it is obligatory such that if one leaves it, he is sinful but does not have to repeat the prayer, or that it is a Sunnah. No one has ever said that reciting something else in its place is equivalent to reciting it from every perspective.
He has particularised the Qur’ān such that none but the pure can touch the mushaf as is established from the Companions such as Sa’d, Salmān and ibn ‘Umar, and the majority of the Salaf and the Khalaf: the four Imāms and others. This was the Sunnah implemented by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and stated in his letter sent to ‘Amr ibn Hazm; there is no doubt that he did actually write it. It is also proven by the Book of Allāh. Likewise the ritually impure (junnub) cannot recite the Qur’ān in the view of the majority of scholars: the four Imāms and others, and this is proven by the Sunnah.

Particularising one of two discourses with specific rules and regulations dictates that it, in and of itself, is of extra merit; to say otherwise would go against the way of the Lord, Most High, in His legal law, it would even go against the customs current amongst His creation. It also goes against rational proofs in addition to going against legal proofs.

Allāh, Most High, says,

وَاتَمِعُوا الْحَسَنَةَ مَا أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا

"Follow the best that has been sent down to you from your Lord."

[al-Zumar (39): 55]

فَبِشَّرْ عِبَادِنَا الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُولَ فِي سَيِّءِهِمْ أَحْسَنْهُمْ

“So give good news to My servants. Those who listen well to what is said and follow the best of it.”

[al-Zumar (39): 17-18]
"Seize hold of it vigorously and command your people to adopt the best in it."

[al-‘Arāf (7): 145]

This then proves that, amongst what Allāh has revealed, is that which is good and that which is better. This is regardless if the better is abrogating, which must be taken to and the abrogated left, since a verse is not abrogated except that it is replaced with something better or its like, or the better falls into another category.

The view that some parts of the speech of Allāh are better than the other parts is the opinion narrated from the Salaf, it is the view of the legal jurists from the four schools of law and others. Their statements concerning this are numerous and recorded in many books.11

d) The absolute oneness of Allāh leads us to worship Him and Him alone. He alone deserves to be worshipped and all other worship is futile,

قُلِ الْإِنْ صَلَّيْتُمْ وَذُكْرْتُمْ وَمُخْبَأً إِلَيْهِ
رَبُّ الْأَعْلَمِينَ لاَ نَمُرِيكَ هَكَذَا أَمْرَتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُتَسَلِّمِينَ

"Say, 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying are for Allāh alone, the Lord of the worlds. I am commanded to be like that and I am the first of the Muslims.'"

[al-An‘ām (6): 162-163]

e) There are many aḥādīth proving the excellence of stating the

11 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū‘ Fatāwā & Tafsīr al-Kabīr
tablīl such as the ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever says, ‘None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh alone without any partner, to Him belongs sovereignty, to Him belongs praise, and He is powerful over everything,’ one hundred times in a day will have the reward of freeing ten slaves, one hundred good deeds will be credited to him, one hundred evil deeds will be wiped out for him and he will have a protection from Shayṭān for that day until evening. None can do anything better than what he did save a person who said it more frequently.”

f) One should take refuge with Allāh alone, Qurtubī said,

It is obligatory upon every legally responsible person to know that the qualities of absolute oneness and everlasting sustaining belong to Allāh alone. Therefore none should be sought save Him and none should be resorted to in cases of exigency save Him.

g) Witnessing His Oneness is the arena of the Prophets. Ibn al-Qayyim said,

This is the sphere of Tawḥīd and His command. The servant witnesses the oneness of the Lord, the Creator, he witnesses His will being implemented, and he witnesses the creation dependent on Him... his witnessing the Tawḥīd of the Lord and His being One with respect to creation, implementing His will, and the workings of His decree opens the door of seeking refuge and resorting to Him, and he realises his dire need of Him. It

12 Bukhārī #3293-6403 and Muslim #2691

13 Qurtubī, al-Asnā, vol. 1, pg. 186
will guide him to the threshold of servitude and throw him at His door as one who is needy, incapable, indigent, one who does not possess the ability to bring harm or benefit, life or death, or resurrection for himself. Witnessing His command and prohibition, His reward and punishment leads him to praise Him, to do His utmost to obey Him and to censure himself for his faults and shortcomings. Hence his life will revolve around witnessing the greatness, wisdom, perfect power, pre- eternal knowledge, and unfathomable providence (of Allāh), and his witnessing his own shortcomings and faults. He will then diligently correct his soul's defects and deeds. Such a servant is one who has been granted accord, who is aided, and has divine providence showered on him. This is the sphere of the Prophets. Ādām said,

٣٣

اقالاربناطلمناكأنفسناوإنلاعفناوانتحمنا لتكون من الحسرين

"Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost!"

[al-ʾAʾrāf (7): 23]

The first Messenger, Nūḥ said,

٦٩

قالاريإنيأعوذبپكأنأستكفماليسليبهعلمولا

تغمريوانتحمنيأصكبرمن الحسرين

"My Lord, in You do I seek refuge that I should ask of You that whereof I have no knowledge. Unless You forgive me and have mercy on me I shall be
among the lost.”

[Hûd (11): 47]

The Imâm of the Ḥunajâ' and the Shaykh of the Prophets, Ibrâhîm, said,

“Who created me, and He does guide me, who feeds me and waters me, when I am sick, He heals me, who causes me to die, then gives me life (again), and who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sin on the Day of Judgment.”

[al-Shu'â'â (26): 78-82]

and he supplicated,

“My Lord! Make safe this territory, and preserve me and my sons from serving idols.”

[Ibrâhîm (14): 35]

Hence he knew that it is Allâh who comes between a servant and his committing shirk and worshipping idols, he knew that there was no Lord besides Him and therefore directed this request to Him.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibn al-Qayyîm, Tariq al-Hijratayn, vol. 1, pg. 262
h) It is possible that man possess some aspects of being samad, Ghazālī said,

The one whom God has appointed to be a model for His servants in fulfilling their worldly and religious duties, and who secures the needs of His creatures by his word and action - to that one God bestows a share in this attribute. But the absolutely eternal is the one to whom one turns in every need, and He is God - may He be praised and exalted.¹⁵

i) Man should try to imitate this attribute as much as is humanly possible. Qurṭūbī said,

Moreover it is upon man to inculcate in himself the qualities of leadership and nobility such that people betake themselves to him and his door is sought. Hishām ibn ‘Urwah narrated that his father said, ‘I met Sa’d ibn ‘Ubadah and a caller would proclaim, “Whoever wants fat and meat, let him come to Sa’d.” Then I met his son, Qays, and a similar call would be proclaimed for him.’¹⁶

j) Tirmidhī records on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn Buraydah al-Aslamī from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) heard a person supplication,

اللهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنْفِي أَشْهُدُ أَنَّكَ أَنتَ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّآ أَنتَ الْأَحْدَ

الْسَّمَّادُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يَوْلِدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كَفُورًا أَحْدَ

¹⁵ Ghazālī, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God

¹⁶ Qurṭūbī, al-ʾAsnā, vol. 1, pg. 186.

The narration is referenced to Dāruquṭnī, al-ʾAskbiya’ by ibn Ḥajr, al-ʾIsābah, vol. 2, pg. 30
'O Allāh, I ask You by virtue of the fact that I testify that none has the right to be worshipped save You, the One and only, the Everlasting Sustainer of all who has fathered none and was not born, and no one is comparable to Him.'

He said, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, he has asked Allāh by His greatest name which if used in supplication, He will respond, and if asked by it, He will grant."\(^{17}\)

k) Ibn Taymiyyah said,

Some of the people of innovated theological rhetoric adduced that the Lord, Most High, was a physical body from His saying, "Allāh, the Everlasting Sustainer." Amongst these were those who held views similar to Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, Muḥammad ibn Karrām and others. They said that He was ṣamad which means that He is not hollow and that this description only applies to solid bodies such as mountains and rocks. This is why it is said in exegesis to this word that He is the One from whom nothing comes out, nothing goes in, and He does not eat or drink. Such negations can only apply to a body. They further said that the essential meaning of ṣamad is to gather (ijtima') such as water collecting (ṭasmi') in one place, and this meaning can only apply to a body which is composite. Those who negated this said al-Ṣamad was one who could not be dispersed or subdivided whereas every body in creation can be subdivided. They further said that al-Abūd was one who could not be subdivided or apportioned whereas every body in creation could. They stated, 'If you say that He is a body which is composite, i.e. made up of individual essences, or from

\(^{17}\) Abū Dāwūd #1493-1494 and Tirmīdī #3475 with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.
Points of Benefit

an essence and a form then something which is made of parts is in need of those parts whereas He, Glorious is He, is al-Samad and this means that He is Rich Beyond Need. Therefore something composite cannot be samad.\textsuperscript{18}

I) Ibn Taymiyyah said,

Just as it is necessary to absolve the Lord of all defect and fault, so too is it necessary to absolve Him of being similar to any object of creation in any of those Attributes that are affirmed to be His. Both these categories make up the absolving that is obligatory. This Surah proves both types. His saying, \textit{"no one is comparable to Him,"} negates likeness and partnership. His saying, \textit{"the Everlasting Sustainer,"} subsumes all Attributes of perfection. Therefore the genus of defects has been negated from Allah, Most High. Everything which is particular to objects of creation constitutes those defects that one must absolve the Lord of, but not so what the Lord has been described with. The servant is described with qualities as befit him such as knowledge, ability, mercy etc. and these are not defective qualities, rather their meanings are also established for Allah, but they are established for Him in a way that no created object can compare to let alone be like. Indeed, the food and drink and clothes that Allah has prepared in Paradise do not compare to anything in this world, even if the names of the two be the same and even though both are created. More so is it that the Creator be incomparable to His creation than one creation being incomparable to another. Allah has named Himself as being Forbearing, Kind, Most Merciful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Almighty, King, Supreme and He has also applied these names to

\textsuperscript{18} Qāsimī
some of His creatures. We know full well that the creatures who have been given these names cannot ever compare to the Creator in any of (the qualities) indicated therein.  

m) Râzî said,

This Sûrah, with respect to Allâh, is like Sûrah al-Kawthar with respect to the Messenger. They abused the Messenger by saying that he was cut off, without heir, having no son and they abused Allâh by saying that He had a son. A man without a son is seen to be deficient and the existence of a son of Allâh is a defect with respect to Allâh, Most High. It is for this reason that He commenced this chapter with, “Say,” i.e. you, Muhammad, should stand up in defence of Me by saying this; however in the other chapter, I would say, “Truly We have given you Great Abundance,” (without commencing with, ‘Say’) so that I may stand in defence of you.

n) Ibn al-Qayyim said,

I heard Shaykhul-Islâm ibn Taymiyyah saying, ‘The Sunnah prayers before Fajr act as the commencement of deeds (for the day) and the Witr prayer acts as the cessation of deeds. It is for this reason that the Prophet (ﷺ) would recite the Two Chapters of Ikhlâs in them since they gather together Tawhid in knowledge and deed, Tawhid in knowledge and intent, and Tawhid in belief and motivation.’

---

19 Qâsimî. cf. Ibn Rajab

20 i.e. Sûrah al-Kâfirûn and Sûrah al-Ikhlâs

21 Ibn al-Qayyim, Zâdûl-Ma‘âd, vol. 1, pg. 168
سورة آل الكافرون

_Sūrah al-Kāfirūn_ (109) : 1-6

---

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

1) Say: "O disbelievers!

2) I do not worship what you worship
3) and you are not servants of who I worship.

4) I am not a servant of what you worshipped

5) and you are not servants of who I worship

6) You have your religion and I have mine
CHAPTER VII

Introduction

Ibn Mas'ūd, al-Hasan and the majority said that this chapter was revealed in Mecca.\footnote{Ibn al-Jawzī} Qatādah said that it was revealed in Madīnah, and this is one of two views related from ibn 'Abbās.\footnote{Qurṭūbī}

There is a unanimous agreement that the chapter comprises six verses and that the number of words is twenty eight. It is called \textit{al-Kāfīrūn}, Disbelievers, because of its opening words, \textit{al-Dīn}, Religion, because of its closing words, and \textit{al-Muqashqishab} (as stated by Zurārah ibn Awfā).\footnote{Ibn Abī Ḥātim #19520} Abū 'Ubaydah said, “There are two Sūraẖs called \textit{al-Muqashqishab}, \textit{al-Kāfīrūn} and \textit{al-Ikhlāṣ}. They both sweep away (gashqash) sins just as tar sweeps away scabies.”\footnote{Fairuzbādī} Aṣma‘ī reasoned that they were given this title because they serve to absolve a per-
son from hypocrisy.\footnote{\textit{Ibn \'Adil}} It is also called \textit{al-Munābidhah}, the Disavowal, and \textit{al-Ikhlās}, Purity.\footnote{\textit{Rāzī}}

Islam was spreading in Mecca bringing sweeping change with it, and it was a measure of the concern that the pagans had that soon after the conversion of the powerful and influential Hamzah, a conversion that shocked them and forced them to rethink their strategy, they approached the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) offering him vast riches, honour and prestige, and kingship if he would only give up his call. The Prophet (ﷺ) refused. Later, another conversion shook them to their roots, that of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Where they were previously practising their religion in private for fear of persecution, this conversion emboldened the Muslims and now they began to openly practise their faith; this in turn forced an extreme reaction from the Meccans. A treaty was drawn up and the Muslims were exiled and excommunicated for a little over two years. The ban failed miserably and was finally annulled. Soon after, the pagans once again approached the Prophet (ﷺ), this time the proposal was one of conciliation and compromise: they would follow Islam for one year and he would follow their religion for one year. It was on this occasion that this chapter was revealed: the so-called compromise was totally unacceptable and was rejected.

Ibn ʿAbbās said, 'The Quraysh promised the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) such wealth as would make him the most affluent person in Mecca and they would let him marry any woman he wanted. They said, "This is a gift for you; however, you must refrain from abusing our gods and criticising them. If you do not accept, we have another proposal for you which will effectuate peace and compromise."' He asked, "What is it?" They said, "Worship our gods, al-Lāt and al-
‘Uzzah, for one year and we will worship your God for one year.’ He said, ‘Wait until my Lord reveals an answer.’ The revelation then came from the Preserved Tablet:

قُلْ يَا الْكُفَّارُ ۛ لاَ أَعْبُدُ مَا أَصَادَقُونَ
وَلَا أَسْتَعْبِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۛ وَلَا أَنَا أَعْبَدُ مَا أُعْبَدُ
وَلَا أَسْتَعْبِدُونَ مَا أُعْبَدُ ۛ لَا أَنَا أَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُكَفَّرِينَ

Say: ‘O disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship, and you are not servants of who I worship. I am not a servant of what you worshipped, and you are not servants of who I worship. You have your religion and I have mine.’

[al-Kāfirūn (109): 1-6]

قُلْ أَفَاعِيِّنَ لَٰهُمَا رَسُولَ أَمِّي وَأَمْوَى أَعْبَدُ يَا
الجَهَّالُونَ ۛ وَلَقَدْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْأَلْبَابِ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُجَازَةِ
أُشْرَكَتُ لِجُنُوبِ عَمَلَكُمْ وَلَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَيْرِينَ ۛ بِلِيْلِ اللَّهِ
ۚ فَأُعْبِدُونَ وَكُنُّ مِنَ الْشَّكْرِينَ

‘Say: ‘Do you order me to worship something other than Allāh, you ignorant people?’ It has been revealed to you and those before you: ‘If you associate others with Allāh, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers.’ No! Worship Allāh and be among the thankful.’

[al-Zumar (39): 64-66]7

Sa‘īd ibn Mīnā said, ‘Walīd ibn al-Mughirah, Āṣ ibn Wā’īl, Aswād

7 Tabarī, Ṭabarānī, al-Ṣaghīr, and Suyūṭi, al-Durr al-Manthūr referenced it to ibn Abī Ḥātim (#19518).
ibn al-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah ibn Khalaf met the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and said, “Muḥammad, come, let us worship what you worship and you worship what we worship. We can all share in this together: if what you have brought is better than what we have, we would have shared it with you and taken our due portion of it. If what we have is better than what you have brought, you would have shared it with us and taken your due portion of it.” At this, Allāh revealed, “Say: ‘O disbelievers!...’” to the end of the Sūrah.”

Ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘The Quraysh said, “If only you would accept our gods, we would worship your God,” so Allāh revealed this chapter.”

Tirmidhī records on the authority of Anas that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said that this Sūrah was the equivalent of a quarter of the Qur'ān. This is also recorded from ibn ‘Abbās and ibn ‘Umar.

Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī record on the authority of Nawfāl that the Prophet (ﷺ) told him, “Before you go to sleep, recite, “Say: O
disbelievers...

Ahmad records that the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a person reciting al-Kāfīrūn and remarked, “He has been saved from shirk.” He passed by another person reciting al-Ikhlaṣ and remarked, “Paradise has become obligatory for him.”

It is also authentically reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would recite this Sūrah and Sūrah al-Ikhlaṣ in the two rak‘abs after having performed tawāf, the two Sunnahs before Fajr, the two Sunnahs after Maghrib, and in the witr prayer.

Ghunaym ibn Qays said, ‘We were ordered to disavow Shaytān in the two rak‘abs before Fajr by reciting al-Kāfīrūn and al-Ikhlaṣ.”

Ibn ‘Abbās said, “There is no Sūrah in the Qur‘ān that enrages Iblīs more than this one because it encapsulates Tawhīd and absolution

13 Abū Dāwūd #5055, Tirmidhī #3403. Ḥākim #2077 said it was ṣaḥīḥ with Dhahabī agreeing as did Albānī.

14 Ahmad #16605-16617-23194 and Arna‘ūṭ said it was ṣaḥīḥ.

15 Muslim #1218 from Jābir

16 Ahmad #4763-4909-5215-5691-5699-5742 from ibn ‘Umar. Arna‘ūṭ said it was ṣaḥīḥ meeting the criteria of Bukhārī and Muslim.

17 Abū Dāwūd #1423 and ibn Mājah #1171 from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b. Abū Dāwūd #1424 and Tirmidhī #463 from ‘Aishah and both were ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Hibbān #2436-2447 and Albānī. Tirmidhī #462 and ibn Mājah #1172 from ibn ‘Abbās and ruled ṣaḥīḥ by Albānī and Arna‘ūṭ, Takhrij Musnad Ahmad #2720. Ahmad #15354-15361-15362 and Nasā‘ī on the authority of ibn Abzā and Arna‘ūṭ said it was ṣaḥīḥ meeting the criteria of Bukhārī and Muslim.

18 Ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 2, pg. 242
from *shirk*.'

‘Amr ibn Mālik would say, “Recite *al-Kāfirūn* frequently and disavow yourself from them.”

The basic message of this chapter is that of disavowal: it enjoins a person to absolve himself of the polytheists and their deeds, to announce this openly and it commands sincerity in deeds, which is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said that it was absolution from *shirk*. Therefore, this chapter deals with *Tawhīd* in deed while *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* deals with *Tawhīd* in belief and it is for this reason that the Prophet (ﷺ) would recite these two chapters in prayer.
CHAPTER VIII

Repetition

It has been argued that there is repetition in the verses, "I do not worship what you worship, and you are not servants of who I worship. I am not a servant of what you worshipped, and you are not servants of who I worship." Verse 5 is a word-for-word repetition of verse 3, and verse 4 can be understood to be a recast of verse 2.

The proponents of this view said that in both cases, the repetition is to emphasise and reinforce what is being said. Farrā' said, 'The Qur'ān was revealed in the Arabic language and the Arabs were in the habit of repeating phrases to emphasise them or to ensure that they were fully understood.'

Examples of this are abundant in Arabic poetry and they are also found in the Qur'ān, for example:

\[
\text{فَإِنَّ مَعَ الصَّعْدَةِ إِنَّ مَعَ الصَّعْدَةِ}
\]

“For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hard-

\(^1\) Farrā', Ālūsī, Shawkānī
ship comes ease.”

[al-Sharh (94): 5-6]

“No indeed, you will soon know! Again no indeed, you will soon know!”

[al-Takāthur (102): 3-4]

or like the repetitions of,

“On that Day, woe to the deniers!”

[al-Mursalāt (77): 15]

“So which of your Lord’s blessings do you both then deny?”

[al-Rahmān (55): 13]

in their respective chapters.

The point that is being emphasised here is that there is no chance whatsoever that the Prophet (ﷺ) would, or even could, accept the proposal forwarded by the disbelievers. They should give up all hope that he would ever acquiesce to such a preposterous suggestion.²

The majority, however, were of the view that this was not a case of mere repetition and that something different was meant in each pair of verses.³ Ibn Taymiyyah, while accepting that emphasising

² Qurṭūbī, Abū Ḥayyān, ibn ‘Ādil, Ālūsī, Shawkānī

³
something by repeating it was a known tool in Arabic, said,

However, nothing of this type exists in the Qur’ān. Even though it is revealed in the Arabic language, the Qur’ān is unique and does not resemble the words of man, be that man a Prophet or someone else; no creature can produce a Sūrah like it, or even part of a Sūrah. There is no case in the Qur’ān where you get one verse repeated word-for-word straight after the verse it is repeating. Sūrah al-Rahmān has the verse repeated every other verse, not in succession. This latter style is better and more sublime than the first and they have exemplified it with the statements of someone who gave a person charity repeatedly with that person refusing to acknowledge his charity: ‘Did I not find you poor and enrich you, do you reject that? Were you not naked and I clothed you, do you reject that? Were you not neglected and I saw to you, do you reject that?’ Neither do the stories in the Qur’ān repeat themselves despite what some may think. There is no repetition in Sūrah al-Kāfirūn except in the verse, “and you are not servants of who I worship,” but again, here the verses are separated by another verse in between.⁴

What this difference in meaning is, however, is the subject of some dispute.

1) Some argue that the first pair of verses refers to the future and the second pair to the past.⁵ Zamakhshārī said,

---

3 Ālūsī


5 Zamakhshārī, Bayḍāwī
"I do not worship what you worship," the negation, lā, only ever precedes a verb when a future meaning is intended. The negation, mā, only ever precedes a present tense verb when the actual present tense meaning is intended.⁶ Therefore the meaning is, "I will never, at any time in the future, accept your proposal to worship your gods and at the same time you will not do what I ask you to do: worship my God." The meaning of, "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," is: "At any given time in the past, I have never worshipped what you worshipped. I never worshipped idols in the period of Jāhilyyah, how then can you expect me to do so after Islām has come?!" "And you are not servants of who I worship," means that you have not worshipped, at any time, the one I worship.

2) While disagreeing with some of the grammatical reasons given by Zamakhsharī, and arguing that the second pair of verses refers to the present tense because the active participle, ism jā'il, has been used, Abū Ḥayyān says,

The opinion I prefer is that the first verse negates the possibility of his worshipping idols in the future because a negation with lā predominantly negates something in the future. The verse following, "and you are not servants of who I worship," is also a negation dealing with the future because it has been stated by way of contrast, muqābalah. "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," negates the action in the present tense, and following this is the verse, "and you are not servants of who I worship," which also negates the present tense because, again, it has been stated by way of contrast. Therefore the meaning is that he does not worship what they worship, and he will not worship what they worship;

⁶ This is true in most cases as stated by Abū Ḥayyān and others.
the same applies to them as well.

3) Others stated the opposite, i.e. the first pair refers to the present and the second pair refers to the future, because the present tense verb can refer to the present or the future and the active participle can also refer to the present or the future, but more commonly the present. Both of these opinions are strong.

Shawkānī, however, raised objections to both of these opinions thus:

All of these opinions are far-fetched and affected. The explanation that, "I do not worship what you worship," refers to the future, even if linguistically warranted, does not hold for "and you are not servants of who I worship," since this is a nominal sentence and hence carries the meaning of permanence and its existing for all times. Constructing the sentence as a negation does not remove this aspect of the meaning. If understanding this verse to refer to the future was correct, it would also hold true for, "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," and "and you are not servants of who I worship." Therefore, their argument cannot hold for the last two verses, i.e. that it refers to the present tense. The same weakness of argument is true for those who held the opposite opinion that the first two verses deal with the present tense, and the next two with the future. This is because the second, third and fourth verses are all nominal sentences beginning with personal pronouns acting as the subject, mubah, all of them having active participles as their predicates, khabr, and all of them negated with là. So, with all of these common features,

---

7 Bukhārī, Akhāf as cited by Ḥalabī, Farrāʾ, Nuḥās, Ṭabarī, Samaʾānī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Baghwā, ʿAtiyah, Nasafī
how can this opinion be justified?

The response to these objections can be seen in the quotes of Zamakhsharī and Abū Ḥayyān, or simply put, “it is permissible to use styles when contrasting that would not normally be allowed when mentioning something alone.”

4) Ibn Kathīr said,

There is another opinion which was supported by Abūl-ʿAbbās ibn Taymiyyah in one of his books. He said that the meaning of, “I do not worship what you worship,” negates the actual deed since it is syntactically in the form a verbal sentence. “I am not a servant of what you worshipped,” is syntactically in the form of a nominal sentence and therefore negates his ever accepting the suggestion since a negation that is constructed in this way is more emphatic. Therefore, it is as if he has negated the act as well as the possibility of accepting the act. The verses negate the occurrence as well as the legal possibility of its ever occurring. This is also a fine opinion.

5) Ālūsī, after quoting the above, mentioned a similar meaning, “It is also possible that the verbal sentence be taken to mean a negation in a specific period of time and the nominal sentence be taken to mean an absolute negation of the possibility. Therefore, it is as if it is being said, “I can never accept this proposal and neither can it apply to you.””

6) Some, such as ibn Qutaybah, said that the repetition was to

---

8 Abū Ḥayyān

9 This is also the view of ibn al-Qayyim who says that it is the best opinion.
reflect the proposal of alternate years.\textsuperscript{10} Therefore, it was unacceptable for the Prophet (ﷺ) to worship anything besides Allāh for one year, and it was unacceptable for them to worship something besides Allāh in the next year. The reason was that this simply cannot be regarded to be worship of Allāh because \textit{Tawḥīd}, or Monotheism, demands that worship be sincerely and solely directed to Him.

7) Others said that they repeatedly made their request, so Allāh repeated the answer.\textsuperscript{11}

8) Others said that it was the habit of the polytheists to worship idols, then, when they tired of them, or found other rocks or objects more pleasing, they would discard the old idols and adopt the new idols as gods. So the first pair of verses refers to the idols they were currently worshipping and second pair refers to the idols they had worshipped and then discarded.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} mentioned by Baghawi, Qurtubi, ibn ‘Adil, Khazin. cf. ibn Qutaybah, \textit{Ta‘wil Mushkil al-Qur‘an}, pg. 151

\textsuperscript{11} mentioned by Sama‘ani, Qurtubi

\textsuperscript{12} Qurtubi citing AkhFash and Mubarrad
CHAPTER IX: DISBELIEF

1) Say: “O disbelievers!

The address is phrased generally and therefore is directed to all disbelievers, even though, in the first instance, the addressees were a specific group of people.¹

This is the only place in the Qur’ān where Allāh addresses the disbelievers so directly in this way, every other address comes in forms such as, “O you who disbelieve...” in Surah al-Tahrīm² for example. The point being emphasised by using the noun, al-Kāfirūn as opposed to the verb is that whoever has this characteristic as a permanent quality is truly deserving of being disavowed by Allāh and the believers, and himself being free of them.³

The significance of the word, “Say,” has already been explained

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, vol. 7, pg. 56, Ibn Kathīr

² al-Tahrīm (66): 7

³ Ibn al-Qayyim, ibn ʿĀshūr
in the commentary to Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ: the Messenger is tasked with conveying precisely what is revealed to him from Allāh. Additionally, the contents of this address are stringent and severe and people could find such words coming from someone they regard to be a peer hard to accept. Therefore, it is as if the Messenger (ﷺ) is saying, ‘These are not my words, I am merely conveying what is revealed to me!’ Moreover, his addressing the disbelievers like this even though they came to him with a proposal of compromise, unafraid of how they would respond, indicates that he is protected by Allāh.

The word kāfīr, disbeliever, comes from the word kufr which linguistically means satr, or covering. In the technical, Islamic sense it refers to a non-Muslim. Ibn Taymiyyah said, ‘Disbelief is the absence of faith in Allāh and His Messenger by agreement of the Muslims. This holds true regardless if the person actually believes something that is incompatible with true faith and voices it or does not believe in anything and does not voice it.'

The scholars have categorised kufr into various classes:

i) Kufr al-Inkār, the disbelief of rejection, referring to a person who has no knowledge of Allāh and does not acknowledge Him.

ii) Kufr al-Juhūd, the disbelief of denial, referring to a person who has knowledge of the truth but denies it, like Pharaoh and the Jews.

---

4 Samaʻānī, Rāżī, Abū Ḥayyān, Khāzin, Sālim

5 Rāżī, Khāzin

6 Abū Ḥayyān, Baqa‘ī

7 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā, vol. 20, pg. 86
iii) *Kufr al-'Inād*, the disbelief of obduracy, referring to a person who has knowledge of the truth, accepts it, but does not follow it out of hatred or arrogance like Iblis.

iv) *Kufr al-Īrād*, the disbelief of turning away, referring to a person who deliberately turns away from the truth, not paying it any attention, neither accepting nor denying.

v) *Kufr al-Shakk*, the disbelief of doubt, referring to a person who doubts whether it is the truth or not.

vi) *Kufr al-Nifāq*, the disbelief of hypocrisy, referring to a person who pretends to be a Muslim outwardly while, inwardly, remaining a disbeliever.

vii) *Kufr al-Ridda*, the disbelief of apostasy, referring to a person who accepted Islām and then left it either through belief, deed or statement.

Allāh, Most High, says about the disbelievers:

> إن شر الماَوَآب ينذِلَ اللهُ الَّذِين كفروا فأفْهِمْ لَاتُؤِمِّنَونَ

"Surely the vilest of animals in Allāh’s sight are those who disbelieve and will not believe."

*[al-Anfāl (8): 55]*

> إن الَّذِين كفَرُوا مِن أهل الكُتُب والمُشْرِكِينَ

في نارِ جهَنَّم خَلِيلِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِك هم شرُّ الْأُلَّهِيَّةِ

"Surely those who disbelieve from the followers of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of Hell, abiding therein; they are the worst of men."

*[al-Bayyinah (98): 6]*
"Surely the vilest of animals, in Allāh’s sight, are the deaf and dumb who do not understand."

*[al-Anfāl (8): 22]*

"Certainly We have created many jinn and men for Hell; they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are like cattle, no, even further astray; these are the heedless ones."

*[al-Ārāf (7): 179]*

"The parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and a cry; deaf, dumb, blind: they do not understand."

*[al-Baqarah (2): 171]*
CHAPTER X: ABSOLUTION

لا أُعبَدُ مَا تَعْبَدُونَ

2) I do not worship what you worship

The Prophet (ﷺ) has never worshipped any false deity that the disbelievers have worshipped, be they polytheists or the People of the Book or any other. He has not done so in the past, he is not doing so in the present, and he is protected from doing so in the future. He has never associated partners with Allāh, instead his worship was sincerely and solely for Him, and the Lord he worshipped is the Lord as revealed in divine scripture, not some idle flight of fancy or superstition.

Ibn Taymiyyah said,

This address is directed to all disbelievers. He (ﷺ) has never worshipped Angels or any other false deity. This verse does not disavow the *shirk* of the polytheist Arabs alone, to think so would a serious error, it disavows every polytheist. It is not possible that the Lord be described with the qualities of idols such as the absence of knowledge; therefore, contrast is not made in things like this.
Absolution

The point here is to mention the attributes of the deity of the Messenger and the believers, and to apprise them of Him so that they can disavow the disbeliever’s deities and the disbelievers can disavow theirs.

When the Jews say, ‘We worship Allāh,’ they are lying, be it knowingly or unknowingly. When the Christians say, ‘We worship Allāh alone, we are not polytheists,’ they are lying. If they wanted to worship Him, they would have worshipped Him in the way He ordered: the Legal Law, not some abrogated or distorted law.

He proceeded to explain that the Christians associate partners with Allāh and as such cannot be regarded to be worshippers of Allāh, and that moreover, they attribute qualities to Him that are far from fitting. The Jews do the same, a small party of them believed that ‘Uzayr was Allāh’s son and the generality of them again assigned qualities to Him that were far from fitting, ‘some of them think He is poor, some think He is miserly, some think He is incapable and grows tired, and some think that He cannot reveal a new law.’ Therefore the object they worship is a distorted, corrupt view of Allāh, ‘idle flights of fancy that Shayṭān has adorned for them.’ It can be said that they believe in the same deity as the Muslims in a very broad sense, but not in a host of very important specifics, as such they cannot be said to worship Allāh, rather in reality they end up worshipping Shayṭān, ‘the Messenger and the believers do not worship what the Jews worship, but they do worship who they worship. This then proves the significance of using the word, mā (what) and not man (who) in the verse,’ because mā refers to inanimate objects or the qualities of animate objects. Later on, he said, ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers do not worship what the Jews worship. The latter do describe Him with qualities that are befitting, but they also describe Him with qualities that He must be absolved of. Their hearts do not contain the worship of Allāh alone because that
can only exist for someone who worships Him in the way He ordered.'

He further argues that Ibn Zayd¹ and some others were mistaken when they argued that the meaning of this verse does not include the Jews because, 'the Jews did not associate partners with Allah, they worshipped Him alone, but they did disbelieve in some of the Messengers and killed others, and they disbelieved in the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and what he brought.' He said, 'While it is correct to say that the Jews did not associate partners in the way that the Arabs and the Christians did, it is not correct to say that they worshipped Allah, rather they refused to worship Him and worshipped Shaytan instead. Whoever says that the Jews worship Allah has made a grave mistake because anyone who worships Allah will be graced with Paradise and is one of Allah’s righteous servants.' Allah, Most High, says,

اللَّهُ أَعَمِّنَ إِلَيْكُمْ رَبَّيَّةَ أُمَّةَ أَدَم‬

τεθείοντος ἐκείνων ἐν οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλος ἄλλαν

λαλομάσται ἐκεῖνον ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλος ἄλλαν

καθ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐκ ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλαν

Did I not make a contract with you, tribe of Adam, not to worship Shaytan who truly is an outright enemy to you, but to worship Me? That is a straight path.”

[Ya Sin (36): 60-61]

Concerning the Jews, Allah, Most High, says,

¹ Recorded by Tabari and others.
“Do you not see those who were given a portion of the Book having faith in idols and false gods and saying to those who disbelieve, ‘These people are better guided on their path than the believers’?”  

[al-Nisa’ (4): 51]

“When a Messenger comes to them from Allâh confirming what is with them, a group of those who have been given the Book disdainfully toss the Book of Allâh behind their backs, just as if they did not know. They follow what the devils recited in the reign of Sulaymân. Sulaymân did not disbelieve, but the devils did...”  

[al-Baqarah (2): 101-102]

The chapter does not start by saying, “Say: ‘O Polytheists!'” it says, “Say: ‘O disbelievers!'” and as such subsumes every disbeliever: those who commit shirk, those who negate what Allâh must be described with, and those who are too arrogant to worship Him. Negation is worse than shirk and every person who negates must
also have committed shirk.²

Linguistically, the word worship, ‘ibādah is derived from ‘abada which means to be subservient and to subjugate. In the technical, Islamic sense, the word ‘ibādah is a comprehensive term referring to everything, inward and outward, that Allāh loves and is pleased with.³ Its pillars are love, hope, fear, submission and humility.

Worship can only be considered true worship when the way of performing it is taken from the Messenger (ﷺ), seeking thereby the face of Allāh only. These two conditions have to be present for the action to be considered worship and hence acceptable to Allāh⁴ and are proven by the ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Actions are by intentions and every person shall have what he intended. So whoever’s migration was to Allāh and His Messenger, his migration was to Allāh and His Messenger; and whoever’s migration was for some worldly gain, or to marry a woman, his migration was for that which he migrated to,”⁵ and by the ḥadīth recorded by Muslim on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever does an action that we have not commanded, it must be rejected.”⁶ This aspect of the meaning of worship is also shown in these verses when understanding the mā as signifying the verbal noun, mā al-maṣdarīyyah. This is explained later.

² Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 7, pp. 73-76
³ Ibn Taymiyyah, al-‘Ubūdiyyah, pg. 1
⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim, Tafsir, pg. 73
⁵ Bukhārī #1-54-2529-3898-5070-6689-6953, Muslim #1907
⁶ Muslim #1718
CHAPTER XI: PAGANISM

3) and you are not servants of who I worship.

Just like the previous verse, this verse is also directed at all disbelievers. Among the disbelievers are those who do not worship Allāh at all and those who worship others alongside Allāh. Both types do not worship Allāh, the latter because to associate partners with Allāh cannot ever be considered worship of Him. As such, their proposal to worship Allāh every other year can, in reality, never come about because, at the end of the day, they would still be polytheists. It is to drive this point home that a nominal sentence structure has been employed in this verse since a nominal phrase adds the sense of something being permanent and entrenched.¹

Ibn Taymiyyah said,

This is an address directed to all of the disbelievers, even

¹ Baqā‘ī, ibn ʿĀshūr.
those who became Muslims afterwards because they had not accepted Islâm at the time of this address. The address is applicable to them for as long as they were disbelievers. It also applies to the hypocrites since they are disbelievers in reality. For as long as a disbeliever remains a disbeliever, he is not worshipping Allâh, he is worshipping Shaytân, regardless if he clearly shows this or does not such as the Jews. The Jews do not worship Allâh, they worship Shaytân, because Allâh can only be worshipped in the way He has legislated and ordered. They may well think they are worshipping Him but their deeds, distorted as they are and prohibited by Him, are despised and hated by Him. He has proscribed them and therefore they cannot be considered worship.

Every person who disbelieves in Muḥammad does not worship what Muḥammad worships for as long as he remains a disbeliever. The present tense verb implies an act that is ongoing and unceasing, so for as long as the person is a disbeliever, he will not worship the God of Muḥammad (ﷺ), not in the present or the future.²

In both verses the word mā, what, has been used, i.e. in “what you worship” and “who I worship.” Mā is used to refer to inanimate objects, and the linguists differ about whether it can be used for animate objects.

With regards to the polytheists, they worshipped animate and inanimate objects. The mā was used to refer to their gods, giving prevalence to the inanimate objects they worship in order to belittle their worship.³

² Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr, vol. 7, pg. 67-68

³ Baqâ‘î
The question, however, arises about the sense in which mā is used where it relates to Allāh in the third and fifth verses. Those who have the opinion that it can be used to refer to animate objects understand it in its normative sense, translated here as "who."⁴ They state that mā has been mentioned in verse 3 as opposed to who, man, as one may expect so the contrast holds with the flow of verse 2.⁵

Those who said that it was not permissible to use mā for animate objects said that the mā here was used to signify the verbal noun, maṣdariyyah.⁶ Therefore, the meaning would be, ‘and you will not be worshippers as I worship,’ and the reference would be to the act and method of worship as opposed to the object of worship. Sālim argues that this is a strong argument, not necessarily because of this linguistic argument, but because in the last verse, “You have your religion and I have mine,” Allāh refers them to their worship and not to their object of worship.

Others said that mā is used to signify an adjectival qualifier, sifah of the act i.e. ‘I do not worship what you worship of falsehood and you are not servants of what I worship of the truth.”⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah said, ‘Mā is used to describe inanimate objects and the characteristics of animate objects.”⁸

Abū Muslim said the last pair only were used to signify the ver-

---

⁴ Ḥalabī

⁵ Sama‘anī, Baghawī, Mardāwī, ibn al-Jawzī, Qurṭūbī, Abū Ḥayyān, Nasafi, Ālūsī

⁶ Zamakhsharī, Baydāwī, Qurṭūbī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ḥalabī

⁷ Zamakhsharī, Baydāwī, Nasafi, ibn al-Qayyim, Ālūsī

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, vol. 7, pg. 73
bal nouns and first two were used to signify the relative pronoun, mawsilah, this would seem to be the opinion preferred by ibn Kathīr who explains the verses thus,

“I do not worship what you worship,” of idols and partner-gods “and you are not servants of who I worship,” Allāh alone with no partners, so mā here has the meaning of man. “I am not a servant of what you worshipped,” i.e. I do not worship in the manner you worship: I will not traverse your path and I will not imitate it. I only worship Allāh in the way He loves and is pleased with. This is why the following verse says, “and you are not servants of who I worship,” i.e. you will not follow Allāh’s commandments and law in worshipping Him, instead you have invented something for yourselves. “They are following nothing but conjecture and what their own selves desire. And that when guidance has reached them from their Lord!”

In this verse, “You are not servants,” is a nominal sentence and “who I worship,” is a verbal sentence. Ibn Taymiyyah explained,

He did not say, ‘You do not worship who I worship,’ using a verb, rather he used a nominal sentence to highlight that their vile, disbelieving souls are free of worshipping the God of Muḥammad (ﷺ), they cannot do so for as long as they remain disbelievers. This is because true worship is to worship Him alone in the way commanded by Muḥammad, whoever disbelieves in him (ﷺ) cannot fulfil this condition.

---

3 Ḥalabī, Ālūsī

10 al-Najm (53): 23

11 Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, vol. 7, pg. 69
CHAPTER XII: PURITY OF FAITH

4) I am not a servant of what you worshipped 5) and you are not servants of who I worship

When contrasting verse 2 with verse 4 we see that "I do not worship," is a verbal sentence and "I am not a servant," is a nominal sentence, "who I worship," is in the present tense and "what you worshipped" is in the past tense. The scholars have discussed these differences, ibn Taymiyyah said,

"I do not worship," in this present time and in the future, "what you worship," in this present time and in the future, since both are present tense verbs and can apply to the present and future but not the past. In the other verse he said, "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," he did not say, 'I do not worship,' using a
verb and he did not say, 'what you worship,' using the present tense, instead the past tense was used. Therefore, the wording for his action and their action is different from the first sentence. The negation in this second sentence is more general, "what you worshipped," deals with the past because the polytheists would worship many different gods, and at any one time they could have worshipped a god different to what they had worshipped previously. His saying, "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," is a disavowal of everything they worshipped at any point in the past, and the first sentence is a disavowal of what they worship in the present and will worship in the future. Hence, both of these sentences taken together reflect a disavowal of what they worship in the past, present and future. This comprehensive meaning is not found in each sentence when taken by itself. "I am not a servant," employs the active participle and therefore applies to the present and the future. The verse is structured as a nominal sentence and is therefore more emphatic since it precludes the very possibility of the act occurring, whereas a negation using a verbal sentence would imply that it has not occurred even though it could have occurred. Therefore, this structure negates the possibility of the act ever occurring in the object because it just cannot reconcile it. Hence, the first sentence negates the occurrence of the act in the present and the future, and the second sentence negates the very possibility of it happening, and hence is more emphatic and potent than the first. Therefore, the words, "I am not a servant," mean that 'My self will not accept and cannot accede to worshipping what you worship, even if you had just worshipped it in the past. I cannot worship, at any time, any of the gods you have worshipped.' The Prophet (ﷺ) has absolved himself of what the polytheists worshipped in the

\[1\] cf. Baqā'ī
present and will worship in the future, and has precluded the possibility of ever worshipping their gods. He has explained that this will not happen and it is far from fitting that it happen and as such negated the legal possibility and actual occurrence of the deed.

Such words, such a negation, are only ever said for something that is truly despicable such as the case of a person who is called to commit an indecent act or act of oppression. As such the negation, when structured like this, includes hatred and aversion to the deed. This sense is not present in a straightforward verbal negation such as ‘I will not do it,’ since a person could refrain from doing a deed because of some external factor and not because he hates it. When a person said, “I am not a worshipper of what you worshipped,” this carries the meaning of hating the god and hating their worship of that god.\(^2\)

Concerning the different tenses in “who I worship,” and “what you worshipped,” Zamakhsharī answered, ‘They worshipped idols in the past, before his being commissioned, yet at that time he did not worship Allāh,’\(^3\) therefore the present tense was used when referring to his action because using the past tense could be construed as being false for the period of time before his prophethood. Abū Ḥayyān rebuts this view by stating that it has left due propriety with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).\(^4\) The truth is that the Prophet (ﷺ) did worship Allāh, even during the time before he was commissioned, however he did not worship Him through those specific acts that could only be known through revelation. Therefore, one could say that the absence of the past tense in the statement could be to

---

\(^2\) Ibn Taymiyyah, \textit{al-Tafsir al-Kabīr}, vol. 7, pp. 64-68

\(^3\) Zamakhsharī

\(^4\) Abū Ḥayyān
highlight this fact, not that he never knew about *Tawḥīd*.

Another reason for using the present tense is that it is a rhetorical device to bring the Prophet’s (ﷺ) worship vividly into the mind of the listener and to help him fully grasp the concept, a style used in other places of the Qur’ān such as,

أَلَّا تَسْتَمِعِيْنَ مَا فَتْصِيحُ الأَرْضُ مَعْضَلَةً

“Do you not see that Allāh sends down water from the sky and then in the morning the earth is covered in green?”

*[al-Ḥajj (22): 63]*

where the present tense verb, *tusbihu*, is used rather than the past, *asbahat*, for this reason.\(^5\)

A third reason for using the present tense was to highlight that who the Prophet (ﷺ) worshipped today was the same as who he worshipped yesterday,\(^6\) he was not given to worshipping on whim and fancy like the polytheists.

Ibn Taymiyyah gave another view: every believer is required to recite these verses, some believers converted to Islām and previously worshipped idols. Were the verse to read, ‘I worshipped,’ it could be taken to refer to false gods. This possibility is removed when using the present tense.\(^7\)

---

\(^5\) Ibn al-Munayyir to Zamakhsharī. cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Abū Suʿūd, ibn ʿĀdil

\(^6\) Qurṭūbī

\(^7\) Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 7, pg. 69
Ibn Kathîr concluded the commentary to these verses by saying,

He (ﷻ) absolved himself of all that they were upon. The worshipper must have an object of worship and a method of worship. The Messenger and his followers worship Allâh in the way that He has legislated and this is why the statement of Islâm is, ‘There is none worthy of worship save Allâh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allâh,’ meaning that there is no object of worship save Allâh and no way to Him except through what the Messenger (ﷺ) brought. The polytheists, on the other hand, worship others besides Allâh for which He has granted no permission. This is why the Messenger (ﷺ) said to them, “You have your religion and I have mine.” In the same way, Allâh, Most High says,

وَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُولُ لِيُعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُم مَا عَمَلْتُونَ وَالَّذِينَ أتَّمُّوا عَمَلَيْنِ إِنَّمَا يُعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“If they deny you, say, ‘I have my actions and you have your actions. You are not responsible for what I do and I am not responsible for what you do.’”

[Yûnus (10): 41]

وَأَنَا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا أَعْمَلُ وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا أَعْمَلُ وَهُمْ آخَرُونَ

“We have our deeds and you have your deeds. We act for Him alone.”

[al-Baqarah (2): 139]
CHAPTER XIII: DISAVOWAL

6) You have your religion and I have mine

The word *din* in this verse has been explained to mean religion, accounting, recompense, supplication and worship.¹ Therefore, the meaning is: "You have your religion" of *shirk*² which you will never abandon; this is what you will die upon³ and then reap the recompense of your deeds,⁴ "and I have mine," Islām and *Tawḥid*⁵ which I will never abandon; I will never leave it for something else⁶ and I

¹ Bayḍāwī

² Baghawī, Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān, Nasafī

³ Ṭabarī, Bayḍāwī

⁴ Sama‘ānī

⁵ Baghawī, Mardāwī, Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān, Nasafī

⁶ Ṭabarī, Bayḍāwī
will reap the recompense of my own deeds. Allāh, Most High, says,

\[\text{وَلَا أَعْمَلُنا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلَكُمْ وَخَافَنَا مُحِيطُونَ}
\]

“We have our deeds and you have your deeds. We act for Him alone.”

[al-Baqarah (2): 139]

\[\text{وَإِذَا سَمَعُوْاً الْعَفُو}
\]

\[\text{أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَا أَعْمَلُنا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلَكُمْ سَلَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ}
\]

“No beget we aught; we have no words.”

[al-Qasas (28): 55]

\[\text{وَإِنَّكَ مَنْ بَدَأْ فَعَلْتُ لِي عَمَلًا وَلَكُمْ}
\]

\[\text{عَمَلَكُمْ أَشْرَبْتُونَ مَثَلًا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءُ إِمَا أَعْمَلُونَ}
\]

“I have my deeds and you have your deeds. You are not responsible for what I do and I am not responsible for what you do.”

[Yūnus (10): 41]

Just as you are content with your religion, I too am content with mine. Just as you supplicate to others alongside Allāh, I will only ever supplicate to Him alone,

---

7 Sama'ānī, Mardāwī

8 Qurṭubi, Shawkānī
“So call upon Allāh, making your religion sincerely His.”

[Qur'ān: Ghāfir (40): 14]

“The only true supplication is made to Him alone. Those they call upon apart from Him do not respond to them at all. It is like someone stretching out his cupped hands towards water to convey it to his mouth: it will never get there. The call of the disbelievers is all in vain.”

[Qur'ān: al-Ra'd (13): 14]

Abū Su'ūd said,

i.e. ‘Your religion: polytheism, is yours and yours alone, I will never acquiesce to your wishes and accept it. Therefore, do not place your vain fancies in something impossible. My religion, Tawhīd, is mine and mine alone and you will not accept it because you have attached an impossible condition (to your offer) which is my worshipping your gods or my accepting them, and because your promise is shīrāk in itself.’ Now, since their offer was built on the premise that both parties share in both methods of worship, the restriction that is derived by the syntactic placing of the subject before the noun (dīn) is an absolute declaration of individuality and disavowal.

After the previous verses showing that the Messenger of Allāh
(ﷺ) is free of their false religion, “You have your religion,” is mentioned first to drive home the point that their choice of faith is worthless and will not benefit them at all, and because they were the ones who approached him with this proposal.⁹ As such, this verse reinforces the message of the earlier verses,¹⁰ and exemplifies the epitome of washing one’s hands of disbelief.¹¹ It was to stress this that the following verses were revealed along with this chapter:

وَلَقَدْ أُحِيَّيْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَيْلِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَيْنَ أَشْرَكْتُ لِحَبْطَةِ عُمُّكَ وَلَتَكُنْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَنْفِرُونَ لِلَّهِ فَأَعْبُدْ كُنْ مِنَ الْشَّكْرِينَ

“Say: ‘Do you order me to worship something other than Allâh, you ignorant people?’ It has been revealed to you and those before you: ‘If you associate others with Allâh, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers.’ No! Worship Allâh and be among the thankful.”

[al-Zumar (39): 64-66]

In a similar sense, Ibrâhîm said,

إِنَأَبَرَى وَأَيْسَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبِدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرَتُكُمْ

“We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allâh and we reject you.”

[al-Mumtažinah (60): 4]

⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim

¹⁰ Ālūsī

¹¹ Abû Ḥayyân
Allāh has explained that a benefit of distancing oneself in this manner is that He will provide him righteous descendents,

فَلَمَا أَعْرَضْتُمْ مِمَّا يَعْبَدُونَ
من دونِ اللَّه مِمْنَاهُمْ إِسْقَاحٌ وَيَعْقُوبٌ وَنَجْعَلْنا يَدُّلْنَاهُمْ
وَوَهْبَنَا لَهُمْ مِمْنَ رَحْمَتِنَا وَنَجْعَلَنَّهُمْ لِسَانَ صَدِّيقٍ عَلِيًّا

“When he had separated himself from them and what they worshipped besides Allāh, We gave him Iṣḥāq and Ya‘qūb, making each of them a Prophet. We endowed them with Our mercy and made them highly honoured.”

[Maryam (19): 49-50]

The verse in question does not mean that it is allowed for the disbelievers to persist in their disbelief\(^\text{12}\) and neither does the verse imply an acceptance of their religion, rather it is said in the same sense as,

وَقُلْ الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَمَا شَأْ فِي لِبَوْيٍ وَمَنْ شَأْ فِي يَقِيرٍ إِنَّا أَعْطَنَاهُ الْفَيْلَ وَأَطْلَبْ مِمَّا سَرَادَ فِهَهَا
وَإِنْ يَسْتَفِينَنَا عَلَيْهَا مَكَّةَ مَهْيَاً كَأَلْفَ يَوْمِ الْوَجْهُ يَبْشَرُ أَشْرَابٌ وُسَاءَتُ مُرْتَفِقًا

“Say, ‘It is the truth from your Lord; so let whoever wishes have faith and whoever wishes disbelieve.’ We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose billowing walls of smoke will hem them in.”

[al-Kahf (18): 29]

\(^{12}\) Bayḍāwī, Ālūsī
Disavowal

i.e. in the sense of a threat and warning. The first verse further emphasises this.\textsuperscript{13}

Because the primary point was to stress that he (\textsuperscript{14}) would never follow their religion, the beginning verses of the chapter commence by announcing this and then, in this final verse, it continues where the first verse left and addresses the disbelievers directly, concluding the ‘negotiations’ as it were.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Rāzī, Qurṭubī, Khāzin, Sālim, ibn ‘Ādil

\textsuperscript{14} Abū Hayyān, Ḥalabī
CHAPTER XIV

Who is being Addressed?

The Sūrah, in its generality seems to indicate that the disbelievers, as a whole, will never believe and worship Allāh alone. An understanding such as this would be clearly flawed since many disbelievers have accepted Islām.¹ Many exegetes, when they came to discuss this point, were of the view that the discourse is directed to those specific disbelievers who Allāh knew would never believe.² This, then, would fall under the same category of verses as,

إنَّ أَلَّذِينَ كَفَّارًا سَوَاءَ عَلَيْهِمَّ عَسَيْنَا أَنْ يُذَرُّوهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

As for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.

[al-Baqarah (2): 6]

---

¹ Qurṭubi, Shawkānī

² Sama‘ānī, Baghawi, Bayḍāwī, ibn al-Jawzi, Zamakhshari, Qurṭubi, Abū Ḥayyān, Tha‘ālabi, Abū Su‘ūd, ibn ‘Ādil
and about whom Allāh says,

إنَّلَيْكَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سَكَبَتْ رُوُّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Those against whom the words of your Lord are justly carried out will never have faith.

[Yūnus (10): 96]

Others, however, advanced different answers. Ibn Taymiyyah, after mentioning the above opinion said,

This is a mistake. Allāh’s words, “Say: O disbelievers” are directed to all disbelievers. He (ﷺ) would recite this verse in Madīnah, after the death of the disbelievers who approached him; he would enjoin its recitation and state that it was absolution from shirk. If the address was indeed to those disbelievers who approached him, or to those who Allāh knew would die as disbelievers, what would be the point of directing an address such as this to a people who do not know that they are meant? Those specific disbelievers did not know they would die as disbelievers and neither do the rest....

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ordered individual Muslims to recite this chapter and told them that it was absolution from shirk. If the address was directed to those who died upon shirk, the chapter would be absolution from the religion of these people only, it would not be absolution from shirk as a whole. The meaning of his (ﷺ) words is that the chapter is absolution from every form of shirk, that related to belief and deed. His words, “You have your religion and I have mine,” is also an address directed to all disbelievers. Even if that disbeliever was to accept Islam afterwards, before he did so, the Muslims are free of him, even if he repented afterwards. It is in this sense that Allāh says to His Prophet,
"If they disobey you, say, ‘I am free of what you do.’"

[Al-Shu'arā (26): 216]

He is free of the sins of his Companions even if they were to repent afterwards. In a similar sense, He says,

"If they deny you, say, ‘I have my actions and you have your actions. You are not responsible for what I do and I am not responsible for what you do.’"

[Yūnus (10): 41]

...The address is directed to all the polytheists, those who have passed away and those who will come till the Day of Rising. Allāh has ordered him to wash his hands of everything that is worshipped besides Him, this is the religion of Ibrāhīm, the Khāliṣ with which he (ﷺ) was sent. Allāh, Most High, says,

"When Ibrāhīm said to his father and his people, ‘I am free of everything you worship, except for Him who brought me into being, who will certainly guide me,’ he made it an on-going word among his descendants so that perhaps they might turn back.”

[Al-Zukhruf (43): 26-28]
Ibrāhīm also said,

ينقُومُ إِنِّي بِرَبِّي يُمَاتِحُونَ
إِنِّي وَجَهَتُ وَجَهْيَ لِلَّذِي فَظُّرَ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ
حَيَّاً وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“My people, I am free of what you associate with Allāh! I have turned my face to Him who brought the heavens and earth into being as a pure natural believer. I am not one of the polytheists.”

[al-An‘ām (6): 78-79]

Allāh says,

قدَّ
كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَى هَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالَ لَوْلَوْمَاعَ
إِنَّا بُلْدُكُمْ وَمَا أَصَبْدُونَ مَن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَّارًا وَبِدَاءً.
وَبَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْمُدَّةَ وَالْبَعْضَاءَ أَبَداً حَتَّى تُوَسَّعَوا إِلَى الْوَحْدَةِ إِلَّا
قُولُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَا أَسْتَغْفِرُ مِنْ أَمْرِي إِلَّا أَنتَ وَإِلَيْكَ أَنْبِئُ وَإِلَيْكَ الْمُصْرِرُ

“You have an excellent example in Ibrāhīm and those with him when they said to their people, ‘We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allāh, and we reject you. Between us and you there will be enmity and hatred forever unless and until you have faith in Allāh alone.’ Except for Ibrāhīm’s words to his father, ‘I will ask forgiveness for you but I have no power to help you in any way against Allāh.’ ‘Our Lord, we have put our trust in You and have repented to You. You are
our final destination.”

[al-Mumtahanah (60): 4]

He says to His Prophet (ﷺ),

وِإِنْ كَذَّبْتُكُمْ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ

عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْثَرْنِي بِمَا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بِمَا أَتَمُّمُّونَ

“If they deny you, say, ‘I have my actions and you have your actions. You are not responsible for what I do and I am not responsible for what you do.’”

[Yûnus (10): 41]

Here Allâh has ordered him to wash his hands of the deeds of everyone who denies him, and this includes the polytheists and the people of the Book.³

Sâlim, developing further on the different syntactical structures of these verses, said,

The Sûrah presents two contrasting view points: that of the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) and that of the disbelievers, with both refusing to worship what the other worships. However, when looking at the wordings used to describe both stances, they are not the same. With respect to the Messenger (ﷺ), the first sentence reads, “I do not worship what you worship,” using present tense verbs in both halves of the sentence which indicates the present state, i.e. ‘I do not worship, in this present time, what you worship, in this present time.’ Then He said, “and you are not servants of who I worship,” using a nominal sentence to describe their stance, and a verbal sentence to describe his, i.e. ‘You cannot be said to have

---

³ Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr, vol. 7, pp. 56-61 summarised
the quality of worshipping who I worship, in this present time.' Then He said, "I am not a servant of what you worship, and you are not servants of who I worship," [using a nominal sentence to describe his (مُعَاصِرُ) stance] i.e. he cannot be said to have the quality of worshipping what they worship, and they do not worship who he is worshipping.

Therefore, in the two sentences, his (مُعَاصِرُ) stance has been described with a verbal sentence and a nominal sentence: one to negate the act itself (in the present state), and the other to negate the possibility of its occurring in the future. Their stance, however, has been described in both cases with a nominal sentence which lends to the meaning of an established, entrenched quality, existing in both the past and the present. The verbal sentence, which indicates repetition and occurrence, was not used to describe them. As such, the sentences dealing with them do not refer to the future, and hence any possible confusion in understanding is removed. Allāh knows best.
CHAPTER XV

Abrogation

Some said that the last verse was abrogated by the Verse of the Sword,¹ however this is not correct because the chapter is a narrative, *khabr* and abrogation does not occur in narratives.² Moreover, washing one’s hands of evil deeds and paganism is and always will be legislated.³ Some said that if one understands the verse to mean leaving each other alone and accepting the others faith, then there is a strong case for abrogation.⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim said,

Many people erred in thinking that this verse was abrogated by the Verse of the Sword because they understood that the verse implied an acceptance of their religion, and some thought that it meant an acceptance of

---

¹ Baghawī, Bayḍāwī, ibn al-Jawzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Thaʿalabī, Fairozabādī, the opinion is mentioned by Samaʿānī, ibn ʿAṭīyyah and Qurṭūbī


³ Shanqīṭī to 10:41

⁴ Bayḍāwī, Ālūsī
the People of the Book specifically. Both opinions are wrong. There is no abrogation or even specification in this chapter. It is impossible that it be subject to abrogation because it talks exclusively about Tawḥīd which was the message of the Messengers, and Tawḥīd is not subject to abrogation. The reason why they erred is because they thought that the verse implied acceptance of their religion and then thought that acceptance was rendered null and void by the Verse of the Sword. There is no way that the verse can be understood in this light, from the very beginning the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) objected to their religious practise strenuously, he rebuked them and pointed out the flaws in their religion, and he threatened them with the coming punishment. They actually asked him to stop criticising their gods and religion in return for which they would leave him and his call alone, but he refused. How then can it be said that this verse implies acceptance of their religion? The actual meaning of the verse is complete disavowal and that each group is free of the other’s religion as already explained.
CHAPTER XVI

Conclusion

Disavowal of the disbelievers faith and practise is an essential component of Islāmic faith and vital in preserving the Muslim identity and religion. It is a consequence of the love the believer holds for Allāh, His Messenger and the believers and his sincerity to them. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allāh would take the pledge of allegiance from the believers that they be sincere to the Muslims and disavow the disbelievers.¹ Ibn al-Qayyim said,

The reality of the statement of faith is composed of knowing what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with, believing it, and acknowledging it on the tongue. It also comprises submitting to it out of love and humility, and acting by it outwardly and inwardly. It includes implementing it and calling to it as much as possible. It is perfected by loving and hating for the sake of Allāh, giving and withholding for His sake, and making Allāh the sole object of worship. The path to actualising this is through

¹Ahmād #19153-19162-19163-19165-19182-19219-19233-19238 and Arna‘ūt said it was ṣahīh.
following the Messenger alone, inwardly and outwardly, and focusing the heart entirely on Allāh and His Messenger so that it turns to no one else.\textsuperscript{2}

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "The hearts only find true delight and pleasure in loving Allāh and drawing close to Him by doing what He loves, and this is only possible if the person turns away from every other beloved object. This is the reality of Lā ilāha ill'Allāh and it is the religion of Ibrāhīm, the Khalīl and, indeed, all the Prophets and Messengers, peace and blessings be on them all.\textsuperscript{3}

Allāh, Most High, says,

\begin{equation}
\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْتَجِدُوا عَلَى الْيَهُودِ وَالْمَسْلِهَّةِ أَوْلَى الْقُوَّمِ بِغَيْبِهِمْ}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{أَوْلَي الْأُولَى بِعَضُوْدٍ مِّنْ يَوْمِئِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فَاعْفَٰعُ}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{ذَٰلِكُمْ الْظَّالِمُينَ}
\end{equation}

"You who have faith! Do not take the Jews and Christians as your friends; they are the friends of one another. Any of you who takes them as friends is one of them. Allāh does not guide wrongdoing people."

\textit{[al-Mā'idah (5): 51]}

\begin{equation}
\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْتَجِدُوا عَلَى الْيَهُودِ وَالْمَسْلِهَّةِ}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{وَأَخْرَجْنَكُمْ أَوْلَى الْأُولَى إِنَّا نَسْتَبْحَبُوا أَلْحَكَمَ عَلَيْ أَمْرٍ مَّن يُعَلِّمُنَّهُ إِلَّا إِمَّامًا}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{وَمِنْ يَوْمِئِهِمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَوْلَي الْأُولَى هُمُ الْظَّالِمُونَ}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{فَقَلُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا أَبَاكُمْ وَابْنَاؤُكُمْ وَأَخْرَجْنَكُمْ وَأَوْلَي الْأُولَى وَعَسَى نَجْزَئُكُمْ}
\end{equation}

\textsuperscript{2} Ibn al-Qayyim, \textit{al-Fawa'id}, pg. 143

\textsuperscript{3} Ibn Taymiyyah, \textit{Majmū' Fatāwā}, vol. 28, 32
"You who have faith, do not befriend your fathers and brothers if they prefer disbelief to faith. Those among you who do befriend them are wrongdoers. Say: 'If your fathers or your sons or your brothers or your wives or your tribe, or any wealth you have acquired, or any business you fear may slump, or any house which pleases you, are dearer to you than Allâh and His Messenger and doing jihâd in His Way, then wait until Allâh brings about His command. Allâh does not guide people who are deviators.'"

[al-Tawbah (9): 23-24]

"You will not find people who have faith in Allâh and the Last Day having love for anyone who opposes Allâh and His Messenger, though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their clan. Allâh has inscribed faith upon such people's hearts and
Conclusion

will reinforce them with a Spirit from Him and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever. Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. Such people are the party of Allāh. Truly it is the party of Allāh who are successful.”

[al-Mujādilah (58): 22]

Ṭabarî’s recapitulation of this Sūrah is as follows,

The polytheists proffered a compromise: they would worship Allāh for a year and, in return, the Prophet of Allāh would worship their gods for a year. In answer, Allāh, Exalted is His mention, apprised His Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ), of the response befitting this request: Muḥammad “Say,” to these polytheists “O disbelievers” in Allāh “I do not worship” in this present time “what you worship,” of gods and idols “and you are not servants of who I worship,” at this time. “I am not a servant” in the times to come “of what you worshipped,” in days gone by “and you are not” ever going to be “servants” in the days to come “of who I worship,” at this time and in the future. “You have your religion and I have mine.” The response was phrased like this because the immediate address was directed to a specific group of polytheists who were never going to believe, established so in His pre-eternal knowledge. As such, He ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to lay waste to their hopes and reject their offer, and to proclaim that such a state of affairs would never happen. He also made the Prophet (ﷺ) give up hope of their ever believing and hence ensuring their success. This is what actually happened, they did not succeed, nor were they victorious: some were killed at the Battle of Badr and others died before that as dis-

---

4 It has already been explained that the stronger opinion is that the address is actually general to all disbelievers.
believers.

Abū Ḥayyān commented thus,

"Say," proving that it was Allāh who commanded him to articulate what follows. "O disbelievers," they came to him with their hands outstretched, offering reconciliation, yet he addressed them like this thus proving that he was protected by Allāh and that he was not concerned about what they would do to him. The disbelievers referred to were a specific group, those who had proffered the compromise: Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, ‘Āṣī ibn Wā‘il, Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib, Umayyah and Ubayy the sons of Khalaf, Abū Jahl, the two sons of Ḥajjāj and others who, in actual fact, never accepted Islām. "I do not worship what you worship," the opinion I prefer is that this first verse negates the possibility of his worshipping idols in the future because a negation with lā predominantly negates something in the future. The verse following, "and you are not servants of who I worship," is also a negation dealing with the future because it has been stated by way of contrast, muqābalah. "I am not a servant of what you worshipped," negates the action in the present tense, and following this is the verse, "and you are not servants of who I worship," which also negates the present tense because, again, it has been stated by way of contrast. Therefore the meaning is that he (ﷺ) does not worship what they worship, and he will not worship what they worship; the same applies to them as well. He said, "I do not worship what you worship," using mā to refer to idols, He contrasted this with, "who I worship," using mā to refer to Allāh, Most High, because it is permissible to use styles when contrasting that would not normally be allowed when mentioning something alone. This, if one follows the view that mā cannot be used for objects that are animate. Those who said it
was allowed, the view attributed to Sibawayh, did not need to give such a reasoning. It is also said that the mā signifies the verbal noun in “who I worship,” and others said that it signifies the verbal noun in every occurrence. Zamakhshāri said that it was used to refer to the adjectival qualifier, i.e. ‘I do not worship falsehood and you will not worship truth.’ “You have your religion and I have mine,” you have your shīrkh and I have my Tawhīd. This verse exemplifies the epitome of disavowal and because the most important point was to stress that he would never follow their religion, the chapter begins by describing this and then, in the final verse, it continues where the first verse left off and addresses the disbelievers directly, concluding the ‘negotiations’ as it were. This verse is abrogated by the Verse of the Sword.5

Sa‘dī explained the chapter as follows:

“Say” openly and clearly “O disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship,” I clear myself of what you worship, outwardly and inwardly “and you are not servants of who I worship,” because you do not worship Allāh sincerely, alone. Your worship of Him, mixed as it is with the worship of others besides Him, cannot truly be called worship. “I am not a servant of what you worship; and you are not servants of who I worship,” this sentence has been repeated. The first instance shows that what is said is a statement of fact, the act will not happen. The second instance shows that the state of affairs has now been set in stone. It is for this reason that Allāh proceeds to differentiate the two groups by saying, “You have your religion and I have mine,” just as Allāh says,

5 It has already been explained that the correct opinion is that the verse is not abrogated.
"Say, 'Each man acts according to his nature, but your Lord knows best who is best guided on the Path.'”⁶ "If they deny you, say, 'I have my actions and you have your actions. You are not responsible for what I do and I am not responsible for what you do.'”⁷

---

⁶ *al-Isrā’* (17): 84

⁷ *Yūnus* (10): 41
CHAPTER XVII

Points of benefit

1. There is no compromise on the truth. The disbelievers offered a so-called ‘middle path,’ built upon the presumption that both sides could be right or wrong and therefore, they should accommodate both. The response was swift, clear and severe.¹

2. This chapter follows Sūrah al-Kawthar to indicate that even though the believers may be few in number, they have great good. They should not despair and they must never falter in the face of falsehood. They must never sell their faith.²

3. The next Sūrah is al-Naṣr, dealing with victory and the Sūrah after is al-Labab, dealing with the defeat of the enemy. This indicates that the path to success lies in adhering firmly to the religion and not compromising³ on things that cannot be com-

¹ Sālim

² Sālim

³ Sālim
promised.

4. Nuḥās said that these verses contain a proof of Prophecy as those who were immediately addressed, never accepted Islām.⁴ It also contain another prophecy in that it shows that Allāh had protected the Prophet (ﷺ) from ever worshipping anything besides Him.⁵

5. Ibn Taymiyyah said, ‘The chapter is a complete disavowal of them but it also encourages the disbelievers to seek and learn the truth,’ because they knew the Messenger (ﷺ) as someone who was totally honest, trustworthy and upright; he was a man of forbearance, fortitude and sublime character who was sincere to his people and wished the best for them. Therefore, the intelligent would take this into account and ponder why such a person would disavow himself of their religion and religious practise.⁶

6. “You have you religion and I have mine,” is commonly and habitually said by Muslims to each other when they want to wash their hands of minor issues or in cases of dispute. This is not allowed.⁷

7. Imām Shāfi‘i and others adduced the last verse of this Sūrah as a proof that all disbelievers are in reality one religion and, therefore, a Jew could inherit from a Christian and vice-versa if a relevant relationship existed between the two. He reasoned

---

⁴ Nuḥās, Ma‘āni al-Qur‘ān

⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim

⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, vol. 7, pg. 72

⁷ Rāzī, ibn ‘Ādil
that all religions besides Islām were false and, from this perspective, they could be regarded as one entity. Moreover, the address in the first verse is directed to all disbelievers, and in this verse the distinction is only made for two parties: your religion and my religion.

İmām Aḥmad and others were of the view that a Christian could not inherit from a Jew and vice-versa due to the ḥadīth in which the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “The adherents of two different religions cannot inherit from each other.”

---

8 Ibn Kathīr
The ḥadīth is recorded by Abū Dāwūd #2911 and ibn Mājah #2731 and declared ḥasan by Albānī, al-İrwā’ #1675
Also Available

The Spiritual Cure
An Explanation of Surah al-Fātiḥah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَانِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْهُدِّيْلِهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ِالْرَّحِيمِ
الْرَّحِيمِ مَلِيثٌ يَوْمُ الْيَوْمِ
إِنَّكَ تَعْبِدُ وَإِنَّكَ تَسْتَعِينُ
إِنَّهُمَا الْمَسْتَفَيْمَا
صُرُّطُ الْذَّيْنَ أُنْتِيْشَعُهُمُ عَذَّبْنَ
لِلْفُعَّوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا أَلْضَالِيْلَنِ

A summary of numerous classical commentaries of the Qur\'ān

Ṭabarī, Sama‘ānī, Baghawī, Zamakhsharī, ibn ‘Atiyyah, ibn al-Jawzī, Qurṭubī, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Taymiyyah, ibn Kathīr, Suyūṭī, Ālūsī, Shawkanī, Sa‘dī, Shanqīṭī and others

ISBN 1-904336-16-7
Also coming in this series:

*Tafsir Ayatul-Kursi*

*Tafsir al-Mu'awwidhatayn*

*Tafsir Surah al-Kahf*

*Tafsir Surah Yusuf*

*Tafsir Surah Ya Sin*

*Tafsir Surah Qaf*
If you have benefited and enjoyed reading this book and would like to join our mailing list, please fill in the form below. We will keep you informed about discounts, promotions and forthcoming publications.

Name:__________________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

City/County: ______________________________________________________

Postcode/Zip code: ________________________________________________

Country: __________________________________________________________

Tel: ____________________________

Mobile/ Cell phone: ____________________________

E-mail: ____________________________________________________________

Sign:__________ Date:____________

Post to:

MAIL MANAGER, DĀR AS-SUNNAH PUBLISHERS,
P.O. Box 9818, Birmingham, B11 4WA, United Kingdom