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Distinctive Guides on

PURSUING THE STRAIGHT PATH

and Defying the Path of the People of Hellfire

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah

Translated by
Abu 'Aaisha Murtadha



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Publisher's Note

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِلْإِسْلَامِ، وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ،
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ، الَّذِي أَرْسَلَهُ بِالْهُدَى
وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ، لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحَابَتِهِ، وَمَنْ
سَلَكَ سَبِيلَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

IT IS CERTAIN that a manifestation of Allāh's mercy and grace upon the Muslim Ummah that He has blessed them with righteous predecessors who dedicated their lives and sacrificed their comfort in service of this noble religion. They meticulously preserved its purity and clarity, safeguarding it against the schemes and doubts of their time. These illustrious scholars elucidated, defended, and penned extensive volumes on many aspects of Islamic fundamental principles and creed, as conveyed by the Prophet.

Among their most remarkable contributions was the elucidation of the religion's objectives and principles, the ability to discern truth and its adherents from falsehood and its proponents, and the clarity in articulating the path of guidance and the Sunnah (the practices of

the Prophet). They tirelessly invited others to follow this path, exposed the pitfalls of misguidance and innovation, and issued warnings against them. Within the Qur'anic and Sunnah texts, one finds numerous rules and judgments that illuminate these profound principles and lofty objectives.

Central to their teachings was the clear mandate, as outlined by religious texts, to maintain a distinct identity from non-Muslims in matters of belief, worship, festivals, laws, and moral conduct. Our righteous predecessors, may Allāh's mercy be upon them, were unwavering in their commitment to elucidating this principle. Prominent scholars like Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah played pivotal roles in this endeavour.

In his renowned work, *Iqtidhā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm li Mukhālafat Ashāb al-Jahīm*, Shaykh al-Islam delved into various issues relevant to Muslims in his era, which remain pertinent today. Among these issues, he expounded upon the unequivocal evidence drawn from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and scholarly consensus, emphasizing the incumbent duty upon Muslims to maintain their distinctiveness from non-Muslims in beliefs and practices while cautioning against alignment with them. This emphasis was rooted in the benefits of adhering to this principle and the evident harms associated with forsaking it.

Additionally, the texts and practices of the righteous predecessors effectively distinguished those groups that Muslims were instructed to oppose, such as the People of the Book, polytheists, hypocrites, and the pre-Islamic Arabs steeped in ignorance. It also extended to non-Muslim Persians and Romans who did not embrace Islam or abide by its laws, not to mention those who engaged in corruption and deviated from the path of righteousness.

Shaykh al-Islam's invaluable book strongly underscored the prohibition of mimicking non-Muslims in various matters, particularly in the observance of festivals. He emphasised that Islam has ordained only two annual festivals for Muslims, 'Īd al-Fitr and 'Īd al-Adhā , and categorically prohibited imitation of disbelievers and people of innovation in their celebrations. Furthermore, the book addressed issues such as constructing buildings upon graves and transforming them into places

of worship, the excessive veneration of pious individuals, establishing shrines and pilgrimage sites, and the prevalence of innovations and heresies in religion. Shaykh al-Islam also delved into subjects like seduction, divisions within the faith, fanaticism, and adopting new methodologies influenced by adversaries of Islam and Muslims.

In conclusion, *Iqtidhā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm* is undeniably one of the most profound works penned by early scholars in this field. Recognising its timeless relevance, Dakwah Corner Bookstore is dedicated to translating this book into English without any abbreviations depending on the version of the original copy checked, approved by the validation of Dr. Nasir ibn Abdul-Karīm al-'Aql, offering it as a valuable resource for Muslims worldwide. This translation aims to guide Muslims in navigating the increasing complexities and divergences in contemporary times while guarding against the misuse of religious occasions by those hostiles to Islam and addressing the vulnerability of some Muslims to prohibited actions and the confusion between established and erroneous beliefs.

We ask Allāh the Almighty to make it beneficial to us and humanity at large till the day of established. Amīn.

Abu Ahmed Farid
Dakwah Corner Bookstore
7 September 2023 / 21 Safar 1445

Translator's Note

ALL PRAISE AND adoration are due to Allāh ﷻ, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful. I bear witness that no one deserves sincere worship except Allāh alone, without any partner. I also bear witness that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His messenger.

Verily, the best speech is Allāh's speech, and the best guidance is that of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The worst matters (in worship) are those innovated by people, for every innovated matter is prohibited, and every innovation is an act of misguidance, leading whoever initiates and practices it to reside in the hellfire.

To proceed:

Allāh, in His great wisdom, abundant blessings and perfect justice towards the affairs of humanity, showed to man His beloved Straight Path—the Path of those whom He has bestowed His blessings upon; not the path of those who incur His Wrath, nor the path of those who are astray.

Mankind was once united upon the Straight Path of Allāh, all of them worshipping Him alone without attributing partners to Him. However, at certain junctures, Satan, their open enemy, lured them into straying from this Path, leading to their division. This decline prompted Allāh, at various intervals, to send Prophets to every nation, guiding them back to this Path.

Addressing this situation, Allāh says:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا﴾

And mankind was not but one community [united in religion], but [then] they differed.¹

At another portion, He says:

﴿كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allāh sent the prophets as givers of glad tidings and warners, and sent down with them the Scripture in truth, to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allāh guided the believers to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allāh guides whom He wills to a Straight Path.²

While explaining this verse Ibn Abbās رضي الله عنه says:

كَانَ بَيْنَ نُوحٍ، وَأَدَمَ، عَشْرَةُ قُرُونٍ، كُلُّهُمْ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ مِنَ الْحَقِّ، فَاخْتَلَفُوا، {فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ} ³

The interval between the eras of Noah and Adam was ten centuries; the people (at the time) were all upon the true *Shari'a*—Path of Allāh. They then differed among themselves, (and Allāh sent

¹ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:19.

² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:213.

³ Ibid.

prophets as givers of glad tidings and warners).⁴

Ibn Abbās elucidated how the difference occurred, he said:

صَارَتِ الْأَوْثَانُ الَّتِي كَانَتْ فِي قَوْمِ نُوحٍ فِي الْعَرَبِ بَعْدَ أُمَّا وَدٌ كَانَتْ لِكَلْبٍ بِدَوْمَةَ
الْجَنْدَلِ، وَأُمَّا سُوَأَعٌ كَانَتْ لِهَذِيلٍ، وَأُمَّا يَعُوْتُ فَكَانَتْ لِمُرَادٍ، ثُمَّ لِبَنِي غُطَيْفٍ
بِالْجَوْفِ، عِنْدَ سَبَا، وَأُمَّا يَعُوقُ فَكَانَتْ لِهَمْدَانَ، وَأُمَّا نَسْرٌ فَكَانَتْ لِحِمَيْرِ لآلِ
ذِي الْكَلَاعِ، أَسْمَاءُ رِجَالٍ صَالِحِينَ مِنْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ، فَلَمَّا هَلَكُوا أَوْحَى الشَّيْطَانُ
إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ، أَنْ انْصَبُوا إِلَى مَجَالِسِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا يَجْلِسُونَ أَنْصَابًا وَسَمُّوَهَا بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ،
فَفَعَلُوا، فَلَمْ تُعْبَدْ، حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ أَوْلَيْكَ وَتَنَسَّخَ الْعِلْمُ عُبِدَتْ

The idols that were worshiped by the people of Noah were worshiped by the Arabs later on. As for the idol Wadd, it was worshiped by the tribe of Kalb at Daumat-al-Jandal; Suwa` was the idol of (the tribe of) Hudhail; Yaghouth was worshiped by (the tribe of) Murad and then by Bani Ghutaif at Al-Jurf near Saba; Ya`uq was the idol of Hamdan, and Nasr was the idol of Himyar, the branch of Dhi-al-Kala`. The names (of the idols) formerly belonged to some pious men of the people of Noah, and when they died Satan inspired their people to (prepare and) place idols at the places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by their names. The people did so, but the idols were not worshiped till those people (who initiated them) had died and the origin of the idols had become obscure, whereupon people began worshiping them.⁵

The divergence from this Straight Path traces back to the people of Noah, who introduced the practice of idol worship, a manipulation orchestrated by Satan himself.

Allāh encapsulated this entire narrative in a Ḥadīth Qudsi, as reported by ‘Iyādh ibn Himār al-Mujāsha’iyy from the Prophet ﷺ:

⁴ Authentic, *Tafsīr* of Ibn Jarīr at-Tabarī (4048), *Mustadrakh* of al-Hakim (4009), and some others.

⁵ Al-Bukhārī (4920).

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ، وَإِنَّهُمْ أَتَتْهُمُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ
عَنْ دِينِهِمْ، وَحَرَمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا أَحَلَلْتُ لَهُمْ، وَأَمَرْتُهُمْ أَنْ يُشْرِكُوا بِي
مَا لَمْ أُنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا.

I have created My servants *Hunafā'*—as one having a natural inclination to the worship of their Lord, Allāh—but it was Satan who came and turned them away from the right religion, he made unlawful for them what had been declared lawful, and he commanded them to ascribe partnership with Me, that which did not have any justification from me.⁶

This process continued until Allāh sent His last Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ whose message was to reinforce and complete the primary of creation: the worship of only One Lord, Allāh.

Furthermore, since the message of this messenger was the final one, and undoubtedly, no one will be accepted into the eternal bliss except through this Straight Path, as clearly stated in the Qur'an:

﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ، لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ، يُجْعَلْ
صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ
الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا
الْأَيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ هَلُمَّ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾﴾

Whoever Allāh wills to guide, He opens his heart to Islam. But whoever He wills to leave astray, He makes his chest tight and constricted as if he was climbing up into the sky. This is how Allāh dooms those who disbelieve (*) That is the Path of your Lord—perfectly straight. We have already made the signs clear to those who are mindful (*) They will have the Home of Peace with their

⁶ Muslim (2865).

Lord, Who will be their Guardian because of what they used to do.⁷

Another verse has as it:

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْنَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

Indeed, this is My Path—perfectly straight. So, follow it and do not follow other ways, for they will lead you away from His Way. This is what He has commanded you, that you may become righteous.⁸

So, in His infinite love and mercy, Allāh raises from among the followers of this messenger, along with other scholars who propagate his message, reformers who will be tirelessly strive to revive this Path at intervals of every hundred years.

Abū Hurairah reported this tidings from the Prophet ﷺ, he says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةٍ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا

Verily, Allāh will keep raising for this nation, at the beginning of every hundred years, the people who will be rejuvenating its religion for it.⁹

There is no doubt that one of the greatest reformers Islam has ever witnessed was Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله. Allāh raised him precisely at the middle age of Islam, since its advent until the present day. Shaykhul-Islam not only dedicated himself to transmitting the knowledge of the early distinguished scholars of this nation to contemporary times; upon which scholars who succeeded him to a considerable extent relied, but he also actively endeavored to reform the Straight Path of Allāh, as left by the Prophet ﷺ utilizing every faculty bestowed upon him.

⁷ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:125-127.

⁸ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:153.

⁹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4291).

Among the great works Imām Ibn Taymiyyah left behind was the book *Iqtidhā' as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm Li Mukhalafat As'hāb al-Jahīm* (The Necessity of Treading the Straight Path [of Allāh], and Deserting the Way of Life of the People of Hell).

Sufficient praise for this book lies in the fact that it was written by Shaykul-Islam with this very title, a title that not only aptly encapsulates the wonderful discourse contained within but also signifies its extensive scope: Elucidating the essence of the Straight Path as prescribed by Allāh and exposing the detriments of following the practices of the People of the Books, such as adhering to their festivals.

While giving the reason for which this work was compiled, Ibn Taimiyyah says:

Our aim is to make clear man's dire need for divine guidance and to provide an understanding of the danger that comes with deviating from the Right Path, so that he can be wary of it.

He says also:

Deviation is a matter which a man's disposition impresses upon him; subsequently, Satan adorns it for him. It is due to this very reason that a Muslim is enjoined to continuously pray to Allāh for His guidance towards the Straight Path—the Path that is entirely free from any Jewish or Christian practices.

I am going to highlight certain vices of the People of the Book and the non-Arabs, vices with which our nation has been afflicted. This is intended to guide a virtuous Muslim in avoiding deviation from the Straight Path and straying onto the path of those who have earned Allāh's wrath and those who have gone astray.

And while explaining the nature of this Straight Path, he says:

The Straight Path itself comprises certain internal and external elements. The former includes beliefs, intentions, and the likes, while the latter

encompasses tenets and deeds. These deeds could be acts of worship or customs, such as those related to food, clothing, marriage, dwelling, making congregation, separation, and traveling, among others.

These internal and external matters are inevitably interrelated, such that emotions and mood in the heart must necessarily bring forth some external phenomena. Similarly, various external actions must necessarily generate certain emotions and moods in the heart as well.

Thus, Allāh granted His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ wisdom, which is his Sunnah, and that Sunnah is the doctrine and the way of life he was given. In accordance with this wisdom, Allāh legislated that he should differentiate his deeds and tenets from those of the people who earned Allāh's wrath and went astray. He ﷺ thereby enjoined his nation to differ from the people in their ways of life. Although many may not fully comprehend the harm of associating with such people, the prophet ﷺ had specific reasons for doing so. He then mentioned the reasons.

Specifically, about the case study of imitating non-Muslims in their festivals or supporting them thereof, he states:

Examining this issue from its rudiments, engaging with non-Muslims in their festivals is, at the very least, an act of disobedience to Allāh. The Messenger of Allāh has indeed highlighted the fact that every religion has its own festivals. Invariably, participating in their festivals is undoubtedly more severe than merely donning their waistbands or wearing any of their attire. This is because clothing is not a part of their religious fundamentals; they adopted these garments merely to distinguish themselves from the Muslims. In contrast, the observance of festivals stands as a core tenet of their religions, accursed be it and its adherents! Consequently, such participation amounts to imitation a distinctive aspect of their religion, which undoubtedly will earn Allāh's wrath and anger.

There is no doubt; therefore, that this work is a marvellous and excellent discussion that elucidates the dos and don'ts of the *Shari'a*; —the Straight Path of Allāh that grants a Muslim Allāh's favors and

bliss, both in this world and the hereafter. It is suitable for all categories of Muslims: beginners, students of knowledge, and scholars. The work comprehensively covers all facets of the Dīn: the *Aqīdah* (Islamic Creed), the *Ibādah* (Matters of Worships), the *Mu'āmalah* and *Sulūk* (General Conducts) related to this topic.

The issues the author drew attention to include the innovations of worship at graves, celebrating the day of 'Āshura', celebrating the Prophet's birthday, celebrating the night of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* (the night of the Prophet's ascension), and the night of middle of Sha'ban. The author also addresses holding specific acts of worship at particular times and places, such as *Salāt Ragāib*, fasting on the first Thursday of the month of Rajab, and performing special prayers on its following night. Additionally, he discusses the imitation of the non-Muslims in their dressings, languages, and general ways of life. The author also refutes the practices of various deviant Islamic groups, including *As-Sūfiyah*, *al-Jahmiyyah*, *al-Mu'tazilah*, *al-Khawārij*, *ar-Rawāfidah* and *al-Ashā'irah*.

He also discussed some of the vices commonly found among non-Muslims, which have strongly influenced the lives of Muslims. These vices include jealousy, envy, oppression, injustice, stinginess, and a rejection of truth. The author supported his arguments by providing evidence from the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah, and the *Āthār* (impacts) of the *Salaf*, along with their judgments. Additionally, he employed intellectual analogies and deductions to provide illustrative explanations.

Due to the paramount significance of this book, Dakwah Corner Publication expressed interest in its translation, to which I willingly agreed.

The Methodology I adopted in the work:

- I commenced by comparing the existing original transcripts of the book. After careful consideration, I found the sixth edition, validated by Dr. Nasir ibn Abdul-Karīm al-'Aql, to be the most fitting. Therefore, I selected this edition for the translation. This particular version had been the subject of his doctoral thesis, under

the guidance of al-'Allāmah ash-Shaykh Ṣaliḥ Fawzan (may Allāh protect him).

- I organized the content by categorizing topics into respective chapters, except for Chapter One which was directly from the author's compilation.
- I meticulously cross-referenced the textual citations from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the *Āthār* of the *Salaf* to their respective sources, ensuring their authenticity.
- As a Research Student of Ḥadīth at al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and having undergone extensive training under the tutelage of eminent scholars, I verified all the *aḥādīth* and the *Āthār* in the book using established principles and concepts of the field. I then compared the result with existing works, such as those by Imām al-Albānī in his books, and Shaykh Shu'ayb for the *Aḥādīth*, alongside the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad.
- Whenever my findings diverged from the conclusions of these scholars, I provided the reason for the differences, often referencing the opinions of other scholars, both past or present.
- In case where certain *ḥādīth* or *Athar* were unverified by any of these scholars, I rendered judgments based on my rulings. I might then explain behind my decisions.
- For the *aḥādīth* in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, I solely referenced them to their sources.
- For lengthy discussions, I tried to summarise them within footnotes, supplementing these with crucial comments and explanations whenever deemed necessary.
- I consistently compared the author's opinions on issues against those of other scholars, followed by my own comments. Whenever I discovered that the viewpoints of other scholars held greater weight than the author's, I duly noted this in the footnotes.
- Fabricated narrations, some of which the author had identified as such and others which he had not, were omitted from the book.
- In instance where the author referenced supplementary texts to support particular narrations, I verified and retained only the

primary narration, removing the additional references after thorough scrutiny.

I express my gratitude to Allāh the Most High, Who has made this translation possible. I beseech Him to make it greatly beneficial to anyone who reads it or acquires its message through any possible means.

I also extend my thanks and deep appreciation to Brother Farid Ahmed, the Managing Director of Dakwah Corner Publication, for giving me this great opportunity. May Allāh rewards him abundantly. I pray to Allāh that He accepts this work, along with my other humble and sincere efforts for His sake. I ask Him to make them beneficial to me on the day when neither wealth nor children shall be of benefit, except he who comes to Him with a clean heart.

And May He grant me unwavering steadfastness upon His Straight Path.

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ، وَمِيكَائِيلَ، وَإِسْرَافِيلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، عَالِمَ
الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ، اهْدِنِي لِمَا
اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ، إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

O Allāh, Lord of Jibrāil, Mikāil and Isrāfil, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the seen and the unseen. You are the arbitrator between Your servants in that which they disputed. Guide me to the truth by Your leave in that which they have differed, for verily You guide whom You wish to the Straight Path.¹⁰

Wa ṣallallāhu ‘alā Nabīyina Muhammadin wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Ṣabbihī wa sallam.

Abū Āisha, Murtadha Ṣalahudden al-Iwoowee

Egypt.

11 August 2023 / 24 Muharram 1445.

¹⁰ Muslim (770).

Introduction

IN THE NAME of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise is due to Allāh, who has perfected our religion for us, completed His blessing upon us, approved Islam for us as a religion, and commanded us to seek His guidance to His Straight Path (the Path of those whom He has blessed); not of those against whom He is wrathful (the Jews), and nor of the astray (the Christians).

I testify that there is no god but Allāh, and that He is Unique with no associates. I also testify that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His messenger. He sent him with the Upright Religion and the Pure Creed, and he gave him the course of the *Shari'a* (the Straight Path), and commanded that he be followed. He asked him ﷺ to proclaim:

﴿هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي - ادْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي﴾

This is my way; I Invite unto Allāh (i.e. to the Oneness of Allāh) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allāh i.e. to the Oneness of Allāh) with sure knowledge.¹¹

¹¹ Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:108.

To proceed: I have warned against the imitation of the rites of the unbelievers during their festivals, either spontaneously or in the course of my response to some questions. In doing so, I have referred to some of the traditions related thereto, as well as the *Shari'a* legal argument. I also explained some of the motives of the *Shari'a* in avoiding the way of life of the unbelievers, among the People of the Book and the unlettered nations, and what the *Shari'a* enjoined of the objection to the People of the Book and non-Arabs.

Although this is a major principle of *Shari'a*, with numerous ramifications, and a capital root, with many branches, nevertheless, I drew attention to it as much as Allāh granted me the ability to do it. Though that response I composed on the subject is not available to me now; the result of which created a measure of good effect to Allāh-willed extent.

However, I was later informed that some people, owing to the diversity of the customs in which they grew up with, found my response to be odd and far-fetched. In this respect, as their basis, they relied on vague, general, and common principles to support their viewpoint. Subsequently, a friend asked me to comment on the subject and thus indicate the root of the issue. This would be highly useful and be of general advantage, particularly considering the issue has affected many people, to the extent that they were engaging in practices of pre-Islamic paganism. I therefore put down what occurred to me at the moment, though if the issue were treated exhaustively by collecting all the available evidence, the available comments of the scholars, and all the traditions, regarding it, the discussion would be found to be far more detailed than what I offered.

I had not supposed that whoever delved deeply into the knowledge of Islamic Jurisprudence, realizing the indications of *Shari'a* and its primary objectives, and being acquainted with the cause and effect upon which the scholars act, as well as their methods of handling issues, would doubt the correctness of this standpoint. Furthermore, I had not expected that someone whose heart is deeply rooted in faith, and to whom the truth of Islam has reached in its simplicity; that it is the

religion of Allāh, which no religion would not be accepted from anyone except it, that when he is made aware of this position, would not heed, rather, becomes the lifeway of his heart, the means of correcting his corrupted faith, and a drive that awakes him in the swiftest manner. However, we seek refuge in Allāh from the corruption of hearts and from following one's whims and desires, as both hinder one's ability to learn and follow the truth.

I

The State of People Prior to Islam

KNOW THAT ALLĀH sent Muhammad ﷺ to mankind during a time when there was a cessation in the coming of Messengers. At a time, Allāh was displeased with the inhabitants of the earth: both the Arabs and non-Arabs, except for the remaining members of the People of the Book, as most of them had passed away before the Prophet's mission.

During those days, a man belonged to one of two kinds: a *kitābī*—someone who adhered to a scripture—who clung tenaciously either to a scripture that had been altered or abrogated, or he who adhered to an obsolete religion, part of which was unknown and no longer practiced. The other category was an *ummī* (unlettered), whether among the Arabs or non-Arabs. He would worship whatever pleased him and whatever he deemed helpful to him, such as a star, an idol, a grave, a statue, and so on.

People were in an extreme state of ignorance at the time, which was caused by ignorant tenets that they mistook for knowledge, and misguided beliefs that they considered righteous. The prominent

individuals among them sought to acquire fragments of knowledge that had been passed down by previous prophets. However, the authenticity of this knowledge had become ambiguous, making it difficult for them to discern the truth from falsehood.

Alternatively, he would engage in actions, which only little of them were lawful and the majority of which were *bid'a* (innovations). These actions rarely enough to influence his welfare, or he would also be drawn towards the speculations of the philosophers, the result of which would be that his mind was lost into the study of nature, mathematics, and ethics. However, after arduous effort, he would often find himself with confused and trifling ideas, very irrelevant to the divine knowledge. If he did manage to gain any knowledge, it would be overshadowed by the multitude of false concepts. And how was it possible, in the face of the abundance of differences and confusions among its people, to establish their proofs and motives?

However, Allāh guided some people through the blessing of Muhammad ﷺ and the clear signs and guidance he brought. This guidance transcends human description and understanding. As a result, the believers, both as a community and particularly among the learned, attained a wealth of beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds, sublime morals and upright practices. In comparison to the wisdom found in the teachings and practices of other nations, the wisdom inherent in the Prophet's mission far surpasses them. All praise is due to Allāh, as this is what pleases and is beloved to Him.

However, this is not the place to produce arguments and proofs on this subject.

Allāh sent the Prophet ﷺ with the religion of Islam, the Straight Path. It is incumbent upon people to seek guidance from Allāh several times a day in their prayers. Allāh has prescribed Islam as the path for those upon whom He has bestowed His Grace, including the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. It is not the path of those against whom He is wrathful, and nor of the astray.

قال عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ رضي الله عنه: "أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ جَالِسٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقَالَ الْقَوْمُ: "هَذَا عَدِيُّ بْنُ حَاتِمٍ" وَجِئْتُ بِغَيْرِ أَمَانٍ وَلَا كِتَابٍ، فَلَمَّا دَفَعْتُ إِلَيْهِ أَخَذَ بِيَدِي، وَقَدْ كَانَ قَالَ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ: "إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ يَدَهُ فِي يَدِي"، قَالَ: "فَقَامَ فَلَقِيْتَهُ امْرَأَةً وَصَبِيًّا مَعَهَا"، فَقَالَا: "إِنَّ لَنَا إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةً." "فَقَامَ مَعَهُمَا حَتَّى قَضَى حَاجَتَهُمَا، ثُمَّ أَخَذَ بِيَدِي حَتَّى آتَى بِي دَارَهُ، فَأَلْقَتْ لَهُ الْوَلِيدَةُ وَسَادَةٌ فَجَلَسَ عَلَيْهَا، وَجَلَسْتُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، فَحَمِدَ اللَّهُ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "مَا يُفِرُّكَ؟ (أَيُفِرُّكَ) أَنْ تَقُولَ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ؟ فَهَلْ تَعْلَمُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ سِوَى اللَّهِ؟. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: لَا. قَالَ: ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ سَاعَةً، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "إِنَّمَا تَفِرُّ أَنْ تَقُولَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ شَيْئًا أَكْبَرَ مِنَ اللَّهِ؟" قَالَ: قُلْتُ: لَا، قَالَ: "فَإِنَّ الْيَهُودَ مَغْضُوبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَإِنَّ النَّصَارَى ضَلَالٌ" قَالَ: قُلْتُ: فَإِنِّي حَنِيفٌ مُسْلِمٌ، قَالَ: فَرَأَيْتُ وَجْهَهُ تَبَسَّطَ فَرَحًا"

‘Adī ibn Hātim رضي الله عنه said: “I came to the Messenger of Allāh while he was sitting in the mosque. A group of people said, ‘This is ‘Adī ibn Hātim.’ He said: ‘I had gone there without any safeguard or paper.’ So, when I was presented before him, he took me by the hand, and earlier he had said, ‘How I wish Allāh makes me get hold of his hand.’ He then stood up with me. Then, a woman with a boy with her met him, they both said to him: ‘We have some matter to submit.’ He attended to them, and then held back my hand until he brought me to his house. The maid laid down a cushion for him; he sat down on it, with me in front of him. He then gave praise to Allāh, and said: ‘What makes you flee? Is it that you may have to proclaim *there is no god worthy of being worshipped in truth except Allāh*? But, then, do you know of any deity worthy of being worshipped in truth but Allāh?’ He said: ‘I replied: No.’ He spoke for some times and then said: ‘Then, did you flee that you may have to proclaim that *Allāh is Great*? But, do you know of anything greater than Allāh?’ He said: ‘I replied: No’

He continued: 'Indeed, the Jews have earned Allāh's anger and the Christians have gone astray.' I thus said: 'I am a Hanīf—someone on the true religion—a Muslim.'" He said: 'I thereupon saw him delighted in happiness.'"¹² (It is reported by at-Tirmidhī and rated it *Hasanun Garīb* [Good, but odd])

Though this hadith is odd, it has supports even from the Book of Allāh.

The like of this passage:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ مُثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ﴾

Say, (O Prophet to the people of the Scripture), "Shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from Allāh: those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allāh and His Wrath, and those of whom (some) He transformed into monkeys and pigs, and those who worshipped *tāghūt* (false deities)."¹³

Allāh, in this portion of the Qur'an, is referring to the Jews.

In another place, He says:

﴿الَّذِينَ تَرَى إِلَى الَّذِينَ قَوْلًا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ﴾

Have you (O Muhammad) not seen those (hypocrites) who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allāh (i.e. Jews)? They are neither of you (Muslims) nor of them (Jews).¹⁴

The people Allāh referred to in this portion were the *Munāfiqun* (hypocrites)—they were those who took the Jews as allies. This meaning is unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of the interpretation of the Qur'an; the context of the verse confirms it as well.

¹² The *ḥādīth* is considered good, considering its chains of transmitters; it is reported by at-Tirmidhī (2953), Ahmad in Musnad (19381), and some others.

¹³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:60.

¹⁴ Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:14.

Allāh also says:

﴿ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَنْ مَا تُقِفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبِأَمْرٍ
بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ﴾

Indignity is put over them wherever they may be, except when under a covenant (of protection) from Allāh, and from men; they have drawn on themselves the wrath of Allāh.¹⁵

This verse is a clear proof that the Jews are those who earned the wrath of Allāh.

As for the Christians, Allāh says:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونََهُ، وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نُبِّئْتُمْ لَهُمْ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ أَنْ يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾

Surely, disbelievers are those who said, “Allāh is the third of the three (in a Trinity).” But there is no god except Allāh. And if they cease not from what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall on the disbelievers among them (*) Will they not turn with repentance to Allāh and ask His Forgiveness? For Allāh is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful (*) The Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), was no more than

¹⁵ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:112.

a messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother (Mary) was a *Siddiqah* (a truthful woman). They both used to eat food (as any other human being, while Allāh does not eat). Look how We make the signs clear to them; yet look how they are deluded away (from the truth) (*) Say (O Muhammad to mankind), “How do you worship besides Allāh something which has no power either to harm or benefit you? But it is Allāh Who is the All-Hearer, All-Knower” (*) Say, “O People of the Book! Exceed not the limits in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of those who went astray before and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the Right Path.”¹⁶

The people Allāh referred to in this portion were the Christians; that is very glaring, and that is the reason why another verse about them carries the same prohibition.

Allāh says:

﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ
إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ﴾

O People of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allāh aught but the truth. The Messiah `Isa, son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a Messenger of Allāh and His Word.¹⁷

The Jews are those who fall short of the truth, and the Christians are those who go beyond its bounds.

There are, however, reasons why Allāh described the Jews as those who earned Allāh's wrath and the Christians as those who went astray, some of which are obvious while others are not, but this is not the place to explain that.

In summary, the Jews' disbelief stems from their failure to act in accordance with the knowledge they possess. They are aware of the truth but do not follow it in their speeches or practices, or both. Whereas the

¹⁶ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:73-77.

¹⁷ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:171.

Christians' disbelief arises from their engagement in acts of worship without knowledge and they exert themselves in various acts of worship that Allāh did not prescribe, and they ascribe to Allāh things they do not know.

Due to these reasons, the *Salaf* (the pious predecessors), such as Sufyan ibn 'Uyaina and some others would say: "If any of our scholars is found corrupted, he has a trait of the Jews, but if it is someone from the devoted worshippers amongst us, then he is somewhat like the Christians." Again, this is not the place to go into much elaboration.

Although Allāh has warned us against following the ways of these people, nevertheless, His Decree was enacted in accordance with what His Prophet ﷺ has informed us regarding the causes, as well as the fact that His Divine Decree would always be fulfilled.

It is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*¹⁸ on behalf of Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudri ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سُنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، حَذْوِ الْقُدَّةِ بِالْقُدَّةِ، حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا مَجْرَ صَبٍّ
لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ "قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ؟" قَالَ: "فَمَنْ؟".

Assuredly you will follow after the manners of those before you, with like for like, so much so were they to enter a lizard's burrow, you will do likewise. "O Messenger of Allāh," they asked, "(You mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He replied: "Who else?"¹⁹

Al-Bukhārī also reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّىٰ تَأْخُذَ أُمَّتِي بِأَحَدِ الْقُرُونِ قَبْلَهَا، شِبْرًا بِشِبْرٍ وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ،
فَقِيلَ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، كَفَارِسَ وَالرُّومَ؟" فَقَالَ: "وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا أَوْلَيْكَ."

The Hour will not be established until my followers will imitate the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span

¹⁸ This term is used for the two collections of Bukhārī and Muslim.

¹⁹ Bukhārī (3456, 7320) and Muslim (2669), but not with this text. This text is reported by Ahmad (17135), Ibn Abī Shaybah (37378) and some others.

by span, and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch). It was asked: “O Messenger of Allāh, Do you mean by those (nations) the Persians and the Byzantines?” He replied: “Who can it be other than they.”²⁰

The Prophet ﷺ informed us that there would be within his nation, people who would imitate the Jews and Christians (the People of the Book), and on the other hand, those who would imitate Persians and Byzantines (the non-Arabs).

Although the Prophet ﷺ warned his nation against imitating these groups of people, it is important to note that this information may not have passed to his entire nation. Additionally, it is also transmitted that he ﷺ said:

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرَةٌ عَلَى الْحَقِّ حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ

A group of my nation will maintain the truth until arrival of the Hour.²¹

He also said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْمَعُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ

Verily, Allāh shall not let this nation agree on error.²²

لَا يَزَالُ اللَّهُ يَغْرِسُ فِي هَذَا الدِّينِ غَرْسًا يَسْتَعْمِلُهُمْ فِي طَاعَتِهِ

Allāh will continue to plant new people in this religion and use them in His obedience.²³

Thus, it is realized from the Prophet’s authentic traditions that there will always be in his nation a group that will adhere to his guidance—the pure Islam—and another that will deviate to one of the factions of the Jewish or Christian faiths. Though one does not become an unbeliever or a sinner through all kinds of deviation, some deviations

²⁰ Al-Bukhārī (7319).

²¹ Al-Bukhārī (3640 and 7311) and Muslim (1920 and 1921). However, this is not the wordings of the hadith in these collections.

²² Authentic, At-Tirmidhī (2167)

²³ Good, Ibn Mājah (8).

may be tantamount to disbelief, depravity, or sinfulness, while others may be only errors.

Deviation is a matter that a man's disposition impresses upon him; Satan then decks it out for him. It is for this reason that a Muslim is required to constantly pray to Allāh for His guidance towards the Straight Path; the Path which is entirely devoid of any Jewish or Christian act.

Some Practices of the Non-Muslim Influenced Certain Muslims

I WILL NOW highlight some practices of the People of the Book and non-Arabs that have affected our nation, so that a virtuous Muslim can steer clear of deviating from the Straight Path and avoid following the path of those who have earned Allāh's wrath and those who have gone astray.

Allāh says:

﴿وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِن بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا
حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ﴾

Many of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you (believers) away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own selves, even after the truth has become manifest unto them.²⁴

Allāh disparages the Jews for being jealous of the guidance and knowledge bestowed upon Muslims.

Unfortunately, some people, known for their knowledge, and some others, among Muslims, have been afflicted with a kind of jealousy for one upon whom Allāh has blessed with beneficial knowledge and righteous deed. This is an utterly abominable trait. In this context, it is one of the traits of those who have incurred Allāh's anger.

²⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:109.

Another vice that has affected some Muslims is the act of concealing the knowledge, clear proofs, and guidance that they have been blessed with, when there arises a need to share them with others.

Allāh says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾

Verily, Allāh does not like such as are proud and boastful (*) Those who are miserly and enjoin miserliness on other men and conceal what Allāh has bestowed upon them of His Bounties.²⁵

Allāh described these people as having miserliness, which includes being miserly with knowledge and property. The context of this verse refers to miserliness with knowledge, which is the major objective here. However, being miserly with property could also be inferred.

Allāh also described them as concealing knowledge, as He does in some other places as well. The like of where He says:

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ﴾

(And remember) when Allāh took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) to make it (the news of the coming of Prophet Muhammad) known and clear to mankind, and not to conceal it.²⁶

And the like of:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَهْدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ
لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّعِينُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا﴾

²⁵ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:36-37.

²⁶ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:187.

Indeed, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidence and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Scripture – they are the ones cursed by Allāh and cursed by the cursers (*) Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare (they truth which they concealed).²⁷

And this other verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا
أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ﴾

Indeed, those who conceal what Allāh has sent down of the Book, and purchase a small gain therewith (of worldly things), they eat into their bellies nothing but the Fire.²⁸

﴿وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِبَعْضِهِمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ قَالُوا
أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

And when they (Jews) meet the believers, they say, “We believe”, but when they meet one another in private, they say, “Shall you (Jews) tell them (Muslims) what Allāh has revealed to you so that they (Muslims) may use it against you before your Lord?” Have you (Jews) then no understanding?²⁹

So, He described those who earned Allāh’s wrath for concealing knowledge: partly out of greed for it, partly out of disdain for showing it to the world, and partly out of fear that some of the truth they disclosed would be used against them.

Likewise, there are individuals who are known for their knowledge but are afflicted with the vice of concealing it. Sometimes they withhold knowledge from others out of jealousy, fearing that someone else may achieve the same level of excellence as them. They also seek personal

²⁷ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:159-160.

²⁸ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:174.

²⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:76.

gain in leadership or wealth, and fear that disclosing the truth may jeopardize their status or material possessions. Yet in some cases, a person may engage in a dispute with an opponent on a certain issue, or belong to a group that has been refuted on a certain point. Due to his uncertainty that his opponent is wrong, he may choose to conceal knowledge that could support his opponent's argument.

'Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Mahdi and others have said: "Men of knowledge write both what is in their favor and what is against them, while people driven by impulses (*ahl al-ahwā*) only write what is in their favor."

The purpose here is not to delve into details on what is obligatory or commendable concerning this issue; rather, we seek to highlight its overarching principles, as Allāh may make them assist a wise person toward that which will benefit him.

Allāh, concerning this issue, says as well:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ
بِمَا وَّرَاءَهُ. وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ﴾

And when it is said to them (the Jews), "Believe in what was sent down by Allāh", they reply, "We believe in what was sent down to us", and they disbelieve in that which came after it, while it is the truth confirming what is with them.³⁰

Right after He had said:

﴿وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا
كَفَرُوا بِهِ. فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

And they formerly used to pray for victory over those who disbelieved, then when there came to them which they had recognized, they disbelieved in it; so let Allāh's curse be on the disbelievers.³¹

³⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:91.

³¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:89-91.

Thus, Allāh described the Jews as those who had prior knowledge of the truth before the Prophet ﷺ came to proclaim it and call people to it. However, when the Prophet came to them, emerging from a group they did not expect, they did not accept him. They insisted on accepting the truth only from their own group, despite not fully adhering to the obligations of their own beliefs.

Similarly, there are those who align themselves with particular people of knowledge or a supposed people of religious understanding among the jurists or mystics and others, or a distinguished religious leader among them, other than the Prophet ﷺ. These individuals only accept religious rulings or traditions that align with the teachings of their chosen group. Unfortunately for them, they often lack a true understanding of what their chosen group actually asserts. The religion of Islam obliges us to unconditionally follow the truth in terms of laws and traditions, without restricting ourselves to any particular group or person. Our allegiance and devotion should solely to the Prophet ﷺ alone. Allāh further describes the people who earned His wrath, He says:

﴿مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ﴾

Among those who are Jews, there are some who alter words from (their) right places (i.e., distort their meanings).³²

Elsewhere they are characterized as those who “twist the Book with their tongues, so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book.”³³

The distortion here refers to both revelation-related distortion and interpretation-related distortion.

As for the distortion caused by false interpretation, they do it very frequently, and various sects within this nation have suffered from it. Whereas, for revelation-related distortion, many have fallen into this pitfall. They distort the words of the Prophet ﷺ by transmitting his traditions through detestable chains of transmitters, though the leading experts among the scholars of hadith have rejected those traditions.

³² Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:46.

³³ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:78.

At times, such a man may even have the audacity to attempt to tamper with the Qur'an—yet he cannot achieve that—as one of them exclaimed: “And unto Allāh, Mūsā (Moses) spoke directly”—distorting the Words of Allāh.³⁴

The act of some individuals tampering with the Sunnah, claiming Divine Origin for their assertions, is nothing but the fabrication of traditions falsely attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. They also resort to using ineffective proofs in religious argument.

This type of distortion is distinctive of Jews and it is strongly discouraged. It is evident to anyone who ponders the Book of Allāh and the tradition of His Messenger ﷺ, as well as the events that transpired in the history of this nation in the light of *Īmān* (faith).

Allāh says about the Christians:

﴿يَتَّاهَلُ الْكُتُبِ لَا تَعْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ
إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ﴾

O People of the Book (Christians)! Do not go to extremes in your religion, nor say of Allāh except the truth. The Messiah `Isa, son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a messenger of Allāh and His Word, which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary).³⁵

There are further passages to this effect:

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ﴾

Indeed, in disbelief are they who say that Allāh is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary).³⁶

³⁴ The distortion made here is that the person tried to refute Allāh being the one Who spoke to Mūsā directly, claiming that it was Mūsā who spoke to Allāh, to achieve the belief that Allāh does not speak. Conversely, however, the verse presented; “**And unto Mūsā Allāh spoke directly.**” (Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:164). That is the reason why the verse is one of the proofs that establish the fact that Allāh talks, as opposed to the beliefs of some of the deviant sects.

³⁵ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:171.

³⁶ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:17, 72.

Then there is the instance of extreme reverence for the prophets and the righteous, which has happened in certain groups of aberrant worshippers and mystics to the extent that many of them have been confused by the elements of incarnation and pantheism, which are as bad as, if not worse than, what the Christians believe.

Allāh says:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ﴾

They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allāh (by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allāh), and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary).³⁷

The Prophet ﷺ explained this to ‘Adi ibn Hātim, saying: “They (the rabbis and monks) made lawful for the people that which was forbidden and the people obeyed them, and they made forbidden for them that which was permissible and they obeyed them as well.”

In the same vein, many aberrant worshippers obey some revered authorities in whatever they command, despite the fact that their command may entail legalizing the unlawful or prohibiting the lawful.

About this people, Allāh also says:

﴿ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ ﴾

But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, we did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please Allāh.³⁸

Only Allāh knows how much Muslim groups have suffered from this newfangled monasticism.

³⁷ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:31.

³⁸ Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, 57:27.

Another vice is what Allāh mentions here:

﴿قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا﴾

Said those who prevailed in the matter, “We will surely build a place of worship over them.”³⁹

The gone-astray and Allāh-displeasing ones were used to erecting places of worship over the graves of the prophets and the righteous, yet, by Allāh, the Prophet ﷺ repeatedly warned his *ummah* against this practice, even when he was on the verge of death. Yet many Muslims have fallen into this error.

Furthermore, it can be observed that those who have gone astray (the Christians) often base their religion on the practice of singing melodious songs and displaying pretty pictures. Their religious focus primarily revolves around engaging in musical activities.

Unfortunately, it can be seen that this *ummah* has also been afflicted with adopting the musical sessions accompanied by the recitation of poetry, painting pictures, and inducing love melodies. Some individuals claim that these activities contribute to the improvement of their hearts’ disposition and general worldly affairs. They engage in such activities in a manner similar to those who have gone-astray, and Allāh has said:

﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصْرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ﴾

The Jews said that the Christians follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion); and the Christians said that the Jews follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion).⁴⁰

In this verse of the Qur’an, Allāh informs us that each of these religions rejects the practices of the other.

Similarly, you will see many alleged religious experts who, when seeing the mystic and unlearned devout, dismiss and regard them as ignorant and aberrant. They have no belief that they possess any knowledge and guidance. On the other hand, you will see that many

³⁹ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:21.

⁴⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:113.

mystics and dervishes reject Islamic laws and knowledge-based verdicts, judging anybody who adheres to them to be straying from the path of Allāh and claiming that none of these things assist man before Allāh.

And indeed, the right course is that whatever the Qur'an and Sunnah assert about law and knowledge is true, and anything discovered to be in conflict with them in regards to laws and the act of learning is wrong.

Regarding the imitation of the Persians and Byzantines, the extensive theoretical and practical influence of Persia and Byzantium on Islam is not hidden from Muslims who learn about Islam as well as its past events.

Our intention here is not to delve into the specific details of all the instances where Muslims imitate Christians and Jews. There are cases where a Muslim may be forgiven for such actions, either because he engaged in *ijtihad* (independent induction) but made a mistake in his judgment, or because his good deeds outweigh the evil ones, which are forgiven for their owners. Rather, our objective is to emphasize the profound necessity for divine guidance and to provide a glimpse of the danger of straying from the Right Path, so that he may be aware and cautious.

Directives to Differentiate from Those Who Deviated from Clear Guidance

THE STRAIGHT PATH is composed of both internal and external elements. The former includes beliefs, intentions, and the like; whereas the latter comprises tenets and deeds. In turn, deeds may be acts of worship or also customs, such as those pertaining to food, dress, marriage, dwelling, congregation, separation, travel, sojourn, riding, etc.

These internal and external elements are inextricably linked, such that the emotions and moods in the heart must inevitably produce some external phenomena, and the different external actions must inevitably produce certain emotions and moods in the heart as well.

Allāh bestowed upon His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ a profound wisdom, which is his Sunnah, and that is the doctrine and way of life that Allāh granted to him. Allāh commanded him in accordance with

this wisdom, Allāh legislated for him to distinguish his actions and tenets from those of the people who had earned Allāh's wrath and went astray. The Prophet ﷺ thus commanded his *ummah* to distinguish themselves from those people in their ways of life, even the harm in maintaining relationships with them was not immediately apparent to many. He ﷺ did this for a number of reasons, some of which are:

1. Participation in conduct breeds homogeneity and resemblance in the participants, resulting in moral and action congruence, and that is evident. For instance, a person who dons the garb of the learned feels a certain affinity with them, and a person who dons the garb of the fighting soldiers, feels an affinity with their ethics, which subsequently become his basic nature, unless he is prevented by something else.
2. Displaying differences in conduct with a people breeds opposition and detachment from them, which prevents, in someone, anything that could motivate exasperation and deviation, but assists in the inclination to the people upon guidance and pleasure of Allāh, and helps in achieving what Allāh commands of advocating for the truth and its people and abandoning the path of His enemies. As much as a person's heart is alive and he realizes his duty as a Muslim, not only demonstrating Islam outwardly or claiming faith inwardly on the whole, his consciousness for exhibiting differences in his conduct with Christians and Jews, both inwardly and outwardly, becomes appreciable, and his deviation from their ways of life becomes apparent, a condition that many Muslims still suffer from.
3. Participation in the conduct of the people breeds open intermingling with them until there is no distinction between the Muslims; whom Allāh is pleased with and who are guided, and those whom He is dissatisfied with and who are astray—the Jews and the Christians. These, along with other prudential reasons for legislating, result in differences in deeds and tenets.

All that has been discussed regarding imitating these people in their open conduct is only about permissible acts that a Muslim can imitate. However, if the act becomes one that leads to disbelief, it is then part of the ways that lead to disbelief. Therefore, imitating them in such an act would be following their evil ways. This principle must, therefore, be taken very seriously.

II

*Illuminating Prohibitions on Emulating Unbelievers: Insights From Qur'an, Sunnah, and Scholarly Consensus*⁴¹

Illuminating the Benefits of Divergence from Disbelievers and the Dangers of Imitation

SOMETIMES, WHEN ISSUES are discussed, the scope of the discussion falls within a general principle that surrounds these issues. Therefore, we began the discussion on this subject by referencing the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ and the consensus of the scholars. We presented some evidence that prohibits imitating the ways of the unbelievers and commands us to object to them. This principle applies to all types of opposition whether it pertains to general or specific issues, and whether the prohibition is strongly imposed or not as much.

⁴¹ From here, the headings are from the translator, the author did not give headings.

Furthermore, we mentioned the evidence that prohibits imitating them in their rites during their festivals.

Additionally, it is worth noting that I mentioned this point in a previous book I wrote on the same topic. It is important to recognize that the command to oppose a certain group in their actions and tenets may be for the sole purpose of opposing them, but it may serve other benefits as well. Similarly, the prohibition of imitating them may be solely for the sake of prohibition, or it may bring about other advantages. Consequently, the act itself can either benefit or harm the person. Without engaging in such imitation or opposition, the person wouldn't have achieved the benefit or incurred the loss. That is why, at times, the only benefit we derive from following the way of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and our pious predecessors in some of their deeds is simply our adherence to them. In some instances, the benefit we gain may only manifest through our love and affinity for them, or through our desire to further emulate them in other acts.

In the same vein, we may suffer affliction in performing some of the acts of the unbelievers only because it is their way of life; had they not engaged in those acts, they wouldn't have been forbidden. Also, the command to oppose the people or the prohibition from imitating them could be for a benefit outside the immediate course. As a result, even if the people do not perform it right now, it remains an imitation or opposition in its implication and intent. In that regard, it can be deduced that imitating them is an evil act, whereas opposing them is not, symbolically.

However, it is possible that the wisdom behind the imitation or prohibition ordered is for two reasons: for the sake of the prohibition or imitation itself as well as achieving a benefit or warding off evil for us, and that is the commonest effect found in most of the imitations and prohibitions prescribed by the *Shari'a*. Thus, it is necessary that we take note of this point, as it will assist us at any instance, in order to always realize the actual implication behind any prohibition or imitation prescribed by Allāh; is it an absolute or a partial prescription?

Evidence from the Qur'an on the Prohibition of Following the Disbelievers

HOWEVER, IT SHOULD be noted that the Qur'an gives evidence on issues and describes events only in summarized, general, and concise manners, whereas, the Sunnah then explains, elaborates, and expresses their implications. Henceforth, we are going to cite some of the verses that explain the submission we made on this issue and later mention some of the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ that explain them, either simultaneously with the verses or later on in the course of the discussion.

Allāh says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَعَآئِنَاهُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

And indeed, We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, and the understanding of the Scripture and its laws, and the prophethood; and provided them with good things, and favored them above the others (mankind and jinn of their time, during that period) (*) And gave them clear proofs in matter (by revealing to them the Torah). And they differed not only until after the knowledge came to them, through envy among themselves. Verily, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ (*) Then We have put you (O Prophet) on a (plain) way of (Our) commandment [like the one which We commanded Our Messengers before you]. So, follow you that, and follow not the desires of those who know not (the ignorant) (*)

Indeed, they can avail you nothing against Allāh (if He wants to punish you). Verily, the wrongdoers are allies of one another, but Allāh is the protector of the righteous.”⁴²

In this chapter of the Qur’an, Allāh informs us that He blessed the Children of Israel with both spiritual and material blessings, but that they were divided among themselves after the knowledge had come to them through oppression and injustice among themselves. Subsequently, He endowed Muhammad ﷺ with the *Shari’a*, enjoining him to follow the *Shari’a* and not the *ahwā’* (desires) of the ignorant. The *ignorant* include those who oppose the Prophet’s Sunnah, *their desires*, and the fancies and modes of life of the *mushrikūn* (polytheists) as shaped by the false faith and its repercussions. The infidels maintain these fancies. Following these fancies would mean being in *accord* with them. That is why the infidels rejoice when they see the Muslims consent to some of their lore. They would gladly pay dearly to attain this. Even if we grant that the act does not involve following the infidels’ fancies, it is still beyond doubt that opposing the infidels is a more definite course and is more conducive to pleasing Allāh by relinquishing the infidels’ fancies. Consenting to them would be a step toward greater agreement, because “He who approaches acts of disobedience comes perilously close to falling into them.” The point is clear regardless of how it is made, but the first manner of agreeing with them is the more common of the two.

Similarly, in this portion:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُنْكِرُ
بَعْضَهُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُوا وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابُ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعَرَبِيًّا وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ
مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقِفٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ ﴾

And (the believers among) those to whom We have given the Scripture rejoice at what has been revealed to you, (O Muḥammad), but among the (opposing) factions are those who deny part of it

⁴² Sūrah al-Jathiyah, 45:16-19.

(i.e., the Qur'an). Say, I have only been commanded to worship Allāh and not associate (anything) with Him. To Him I invite, and to Him is my return (*) And thus We have revealed it as an Arabic legislation. And if you should follow their inclinations after what has come to you of knowledge, you would not have against Allāh any ally or any protector.⁴³

“Their desires” refers to the fancies of the parties of men who deny parts of the Revelation. They include the Jews, the Christians, and others who reject the Qur'an.

In another place, He says:

﴿وَلِيْنَ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ اِنَّكَ اِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ﴾

If you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allāh), then indeed you will be among the evildoers.⁴⁴

Following them in the specifics of their faith means following their desires. Even lesser acts may involve the infidels' desires.

The following verse has the same effect:

﴿وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ اِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللّٰهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلِيْنَ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيْرٍ﴾ (120)

Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you (O Muhammad) until you follow their faith. Say, “Verily, Allāh's Guidance is the only (true) guidance.” And if you (O Muhammad) were to follow their (Jews and Christians) desires after what you have received of knowledge (i.e. the Qur'an), then you would have against Allāh neither any Walī (protector or guardian) nor any helper).⁴⁵

⁴³ Sūrah ar-Ra'd, 13:36-37.

⁴⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:145.

⁴⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:120.

Note the use of the phrase 'their faith' and the negative attitude toward 'their desires': The infidels will not be pleased with anything short of unconditional conformity to their religion. The warning applies to any such compliance, be it limited or extensive. It is, moreover, well known that assimilating elements of their faith is a way of assimilating, or coming dangerously close to assimilating their desires, as earlier explained.

Similarly, Allāh says:

﴿وَلَيْنَ آتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَيْنَ آتَبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَلِكُلِّ وُجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْحَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ؛ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾﴾

And even if you were to bring to the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) all the proof, they would not follow your Qiblah (prayer direction), nor are you going to follow their Qiblah (prayer direction). And they will not follow each other's Qiblah (prayer direction). Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allāh), then indeed you will be one of the wrongdoers. (*) Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their own sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it (i.e. the qualities of Muhammad which are written

in the Torah and the Injil). (*) (This is) the truth from your Lord. So be you not one of those who doubt (*) For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allāh will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allāh is Most Capable of everything. (*) And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of the Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (at Makkah). That is certainly the truth from your Lord. And Allāh is not unaware of what you do. (*) And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (at Makkah), and wheresoever you are, turn your faces towards it (when you pray) so that men may have no argument against you except the wrongdoers among them. Do not fear them, but fear Me. And so that I may complete My blessings on you and that you may be guided.⁴⁶

A number of the *Salaf* have said that: the “people” in the quotation “so that people will have no argument against you” refers to the Jews against the Muslims, in the matter of the *qibla*. The Jews might say: Now that the Muslims have agreed with us to follow our *qibla*, they may be expected to agree with us in our religion. But by expressly exhorting Muslims to oppose the Jews in their *qibla*, Allāh has thwarted their argument. And that is referred to as an argument, even though the people are on falsehood, because an argument can be for the truth versus falsehood or for falsehood versus the truth.

Also, “except the wrongdoers among them” refers to “Quraysh” (the unbelievers of Makkah). They said: “They (the Muslims) have returned to our *qibla*, they may be expected to return to our religion.”

Allāh, therefore, makes it clear that the wisdom underlying the abrogation of the first *qibla* and a change in its direction is precisely the intent to oppose them, that being a strong way of cutting off the evil they intended, which ‘intention is present in every case of dissent and consent: for if an infidel is followed in one of his acts, he might use the argument in his favor, just as, or nearly as, did the Jews concerning the *qibla*.’

⁴⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:145-150.

He also says:

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ﴾

And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them.⁴⁷

These were the Jews and Christians who had split up into more than seventy sects. This is why, despite the warning that “soon his community will split up into seventy-three sects,” the Prophet ﷺ forbade following them in a similar sectarian fragmentation. Though his objection to imitation may refer to both word and content, and even if a less comprehensive interpretation is applied to this objection, it at least indicates that not imitating infidels and abandoning any assimilation to them is a positive legal duty. It also implies that the more a person stays away from assimilating to them in matters glossed over in the law, the more likely he is not to fall into the positively forbidden type of assimilation. This is in itself a great advantage.

Allāh says to Mūsā ﷺ and Hārūn ﷺ:

﴿فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

So, you both keep to the Straight Way, and do not follow the path of those who do not know.⁴⁸

It is also said:

﴿وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ أَخْلَفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ﴾

And Mūsā (Moses) said to his brother Hārūn (Aaron), “Take my place among my people, do right (by them), and do not follow the way of the corrupters.”⁴⁹

To the same effect is also the verse:

⁴⁷ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:105.

⁴⁸ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:89.

⁴⁹ Sūrah al-'A'rāf, 7:142.

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بُيِّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ عَيْرَ سَبِيلِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ ﴾

And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers—We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell.⁵⁰

What they (the unbelievers) are doing in terms of guidance and deeds is not of the believers' way. The believer should keep his distance even from the positive elements in the infidels' theory and practice. It behooves us not to accept any of these at all. By rejecting the infidels' heritage in its entirety, the believer is on safer ground in avoiding what is clearly forbidden and approaching what is dangerously close to it.

This fact is supported by the following verse:

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا
عَلَيْهِ ۖ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن
لَيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَاءِ آتِنَاكُمْ فَأَسَدِّقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۚ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَأِنْ أَحْكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
وَاحْذَرُهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُواكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۗ ﴾

And we have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and as Muhaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures). So, judge among them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their vain desires, diverting away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allāh had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you;

⁵⁰ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:115.

so compete with one another in doing good. To Allāh you will all return, He will inform you about that in which you used to differ. (*) And so, judge (O Muhammad), among them by what Allāh has revealed and do not follow their vain desires. But beware of them lest they turn you (O Muhammad) far away from some of that which Allāh has revealed to you.⁵¹

So, following the ways of life of the infidels is tantamount to following their desires or getting suspiciously close to them. On the other hand, not following their way of life means to completely abandoning their aspirations or taking a step toward abandoning their desires.

The Book of Allāh abounds in the prohibition of assimilation to communities of infidels and in stories about them that contain many admonitions to renounce their acts.

For instance, after enumerating the exemplary punishments Allāh meted out to the People of the Book, it spells out:

﴿فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ﴾

Then take admonition, O you with eyes (to see)!⁵²

Or where Allāh says:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَتْ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding.⁵³

And other examples, some of which directly address the subject while others only allude to it.

If the purpose is to explain that it is more proper for us to differ from the infidels generally, then all the verses point to that. If, however, the purpose is to differ from them is our positive duty, only some of the verses point in that direction.

We mention the passages that indicate that it is in general, a precept to differ from them because this is what is intended here.

⁵¹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:48-49.

⁵² Sūrah al-Hashr, 59:2.

⁵³ Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:111.

Our purpose here is not to distinguish between the proving force of the various passages and the various degrees of obligation under them.

We shall indicate that imitating the infidels in their rites during their festivals is a forbidden act. Indeed, this is the question that is pursued here. All other questions have been brought here to establish that suitable and great general principle.

In these passages:

﴿ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتِ وَالْكٰفِرَانَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خٰضُوا أُولٰٓئِكَ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرٰهِيمَ وَأَصْحٰبِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَنَّهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَتَّبِعُوا مَنَاجِرَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَا يَتَّبِعُوا أُمَّةَ الْكٰفِرِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُنَّ مِنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرْنَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ الْكٰفِرِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ هُمُ السَّٰرِكُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاؤُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولٰٓئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرَ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكٰفِرَ وَالْمُنْفِقَ وَالْغٰلِظَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوٰهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَنِسْ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾ ﴾

The hypocrites, men and women, are one from another; they

enjoin [on the people] *al-munkar* (disbelief and polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and forbid [people] from *al-ma'rūf* (Islamic monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and they close their hands [from spending in Allāh's cause i.e., giving alms]. They have forgotten Allāh, so He has forgotten them. Verily, the hypocrites are the rebellious. (*) Allāh has promised the hypocrites—both men and women—and the disbelievers, an everlasting stay in the Fire of Hell; therein shall they abide. It will suffice them. Allāh has cursed them and for them is the lasting torment. (*) Like those before you: they were mightier than you in power, and more abundant in wealth and children. They had enjoyed their portion (awhile), so enjoy your portion (awhile) as those before you enjoyed their portion (awhile); and you indulged in play and pastime (and in telling lies against Allāh and His Messenger Muhammad) as they indulged in play and pastime. Such are they whose deeds are in vain in this world and the Hereafter. Such are they who are the losers. (*) Has not the story reached them of those before them - the people of Noah, 'Âd, and Thamûd, the people of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), the dwellers of Madyan (Midian) and the cities overthrown [i.e. the people to whom Lot preached]; to them came their Messengers with clear proofs. So, it was not Allāh Who wronged them, but they used to wrong themselves. (*) The believers, both men and women, are guardians (friends) of one another. They encourage good and forbid evil, establish *Salāt*, and give the *Zakāt*, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. Allāh will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allāh is Almighty, All-Wise. (*) Allāh has promised the believers—men and women—Gardens under which rivers flow to stay there forever, and beautiful mansions in the Gardens of Eternity. But the greatest bliss is the Good pleasure of Allāh. That is the ultimate triumph. (*) O Prophet (Muhammad)! Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them. Their abode is hell—and worst indeed is that destination!⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:67-73.

Allāh portrays the moral makeup and characteristics of the hypocrites as well as those of the believers. Both parties proclaim Islam as their faith, but Allāh has threatened with hellfire both Islam-professing hypocrites, their profession of Islam notwithstanding, and infidels who profess unbelief, and enjoined His Prophet ﷺ to fight against them both.

Since Allāh chose Muhammad ﷺ as His Messenger and sent him to Madinah, mankind has been divided into three groups: believers, hypocrites, and infidels. The case of infidels who manifestly profess unbelief is clear enough. We are here concerned with the characteristics of the hypocrites, mentioned both in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which constitute a threat to the *People of the Qibla* (Muslims). Allāh described the hypocrites as 'are of one another' and the believers as 'friends of one another.'

This is because hypocrites are all alike in their hearts and actions. Even so, "their hearts are diverse," though you may be inclined to 'think of them as a whole'. Their friendship is not constant but lasts as long as they have a common interest, and thereafter each of them stands for himself. Not so the believers; they love a fellow believer from whom they may be separated by time and space.

Subsequently, Allāh portrays the conduct of each of the two groups, first *vis-à-vis* their ilk and later in relation to others. It may be observed that Allāh's Words are concise formulae.

Therefore, man's religious acts are of two kinds: (a) he acts or desists from acting, and (b) he calls others to act or desist. Furthermore, his acts benefit either himself or others. So, now, we have all three kinds. To enumerate:

1. An act that is only related to the doer, such as *Salāt* (prayer).
2. An act he does to benefit others, such as *Zakāt*.
3. An act he calls upon others to do. In this case, the doer is someone else, while the caller's share in it is the exhortation.

The hypocrites are characterized in the Qur'an as, "they command what is evil, forbid what is good," and the believers, contrarily, as, "they command what is good, and forbid what is evil."

The word *al-maruf* (good) is a noun embracing all that is pleasing to Allāh, such as faith and righteous deeds. Conversely, *al-munkar* (evil) comprises all that displeases Allāh and which He has forbidden.

He further says: “They keep their hands closed (withhold what is in their hands).”

Mujahid interprets the phrase to mean that hypocrites withhold their hands from spending for the sake of Allāh, whereas Qatāda interprets it to mean that they withhold their hands from doing any good deeds.

Thus, Mujahid alludes to benefits accruing from possessions, while Qatāda refers to spending wealth and making any other material sacrifice.

The phrase ‘closing of hands’ stands for grip, hold, as in the verse, “And do not keep your hand chained to your neck, nor spread it out completely,”⁵⁵ and elsewhere, “The Jews said, Allāh’s hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered, and they are cursed for saying so. Nay, but both His hands are spread out; He expends as He wills.”⁵⁶ This is a customarily acknowledged fact, self-evident, or else a well-known metaphor.

As against the phrase “they keep their hands closed” (withhold what is in their hands), the believers are depicted as “paying *Zakāt*” (the compulsory alms).

The *Zakāt*, though it later became a fact of Divine Law as it came to be envisaged as the obligatory alms-giving, refers to bodily exertion and the sacrifice of wealth. The implication of bodily exertion and sacrifice of wealth obtains here as in the phrase ‘closing of hands’.

Further on, the Qur’an says: “They neglected Allāh, so He neglected them.”

To neglect Allāh is to abandon invocation of His Name. In opposition, the believers are described as those who “perform the *Salāt* (prayers).” Now, the prayer, too, is comprised of both the *mafruda* (obligatory) as well as the *tatawwu’* (voluntary) prayers. All acts of invocation of Allāh, verbally or in intent, come under the heading of prayer. Ibn Mas’ūd even said that “so long as you keep mentioning Allāh’s Name, you are in a state of prayer, though you may be in the market.” Mu’adh ibn Jabal has it: “Class-study is also a kind of prayer.”

⁵⁵ Sūrah al-’Isrā’, 17:29.

⁵⁶ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:64.

Further, the Qur'an mentions the curse – the hellfire and lasting chastisement—in the hereafter, with which the hypocrites and infidels are threatened. This is contrasted by Allāh's promise of Paradise, pleasure, and mercy for the believers. Numerous secret meanings can be found, meanwhile, in the very arrangement of Qur'anic phrases and the words they are composed of. However, this is not the place to discuss them. This is all preliminary to what follows.

It has been said that the part: “and they will suffer an unending punishment” alludes to mental ailments such as sorrow, tribulations, harshness, darkness of the heart, and ignorance. These ailments will be experienced by the hypocrites in both this world and the hereafter. What other recompense could there be for disbelief and disobedience besides afflictions in this world and the next, known only to Allāh? This is why you will find that most hypocrites and infidels seek worldly pleasures, through various distractions such as consuming intoxicants, beholding amusing pictures, lending an ear to music. These distractions rob them of their reason and distract their hearts.

The believers, on the other hand, are those “on whom Allāh will have mercy.” Allāh will implant mercy in their hearts so that they will find and relish the sweetness of faith. He will open their hearts to Islam, and give them indescribable joy over faith, useful knowledge, and deeds of goodness.

Towards the conclusion of the verse concerning the hypocrites, Allāh says: “Like those before you, who were stronger than you in might and more affluent in wealth and children.”

There are divergent opinions about the sense of the word “like” in this clause. While some take it to mean “You are like those before you,” others construe it as “You acted like those before you.”

In either case, the comparison is to the actions of the predecessors, but it is also possible that the comparison is to their punishments.⁵⁷

Such is also the Qur'anic comparison between believers and unbelievers in the words “they obey Allāh and His Messenger,” for

⁵⁷ Here, the author delved into the grammatical structure of the phrase, “Like those before you...” mentioning the various positions taken and offered by various Arab grammarians—the summary of which he had already provided.

obedience to Allāh and His Messenger is incompatible with imitation of those before you.

Although the phrase “who were stronger than *you* in might” and the phrase “so do *you* enjoy your lot” use the second person pronoun.

If the hypocrites are those being addressed, such an address is for the purposes of *stress* and *attention*, and it is effected by a sudden shift from third to second person pronoun, as it is in the verses: “*the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, (*) Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. (*) You (alone) we worship.*”

So, there is a shift in the pronoun present in the phrase, “Such are *they* whose works have failed” from the second to the third person.

Like the phrase:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِّ وَجْرَيْنَ لِيَهُم بَرِّيحٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا﴾

Until when *you* are in the ships, and they sail with *them* with a favorable wind, and *they* are glad therein.⁵⁸

So also in the phrase:

﴿وَكْرَهَ إِلَيْكُمْ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشٰدُونَ﴾

And He has made disbelief, rebelliousness, and disobedience (to Allāh and His Messenger) detestable to *you*. *Those* are the ones rightly guided.⁵⁹

So, the phrase “Such are they whose works have failed,” is evident that it refers to those people who seek pleasure and plunge into it, just as in the continuation, it says, “Has there not come to *them* the report of those who were before *them*.”

However, if the entire Muslim community is addressed here, the emphasis falls upon the latter-mentioned ones.

In his commentary on the Qur’an, ‘Abdur-Razzaq, on the authority of Ma’mar reported that al-Hasan said the phrase “they enjoyed their lot—they enjoyed their share in this life” meant “the enjoyment in their faith.”

⁵⁸ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:22.

⁵⁹ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:7.

This is reported from Abū Hurairah. Ibn ‘Abbās, however, has it: In their share of the hereafter, but in this world. Others construe (enjoyment of lot, or share as enjoying) their share of this world.

Lexicographers have taken the word *khalaq* (share) to mean “portion,” “lot,” i.e., what has been created for man’s benefit or designated for him; as one says: A portion is what is apportioned for man and a lot is what is allotted to him—meaning what is determined for him. On the other hand, the same meaning of portion emerges from the phrase:

﴿وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْأَخْرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ﴾

Shall have no *share* in the Hereafter,⁶⁰

And on the other hand, from the tradition,

إِنَّمَا يَلْبَسُ الْحَرِيرَ مَنْ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُ

The silk is worn by one who will have no *share* (in the Hereafter).⁶¹

The verse “who were stronger than you in might, and more affluent in wealth and children” presents in general what the *ulamā* have unanimously stated, viz., the might they possessed might have enabled them to strive for this world and the next. The same is true of their wealth and children. Thus came their share of might, wealth, and children, with which they sought pleasure in this world. The very acts they performed with this might and wealth constituted their faith. Had they intended Allāh’s pleasure and the benefits of the eternal abode with their acts, they would have indeed been duly recompensed in the hereafter; enjoying them meant their worldly fate. Thus, one who acts but for the sake of worldly gains belongs to this category, regardless of whether his acts were acts of worship or some other kind. Further in the passage we have: “So do you enjoy your lot, as those before you enjoyed their lot. You have plunged as *they* plunged.”

⁶⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:105, 200.

⁶¹ Al-Bukhārī (6081), Muslim (2069) and others. The part “in the world to come” is present in other narrations of Bukhārī and Muslim as well, except that the demonstrative pronoun “this” is used in the place of “silk.”

Now, the pronoun *they* may be construed in two ways: either—and this is better—as modifying the verbal noun, i.e., as the *plunge* which *they* took, in which case the antecedent pronoun may be omitted, as for instance elsewhere in the Qur'an: "That which Our handiwork have created?"⁶² Such use is frequent in the language. Or it is a modifier of the agent, e.g., a faction, a class, or a generation who plunged, just as if it were said: like those who plunged.

The Qur'an draws an analogy between 'seeking enjoyment in one's share' and the "plunge." It is because the corruption of the religion occurs either by having false belief and thus proclaiming it or by acting contrary to the true belief. Innovations and the like come under the former; sinfulness in deeds and the like come under the latter. The first is the sphere of doubts, and the second is that of lust. For this reason, the *Salaf* used to say:

One must be wary of two kinds of people: those who are prey to their fancies and those who are blinded by their worldliness.

They also used to say:

Beware of the temptation of an immoral scholar and an ignorant worshipper; for it can further pervert those already corrupt.

This is similar to the phrase in which two groups are characterized as erring, one despite the knowledge and the other in the absence thereof. Someone⁶³ once characterized Ahmad ibn Hanbal as: "May Allāh have mercy upon him; nobody was as indifferent as to the world as he was, and nobody is as much like the early saints as he: Innovations—he rejected them; the world—he renounced it."

The Qur'an describes the leaders of the Allāh-fearing ones as:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا

⁶² Sūrah Yā' Sin, 36:71.

⁶³ The statement is reported to have been said by Abū 'Umayr Falastīnī. [*Iqtadhā as-Sināt al-Mustaqīm*, Dāru al-Āsimah's edition (1/120)]

﴿يُوقِنُونَ﴾

And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our command, when they were patient and used to believe in certainty in Our signs.⁶⁴

Thus, through patience, lust is renounced, and through certainty, doubts are dispelled. The same import lies in this verse:

﴿وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ﴾

And (they) exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to patience.⁶⁵

Bearing on the same subject, there is also a *mursal*⁶⁶ tradition in which the Prophet ﷺ is quoted as saying, “Verily Allāh prefers him who uses insight and discernment when doubts appear, and him who possesses perfect reasoning when lust overwhelms.”⁶⁷

Thus, the Qur’anic phrase, “so do you enjoy your lot” is an allusion to those who allow themselves to be carried away by lust, as is the case with the disobedient, while the phrase, “You have plunged as they plunged” alludes to the act of following one’s doubts, and this is the cancer of the innovators and people who are given to fancies and argumentation. Most often, the two vices converge. Rarely, if at all, will you find one whose deeds were not corrupt even though his faith was. The verse indicates that people of yore sought pleasure and immersed themselves in it, while these people did the same.

Further, “so do you enjoy your lot” and “you have plunged” are statements of these acts having been performed in the past. This is meant as a reproach to anybody acting this way down to the Resurrection Day,

⁶⁴ Sūrah as-Sajda, 32:24.

⁶⁵ Sūrah al-‘Asr, 103:3.

⁶⁶ A *Mursal* tradition is one reported by a *Tābi‘ī*—someone who lived at a period immediately after the Prophet ﷺ; and could only report hadith from the companions or a *Tābi‘ī* like him—lifted directly to the Prophet ﷺ, without mentioning who he reported the tradition from.

⁶⁷ I found it as a *Mawsūl* tradition—one reported from the Prophet ﷺ without breakage, though also weak. *Musnad Shihāb al-Qada‘ī* (1080).

as are the other statements concerning the acts and characteristics of the infidels and hypocrites at the time of the Prophet's mission.

But it may be construed as a reference of a constant and continuous import; for though the pronoun in "so do you enjoy your lot" and 'you have plunged' is a second person pronoun, it nevertheless resembles the imperative employed elsewhere in the Qur'anic phrases: "serve!", "wash!", "kneel and prostrate!", and "believe!", whereby those addressed include not only the generation of the Prophet ﷺ but also all people down to the Resurrection Day; such is the nature of Allāh's Speech, and the Messenger is merely enunciating His Word.

And this is the opinion of the vast majority of scholars, although some of the scholars of the *Usul al-Fiqh* (Fundamentals of Jurisprudence) maintained that the second person pronoun "you" in those cases refers strictly to the generation of the Prophet ﷺ. And that the rest of those present were included, either because this is evident from the principle of uniformity in the application of judgment, as if the Prophet ﷺ were addressing one of his community, or because we know it from the Sunnah, Consensus, or Analogy. Thus, anyone who sought enjoyment and plunged into it inevitably became the addressee of the Divine Words "so do you enjoy your lot" and "you have plunged," however, the former is the more plausible of the two views.

This is exactly what we intend here by this verse, viz., that, as the Qur'an has it, in the Muslim community there are people who sought pleasure in their share and have plunged therein, just as the people before them did, and are on that account censured and threatened by Allāh.

Further, Allāh exhorts them to learn a lesson from those who lived before them. Thus, He says: "Has there not come to them the report of those who were before them—the people of Nūḥ, 'Ad, and Thamūd."

As we have mentioned earlier, in contradistinction to the believer, whose characteristic is to be obedient to Allāh and His Messenger, these pleasure-seekers are described as resembling the past generations. They are reproached. In the next verse, Allāh instructs His Prophet ﷺ to fight against infidels and hypocrites, indicating the struggle against these pleasure-seekers and pleasure-plungers as well.

Thus, the Qur'an indicates that some Muslims imitate past generations in worldly and spiritual matters. The reproach directed to them is also reaffirmed in the Prophet's Sunnah, and the verse we are elucidating was also interpreted in this manner by the Companions ﷺ.

Evidence from the Sunnah on the Prohibition of Following the Disbelievers

ABŪ HURAIRAH NARRATES that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Assuredly you will act as did the people before you: measure for measure, span by span, and fathom by fathom, so much so that if one of the latter were to enter a lizard's burrow, you would do likewise." ("You may, if you care," said Abū Hurairah, "recite here the verse *Like those before you, who were stronger than you in might, etc.*") The people then asked, "O Messenger of Allāh, like what the Persians, Byzantines, and the People of the Book did?" "Who else?" replied the Prophet ﷺ.⁶⁸

Concerning this verse, Ibn 'Abbās commented, "How much tonight resembles the last! These Children of Israel, we so much resemble them!"

Ibn Mas'ūd reports, "Both in your way and in your manner", said the Prophet, "you resemble the Children of Israel more than any other people. You follow their act every bit. But I am not sure. Are you worshipping the Calf?"

Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamman reports, "The hypocrites found in your midst today are worse than those in the Messenger's age."

"And how is that?" we asked.

He said, "Well, those—they used to conceal their hypocrisy, while these—they proclaim it."⁶⁹

The Sunnah states cases where the 'people before' were imitated in matters temporal, blames them and prohibited such imitation, so also in spiritual matters.

⁶⁸ The authentic version of this hadith is in Bukhārī (3456, 7320) and Muslim (2669) as mentioned earlier. This text, however, has some weak annexations.

⁶⁹ Authentic, Ibn Abī Shaibay in *al-Mūsānnaḥ* (37393), al-Bazār in *al-Musnad* (287), and Ibn Battah in *al-Ībānah al-Kubrāh* (911).

Regarding the former, which is seeking pleasure in one's lot, both collections of *Ṣaḥīḥ* narrate on the authority of 'Amr ibn 'Auf that:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعَثَ أَبَا عُبَيْدَةَ بْنَ الْجَرَّاحِ إِلَى الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَأْتِي بِجَزْيَتِهِمَا، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هُوَ صَاحِبُ أَهْلِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ، وَأَمَرَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعَلَاءَ بْنَ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ، فَقَدِمَ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بِمَالٍ مِنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ، فَسَمِعَتْ الْأَنْصَارُ بِقُدُومِ أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ، فَوَافَتْ صَلَاةَ الصُّبْحِ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَمَا صَلَّى بِهِمُ الْفَجْرَ انْصَرَفَ، فَتَعَرَّضُوا لَهُ، فَتَبَسَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ رَأَوْهُمْ، وَقَالَ: "أَظُنُّكُمْ قَدْ سَمِعْتُمْ أَنَّ أَبَا عُبَيْدَةَ قَدْ جَاءَ بِشَيْءٍ؟"، قَالُوا: أَجَلْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: "فَأَبْشِرُوا وَأَمَلُوا مَا يَسُرُّكُمْ، فَوَ اللَّهُ لَا الْفَقْرَ أَخَشَى عَلَيْكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ أَخَشَى عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُبْسَطَ عَلَيْكُمُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا بُسِطَتْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، فَتَنَافَسُوهَا كَمَا تَنَافَسُوهَا وَتُهْلِكُكُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكَتُهُمْ".

The Prophet ﷺ sent Abū 'Ubaida ibn al-Jarrah to Bahrain to collect the *Jizya* (poll tax). The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had made a peaceful reconciliation with the people of Bahrain and appointed al-'Ala' ibn al-Hadrami as their governor. When Abū 'Ubaida came from Bahrain with the money, the *Anṣār* heard of Abū 'Ubaida's arrival which coincided with the time of the morning prayer with the Prophet. When Messenger of Allāh ﷺ led them in the morning prayer and finished, the *Anṣār* approached him, and he looked at them and smiled on seeing them and said, "I feel that you have heard that Abū 'Ubaida has brought something?" They said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allāh." He said, "Rejoice and hope for what will please you! By Allāh, I am not afraid of your poverty but I am afraid that you will lead a life of luxury as past nations did, whereupon you will compete with each other for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them."⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Al-Bukhārī (3158, 4015, 6425) and Muslim (2961).

The Prophet ﷺ stated that he did not fear the trials of poverty for his nation, but he did fear the unfolding of worldly riches, the rivalry it generates, and the ruin it causes. This is the same as seeking pleasure in one's lot, mentioned in the verse.

Both Bukhārī and Muslim have it on the authority of 'Uqba ibn 'Amir that:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَرَجَ يَوْمًا، فَصَلَّى عَلَى أَهْلِ أُحُدٍ صَلَاتَهُ عَلَى الْمَيِّتِ، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ إِلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، فَقَالَ: "إِنِّي فَرَطٌ لَكُمْ، وَأَنَا شَهِيدٌ عَلَيْكُمْ، وَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ لَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى حَوْضِي الْآنَ، وَإِنِّي أُعْطِيتُ مَفَاتِيحَ خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ - أَوْ مَفَاتِيحَ الْأَرْضِ - وَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَشْرِكُوا بَعْدِي، وَلَكِنْ أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنَافَسُوا فِيهَا"

One day the Prophet went out and offered the funeral prayers of the martyrs of the battle of Uhud and then went up the pulpit and said, "I will pave the way for you as your predecessor and will be a witness on you. By Allāh! I see my Pond (*Kauthar*) just now and I have been given the keys of all the treasures of the earth (or the keys of the earth). By Allāh! I am not afraid that you will worship others along with Allāh after my death, but I am afraid that you will fight with one another for the worldly things."⁷¹

Another version continues, "But I am afraid that you will vie with one another and fight and perish like those before you did." 'Uqba said, "It was the last time I saw the messenger of Allāh ﷺ on the pulpit."

And Muslim has it on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amar that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"إِذَا فُتِحَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ (خَزَائِنُ) فَارِسَ وَالرُّومَ، أَيُّ قَوْمٍ أَنْتُمْ؟" قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ: "نَقُولُ كَمَا أَمَرَنَا اللَّهُ،" قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَوْ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ، تَنَافَسُونَ، ثُمَّ تَتَحَاسَدُونَ، ثُمَّ تَتَدَابِرُونَ، ثُمَّ تَتَبَاغِضُونَ، أَوْ نَحْوَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ تَنْطَلِقُونَ فِي مَسَاكِينِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ، فَتَجْعَلُونَ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى رِقَابِ بَعْضٍ."

⁷¹ Al-Bukhārī (1344, 3596, 4085, 6426, 6590) and Muslim (2296).

“How would you be, O people, when Persia and Rome would be conquered for you?” ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn ‘Auf said, “We would say as Allāh has commanded us and we would express our gratitude to Allāh.” Thereupon Allāh’s Messenger said, “Nothing else besides it? You would (in fact) compete with one another, then you would feel jealous, then your relations would be estranged and then you will bear enmity against one another, or something to the same effect. Then you would go to the poor emigrants and would make some masters of the others.”⁷²

It is reported in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Sa’īd al-Khudri, also, that:

"إِنِّي مِمَّا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِي، مَا يُفْتَحُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ زَهْرَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتِهَا. فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَوْيَأْتِي الْخَيْرُ بِالشَّرِّ؟" فَسَكَتَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: "مَا شَأْنُكَ؟ تُكَلِّمُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَا يَكَلِّمُكَ؟ فَرَأَيْنَا أَنَّهُ يُنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِ؟ قَالَ: "فَمَسَحَ عَنْهُ الرُّحَصَاءَ،" فَقَالَ: "أَيُّ السَّائِلِ؟" وَكَأَنَّهُ حَمَدَهُ، فَقَالَ: "إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِي الْخَيْرُ بِالشَّرِّ، وَإِنَّ مِمَّا يُنْبِتُ الرَّبِيعُ يَقْتُلُ أَوْ يُلِيمُ، إِلَّا آكَلَةَ الْخَضِرَاءَ، أَكَلْتُ حَتَّى إِذَا امْتَدَّتْ حَاصِرَتَاهَا اسْتَقْبَلَتْ عَيْنَ الشَّمْسِ، فَتَلَطَّتْ وَبَالَتْ، وَرَتَعَتْ، وَإِنَّ هَذَا الْمَالَ خَضِرَةٌ حُلْوَةٌ، فَنِعْمَ صَاحِبُ الْمُسْلِمِ مَا أَعْطَى مِنْهُ الْمِسْكِينَ وَالْيَتِيمَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ" - أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - "وَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْخُذْهُ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ، كَالَّذِي يَأْكُلُ وَلَا يَشْبَعُ، وَيَكُونُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."

Once the Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ sat on a pulpit and we sat around him. Then he said, “The thing I am afraid of most for your sake (concerning what will befall you after me) is the pleasures and splendors of the world and its beauties which will be disclosed to you.” Somebody asked, “O Messenger of Allāh, can the good bring forth evil?” The Prophet remained silent for a while. It was said to

⁷² Muslim (2962).

that person, “What is the matter with you? You are talking to the Prophet while he is not talking to you?”

Then we noticed that a revelation was being revealed unto him. Then the Messenger of Allāh wiped off his sweat and said, “Where is the man who asked the question?” It seemed as if the Prophet liked his question. Then he said, “Good never brings forth evil.” (In another version he asks, “Where is the man who asked the question whether it is good?” These words he repeated three times.) What is good can bring only goodness, but of the plants that spring rain causes to grow are some that kill with tumor or nearly kill all, but the animal that feeds on vegetation. It eats and when its flanks are distended it faces the sun, then when it has dunged and urinated it returns and eats. This wealth is green and sweet, and how excellent a helper it is for the Muslim who gives from it to the needy, orphans and wayfarers (or as the Prophet said), but he who usurps it is like one who eats without being satiated, and it will be a witness against him on the Resurrection Day.”⁷³

Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority Abū Sa’īd, also, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا، فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ، فَاتَّقُوا
الدُّنْيَا وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ فِتْنَةٍ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَتْ فِي النِّسَاءِ.

Verily the world is sweet and lush green, and Allāh has appointed you His vicegerent in it in order to see how you will act thereof. So, beware of the world and avoid the allurements of women; verily, the first trial for the Children of Israel was caused by women.⁷⁴

In this tradition, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ warned against the trials caused by women, which were the first cause of discord among the Children of Israel.

This parallels the tradition quoted by Mu’awiya: “The Children

⁷³ Al-Bukhārī (1465, 2842, 6426) and Muslim (1052).

⁷⁴ Muslim (2742).

of Israel perished,' said the Prophet, 'when their women adopted this,'⁷⁵ meaning adopted long sporting hair."

Indeed, it is the women who are responsible for much of the imitation of the people of the Book, either in the rites of their festivals or some other customs.

As for "you have plunged as they plunged," ath-Thauri through his chain of narrators, transmits on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr who quotes the Prophet ﷺ as remarking, "Truly my people will experience exactly what the Children of Israel experienced. If one of the Israelites openly fornicated with his mother, one of my people would do the same. The Israelites broke up into seventy-two sects, but my nation will break up into seventy-three sects, all of which but one will go to hell." When asked which it was, he replied, "It is the one that is upon that which my Companions and I are upon."

Abū 'Isā at-Tirmidhī transmitted it,⁷⁶ and commented that, it is a strange tradition, but detailed, and we know it only in this form.

The breaking up of the nations reported in this tradition is popularly attributed to the authorities of Abū Hurairah, Sa'd, Mu'awiya, and 'Amr ibn 'Auf, among others. I have, however, quoted here the report of Ibn 'Amr because of the issue of the imitation it contains.

Muhammad ibn Amr reported from Abū Salamah on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

تَفَرَّقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ أَوْ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً، وَالنَّصَارَى
مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، وَتَفَتَّرْتُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً.

The Jews were split up into seventy-one or seventy-two sects and the Christians as such, but my nation will be split up into seventy-three sects.⁷⁷

It is transmitted by Abū Dawūd, Ibn Mājah, and at-Tirmidhī. He commented that it is an authentic sound tradition.

⁷⁵ Muslim (2127).

⁷⁶ Weak (2641).

⁷⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4596), at-Tirmidhī (2640, 2641), and Ibn Mājah (3991, 3992, 3993). The author mentioned two other weak narrations of the slitting up of the nations, repeating them here is not necessary.

The Differences as Informed by the Prophet

THE PROPHET ﷺ had thus foretold the splitting up of his nation into seventy-three sects, of which seventy-two are doubtlessly those who plunged as those who had plunged before them.

The discord predicted by the Prophet ﷺ is either concerning the religious matter alone or both religious and worldly matters—which may later lead to bloodshed—and may be in reference to the worldly matter only.

Furthermore, the discord mentioned in these traditions has also been forbidden in these verses:

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا ﴾

And do not be like those who split (into sects) and differed.⁷⁸

And the verse:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ﴾

Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, (O Muḥammad), are not with them in anything.⁷⁹

And this other one:

﴿ وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

Indeed, this is My Path, which is straight. So, follow it and do not follow other ways, for you will be separated from His Way. This is what He commanded you that you may become righteous.⁸⁰

This is consistent with what Muslim has reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from ‘Amir ibn Sa’id ibn Abī Waqqas who narrates from his father: “I

⁷⁸ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:105.

⁷⁹ Sūrah al-‘An‘ām, 6:159.

⁸⁰ Sūrah al-‘An‘ām, 6:153.

was once with Allāh's Messenger ﷺ in the company of a group of his Companions from al-'Aliya. As he passed the mosque of Banū Mu'awiya, he entered and prayed two *rak'as* and we joined him. He went into a long supplication to Allāh, then turned to us and said:

سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي ثَلَاثًا، فَأَعْطَانِي ثِنْتَيْنِ وَمَنْعَنِي وَاحِدَةً، سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي: أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَ أُمَّتِي
بِالسَّنَةِ فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَ أُمَّتِي بِالْغَرَقِ فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا
يَجْعَلَ بَأْسَهُمْ بِيَدِهِمْ فَمَنْعَنِيهَا.

I asked Allāh three things and He has granted me two but has withheld one. I asked Allāh not to destroy my nation by drought, and He granted me that. And I asked Him not to destroy my nation by drowning and He granted me that. And I asked Him not to let war arise among them, but He did not grant it.”⁸¹

Muslim also reported on the Thauban that Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَوَى لِي الْأَرْضَ، فَرَأَيْتُ مَشَارِقَهَا وَمَعَارِبَهَا، وَإِنَّ أُمَّتِي سَيَبْلُغُ مُلْكُهَا
مَا رُويَ لِي مِنْهَا، وَأُعْطِيْتُ الْكَزْبَيْنِ الْأَحْمَرَ وَالْأَبْيَضَ، وَإِنِّي سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي
لِأُمَّتِي أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَهَا بِسَنَةِ عَامَةٍ، وَأَنْ لَا يُسَلِّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا مِنْ سِوَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ،
فَيَسْتَبِيحُ بِيَضَّتِهِمْ، وَإِنَّ رَبِّي قَالَ: "يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنِّي إِذَا قَضَيْتُ قَضَاءً فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُرَدُّ،
وَإِنِّي أُعْطَيْتُكَ لِأُمَّتِكَ أَنْ لَا أُهْلِكَهُمْ بِسَنَةِ عَامَةٍ، وَأَنْ لَا أُسَلِّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا
مِنْ سِوَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ، يَسْتَبِيحُ بِيَضَّتِهِمْ، وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَنْ بِأَقْطَارِهَا - أَوْ قَالَ
مَنْ بَيْنَ أَقْطَارِهَا - حَتَّى يَكُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ يَهْلِكُ بَعْضًا، وَيَسِي بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا".

Allāh drew the ends of the world near one another for my sake. And I have seen its eastern and western ends. And the sovereignty of my ummah would reach those ends which have been drawn near me and I have been granted the red and the white treasure and I begged Allāh for my ummah that it should not be destroyed because

⁸¹ Muslim (2890).

of famine, nor be dominated by an enemy who is not amongst them to take their lives and destroy them root and branch. And my Lord said: “O Muhammad! Whenever I make a decision, there is none to change it. I grant you for your ummah that it would not be destroyed by famine and it would not be dominated by an enemy who would not be amongst it and would take their lives and destroy them root and branch even if all the from the different parts of the world join hands together (for this purpose), but it would be from amongst them, vis. Your ummah, that some people would kill the others or imprison the others.”⁸²

Al-Barqānī reported this tradition in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as well, but added: “But I fear for my nation deceptive leaders; and once killing is ensued upon them it shall not be withheld until the Day of Resurrection, and the Day of Resurrection will not come to pass until a community of my nation will accede to the pagans (worshipping idols). Moreover, thirty liars will appear among them, all of them claiming to be Prophets; I am the zeal of the Prophets, no Prophet will come after me. And a group of my nation shall not cease to be upon the truth; being granted support therein, and until Allāh decree (of the Last Hour) will come, whoever forsakes them will not be able to impose any harm upon them.”⁸³

This notion, preserved from the Prophet ﷺ in several ways, alludes to the fact that dissension and discord were bound to occur in Islam. He used to warn his people thereof, so that he whom Allāh wishes success may escape. Likewise, an-Nazzal ibn Sabra reports ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd as saying: “I heard a man recite a Qur’anic verse I had heard the Prophet ﷺ recited differently. So, I caught him by the hand, and off we went to the Prophet ﷺ. As soon as I mentioned the matter to the Prophet, I saw signs of displeasure come over his face. ‘Both are right,’ he said. ‘Do not contradict one another for those before you did contradict one another, and perished therefrom.’” (This is transmitted by Muslim)⁸⁴

⁸² Muslim (2889) and others.

⁸³ Authentic. Though the author ascribed this addition to al-Barqānī, Abū Dawūd reported the hadith completely—together with the addition (4252); see also, al-Imām Ahmad (22395); while at-Tirmidhī reported a part of it separately, hadith (2229), and the main report at (2176).

⁸⁴ Though the author ascribed the tradition to Muslim, it is not found in *Ṣaḥīḥ*

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited dissent in which each contender denied whatever of the truth the other possessed, for each of them was right in his recitation—the reason being that those who came before us dissented and hence perished.

It was for this reason that Hudhaifa, noting how the Syrians quibbled with the Iraqis about Qur’anic words in a fashion prohibited by the Prophet ﷺ said to ‘Uthmān, “Quickly see to the matter with this nation, so that the like of the differences that occurred to the previous nations over their Scriptures do not occur to them.”⁸⁵

Thus, we derive two valuable points: First, the prohibition of similar dissension; and second, awareness of those before us and wariness about slipping into imitating them.

Most of the sectarian dissent in Islam will be found to be of this kind, viz., one of the contenders may be right in what he asserts, fully or partly, and at the same time be wrong in denying the assertion of his rival, just as each of the two readers was right in the reading that was taught to him but wrong in denying the other man’s reading. Indeed, most ignorance is displayed in denying, rejecting, and refuting, not in affirming because human comprehension of the affirmative is less arduous than that of the negative. Therefore, Muslims are forbidden to contradict one Qur’anic verse with another because such contradiction is tantamount to believing in one verse and disbelieving in the other. If it is believed that this is a contradiction, then the two contradictory statements cannot be accepted.

A similar case is also transmitted by Muslim on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr, who stated: “One day around high noon, I called on Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ. He heard two people arguing excitedly about a certain Qur’anic verse. He ﷺ came out in a state of visible anger and said, “Those before you perished just because of their quibbling over the Scripture!”⁸⁶

Dissension, as the Qur’an has it, is of two kinds:

1- That both the contending parties are censured.

Muslim with us, but in the Bukhārī (2410, 3476, and 5062). Allāh knows best.

⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī (4987), and others.

⁸⁶ Muslim (2666) and others.

The instances of this kind are found in the following verses:

﴿... وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ﴾

But they will not cease to differ (*) except those shown mercy by your Lord.⁸⁷

In this verse, Allāh excludes the blessed people from the differences. Also, in this verse:

﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ﴾

That is because Allāh has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) in truth. And indeed, those who disputed as regards the Book are far away in opposition.⁸⁸

And here's another:

﴿وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أَلْتُمُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًّا بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

And those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) did not differ except, out of jealousy, after knowledge had come to them.⁸⁹

Furthermore, evident from this verse:

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ﴾

And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them.⁹⁰

And the verse:

⁸⁷ Sūrah Hūd, 11:118-119.

⁸⁸ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:176.

⁸⁹ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:19.

⁹⁰ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:105.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ﴾

Indeed, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious acts), you (O Muḥammad) have no concern in them in the least.⁹¹

In this portion, Allāh describes the differences that ensued among the Christians as follows:

﴿فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾

So We caused among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. And Allāh is going to inform them about what they used to do.⁹²

And He described the dissension among the Jews in the following manner:

﴿وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ﴾

And We have put enmity and hatred amongst them until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war [against you], Allāh extinguished it.⁹³

He says about them as well:

﴿فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلٌّ حِزْبٌ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ﴾

But they (men) have broken their religion among them into sects, each group rejoicing in what is with it (as its beliefs).⁹⁴

⁹¹ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:159.

⁹² Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:14.

⁹³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:64.

⁹⁴ Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23:53.

Also, when the Prophet ﷺ described the splitting up of this nation into seventy-three sects, he described it as, “all of which but one will go to hell, and which is the *Jamā* (the rightly guided group).”

In another tradition, he said, “It is the one that is upon that which I and my Companions are upon.”⁹⁵

This tradition informed us that all the sects that incorporated differences into the religion are doomed, except *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'* who never engaged in any differences.

This reproachable dissension is sometimes caused by the way people's intentions get twisted because of things like iniquity, jealousy, the desire for higher positions through corruption, etc., which are all part of human nature. For that, he likes to denounce another man's words or deeds or likes to assert his own mastery among others; or he likes to hear others approve of his lineage, behavior, land, or company, because these words of approval carry with them the promise of honor and leadership. How often is this the case with men! This is pure iniquity.

Sometimes dissension results from the contenders' ignorance of the true character of the matter in dispute, or from ignorance of the argument with which one contender seeks to guide the other, or ignorance of the other's partial truth in judgment and argument. At the same time, he may be fully cognizant of the truth of his own judgment and argument.

Types of Dissension

THERE ARE TWO kinds of dissension: one from differences and the other from contradictions.

The dissension based on diversity again shows several varieties. Thus, any two views or deeds may be entirely correct and legitimate, as seen in the various readings of the Qur'an among the Companions, whom the Prophet ﷺ finally upbraided when he said, “Both of you are right!”

⁹⁵ This tradition had been mentioned before.

Similar disagreement exist on the many varieties of *adhān*, *iqama*, *istiftah*,⁹⁶ *tashahud*, *salāt al-khauf*,⁹⁷ the *takbirs* offered in ‘īd prayers and funeral prayer, and other such prescribed acts. Even though one may be preferred to the other on occasions, they are equally commendable.

Moreover, we find that many Muslims disagree in such matters, resulting in strife among them. They may, for instance, fight against one another about how many times the statements of the *iqama* are repeated: twice, once, and so on and so forth. Such fighting is indeed forbidden. In addition, even those who do not go to this extent may often have strong preferences and aversions, which the Prophet ﷺ objected to.

Alternatively, consider the situation when two views are identical, even though they may be worded differently. Indeed, people will often differ in the wording of definitions, expressions, classifications, etc. It is sheer ignorance or iniquity that causes a man to admire one of the two views while condemning the other.

Sometimes you have different ideas, but they are not necessarily contradictory. This and that are both true, though one is different from the other. This is frequent in discord among men.

Sometimes there may be two legitimate ways. One man takes one way; another man takes another, both of which are legitimate. Again, it is ignorance or iniquity that will induce a man to denounce the other and prefer his way without sufficient reason, knowledge, or good intention.

As for the other type, the dissension resulting from contradiction, it happens when there are contradictory views either in their foundations or their ramifications in public opinion, which also holds that only one of the views could be right. Otherwise, if one claims that each party to the controversy is correct, it is a situation of dissent out of diversity, not out of contradiction.

This is a more serious case because the two rival views contradict each other. Even so, not infrequently, we find the proposition of a man’s rival to contain an element of truth or that his argument is substantially valid

⁹⁶ The opening prayer said after the first *takbir*, before reciting Sūrah al-Fatiha, in *Salah*.

⁹⁷ The prayer of fear, performed during wars.

to some extent. By rejecting the rival's view as entirely false, he rejects the partial truth his rival may have. And his rival acts likewise. I often saw scholars from *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'* having some differences on questions of predestination, Divine Attributes, the authority of the Companions,⁹⁸ etc.; or a majority of the past and latter scholars of Jurisprudence, not to mention the innovators whose case is clear enough. In the same way, I frequently saw the predominance of the same attitude among those who claim to be experts on the law as well as among mystics and factions of mystics. The phenomenon is widespread.

He whom Allāh wishes to guide and whose way He illuminates sees clearly the benefit underlying the injunction offered by the Qur'an and Sunnah against such an attitude and its likes. Sound hearts reject the wrong attitude forthwith, the more so with divine guidance. Conversely, he upon whom Allāh has not bestowed this light is deprived of seeing things from their proper perspectives.

In the category we have designated as "dissension arising from diversity," both of the two contenders are right without a doubt. However, if one commits an outrage against the other, he is liable to be censured. The Qur'an states that both parties are praised in the same manner, as long as neither of them commits an outrage upon the other. For instance, at the time of the siege of Banū an-Nadir, the Companions held different views regarding the cutting down of trees and date palms, so some of them cut while others did not. The Qur'an states:

﴿ مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لَيْسَةٍ أَوْ نَرَكْتُمْ هَا فَاقِمْ عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﴾

⁹⁸ Shaykhul Islam meant that: the individual opinions or understanding of some scholars over these issues, which they probably developed out of mistakes, misunderstandings, or poor perception, which are certainly not the opinions of *ahlu as-Sunnah* over those issues. He did not mean that there is a dissension in the methodology of *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'*. That is why Shaykhul Islam, while commenting on the hadith of the splitting of the nations, earlier in this book, said: This tradition informed that all the sects that incorporated differences into the religion are doomed, except *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'* which never engaged in any differences.

Whatever you have cut down of (their) palm trees or left standing on their trunks, it was by permission of Allāh's.⁹⁹

Or, another example:

﴿وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكَلَّمْنَا دَاوُدَ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

And (remember) Dawūd (David) and Sulaimān (Solomon), when they gave judgment in the case of the field in which the sheep of certain people has pastured at night, and We were witness to their judgments (*) And We made Sulaimān (Solomon) to understand (the case), and to each of them We gave judgment and knowledge.¹⁰⁰

The Qur'an endows understanding upon Solomon and praises both him and David for judgment and knowledge. Or take the case when the Prophet ﷺ approved of him who said his afternoon prayer at its appointed time as well as of him who postponed it until after arrival in the territory of the Bani Quraiza, after his having already asked the caller on the day of the battle with the Bani Quraiza to announce: "Let no one offer the afternoon prayer but in the territory of Bani Quraiza."¹⁰¹

As the Prophet ﷺ says:

إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أخطأَ
فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ

If a judge issues a ruling, having tried his best (to decide correctly), and his ruling is right, he will have a double reward, but if he issues a ruling, having tried his best (to decide correctly), and his ruling is wrong, he will have a single reward.¹⁰² [There are many instances of this attitude].

⁹⁹ Sūrah al-Ḥashr, 59:5.

¹⁰⁰ Sūrah al-'Anbiyā', 21:78-79.

¹⁰¹ Al-Bukhārī (946, 4119) and Muslim (1770).

¹⁰² Al-Bukhārī (7353) and Muslim (1716).

If this last point is considered a separate category, the dissension will come to have three categories.¹⁰³

- 2 - To come back to the second kind of dissent mentioned in the Qur'an. This is the case in which one party—the believers—is praised and the other, censured.

For instance, the Qur'an has it:

﴿تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلُوا﴾

Those messengers—some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allāh spoke, and He raised some of them in degree. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit [i.e., Gabriel]. If Allāh had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have fought each other.¹⁰⁴

The Qur'anic words: “But they differed, some of them believed and some disbelieved” lauds one of the parties—the Muslims—and denounces the other. So also in the verses:

﴿هَٰذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَيْبٍ فَأَلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِنْ نَارٍ يُصَبُّ مِنْ فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ ﴿١١﴾ يُصْهَرُ بِهِ ۗ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَهُمْ مَقْتَعُونَ مِنْ حديدٍ ﴿٢١﴾ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا﴾

¹⁰³ The author meant that if the difference, be it out of diversity or contradiction, does not bring about disparity; the both parties are rather praised and that could be categorized as the third kind of difference.

¹⁰⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:253.

وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ﴿٢٣﴾

These are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water (*) By which is melted that within their bellies and (their) skins (*) And for (striking) them are maces of iron (*) Every time they want to get out of it (i.e., Hellfire) from anguish, they will be returned to it, and (it will be said), “Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire! (*) Indeed, Allāh will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow.¹⁰⁵

It corroborates the meaning inferred from these verses and what is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Abū Dhār رضي الله عنه that the verses were revealed concerning the two parties that fought against each other at the battle of Badr: ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib, Hamza, and Abīdah on the Muslims’ side, and ‘Utbah, Shaibah, and al-Walīd on the side of the Quraysh.

Much of the Muslim community’s dissension leading to sectarianism is of the first kind. It also leads to bloodshed, violation of property, enmity, and hatred when one party refuses to acknowledge the other’s right and just claim. It rather increases its claims by adding unjustifiable elements, as does the other party.

It is for this reason, the Qur’an considers insolence to be the source of dissension.

Allāh says:

﴿وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them—out of jealous animosity among themselves.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:19-23.

¹⁰⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:213.

Insolence means exceeding the proper boundaries. It is mentioned multiple times in the Qur'an so that the Muslim community may benefit from it.

Close to this is the tradition cited in the two collections of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Abū Hurairah, who reports the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

ذُرُونِي مَا تَرَكَتُكُمْ، إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ،
فَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.

Leave me as I leave you, for the people who were before you were ruined because of their questions and their differences over their prophets. So, if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can.¹⁰⁷

The Prophet ﷺ commanded his people to refrain from doing anything they were not commanded to do, citing the perdition of earlier nations as a result of their numerous queries, dissent, and insubordination to their prophets as his justification. This is referenced in the Qur'an in reference to the Children of Israel, who challenged Moses in topics such as warfare, or their asking excessive queries over the description of the sacrificial cow.

The first disagreement, then, is the opposition of some men against others, despite the fact that both phenomena are inseparable. Or, it is the disagreement with the prophets that reflects the disagreement among people. This is feasible.

Occasionally, the entire disagreement pertains to a Qur'anic passage, as in the hadith of Ibn Mas'ūd cited earlier, and occasionally to its interpretation, as in the case of the tradition of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr, also cited previously. The tradition narrated by 'Amr ibn Shu'aib also indicates the same insofar as it refers to this matter.

In his *Musnad*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal reports from 'Amr ibn Shu'aib on the authority of his father, who reported from his grandfather:

¹⁰⁷ Al-Bukhārī (7288) and Muslim (1337).

أَنَّ نَفَرًا كَانُوا جُلُوسًا بَبَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: "أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟" وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: "أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟" فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَخَرَجَ كَأَمَّا فُقَيْءٍ فِي وَجْهِهِ حَبُّ الرُّمَّانِ، فَقَالَ: "بِهَذَا أُمِرْتُمْ؟ أَوْ بِهَذَا بُعِثْتُمْ؟ أَنْ تَضْرِبُوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ بَعْضَهُ بِبَعْضٍ؟ إِنَّمَا صَلَّتِ الْأُمَمُ قَبْلَكُمْ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا، إِنَّكُمْ لَسْتُمْ مِمَّا هَاهُنَا فِي شَيْءٍ، انظُرُوا الَّذِي أُمِرْتُمْ بِهِ، فَاعْمَلُوا بِهِ، وَالَّذِي نُهِيتُمْ عَنْهُ، فَانْتَهُوا."

A group of men were sitting at the Prophet's door. Someone said, "Has not Allāh said such and such?" Another man said, "Has not Allāh said such and such?" Allāh's Messenger heard that and came out. His face looked as if a pomegranate seed had been burst open. He then said, "Is this what you were commanded to do, or was it for this purpose that I was sent to you, that you may criticize one Qur'anic passage with another? Indeed, it was just because of such a practice that those nations before you went astray. You have nothing to do with that. Observe what I have enjoined, and act accordingly, and stop doing what I have forbidden you."¹⁰⁸

Ahmad wrote this hadith to al-Mutawakkil¹⁰⁹ and he referenced it at the debate between him and the people, saying, "Criticizing a part of the Book of Allāh with another has been forbidden for us," for he knew the great perversion such practice could cause.

At-Tirmidhī reported a similar hadith on the authority of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and commented thus: The hadith is *Hasan Gharib* (a sound but strange hadith) and there are other narrations on the subject on the authority of 'Umar, 'Ā'ishah, and Anas.

This is an extensive subject, and we do not intend to pursue it here. All we aim at is to warn the Muslim community against the danger

¹⁰⁸ Authentic, Ahmad (7846). The author mentioned two other versions of this hadith, reported by Imām Ahmad on the authority of 'Amr as well, in order to further establish its authenticity, repeating them here is, however, is not necessary.

¹⁰⁹ Imām Ahmad wrote this hadith to al-Mutawakkil, the Caliph, as the evidence that prohibits criticizing the Book of Allāh that was the practice of the innovators at the time.

implicit in conforming to people who preceded them in time because as the tradition puts it, “The prime reason for man’s perdition is indeed his disputation concerning predestination.” The said disputation is also responsible for giving rise to the Zoroastrian creed (proponent of the two bases of light and darkness) as well as the creed of the Sabians and others who assert their faith in the non-creation of the universe, and also to the tenets of Muslim heretics and schismatics. The majority of the sects that had worked, in the past, towards distorting various *Shari’a* had this creed as their basis as well.

The people disputed the reason for Allāh acting as He does. They wanted to assert something that would enable them to find the reason for His acting in accord with His design about creatures. Thereby, they fell into extreme error either by asserting that the Divine Act is still attached to Allāh or by asserting that the Creator is dual, or else that He enacts part of it while part of it is due to the creatures; or else that His act does not enjoin the opposite and He does not preordain the opposite of what He enjoins.

And that is when people confronted the Divine Act and the Divine Command, such that one of the factions assumed predestination but refuted the Divine Command, while the other did the exact opposite, holding in common that concord between them is impossible. Thus, each of them rejected as false what the other held to be true.

This mostly happens when a dispute arises about something, as little as it may be, prior to wise judgment with all its ramifications.

That is why the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ says:

إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ يُكَذِّبُ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا، بَلْ يُصَدِّقُ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا، فَمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْهُ، فَأَعْمَلُوا بِهِ، وَمَا جَهِلْتُمْ مِنْهُ، فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِهِ.

Verily the Qur’ān is not revealed that a part of it refutes another, rather its parts confirm one another, so, act according to as much of it as you know, but what you are ignorant of refer it to him who knows.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Authentic, Ahmad (2702).

Our sole purpose in citing these traditions is none other than to show that such traditions and instances from the Sunnah confirm the Qur'anic phrase, "You have plunged as they plunged."

And from those traditions, az-Zuhri transmits on the authority of Abū Wāqid al-Laithi who said:

We went out in the company of Allāh's Messenger to the battle of Hunain. He passed a tree that the polytheists called *dhat-anwat* upon which they hung their weapons. They (the companions) said: "O Messenger of Allāh, make a *dhat anwat* for us as they have a *dhat anwat*." The Messenger of Allāh replied, "*Subhān Allāh!* This is like what Moses's people said: Make for us a god like their gods. By the One in whose Hand is my soul! You shall follow the ways of those who were before you."¹¹¹

It is reported by Mālik,¹¹² an-Nasā'ī and at-Tirmidhī who commented thus: This hadith is sound, and authentic. Also, the hadith I cited earlier from *Ṣaḥīhayn*, on behalf of Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudri رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، حَذْوَ الْقُدَّةِ بِالْقُدَّةِ، حَتَّى لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ صَبَّ
لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ. قَالُوا: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى؟" قَالَ: "فَمَنْ؟".

You surely will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch) so much so that even if they entered a hole of a mastigure (sand lizard), you would follow them. We said: "O Messenger of Allāh, (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He replied: "Whom else?"¹¹³

¹¹¹ Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (21880), Ahmad (21897, 21900), an-Nasā'ī, in *al-Kubrāh* and others. However, the version cited here by the author is reported by at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Kubrāh* (3291).

¹¹² The hadith is not found in the *al-Muwatta* of Imām Malik, however, some of the scholars who recorded the hadith reported it through his chain; like at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Kubrāh* (3291) and al-Marwazi in *as-Sunnah* (39). Imām Malik transmitted the hadith from az-Zuhuri, perhaps, the author meant that. Allāh knows best.

¹¹³ Bukhārī (3456, 7320) and Muslim (2669), but not with this text. This text is

And what Al-Bukhārī reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh said:

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ أُمَّتِي بِأَخْذِ الْقُرُونِ قَبْلَهَا، شِبْرًا بِشِبْرٍ وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ،
فَقِيلَ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، كَفَارِسَ وَالرُّومَ؟" فَقَالَ: "وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا أَوْلِيكَ."

The Hour will not be established until my nation copy the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span by span, and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch). It was asked: "O Messenger of Allāh, do you mean by those (nations) the Persians and the Byzantines?" The Prophet replied: "Who can it be other than they?"¹¹⁴

All of this might be construed as an adumbration of what was to happen as well as a censure for those who would follow suit. There are other Traditions in which the Prophet predicted what people would do regarding reprehensible and forbidden acts on the eve of Judgment Day.

Imitation of the Jews, Christians, Persians, and Byzantines by Muslims is without a doubt what Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ reproach; this is exactly what we intend to emphasize.

The question is: in as much as the Qur'an and Sunnah have already foreshadowed the inevitable emergence of this attitude, what, then, would be gained by prohibiting it? It just cannot be posited. Both the Qur'an and the Sunnah assert that a group of men in the Muslim community will continue to adhere to the truth with which Muhammad ﷺ was entrusted until the Day of Resurrection and that they will not agree on error. From this perspective, the prohibition would be found with the explicit purpose of increasing this Allāh-assisted community, as well as strengthening and augmenting its faith. Pray that Allāh, who hears and answers prayers, accepts us into this group.

And even if it were supposed that not a single human would give up this reprehensible imitation, then knowledge of it would be recognition of evil and the belief that it is so; and though it may not be

reported by Imām Ahmad (17135), Ibn Abī Shaybah (37378) and others.

¹¹⁴ Al-Bukhārī (7319).

acted upon, the very knowledge of and belief in what is detestable to Allāh is at any rate a virtue—nay, the benefit accruing from knowledge and belief is greater than that accruing from mere action not coupled with knowledge. For when a man recognizes what is reputable and rejects what is disreputable, this is preferable to his being with a dead heart – neither recognizing the reputable nor rejecting the disreputable.

Don't you see what the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.

Whosoever of you sees an evil actions, let him change it with his hand, and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue, and if he is not able to dos, then with his heart, and that is the weakest of *iman*. (Muslim transmitted it)¹¹⁵

In another version:

وَلَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ حَبَّةُ خَرْدَلٍ

And beyond that¹¹⁶ there is no grain of faith.¹¹⁷

A heart's rejection of something indeed means it believes it is disreputable and thus detesting it.

If the heart can achieve this, it can be said that it possesses faith, however, if the cognizance of what is reputable and rejection of what is not is lost to the heart, then faith is as good as gone from it.

Similarly, a man can ask for forgiveness for a sin even if he continues to do it, or he can perform good deeds that wipe out all or part of the sin. Once he knows it to be detestable, it may diminish, and his ardor for it may weaken.

Furthermore, if we suppose that people neither abandon evil nor recognize it as such, this still should not be a deterrent against the attempt

¹¹⁵ Muslim (49).

¹¹⁶ Beyond correcting disreputable something with the heart.

¹¹⁷ Muslim (50).

to convey the Prophetic message and the exposition of knowledge. Rather, this does not even invalidate the necessity of disseminating the divine message or commanding good and forbidding evil, according to one of the two reports transmitted from Ahmad and also in consonance with the opinion of many a scholar. For an exhaustive presentation, however, this is not the place. We, however, owe Allāh praise for His message through the Prophet ﷺ for it is enough that the Prophet ﷺ informed us that, “a group of nations will never cease to be on the truth until the decree of Allāh will come.”¹¹⁸

Our discussion is not just confined to this particular case of disreputable behavior; it refers to any disreputable act that the Prophet foretold would happen.

Returning to Qur’anic Evidence on the Prohibition of Emulating Disbelievers

ANOTHER QUR’ANIC PASSAGE that warns against imitating the unbelievers is as follows:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا
وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

O you who believe, do not say (to the Prophet): *Ra’ina* (watch over us) but say *Unzurna* (make us understand) and hear. And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.¹¹⁹

Qatāda and some others stated, “The Jews would use the word *ra’ina* by way of derision. Consequently, Allāh disapproved of similar use of the expression for the believers.” He also said, “The Jews would say to the Prophet scoffing, ‘*Ra’ina sam’aka*—lend us an ear!’ for among them it was considered disgraceful.”

Ahmad quotes ‘Atiyah al-’Afi as saying, “Some Jews used to come saying, ‘*Ra’ina sam’aka!*’ until some Muslims also began to say the same.”

¹¹⁸ The hadith had been cited earlier.

¹¹⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:104.

Allāh displeased that Muslims should repeat what the Jews said.›

‘Ata explained, “The expression was in vogue among the *Anṣār* in pre-Islamic times.” Abū’l-’Aliya holds, “The pagans used to employ the expression ‘*Ra’ini sam’aka!*’ when addressing one another, the Muslims were then forbidden to do so.” Ad-Dahhak stated the same thing.

All of this demonstrates unequivocally that Muslims are not permitted to use this expression. Why? Because the Jews employed it. Although while it was considered disgraceful among Jews, whereas no such negative connotation was implicit in Muslim use of the expression, it had to be prohibited since it still represented imitation of unbelievers, and following their path could only lead to their ends.

Allāh says in the Qur’an:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ﴾

Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allāh; then He will inform them about what they used to do.¹²⁰

There is no doubt that the unbelievers are divided into sects.

He says also:

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ﴾

And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after clear proofs had come to them.¹²¹

﴿وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ﴾

Nor did those who were given the Scripture become divided until after there had come to them clear evidence.¹²²

﴿وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِيكَ أَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمُ مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا﴾

¹²⁰ Sūrah al-’An‘ām, 6:159.

¹²¹ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:105.

¹²² Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98:4.

﴿مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

And from those who say, “We are Christians,” We took their covenant; but they forgot a portion of that of which they were reminded. So, We caused among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Judgment.¹²³

Concerning the Jews, He says:

﴿وَلِيُزِيدَكُمْ كَيْدًا مِنْهُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَالْقِيَامَةَ بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. And We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Judgment.¹²⁴

From Allāh’s words to the Prophet ﷺ, “You are not [associated] with them in anything”, it follows that he should be free from involvement with them in every respect. A man who follows another, even partially, is still involved with him to that extent. There are such expressions as “I am of this type” or “this is my type,” meaning “I and he or we belong to the same category” because two persons can only be classified together generically. The Qur’anic verse further confirms this, “You are of one another,”¹²⁵ as well as the Prophet’s words addressed to ‘Alī, “You are of me, and I am of you.”¹²⁶

Thus, the expression, “I am not with him in anything,” means “I am not a partner with him in the matter; I am rather free from involvement in all his affairs.”

If Allāh exculpated His Messenger ﷺ from imitating the unbelievers generally, then he who truly follows the Prophet ﷺ is, in effect, as entirely free from imitating them as the Prophet himself was. He who is in accord with them is opposed to the Prophet to the extent he is in accord with them. For whenever you imitate one of the two persons who differ from each other in every aspect of their religions, you inevitably

¹²³ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:14.

¹²⁴ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:64.

¹²⁵ Sūrah ‘Alī ‘Imrān, 3:195; or Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:25.

¹²⁶ Al-Bukhārī (2699, 4251).

oppose the other.

The import of this verse confirms this assertion:

﴿لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ...﴾

To Allāh (alone) belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allāh will bring you to account for it... (till the end of the verses).¹²⁷

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim relates on the authority of Abū Hurairah who said:

لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ﴿لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَعْلَمُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾، قَالَ: فَاشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَتَوْا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ بَرَكُوا عَلَى الرَّكْبِ، فَقَالُوا: أَيُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، كَلَّفَنَا مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا نُطِيقُ، الصَّلَاةَ وَالصِّيَامَ وَالْحِجَادَ وَالصَّدَقَةَ، وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْتَ عَلَيْكَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ وَلَا نُطِيقُهَا، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا كَمَا قَالَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا؟ بَلْ قُولُوا: سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ"، قَالُوا: "سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ"، فَلَمَّا اقْتَرَأَهَا الْقَوْمُ، ذَلَّتْ بِهَا أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِي إِثْرِهَا: ﴿ءَاَمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ ءَاَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾،

¹²⁷ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:284-286.

فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ نَسَخَهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: {لَا يَكْفُرُ
 اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا
 إِن نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا} " قَالَ: نَعَمْ " {رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا
 حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا} " قَالَ: نَعَمْ " {رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ
 لَنَا بِهِ} [البقرة: ٢٨٦] " قَالَ: نَعَمْ " {وَأَعْفُ عَنَّا وَأَعْفِرْ لَنَا وَأَرْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ
 مَوْلَانَا فَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ} " قَالَ: نَعَمْ "

When the verse “To Allāh (alone) belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allāh will bring you to account for it, then He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases, and Allāh is over everything” was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, the Companions felt it hard and severe and they came to the Prophet, knelt down and said: “O Messenger of Allāh, we were assigned some duties which were within our power to perform, such as prayer, fasting, *jihād*, and *sadaqa* (charity). Then this (the above-mentioned) verse was revealed unto you and it is beyond our power to live up to it.” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “Do you intend to say what the people of the Books (Jews and Christians) said before you, ‘We hear and disobey!’ You should rather say, ‘We hear and we obey. (we seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord and unto You is the return.’ And they said, ‘We hear and we obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, Our Lord! and unto You is the return.’” When the people recited it and it smoothly flowed on their tongues, then Allāh revealed immediately afterwards: “The Messenger believes in that which is revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allāh, His angels, His Books, and His Messengers, saying We make no distinction between any of His Messengers and they say, We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, Our Lord, and unto You is the return” [2: 286]. When they did that, Allāh abrogated this (verse) and then Allāh

revealed: “Allāh burdens not a soul beyond its capacity. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake.” (The Prophet said:) “Yes, our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. (The Prophet said:) Yes, our Lord, impose not on us (burdens) which we have not the strength to bear (The Prophet said:) Yes, and pardon us and grant us protection! and have mercy on us. You are our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people.” He (the Lord) said: “Yes.”¹²⁸

When the people did likewise, Allāh subsequently abrogated it, and the following verse was revealed, “Allāh burdens no soul beyond its endurance; for it (is) that which it has earned, and against it (is) that which it has merited. Our Lord, blame us not if we forget, or make a mistake.” He (Allāh) answers: “Indeed.” “Our Lord, put not upon us a burden such as You did put upon those before us.” He replies: “Indeed.” “Our Lord, burden us not beyond our strength can bear.” He replies: “Indeed.” ‘And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us; You are our Protector. And give us victory over unbelieving people.’ He replies: “Indeed.”

The Prophet ﷺ warned them against receiving the Divine Command in the same mood in which the people of the Book had received it and enjoined them to receive it with attention and obedience. Allāh was pleased with that and relieved them of the burdens and fetters that had been imposed on past generations.

Allāh describes the Prophet ﷺ in these words:

﴿وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

And he relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them.¹²⁹

That the Prophet ﷺ relieved his nation of the *isr* (loads) and *aghlal* (fetters) that were upon the People of the Book.

¹²⁸ Muslim (125).

¹²⁹ Sūrah al-'A' rāf, 7:157.

Also, in the hadith, when the believers made supplications, the Prophet ﷺ informed them that Allāh had answered their call.

Furthermore, even though this is an abrogation of an imposition and of a prohibition, yet Allāh is as pleased when use is made of His permissiveness, as He is displeased when a transgression is perpetrated.¹³⁰ This is reported as true on behalf of the Prophet ﷺ.

Likewise, the Prophet ﷺ detested that Muslims imitated these loads and fetters of the people of the Book. He censured his Companions for celibacy, saying, “There is no *rahbaniya* (monasticism) in Islam.”¹³¹ He encouraged them to take a meal before daybreak when *sahūr* (fasting) and forbade prolonging the *wisāl* (fast) and referring to a defect of the people of the Book, he warned against being in accord with them, saying, “These are their remnants in cloisters.”¹³² This is a very extensive discussion.

Prohibition of Alliance and Affection for Disbelievers

WITH REGARDS TO that, Allāh says:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ﴾

O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is [one] of them.¹³³

He says also:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ﴾

¹³⁰ Authentic, Ahmad (5866, 5873), Ibn Hiban (2742) and others.

¹³¹ With this text, the hadith is weak. However, the prohibition of monasticism is authentically transmitted in several traditions.

¹³² Weak, Part of a long hadith reported by Abū Dawūd (4904).

¹³³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:51.

Have you (O Muhammad) not seen those (hypocrites) who take as friends a people upon whom is the wrath of Allāh (i.e. Jews)? They are neither of you (Muslims) nor of them (Jews).¹³⁴

In this portion, He censured the *Munāfiqūn* who allied with the Jews, until the verses

﴿لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ﴾

You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those—He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allāh.¹³⁵

He as well says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفَعَّلُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ

¹³⁴ Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:14.

¹³⁵ Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:22.

كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوَأُوا
 وَنَصَرُوا أَوْلِيَّكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
 مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنْكُمْ ﴿٧٥﴾

Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allāh and those who gave them shelter and help—they are allies of one another. But those who believed and did not emigrate – for you there is no support of them until they emigrate. And if they seek your help for the religion, then you must help, except against a people between yourselves and whom is a treaty. And Allāh is All-Seeing of what you do (*) And those who disbelieved are allies of one another. If you do not do so [i.e., ally yourselves with other believers], there will be fitnah [i.e., disbelief and oppression] on earth and great corruption(*) But those who have believed and emigrated and fought in the cause of Allāh and those who gave shelter and aided—it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.¹³⁶

Allāh strengthened the friendship bond between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*, and extended this bond to include all believers who would come after them, emigrate and fight for Allāh’s way until the Day of Resurrection. The word *muhājir* refers to *hājara* (one who leaves behind) of what Allāh has prohibited, and *jihād* (fighting for the religion) will continue to exist until the Day of Resurrection.

The coexistence of these two qualities is not impossible for any person, though some people with soft dispositions may refrain to abandon evils but do not proceed to fight. In contrast, others with strong characters may be inclined to fight without first abandoning evil. Allāh has specifically, however, fastened the bonds those individuals in whom both qualities coexist. These people are the members of Muhammad’s community who sincerely believed in him.

Allāh says:

¹³⁶ Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:72-75.

﴿إِنَّهَا وَإِيَّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ
رَاكِعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾

Verily, your *Waliyy* (Protector) is none but Allāh and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed—those who perform the prayer and pay the alms, and they bow [in worship] (*) And whosoever takes Allāh, His Messenger, and those who believed, as Protectors/Helper, then the party of Allāh will be the victorious.¹³⁷

Instances of this sentiment are found expressed variously in the Qur'an. Allāh enjoins amity among the true believers (those who are His party and His army) and states that they do should neither befriend the unbelievers nor love them.

Even though matters of amity and love belong to the realm of feeling and emotion, it is easier for the believer to outwardly dissimilate from the unbelievers than to sever contacts with them. If similarity with the unbelievers in external matters did not, directly or indirectly, contribute to some form of amity and love, it would not require severance. However, such similarity does indeed lead to prolonged contact due to nature and custom. For this reason, the *Salaf* used to invoke these verses to advocate for the abandonment of all non-Muslim assistance in the administration of provinces.

Imām Ahmad quotes Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ari, with a transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ* category, as saying: I told 'Umar that I had a Christian scribe, to which he replied, "What is the matter with you? May Allāh fight (curse) you!¹³⁸ Haven't you heard Allāh's words, 'O believers, do not take the Jews and Christians for friends; they are friends of each other.' Why didn't you employ a Muslim instead?" I replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, for me—his penmanship; for him—his faith!' He replied, 'I shall not honor those whom Allāh has dishonored, nor esteem those whom He has not humbled, nor bring near those whom He has kept far.'

¹³⁷ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 55-56.

¹³⁸ A word used by the Arab to show displeasure.

Given that the Qur'an, Sunnah of the Prophet, and the practice of the Righteous Caliphs all align in this regard, the legists unanimously agree that the unbelievers should be opposed and any attempt to emulate them should be abandoned.

In *Sahihayn*, the Prophet ﷺ is quoted on the authority of Abū Hurairah as saying:

إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى لَا يَصْبُغُونَ، فَخَالِفُوهُمْ

The Jews and Christians do not dye their hair, so you shall do the opposite of what they do.¹³⁹

This implies that the primary objective of the *Shari'a* is to promote categorical opposition. If the directive pertains to general category of differences, then fulfilling the requirement is sufficient. However, if the command to differ is specific to a change in hair, it is due to the element of opposition embedded within it. Thus, this opposition can be seen either a primary cause, a secondary cause, or a partial cause.

However it may be, the opposition enjoined here must be the aim of the Prophet ﷺ because when a command to perform a certain act is expressed using a word derived from a more general notion, it is inevitable that the desired objective includes aspect related to the derivation. This is especially true when it becomes evident that the derived notion aligns with common sense. It can be likened to when it is said about a guest, "Honor him!" which implies "Feed him!" or when referring to an older person, "Respect him!" which implies "Lower your voice in his presence!" or something similar.

Aspects of Command to Differ from Disbelievers

THERE ARE REASONS for that, among them:

- 1- If the command is related to a verb connected with an idea, then that idea represents the motive of the command.

¹³⁹ Al-Bukhārī (3462, 5899) and Muslim (2103).

This is evident, for example, in the Words of Allāh: “Slay the idolaters!”;¹⁴⁰ and: “Therefore make peace between your two brothers!”;¹⁴¹ or, for instance, in the Prophet’s words:

أَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ، وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ، وَفُكُّوا الْعَانِيَ

Feed the hungry, pay a visit to the sick and free the captives!¹⁴²

Such examples are numerous and well known.

Now, if the enjoined act itself stems from a more general notion, then the demand or need itself becomes associated with that more general notion. Hence, the enjoined act will be the one primarily required.

- 2- Regardless whether the acts are derived from the verbal noun, the verbal noun from them, or both from each other—all verbs are derived in the sense that there is a correlation of both word and meaning between them and not in the sense one is the root and the other only the branch—rather in the position of correlation ideas like paternity, filiation, brotherhood, and so on.

At any rate, when an act is commanded, it is the source itself from which the act proceeds that is desired and intended by one who commands. An example is found in the Qur’anic injunctions: ‘Be Allāh-fearing’; ‘do good; Allāh loves good-doers’;¹⁴³ ‘Believe in Allāh and His Messenger’;¹⁴⁴ ‘Serve Allāh, my Lord and your Lord’;¹⁴⁵ and ‘Put your trust in Him’¹⁴⁶ the very fear of Allāh, good deeds, belief and worship, and trust are all desired and intended – in fact, these are the very things that are commanded.

Further, the commands vary and they can be only definite. Elements that were not intended by the person who issued the command become

¹⁴⁰ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:5.

¹⁴¹ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:10.

¹⁴² Al-Bukhārī (3046, 5174, 5373, 5649).

¹⁴³ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:194-95.

¹⁴⁴ Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4:136; Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, 57:7.

¹⁴⁵ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:75.

¹⁴⁶ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:84.

admixed as the command becomes definite, but man cannot carry out the command unless it is definite. For instance, when it says in the Qur'an, "They should set free a slave,"¹⁴⁷ and if a slave is manumitted, it is inevitable that the absolute (universal) nature of the injunction includes such specifications (particulars) as black, white, tall, short, Arab, non-Arab, or some such feature; but what is intended is the absolute, which is shared by all these concrete cases.

The same is true when it is enjoined: "Be Allāh-fearing, and be different from the Jews!" For fear of Allāh is sometimes attained by performing an obligatory act, such as prayer or fasting, and sometimes by abandoning the prohibited, such as unbelief, adultery, etc. The inclusion of a particular act under the heading of piety does not preclude the inclusion of others.

When a man is caught contemplating adultery and told, "Have fear of Allāh!" This, then, is a command for him to be in general Allāh-fearing, including in particular the injunction to abandon that adultery, because the occasion for the (application of the) general term must be included in it.

Likewise, when it is said, "The Jews and Christians do not dye their beards, so be different from them!" then it is a general command to look different, including (in particular) being different in terms of dyeing the beards, because this (i.e., the question of dyeing) is the occasion for the application of the general term.

This is so because an action carries a generally and comprehensiveness, which has both a *lafz* (letter) and *ma'na* (meaning) it has to be totally complied with. The fact that a command for an action has been occasioned by something that is necessarily included in it does not exclude others from being included therein.

If the objections are raised: (a) the general term is limited to its cause because generality here refers to the meaning and, unlike the generality of a letter, cannot yield to particularization; and (b) the command to be different is a truly absolute command, and there could be no generality

¹⁴⁷ Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:92; Sūrah al-Mujādila, 58:3.

therein; it is rather confined to looking different in a certain respect, as is true in other cases mentioned—from where does it follow that looking different in one respect necessitates looking different beyond that concrete deed? I would say: This is a question that is sometimes brought up by *al-mutakallimun* (the scholastic theologians) concerning all enjoined acts, and with this question, they are in the habit of confusing the jurists. One can, however, answer it from two angles:

First, general terms such as *taqwa* (piety) and *mukhālafā* (differing) may have a generality that issues from the *kull* (whole) to its *ajza'* (parts), as distinct from the generality of the *jins* (genus) to its *anwa'* (species).

The generality is of three kinds: the whole comprehending its parts; the collectivity or aggregate in its particulars; and the genus, its species and particular existents. It is only in the last two categories that a general term may be employed to represent single entities.

Let us take the first kind, the case of the whole comprehending its parts, which may be individual or particular *a'yan* (existence), *af'al* (deeds), or *sifat* (attributes). We find in the Qur'an, "Wash your faces!" The word face commonly includes the cheek, border of the forehead, forehead, and so on and so forth. Each of these parts separately does not stand for the face as a whole, with the result that washing a certain place on these parts would not mean washing the entity called the face. Why? Because the term whole is negated by the negation of its part.

The same goes for qualities and actions. For instance, when someone is commanded to pray a *rak'a* after which he walks out without pronouncing the *salām*, or when he is commanded to fast, which he does only part of the day, he will be found wanting because the requisites of the notion of prayer as such and fasting as such have not been fulfilled.

Similarly, if a man is told, "Honor this man!" and the overall meaning of honor, which requires that whatever pleases the guest be done and whatever hurts him be avoided, exactly as it occurs in the tradition, "Let him who believes in Allāh and the Last Day honor his guest." Now if a man feeds his guest only to a certain degree, leaving him actually hungry, then he quite lacks in showing him honor, because some elements of honoring are missing. In such a case, one simply

cannot say that since honoring is a notion in itself, it can be attained by offering some food, even if it be a mere mouthful.

In the same way, if it is said, “Be different from them!” then, differing as such equally negates even partial or preponderant agreement with the other part. This is due to the fact that differing is the exact opposite of agreeing, so the injunction in favor of one would be against the other. It simply cannot be maintained that differing in a single act would result in differing (in general), just as it cannot be maintained that agreement in a single matter would result in total agreement.

The point here is the difference between the concept of a complete term and the complete concept of a term. A term can be used in its full signification or in a limited signification. If you take that sense of a word that is common to all the usages, full and limited, then this sense will be more comprehensive than the one understood from the word when used absolutely, and that comprehensive or absolute meaning can occur through some of the senses of the word whether used absolutely or restrictively.

As for the meaning, if the word is used comprehensively, then it will not comprehend some of its instances when applied restrictively. On the contrary, it demands many other things that the restricted application of the word does not require. It is at this point that many people go wrong.

As you see, the *fuqaha* (jurists) differentiate between water as an absolute entity and the aqueous property as such, which is present in semen, any transformed fluids, and all other fluids. When you intend to be restrictive, you say, “Honor the guest by giving him this dirham!” This is honoring in its restrictive sense. But when you say, “Honor this guest!” then what you are commanding here is the concept of the term as such, which, of course, requires a host of other things besides, which simply cannot be fulfilled merely by giving him a dirham.

For the second kind of generality, the collectivity or aggregate in its particulars, the instance of such is found in the verse, “And fight against the *Mushrikūn*— idol worshippers (collectively as they fight against you collectively).”¹⁴⁸ What is intended here is each and every

¹⁴⁸ Surah at-Tawbah, 9:5.

one of them.

For the third, the genus; its species and particular existents, an example is the tradition of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ that says, “No Muslim should be killed in *qisas* for the killing of a non-Muslim.”¹⁴⁹ It involves all forms of killing, so also, any Muslim and any unbeliever.

If this is clear, then difference is not maintained by being partially different, if the agreement in such a thing is to a large extent. It will come about by differing in all and most respects, since differing as such is the antithesis of agreeing as such; the two is never obtained simultaneously, and judgment depends on which prevails.

This assertion is sound, but it is based on the prior premise that the concept of differing, when used in the wider sense, includes different in all outside matters.

If this particular point is still unclear, then take the second reason: the generality of meaning, by which it is understood that differing is a derivative. Indeed, it was enjoined, as established earlier, by virtue of its differing. This notion is present in every particular case of differing. The inclusion is, then, established from the point of view of the accepted signification.

By recourse to these two methods, a wider application can be established for the Words of Allāh, “So take a lesson, O you who have insights”¹⁵⁰ and in other similar (enjoined) acts. Although most people readily opt for the second method, and very few of them even comprehend the first, it sounds like it is the most far-reaching.

We, moreover say: Granted anything called differing is satisfactory, but one can increase the prescribed amount of differing because the command itself was given in general terms, as it is in Words of Allāh, “Bow and prostrate yourself!”¹⁵¹ This applies in all cases of commands given in general form.

A third facet: Deviating from the term of a particular act to a term with a more general signification—such as the case of deviation from the phrase ‘Feed him!’ to the phrase ‘Honor him!’ or the case of deviation

¹⁴⁹ Al-Bukhārī (111, 3047, 6903, 6950).

¹⁵⁰ Sūrah al-Ḥashr, 59:2.

¹⁵¹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:77.

from the term ‘Dye your beards!’ to the term ‘Be different from them!’—must be of some advantage. If not, then harmony between the term and the meaning is at any rate preferable to employing a general term and intending thereby something particular. There is here no apparent advantage except to connect the intention with that general sense, which comprises the particular sense, as must be clear on reflection.

A fourth facet: Generally knowledge of an element generally presupposes the knowledge of a particular thing contained in the element. By the same token, reference to a general notion implies reference to a particular notion involved in it. Thus, if you know that every intoxicant is liquor and that *nabidh* (date or grape wine) brings on intoxication, then from your knowledge of this general matter, its application in particular would follow your knowledge of the particular case. Similarly, if you refer to food as such or to some object as such and you know that a particular kind of food or a certain object is available in a certain place, then your reference is clear, inasmuch as the knowledge and the reference converge in such a case. The discourse specifies the speaker’s intention and purpose.

Thus, if a man prescribing an action used a general term but intended a particular action, the syntactic order would indicate, as we have already mentioned, that he was referring to this general term and that he meant this particular action because it was included in the term.

Thus, the imperative ‘Honor him!’ encompasses two requisites: the call for general respect and the need for a specific action that materializes this general notion. This stems from the fact that the general concept is attained through specific instances. This method is the correct approach. When a man demonstrates good judgment and sagacity, these qualities become valuable across numerous scenarios, paving the way for rational thinking and logical reasoning.

One may conclude that all this indicates that the *Shari’a* had a certain kind of opposition in mind, which is true, but the reference to the category of opposition is confined to opposition in certain matters only, and any addition to these is unnecessary.

I would argue that once the intent is established to apply a principle

to an entire category, whatever pertains to the category becomes applicable to every specific case within it. Even if the obligation is lifted in certain instances, the commendability might still persist in others.

From this, it follows that the prohibition of agreeing with them is also intended. This is because the directive to differentiate from them is evident, as reflected in the command to engage in actions that diverge from their ways, especially in areas where neither our intention nor actions align with theirs—how then could he (the Prophet ﷺ) not instruct against effecting an act of agreement with them, intentionally or unintentionally.

A fifth facet: The Prophet ﷺ made the rule the consequence of the characterization by using the conjunction so. This sequence demonstrates that it is built upon a cause for no given reason. Inasmuch as he said, “The Jews and Christians do not dye (their beards), so be different from them!,” it follows that the motive of the command should be their not dyeing their beards, the implication being, “You dye for they do not dye.” Since the motive underlying the command to act in a certain way is the absence thereof among the unbelievers, it indicates that the intent to look different from them is included in the law.

To put it more clearly, if the intent to keep Muslims different from unbelievers had no relation to the command about the dyeing of the beard, then mentioning the unbelievers, whether before or after the command, would be pointless.

Though this indicates that differing from them is the intent of the *Shari'a*, still does not preclude the possibility that the very act in which Muslims differ from them may be of a positive, intended goal, not to speak of the matter of differing from them. Two observations are in order: One, there is benefit for the believers in the very act of looking different from them in external behavior, because differing from them means separating from them, which necessarily keeps the believers away from the deeds of those doomed to hell. The good thing about this command would be apparent to him whose heart has been enlightened to recognize the heart-disease harbored by those who have earned Allāh's wrath and the gone-astray, which is more dangerous than physical maladies.

Two, their very behavior and moral character are either harmful or deficient, with the result that one is prohibited from it and enjoined to act contrary to it, since there is benefit and perfection in so doing. Everything in them is either harmful or deficient; because their acts—newfangled, abrogated, etc.—are harmful. Other acts of theirs, which do not come under this heading, are subjected to addition or subtraction. Differing from them in such acts follows an evaluation on the basis of perfection, and it cannot be imagined that any of their deeds can ever be perfect.

Differing from them, then, carries advantages as well as benefit for us in all our affairs, so that whatever perfection they may possess in their mundane affairs may be injurious to our hereafter and our important worldly concerns. Consequently, differing is beneficial to us.

To sum up: *kufṛ* (unbelief or infidelity) is like a malady of the heart or even worse. Once the heart is sick, none of the limbs can be altogether healthy. You may best gain if you do not imitate the heartsick in any respect. Even if the sickness of the limb remains concealed from you, it is enough that you know that the rot at the root will inevitably affect the branch. He who is aware of this might be able to comprehend the wisdom behind some of the rulings Allāh revealed to us. He whose heart is sick may entertain doubts about the very injunction of differing from the unbelievers, because he lacks perception of its advantages. Or he may imagine that this injunction is of the same kind as one issued by kings and chieftains aspiring to attain earthly grandeur. By Allāh, prophethood is the pinnacle of authority which Allāh bestows on whomsoever He wishes and withholds from whomsoever He wishes, but Prophetic authority secures the highest benefit in this world and the hereafter to him who obeys the Prophet.

In reality, imperfection is unavoidably present in all the deeds and affairs of the unbelievers. It is this element of imperfection which prevents these deeds and affairs from yielding any advantage to them. If we grant that there is in him an element of positive perfection, it supposes that he deserves recompense in the hereafter. But, as it is, all his affairs are either corrupt or deficient.

Praise be to Allāh as it may please Him for His gift of Islam—the greatest of all bounties and the source of all good.

Evidently, then, the very differing from them is the general intent of the *Shari'a*. It is for this reason that Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other religious leaders used to motivate the instruction to dye the beard by (the general reasoning for) differing.

Hanbal¹⁵² said, “I heard Abū ‘Abdullāh (Imām Ahmad) saying, ‘I wish everybody to change his gray hair and not to be like the People of the Book in view of the Prophet’s words ﷺ: *Change gray hair and do not be like the People of the Book!*’”¹⁵³

Shaq ibn ‘Ibrāhīm said, “I heard Abū ‘Abdullāh tell my father, ‘O Abū Hāshim, dye your hair, though for once. I wish you dyed your hair and did not look like a Jew!’”

The text Imām Ahmad referred to here is reported by at-Tirmidhī on the authority of Abū Hurairah.¹⁵⁴

This expression, “Do not be like the Jews and the Christians,” is the most cogent proof of a command directed towards differing from the unbelievers and against appearing like them. If the Prophet forbade imitating them in the gray color of the beard, which is not of our doing, it is more appropriate for him to forbid us consciously effecting resemblance with them. That is why this kind of assimilation with them used to be *ḥarām* (unlawful) unlike the first.

Similarly, both *Ṣaḥīhs* report Ibn ‘Umar quoting the Prophet ﷺ as: “Do the opposite of what the polytheists do; clip the mustache and leave the beard!”¹⁵⁵

First the Prophet ﷺ gave a categoric command to differ from the polytheists, then he said, “Clip the mustache and leave the beard,” which second clause here stands as a *badal* (permutative) for the first; for *ibdāl* (permutation) occurs as much in whole expressions as in individual words; for instance, in the Words of Allāh:

¹⁵² Imām Ahmad’s cousin, but took his name after his grandfather.

¹⁵³ Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (1752) and an-Nasā’ī (5073 and 5074) reported it with the text “Change gray hair and do not be like the Jews”, while Imām Ahmad, in the *Musnad* (7545), reported it with the addition, “and the Christians.”

¹⁵⁴ The author then cited these narrations as noted up here.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī (5892 and 5893) and Muslim (259).

﴿يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ﴾

They were afflicting you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your women alive.¹⁵⁶

The act of slaughtering and sparing are to be read as substitutes for affliction through chastisement. In the same way (i.e., in the tradition in question), we have the general injunction of differing from the polytheists.

Thus, the phrase “differing from the polytheists” indicates that what the *Shari’a* intended was the very category of differing, though here it is specified as this particular act. That the differing is put first is by reason of the general preceding the particular. You say, “Honor your guest: feed him and converse with him.” Thus, your command to honoring first indicates that honoring the guest is your intention, then you specify the act of which the honoring consists at a particular moment.

The conclusion drawn from this tradition is similar to one drawn from the Prophet’s words, “They do not dye their beards; so, act differently from them.”

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim has Abū Hurairah quoted the Prophet ﷺ as saying, “Clip the mustache and let the beard hang loose; do the opposite of what the Zoroastrians do.”¹⁵⁷

He followed up the injunction with a suitable description of what is derived from this command, indicating that acting contrary to what the Zoroastrians do is the intent of the *Shari’a*. It serves as the cause for this precept, or a secondary cause, or a fraction thereof, although it is more plausible that it is the entire cause.

Therefore, when the *Salaf* realized the reprehensibility of emulating the Zoroastrians in this matter and others, they opposed even those elements of the Zoroastrian pattern for which there were no specific textual references.

I asked Abū ‘Abdullāh (Ahmad ibn Hanbal), ‘about the shaving of the nape. Al-Marūdhī reported that he replied that it was one of the

¹⁵⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:49.

¹⁵⁷ Muslim (260).

practices of the Zoroastrians and that anyone who imitates a people belongs to that people. He also reports that Ibn Hanbal was asked whether he considered it reprehensible for a man to shave his nape or face. To which he replied, “Well, I for one do not.”

A *Mursal* tradition is also cited on behalf of Qatāda about the Prophet’s revulsion to this act, “Shaving of the nape is indeed a Zoroastrian practice.”

Ibn Hanbal also said of Imām Ahmad, “He shaves his nape at the time of cupping.” And reported him as said, “It does not matter if one shaved one’s nape for the purpose of cupping.”

Ibn Mansūr narrates from him, saying: ‘I asked Ahmad about shaving the nape and he replied, “I do not know of any tradition bearing on the subject, except what is narrated on the authority of ‘Ibrāhīm that the Prophet ﷺ considered it reprehensible.” This report and similar ones are mentioned by al-Khallāl as well.

He also narrated from al-Haitham ibn Humaid as saying, “Scraping off the hair on the nape is a Zoroastrian practice.”

Al-Mu’tamar ibn Sulaimān at-Taimin said of his father, “When my father had his hair cut, he never shaved his nape” he was asked for the reason, he replied, “He didn’t like to resemble some non-Arabs.”

The *Salaf* sometimes attribute their revulsion against this action as being emulation of the People of the Book and sometimes as imitating non-Arabs; nonetheless, both aversions are textually established from the Sunnah. As stated previously, the Prophet ﷺ had foretold that Muslims were bound to imitate these and those.

Through another transmission, Shadad ibn Aus is reported quoting the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

حَافُوا الْيَهُودَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُصَلُّونَ فِي نَعَالِهِمْ، وَلَا خِفافِهِمْ

Act differently from the Jews, for they do not pray in their sandals or their shoes. (Reported by Abū Dawūd).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (652).

That despite the fact that the Jews take off their sandals to follow Mūsā (Moses) as he was ordered:

﴿فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ﴾

“Put off your shoes!”¹⁵⁹

Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ is reported quoting the Prophet ﷺ:

فَصَلُّ مَا بَيْنَ صِيَامِنَا وَصِيَامِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ، أَكْلَةَ السَّحْرِ

The difference between our fasting and that of the People of the Book is eating shortly before dawn. (Muslim transmitted it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*)¹⁶⁰

This indicates that the *Shariʿa* wanted to maintain the difference between these separate acts of worship.

This is laid down even more clearly in the tradition reported by Abū Dawūd on the authority of Abū Hurairah where the Prophet ﷺ is quoted as saying:

لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا مَا عَجَلَ النَّاسُ الْفِطْرَ، لِأَنَّ الْيَهُودَ، وَالنَّصَارَى يُؤَخَّرُونَ

Religion will continue to prevail as long as people hasten to break the fast, because the Jews and Christians delay doing so.¹⁶¹

This text’s assertion that hastening in breaking the fast is the reason of victory of Islam demonstrates the Muslim’s necessity to distinguish themselves from the Jews and the Christians. Since distinguishing from them is the cause of the victory of Islam, then, the purpose of sending the prophets is for the divine faith to emerge triumphant. Thus, differentiating from them is one of the most important prophetic responsibilities.

The same meaning underlay the tradition quoted by Abū Dawūd as one of those transmitted by Abū Ayyub al-Anṣārī, like, the Prophet ﷺ stated:

"لَا تَزَالُ أُمَّتِي بِخَيْرٍ" - أَوْ قَالَ: عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ - مَا لَمْ يُؤَخَّرُوا الْمَغْرِبَ إِلَى أَنْ تَشْتَبِكَ
النُّجُومُ"

¹⁵⁹ Sūrah Ṭāʾ Hāʾ, 20:12.

¹⁶⁰ Muslim (1096).

¹⁶¹ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2353).

My nation will continue to prosper (in another version, on natural disposition of Islam) as long as they do not postpone the sunset prayer till the stars are out in clusters.

Ibn Mājah reported it going back to al-'Abbās, while Imām Ahmad reported it on behalf of as-Sa'ib ibn Yazid.¹⁶²

Interpreting the argument, "They shall continue to prosper as long as they do not postpone the sunset prayer until rising of the stars, in imitation of the Jews, and as long as they do not put off the dawn prayer until waning of the stars, in emulation of the Christian." Sa'īd ibn Mansūr on the authority of Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān as-Sanābijī reported.

He also reported through his chain of transmitters going back to Laila, the wife of Bashīr ibn al-Khasāsiyya, who said, "I intended to fast for two consecutive days without breaking in between but Bashīr forbade me to do so, saying that he had been forbidden by the Prophet ﷺ to do so in the words, "Indeed the Christians do that. You fast as Allāh has prescribed for you, and complete your fast as Allāh has commanded you: then complete the fast till nightfall, so, when it is night, break the fast" (Ahmad reported it in his *Musnad*).¹⁶³

The reason the consecutive fast without a break in between is prohibited is because such is the Christian fast. Probably, this is what the Prophet ﷺ was referring to when he mentioned they innovated it just like monasticism.

It is reported on the authority of Anas that:

"أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ كَانُوا إِذَا حَاضَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ فِيهِمْ لَمْ يُؤَاكِلُوهَا، وَلَمْ يُجَامِعُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ
فَسَأَلَ أَصْحَابُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
تَعَالَى {وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَى فَأَعْتَرِ لُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ} إِلَى
آخِرِ الْآيَةِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "اصْنَعُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا التِّكَاحَ"
فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ الْيَهُودَ، فَقَالُوا: مَا يُرِيدُ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ أَنْ يَدَّعَى مِنْ أَمْرِنَا شَيْئًا إِلَّا خَالَفْنَا
فِيهِ، فَجَاءَ أُسَيْدُ بْنُ حُضَيْرٍ، وَعَبَادُ بْنُ بَشِيرٍ فَقَالَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ تَقُولُ:

¹⁶² Ibn Mājah, (689); authentic, and *Musnad Imām Ahmad* (15717); sound.

¹⁶³ Authentic, *Musnad Imām Ahmad* (21955).

كَذًا وَكَذَا، فَلَا نُجَامِعُهُنَّ؟ فَتَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا
أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِمَا، فَخَرَجَا فَاسْتَقْبَلَهُمَا هَدِيَّةً مِنْ لَبَنٍ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ، فَأُرْسِلَ فِي آثَارِهِمَا فَسَقَاهُمَا، فَعَرَفَا أَنَّ لَمْ يَجِدْ عَلَيْهِمَا"

Among the Jews, when a woman menstruated, they did not dine with her, nor did they live with them in their houses; so the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ questioned the Prophet, and Allāh revealed, "And they ask you about menstruation; say it is *Adha* (a harmful thing), therefore keep away from woman during menstruation..." to the end (Qur'an, 2:222). The Allāh's Messenger then said, "Do everything with them except sexual intercourse." This reached the Jews who then said, "This man does not want to leave anything we do without opposing us in it." Usaid ibn Hudair and 'Abbad ibn Bishr came and said, "Messenger of Allāh, the Jews say such-and-such thing. We should not have, therefore, any contact with them (as the Jews do)?" The face of Allāh's Messenger underwent such a change that we thought he was angry with them, but when they went out, they happened to receive a gift of milk which was sent to the Prophet ﷺ. He called for them and gave them drink, whereby we knew that he was not angry with them (Reported in Muslim's collection).¹⁶⁴

This tradition indicates that Allāh frequently stipulated for His Prophet ﷺ to differ from the Jews, and that the Prophet did differ from them in the most respects, so that they exclaimed: "(This man) does not want to leave anything we do without opposing us therein."

Moreover, as we shall indicate, differing can sometimes relate to the fundamentals of a stipulation or its particulars. Thus, regarding the issue of distancing from a menstruating woman, disputes arose not concerning the fundamentals of the stipulation, but rather its particulars. The Qur'an established that contact with a menstruating woman is permissible except at the place of hurt. When one of the Companions aimed to diverge from the Jews to an extent that led to abandoning the

¹⁶⁴ Muslim (302).

stipulation of the *Shari'a*, the Prophet ﷺ became displeased.

On the subject of ritual or cultic *tahara* (cleanliness), the Jews were heavily shackled, whereas the Christians, in the course of their innovation, abandoned all these restrictions, without divine sanction, to the extent that they deemed nothing impure. In light of this, Allāh guided the Muslim community to choose a middle course; despite the fact that the Jewish position was once legitimate. Thus, avoiding that which Allāh has not sanctioned to be avoided would be deemed an act of drawing close to the Jews while close association to that which divine legislation must be avoided would be tantamount to a close relationship with Christians. However, the ideal way is the way of Muhammad ﷺ. It is reported on the authority of 'Amr ibn 'Abasah who said:

“While I was still a pagan, I believed that people were in error and that their belief lacked substance since they worshipped idols. Then I heard of a tale-telling man in Makkah. I mounted my camel and started out for him, and it turned out that Muhammad had fled from his people’s persecution, but I was able to find him in Makkah. ‘Who are you?’ I asked him. ‘I am a prophet,’ he replied. ‘What is a prophet?’ ‘Allāh has sent me.’ ‘To do what?’ ‘To promote ties of relationships, to break idols, and see to it that Allāh’s unification is proclaimed and nothing is associated with Him.’ ‘Who is with you in that?’ ‘A free man and a slave.’ Abū Bakr and Bilal were his only followers then. I said to him, ‘I am going to follow you.’ ‘You cannot do so now,’ he replied. ‘Don’t you see the position I and my people are in? But go back home and when you hear that I have prevailed, come back to me.’ I returned home. I was still with my family when the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madinah. I was eager for news and asked people, until a party from Yathrib (i.e., Madinah) arrived. ‘What is that fellow who has arrived in Madinah doing?’ I asked them. ‘People are just rushing to him,’ they replied. ‘His own people had attempted to kill him but failed.’ I went to Madinah, called on him, and said, ‘Prophet of Allāh, do you recognize me?’ ‘Sure,’ he replied. ‘You are the one who had found me at Makkah.’ ‘Prophet

of Allāh,’ I said, ‘Tell me what Allāh has taught you and which I do not know; tell me about the prayer.’ ‘Observe the morning prayer,’ he said, ‘then stop praying when the sun is rising until it is fully up, for when it rises, it rises between the horns of *Satan*, and at that time, the infidels prostrate themselves before it. Then pray, because that prayer is witnessed and attended to by angels, until the shadow becomes about the breadth of a lance; then stop praying, because *Jahannam* (hell) is ablaze at that time. Then, when the shadow advances, pray, for that prayer is witnessed and attended to by angels, until you pray the afternoon prayer; then cease praying till the sun sets, for it sets between the horns of *ash-Shaitan* (the Devil), and at that time the infidels prostrate themselves before it” (Reported by Muslim).¹⁶⁵

The Prophet ﷺ forbade praying at exact sunrise and sunset because the sun rises and sets between the devil’s horns and infidels prostrate themselves to it at these times. Obviously, the believer solely prostrates before Allāh. Perhaps the majority of people are unaware that the sun rises and sets between the devil’s horns and that at certain times, infidels prostrate themselves before it. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ forbade praying at these times so as to definitively eliminate any similarity between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The meaning behind this becomes partly apparent when we discover that some of the Sabians today who practice polytheism. They publicly embrace Islam, but they also worship the planets and believe that the planets can fulfill their needs. These Sabians perform acts of prostration and offer sacrifices to the planets.

Within the Islamic community, certain individuals have written books discussing the religious practices of these polytheistic Sabians and Barahima, focusing on their worship of celestial bodies. They claimed that such worship can lead to worldly goals such as power, etc. However, this type of worship is considered a form of sorcery that was popular among the Canaanites and later continued under the rule of pagan Nimrod kings. It was during this era that Allāh sent ‘Ibrāhīm (Abraham) with the righteous creed, emphasizing that all acts of devotion should be reserved for Allāh alone.

¹⁶⁵ Muslim (832).

If someone in our present time engages in such practices, the underlying motive behind the Prophet's command to refrain from praying at those specific times becomes evident. The aim was to eradicate any possibility of Muslim adopting practices that resemble those of non-believers. There is a warning message to Muslims that all acts of worship that contain element of disbelief or disobedience are forbidden, even if their intentions differ from those of the polytheists. This prohibition serves to definitively put an end to any incorrect or improper usage of such practices.

Bearing on the subject is the tradition, "Whenever the Prophet ﷺ prayed in front of a log or pillar, he would position himself in a way that the object aligned with either his right or left eyebrow, avoiding direct face-to-face alignment."¹⁶⁶

Therefore, he summarily prohibited praying in front of any object that was worshipped beside Allāh, regardless of whether the person praying intended not to worship those things. Similarly, it is prohibited to prostrate to Allāh while facing another person directly, even if the person performing the prostration did not intend any form of worship towards that individual. This prohibition is due to the fact that such an act bears a resemblance to prostrating before a power other than Allāh.

The *Shari'a* has decisively ruled against any form of resemblance in the matters of the direction and timing of prayer. Just as a believer does not turn towards the same direction as non-believers, he also does not worship the same deity as non-believers, which would be even more severe. While the *qibla* (direction) is one of the precepts which can change with different prophetic dispensation, *sujud* (prostration) and worship offered to anyone other than Allāh are strictly forbidden in religion, a stance agreed upon by all of Allāh's prophets.

To discredit the worship of any power other than Allāh, Allāh says:

﴿ وَسَأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ
 ءِالِهَةً يُعْبُدُونَ ﴾

¹⁶⁶ Weak, Abū Dawūd (693). It is, however, permissible to stand before these objects or any other facing them directly when praying, as that was the practice authentically reported from the Prophet ﷺ.

And ask (O Muhammad ﷺ) those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: “Did We ever appoint *ālihah* (gods) to be worshipped besides the Most Gracious (Allāh).”

According to the narration from Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه), he saw a man resting on his left hand while sitting during prayer. In response, Ibn Umar said to him, “Do not sit like this, because those who are punished sit like this.”

Another narration states, “that is the sitting position of those who have earned the wrath of Allāh.”

Additionally, “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade resting on the hand while sitting in prayers.”¹⁶⁷

The Prophet ﷺ forbade this sitting posture being the sitting of the punished indicating the importance of differentiation from the people.

Al-Bukhārī also reported, through the chain of transmitters going back to ‘Āishah, that she disliked the practice of placing hands on the flanks while praying. She mentioned that this was a practice observed by the Jews.¹⁶⁸

He reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah:

نُهِيَ عَنِ الْخَضْرِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ

It was forbidden to keep the hands on the hips during *Salāt*.¹⁶⁹

In another narration, he said:

نَهَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ الرَّجُلُ مُخْتَصِرًا

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited that a man should pray while he puts his hands on his hips.¹⁷⁰

Sa’id ibn Ziyad ibn Subaih said: “I prayed by the side of Ibn Umar and placed my hands on my waist. After he finished praying, Ibn Umar informed him that, “This is a cross making in prayer; the Messenger of

¹⁶⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (992, 993, 994).

¹⁶⁸ Al-Bukhārī (3458)

¹⁶⁹ Al-Bukhārī (1219).

¹⁷⁰ Al-Bukhārī (1220) and Muslim (545) .

Allāh ﷺ used to forbid it.” (Reported by Ahmad, Abū Dawūd, and an-Nasā’i)¹⁷¹

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh is quoted as saying: “The Prophet fell ill. We performed prayer behind him while he was in a sitting position and Abū Bakr was repeating his *takbirs* after him so that people could hear them. He turned to us and saw some of us were standing. He gestured for us to sit down, so we sat down and performed the prayer in sitting position. After he had pronounced the *salām*, he said:

إِنْ كِدْتُمْ أَنْفَا لَتَفْعَلُونَ فِعَلِ فَارِسَ وَالرُّومِ يَقُومُونَ عَلَى مَلُوكِهِمْ، وَهُمْ قُعُودٌ فَلَا تَفْعَلُوا ائْتَمُّوا بِأَمَّتِكُمْ إِنْ صَلَّى قَائِمًا فَصَلُّوا قِيَامًا وَإِنْ صَلَّى قَاعِدًا فَصَلُّوا قُعُودًا

You were at this time about to do an act like that of the Persians and Romans. They stand before their kings while they sit, so don’t do that. Follow your Imāms, if he prays standing, you should also do so, and if he prays sitting, you should also say prayer sitting. (Reported by Muslim and Abū Dawūd).¹⁷²

According to the tradition transmitted by Abū Dawūd and others, Jābir reported that: “In Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ mounted a horse which threw him against the trunk of a date-palm, causing his foot to become dislocated. We came to visit him in ‘Ā’ishah’s chamber, he was worshipping in a sitting position. We stood behind, but he made a sign and we sat down. After completing the prayer, he said, ‘If the leader prays in a sitting posture, then you should do the same. And if the leader prays in a standing posture, then you should also do the same. However, don’t imitate the Persians in the way they exalt their notables.’”¹⁷³

I suppose a version other than that of Abū Dawūd has, “Do not exalt me the way non-Arabs exalt one another.”¹⁷⁴

In this tradition, the Prophet ﷺ instructs the companions to abandon standing posture which is mandatory in prayer, with the

¹⁷¹ Authentic, Ahmad (4948), Abū Dawūd (903), and an-Nasā’i (891).

¹⁷² Muslim (413) and Abū Dawūd (606).

¹⁷³ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (602), Ibn Mājah (1240) and others.

¹⁷⁴ Weak, Abū Dawūd (5230).

reasoning that by standing, while the leader sits, it resembles the Persian and Byzantine custom of standing in attendance before sitting notables. However, it is important to note that the one who stands during prayer does so solely for the sake of Allāh and not for the sake of the leader.

This tradition explicitly prohibits the act of standing to honor a sitting man, as well as any similar actions, even if the intention behind them differ. It is for this reason that prostrating oneself for Allāh in front of another person is forbidden, as well as praying in the direction of objects worshipped besides Allāh, such as fire, etc.

In this tradition, when the Prophet says, “Don’t do it,” he is forbidding anything that may resemble the practices of the Persians or Byzantines, regardless of the difference in intention. Beyond that, could there be any further aim for prohibition against imitating non-Muslims in mere outward act!

Regarding the sitting posture of the leader, whether it is still binding or abrogated, this tradition retains its demonstrative power. The possible abrogation of the sitting posture does not invalidate the argument, but rather suggests that there may be something preferable to it, as evidenced by the stipulation of the obligatory standing posture in prayer. The obligation is not aborted by mere formal resemblance, and in such a case, *ijtihad* (independent judgment) must be applied. In terms of formal resemblance, if it does not abort (an) obligation, then the argument employed by the Prophet ﷺ remains valid despite objections and abrogation. The standing posture does not, in reality, amount to resemblance and is not objectionable. If a stipulation is drawn from an argument and is subsequently abrogated with the argument still intact, it does show that something else may have certainly been preferred over it or may have weakened its impact at the time of its abrogation, but it would be absurd to consider the stipulation itself as false.

All of the above arguments hold true if the stipulation had indeed been abrogated—but was it? However, to be correct, this tradition is still fully applicable, and many Companions had definitely acted upon it after the Prophet’s death, despite being aware of how the Prophet ﷺ prayed during his last illness.

This stipulation has been widely reported from the Prophet ﷺ and

its authenticity makes it impossible to be abrogated by the tradition of his prayer during his last illness. As it has been broadly established elsewhere, presenting two possibilities: either both positions (sitting and standing) are allowed since standing does not negate sitting – or there is a distinction between a prayer one commences in a sitting posture and one performed in a standing position. The latter type of prayer does not fall under the Prophet’s statement, “If he prays in a sitting posture,” and because it is devoid of the harm which the Prophet adduced as an argument. Additionally, it is more appropriate for a prayer should to end as it began rather than merely following the leader’s prayer, among other similar points mentioned elsewhere.

Furthermore, ‘Ubaida ibn as-Samit reported as saying: “When Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ followed a funeral procession, he would not sit down until the corpse was placed in the side of the *lahd* (grave). On one occasion, he encountered a *hibr* (learned Jew) who informed him, ‘O Muhammad! This is what we do.’ The Prophet ﷺ sat down and said, ‘Act differently from them.’” (Reported by Abū Dawūd, Ibn Mājah and at-Tirmidhī)¹⁷⁵

I say: Regarding the standing during a funeral procession, scholars have had differing opinions on whether you must stand as it passes by or for one they attend. The order to stand has been reported in numerous traditions. However, those who believe these traditions to be abrogated or consider the stipulation regarding standing for the procession rely on the tradition of ‘Alī and the one narrated by ‘Ubada. Both can be equally supported, as the participant stands until the corpse is taken off the shoulders of the bearers but is not yet placed in the side of the grave. One can view this tradition either as harmonizing with the others or as abrogating them, but it has been presented as an argument in the matter of differing. Those who do not support it may weaken it, but this does not diminish its power as an argument for differing from non-Muslims. Bukhārī reported from ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn al-Qasim that Al-Qasim used to walk in front of the funeral procession and would not get up when it passed by him. And he narrated from ‘Ā’ishah that she said,

¹⁷⁵ Sound, Abū Dawūd (3176) at-Tirmidhī (1020), and Ibn Mājah (1545).

كَانَ أَهْلُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُومُونَ لَهَا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا رَأَوْهَا: كُنْتَ فِي أَهْلِكَ مَا أَنْتِ مَرَّتَيْنِ

The people of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance used to stand up for the funeral procession. When they saw it, they used to say twice: ‘You were noble in your family. What are you now?’¹⁷⁶

Therefore, those who are against the practice of standing for a funeral procession may argue that it was a pre-Islamic practice and not an established Islamic tradition. However, the specific point regarding this argument is beyond the scope of our current discussion. Furthermore, Ibn ‘Abbās reports the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

اللَّحْدُ لَنَا وَالشَّقُّ لِغَيْرِنَا

The *lahd* (niche in the side of the grave) is for us and the *shaqq* (excavation in the middle) is for others. (Reported by all four compilers of Sunan).¹⁷⁷

Jarīr ibn Abdullah reported it as well. Ahmad and Ibn Mājah recorded his narration. Ahmad has another version, which states: “And the excavation in the middle is for the People of the Book.” It is worth noting that these versions of the narration are transmitted from weak sources, although the reports mutually supporting each other. They emphasize the importance of acting differently from the People of the Book, even in the practice of burial.

Censure of Some Pre-Islamic Practices

ADDITIONALLY, ‘ABDULLĀH IBN Mas’ūd is reported as quoting the Prophet ﷺ:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ ضَرَبَ الْحُدُودَ، وَشَقَّ الْجُيُوبَ، وَدَعَا بِدَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

¹⁷⁶ Al-Bukhārī (3837).

¹⁷⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3208) at-Tirmidhī (1045), an-Nasā’ī (2009), and Ibn Mājah (1554).

He who (on befalling a calamity) slaps his cheeks, tears the garments, and follows the tradition of the Days of Ignorance is not from us (This tradition is agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).¹⁷⁸

“Crying out” in pre-Islamic fashion consists of bewailing over the dead. In pre-Islamic times, people used to cry out in *‘asabiya* (spirit of tribal loyalty). A similar tradition is reported by Ahmad, based on the narration of Ubay ibn K’ab, who reported that the Messenger of Allāh said:

مَنْ تَعَزَّى بِعَزَاءِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، فَأَعِضُّوهُ بِهِنَّ أَبِيهٖ، وَلَا تَكُنُوا

Whoever attributes himself (in lineage) with an attribution of the pre-Islamic era, then tell him to bite his father’s male organ and do not speak figuratively (i.e. be explicit).¹⁷⁹

Similarly, Abū Malik al-Ash’ari reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، لَا يَتْرُكُونَهَا: الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ، وَالْأَسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ، وَالنِّيَاحَةُ" وَقَالَ: "النَّائِحَةُ إِذَا لَمْ تَتُوبْ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهَا، تُقَامُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَعَلَيْهَا سِرْبَالٌ مِنْ قَطْرَانَ، وَدِرْعٌ مِنْ جَرَبٍ."

“Among my people there are four characteristics belonging to pre-Islamic period which they do not abandon: boasting of high rank, reviling other people’s genealogies, seeking rain by stars, and wailing.” He (further) said, “If the wailing woman does not repent before she dies, she will be made to stand on the Day of Resurrection wearing a garment of pitch and a chemise of mangle.” (Reported by Muslim)¹⁸⁰

In this regard, Prophet ﷺ censures those who cry out in a pre-Islamic manner, emphasizing that not all Muslims will forsake all the pagan rites. This indicates that Islam regards all pre-Islamic practices as reprehensible. If not, attributing these detestable acts to the period

¹⁷⁸ Al-Bukhārī (1297, 1298) and Muslim (103).

¹⁷⁹ Authentic, Ahmad (21236).

¹⁸⁰ Muslim (935).

of *jāhiliya* (pre-Islamic period) would not be a censure upon *jāhiliya*. However, associating these practices with *jāhiliya* was indeed intended as a reproach upon *jāhiliya*. A comparable example can be found in the Qur'ān, where it states:

﴿وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى﴾

And do not display yourselves as like that of the times of ignorance.¹⁸¹

In this situation, the focus of criticism is the 'display' as much as the state of "former paganism." Consequently, it implies that one should refrain from resembling them in general. A similar incident occurred when Abū Dhar, upon insulting a man based on his lineage, was reprimanded by the Prophet ﷺ in the following manner:

إِنَّكَ أَمْرٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ

The *Jāhiliyah* is still in you.¹⁸²

The Prophet ﷺ in this instance admonishes and disapproves not only this particular behavior but also other pre-Islamic traits with that are inconsistent with the teachings of Islam.

This verse is also in-line:

﴿إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

When those who disbelieve had put in their hearts pride and haughtiness—the pride and haughtiness of the time of ignorance, then Allāh sent down His *Sakinah* (calmness and tranquility) upon His Messenger ﷺ and upon the believers.¹⁸³

The Prophet ﷺ links pride and haughtiness to the period of ignorance, indicating that such act is reproachable. Therefore, any actions and deeds resembling those of the pre-Islamic era are likewise

¹⁸¹ Sūrah al-'Aḥzāb, 33:33.

¹⁸² Al-Bukhārī (30, 6050) and Muslim (1661).

¹⁸³ Sūrah al-Faṭḥ, 48:26.

deemed reproachable. Likewise, what al-Bukhārī reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through his chain of transmitters reaching Ibn Abbās is said to have said:

"خِلَالٌ مِنْ خِلَالِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ وَالتَّيَاحَةُ وَنَسِي الثَّالِثَةُ،
قَالَ سُفْيَانُ "وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهَا الْإِسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالْأَنْوَاءِ"."

Following are some traits of the people of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (i) to defame the ancestry of other families, (ii) and to wail over the dead." He ('Ubaidullah) forgot the third trait. Sufyan said, "They say, it (i.e. the third trait) was to believe that rain was caused by the influence of stars (i.e., if a special star appears it will rain)."¹⁸⁴

Muslim also reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, from the narration of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

اِثْنَتَانِ فِي النَّاسِ هُمَا بِهِمْ كُفْرٌ: الطَّعْنُ فِي النَّسَبِ وَالتَّيَاحَةُ عَلَى الْمَيِّتِ.

Two (things) are found among men which are tantamount to unbelief: slandering one's lineage and lamentation on the dead.¹⁸⁵

The statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم "which are tantamount to unbelief" implies that these two traits can be found in individuals, and the acts themselves are considered acts of disbelief because they are reminiscent of the practices of the pre-Islamic era.

However, if a person possesses a grain of unbelief, it does not automatically make him a complete disbeliever. Likewise, if a person possesses a degree of belief, it does not make him an exemplary believer. There is a great difference between the unbelief mentioned in the tradition:

إِنَّ بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ الشِّرْكِ وَالْكَفْرِ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ.

Verily between man and between polytheism (*shirk*) and unbelief is the negligence of prayer.¹⁸⁶ (and the unbelief of him who denies the existence of Allāh.)

¹⁸⁴ Al-Bukhārī (3850).

¹⁸⁵ Muslim (67).

¹⁸⁶ Muslim (82).

There is also a distinction between the meaning of a complete term—for instance, if it were said, unbeliever or believer—and the complete meaning derived from a term anywhere it occurs, as it is in the Prophet’s words,

لَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفَّارًا، يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ

Do not revert to disbelief after me by striking (cutting) the necks of one another (killing each other).¹⁸⁷

The phrase mentioned in the tradition “striking (cutting) the necks of one another” conveys the meaning of the “disbelief.” In this context, the people involved are referred to as “unbelievers,” but it is important to understand that the term is used in a restricted sense rather than in its absolute meaning. If the word is pronounced “*Kāfirun* (disbelievers)” or we pronounce “*Mu’minūn*,” the word in these cases does not fall under its absolute meaning, rather a restricted. For example, the Words of Allāh:

﴿ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ ﴾

He is created from a water gushing forth.¹⁸⁸

Here, the term “water” is used in a restricted sense to refer to spermatic fluid, not in its absolute term as used in the verse,

﴿ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا ﴾

And cannot find water (for purification).¹⁸⁹

In this same discussion may be included also what has been adduced by both Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of ‘Amr ibn Dinar from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh who said:

غَزَوْنَا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَقَدْ ثَابَ مَعَهُ نَاسٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ حَتَّى

¹⁸⁷ Al-Bukhārī (121, 1661, 1739, 1741, 4402, 4405, 6166, 6868, 6869, 7077, 7080, 7088) and Muslim (65 and 66).

¹⁸⁸ Sūrah at-Tariq, 86:6.

¹⁸⁹ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:6.

كَثُرُوا، وَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ رَجُلٌ لَعَابٌ، فَكَسَعَ أَنْصَارِيًّا، فَغَضِبَ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ
 غَضَبًا شَدِيدًا حَتَّى تَدَاعَوْا، وَقَالَ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ: "يَا لِلْأَنْصَارِ"، وَقَالَ الْمُهَاجِرِيُّ:
 "يَا لِلْمُهَاجِرِينَ"، فَخَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: "مَا بَأَلْ دَعْوَى أَهْلِ
 الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ؟" ثُمَّ قَالَ: "مَا شَأْنُهُمْ" فَأُخْبِرَ بِكَسَعَةِ الْمُهَاجِرِيِّ الْأَنْصَارِيَّ، قَالَ:
 فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "دَعُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا خَبِيثَةٌ" وَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أُبَيٍّ
 سَلُولٌ: أَقَدَ تَدَاعَوْا عَلَيْنَا، لِيُنْزِلَنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجَنَا الْأَعْرُ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ،
 فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: أَلَا نَقْتُلُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا الْحَبِيثَ؟ لِعَبْدِ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَا يَتَحَدَّثُ النَّاسُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقْتُلُ أَصْحَابَهُ"

"We were in the company on an expedition with the Prophet ﷺ. A large number of the *Muhājirūn* (emigrants) joined him and among the emigrants there was a very playful fellow. He (jokingly) stroked an *Anṣārī* (helpers) on the hip. The latter became furious that both of them called their people. The *Anṣārī* said, "Help, O *Anṣār!*" and the *Muhājirī* said, "Help, O *Muhājirūn!*". Thereupon the Prophet came out and said, "What is wrong with the people (as they are calling) this call of the period of *jāhiliya*?" So, he was told about the stroke of the *Muhājirī* to the *Anṣārī*. The Prophet then said, "Stop this" (i.e. appeal for help) for it is an evil call.

‘Abdullāh ibn Ubaiy ibn Salul (a hypocrite) said, "The emigrants have called and (gathered against us); so when we return to Madinah, surely the more honorable people will expel therefrom the meaner." Upon that ‘Umar exclaimed, "Shall we not kill this evil person (i.e., ‘Abdullāh bin Ubaiy bin Salul)?" The Prophet replied, "(No), lest the people should say that he (the Prophet) used to kill his own companions."¹⁹⁰

Muslim has another version from Jābir as well: two young men, one from the *Muhājirūn* (emigrants) and the other one from the *Anṣār* (helpers) fell into dispute and the *Muhājir* called his fellow

¹⁹⁰ Al-Bukhārī (333, 4905, 4907) and Muslim (63, 2584).

Muhājirūn, and the *Anṣāri* (the helper) called the *Anṣār* (for help). In the meanwhile, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ came there and said: “What is this, the proclamation of the days of *jāhiliya* (ignorance)?” They said: “Allāh’s Messenger, there is nothing serious. The two young men fell into dispute and the one struck at the back of the other.” Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) said: “Well, a person should help his brother whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed. If he is the oppressor he should prevent him from doing it, for that is his help; and if he is the oppressed he should be helped (against oppression).”¹⁹¹

The terms “*Muhājirūn*” and “*Anṣār*” are *Shari’a* terms occurring in the Qur’an and Sunnah. If one belongs to the *Muhājirūn* or to the *Anṣār*, it is considered positive and praiseworthy with Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ. It is not merely a permissible quality like indicating belonging to a tribe or city, nor is it something objectionable and forbidden, such as association with something conducive to innovation or any other kind of disobedience. However, when each of the boys called out, summoning his faction for help, the Prophet ﷺ objected and called it a “proclamation of the days of *jāhiliya* (ignorance).” He was told that it was only a fight between two boys and did not involve the community. He then enjoined that the wrongdoer be restrained and the wronged be assisted. The Prophet ﷺ thus made it clear that what needs to be avoided is absolute fanaticism for one’s party, as it was the way of the *Jāhiliyah*. However, assisting one’s brother for what is right without violence is considered positive, obligatory and commendable.

An example of this can be seen in what Abū Dawūd and Ibn Mājah reported on behalf of Wathila ibn al-Asqa’. Al-Asqa’ asked the Prophet ﷺ:

قُلْتُ: “يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الْعَصَبِيَّةُ؟” قَالَ: “أَنْ تُعِينَ قَوْمَكَ عَلَى الظُّلْمِ”

“Messenger of Allāh, what is *‘asabiya*?” He replied, “That you should help your people in wrongdoing.”¹⁹²

Abū Dawūd reported on behalf of Surāqa ibn Malik, who said:

¹⁹¹ Muslim (62, 2584)

¹⁹² Weak, Abū Dawūd (5119) and Ibn Mājah (4949).

خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: "خَيْرُكُمْ الْمُدَافِعُ عَنْ عَشِيرَتِهِ، مَا لَمْ يَأْتُمْ"

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ gave us an address and said: "The best of you is the one who defends his tribe, so long as he commits no sin."¹⁹³

He has this report from Jubair ibn Mut'im, who reported the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as saying:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ، وَلَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ قَاتَلَ عَلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ، وَلَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى عَصَبِيَّةٍ.

He who summons others to party-spirit does not belong to us; and he who dies upholding party spirit does not belong to us.¹⁹⁴

He also reported that Ibn Mas'ūd said:

مَنْ نَصَرَ قَوْمَهُ عَلَى غَيْرِ الْحَقِّ فَهُوَ كَالْبَعِيرِ الَّذِي رُدِّيَ فَهُوَ يُنْزَعُ بِذَنْبِهِ.

If anyone helps his people in an unrighteous cause, he is like a camel which falls into a well and is pulled out by its tail.¹⁹⁵

If this appeal for fighting occurred in such a case between persons belonging to groups (i.e., the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*) whom Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ approved of, how much more would it then apply in the case of absolute party spirit, the appeal to clan-loyalties and other issues which are either merely permissible or outright objectionable.

Affiliating oneself with an Islamic recognized term is preferable to non-Islamic affiliation. This can be understood from what is reported by Abū Dawūd from Abū 'Uqba, a *mawla* (client) from the people of Persia as saying:

عَنْ أَبِي عُقْبَةَ، وَكَانَ مَوْلَى مِنْ أَهْلِ فَارِسَ، قَالَ: "شَهِدْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

¹⁹³ Weak, Abū Dawūd (5120).

¹⁹⁴ Weak, Abū Dawūd (5121).

¹⁹⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (5117).

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَدًا، فَضَرَبْتُ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، " فَقُلْتُ: " خُذَهَا مِنِّي وَأَنَا الْعُلَامُ الْفَارِسِيُّ، " فَالْتَفَتَ إِلَيَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: " فَهَلَّا قُلْتَ خُذَهَا مِنِّي، وَأَنَا الْعُلَامُ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ "

I was present along with the Prophet ﷺ at the battle of Uhud, and on smiting one of the polytheists, I said, "Take this (the strike) from me who is a Persian boy." The Prophet ﷺ then turned to me and said, "Why did you not say, take this from me who is the young *Anṣārī*?"¹⁹⁶

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ urged him to associate himself with the *Anṣār*, even though it was through *wila* (clientship), as this was more desirable to the Prophet ﷺ than openly acknowledging non-Arab origin. Such a relationship is genuine and not forbidden.

There is a likelihood that the wisdom behind this desirability—Allāh Knows best—is that one's mind is protected by the party to which they are affiliated. Therefore, it is highly preferable for one to be affiliated with the party that is beloved to Allāh. However, if something is characterized as pre-Islamic concept, it implies censure and disapproval. Consequently, it necessitates the complete rejection of anything pre-Islamic, which is the central theme of the present book. Here is a further example: Abū Hurairah quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عُبَيْةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَفَخَرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ، وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ، أَنْتُمْ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ، لَيْدَعَنَّ رِجَالُ فَخْرَهُمْ بِأَقْوَامٍ، إِنَّمَا هُمْ فَحَمٌ مِنْ فَحَمِ جَهَنَّمَ، أَوْ لَيْكُونَنَّ أَهْوَنَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْجِعْلَانِ الَّتِي تَدْفَعُ بِأَنْفِهَا التَّتِينَ.

Allāh, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestors. One is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors.

¹⁹⁶ Weak, Abū Dawūd (5123).

They are merely fuel in Jahannam; or they will certainly be of less account with Allāh than the beetle which rolls dung with its nose. (Reported by Abū Dawūd and others as an authentic tradition).¹⁹⁷

He associates pride and boasting with the pre-Islamic era, censuring them, as anything related to pre-Islamic time is undoubtedly an object of reproach.

Furthermore, on the authority of Abū Hurairah, the Prophet ﷺ says:

مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ، وَفَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ فَمَاتَ، مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً،
وَمَنْ قَاتَلَ تَحْتَ رَايَةٍ عَمِيَّةٍ يَعْضِبُ لِعَصْبَةٍ، أَوْ يَدْعُو إِلَى عَصْبَةٍ، أَوْ
يَنْصُرُ عَصْبَةً، فَقُتِلَ، فَقِتْلُهُ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، وَمَنْ خَرَجَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي، يَضْرِبُ بَرَّهَا
وَفَاجِرَهَا، وَلَا يَتَحَاشَى مِنْ مُؤْمِنِيهَا، وَلَا يَفِي لِذِي عَهْدٍ عَهْدَهُ، فَلَيْسَ
مِثِّي وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ.

One who defected from obedience (to the Amir) and separated from the main body of the Muslims—if he died in that state—would die the death of one belonging to the days of Jahiliyyah (i.e. would not die as a Muslim). One who fights under the banner of a people who are blind (to the cause for which they are fighting, i.e., do not know whether their cause is just or otherwise), who gets flared up with family pride, calls (people) to fight for their family honor, and supports his kith and kin (i.e., fights not for the cause of Allāh but for the sake of this family or tribe)—if he is killed (in this fight), he dies as one belonging to the days of *Jahiliyyah*. Whoso attacks my Ummah (indiscriminately) killing the righteous and the wicked of them, sparing not (even) those staunch in faith and fulfilling not his promise made with those who have been given a pledge of security—he has nothing to do with me and I have nothing to do with him.¹⁹⁸

In this tradition, the Prophet ﷺ mentions three categories of Muslims for whom scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have dedicated chapters in their books; the Chapters of the law-breakers, the aggressors, and the extreme factionalists.

¹⁹⁷ Sound, Abū Dawūd (5116), at-Tirmidhī (3955 and 3956).

¹⁹⁸ Muslim (1848).

The first category refers to those who renounces obedience to authority. The Prophet ﷺ strictly forbade the act of renouncing obedience to authority and separating oneself from the general Islamic community. He emphasized that whoever dies in disobedience to their leaders dies a death similar to that someone from the days of Jahiliyyah. It is well-known that during the days of Jahiliyyah, the Arabs and similar societies did not follow a supreme commander.

The Prophet ﷺ proceeded to mention those who engage in fighting out of partisanship for a group or town, and similar reasons. He referred to it as a “blind banner” because it represents a cause that is blindly followed without a clear understanding of its true nature. The same applies to fighting driven by the sentiment of party-spirit, where the permissibility of the fight is not certain.

The Prophet ﷺ drew an analogy between a killing that occurs in a factional fight and a killing that occurs in a *Jāhiliya* cause. This analogy applies regardless of whether the person harbored anger in their heart, agitated orally, or physically assaulted the victim by striking them with their hand. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ elaborated on this matter in another tradition, which is reported by Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah as well. Abū Hurairah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا تَذْهَبُ الدُّنْيَا، حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ عَلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمٌ لَا يَدْرِي الْقَاتِلُ فِيْمَ قَتَلَ، وَلَا الْمَقْتُولُ فِيْمَ قُتِلَ" فَقِيلَ: "كَيْفَ يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ؟" قَالَ: "الْهَرْجُ، الْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ."

The world would not come to an end until a day would come to the people on which the murderer would not know as to why he has killed and the slain would not know as to why he has been murdered. It would be said: “Why would it happen?” To which he replied: “It would be because of general massacre and bloodshed. And the slaughterers and the slain would be in Fire.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Muslim (2908).

The third category comprises those who initiate aggression against the Muslim community. These individuals are driven by material gains, such as the highwaymen (seeking wealth), or by a thirst for power, such as those who fight against the people of a city that is already under the rule of someone else, even if those people themselves are not at war. This category includes dissenters from the Sunnah, like the Haruriya, who were slain by 'Alī—who consider it permissible to shed the blood of fellow Muslim.

The Prophet ﷺ strongly condemned and reproached the act of dying and killing associated with these categories. Therefore, it becomes evident that according to the unwavering belief of the Companions, anything that can be attributed to the practices of Jāhiliya, such as violent death and killing, was both reprovved and forbidden. This understanding leads to the conclusion that anything associated with Jāhiliya is subject to reproach, which is the main focus of this discussion.

It further supports what is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* through al-Ma'mūr ibn Suwaid from Abū Dhār al-Ma'mūr reports:

رَأَيْتُ أَبَا ذَرٍّ وَعَلِيَّهٖ حُلَّةٌ، وَعَلَى غُلَامِيهِ مِثْلَهَا، فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ:
 "فَدَكَرْتُهُ أَنَّهُ سَابَّ رَجُلًا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَعَيَّرَهُ
 بِأَمِّهِ،" قَالَ: "فَأَتَى الرَّجُلُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُ،"
 فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّكَ أَمْرٌ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، إِخْوَانُكُمْ
 وَخَوْلُكُمْ، جَعَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَحْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ، فَمَنْ كَانَ أَخُوهُ تَحْتَ يَدَيْهِ،
 فَلْيُطْعِمْهُ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ، وَلْيَلْبِسْهُ مِمَّا يَلْبَسُ، وَلَا تُكَلِّفُوهُمْ مَا يَغْلِبُهُمْ،
 فَإِنْ كَلَّفْتُمُوهُمْ فَأَعِينُوهُمْ عَلَيْهِ."

I saw Abū Dhar wearing a *burd* (garment) and his slave wearing similar ones. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, "I abused a person during the lifetime of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ by calling his mother with bad names and that person came to Allāh's Apostle ﷺ and made mention of that to him. Thereupon Allāh's Messenger

ﷺ said: ‘You still have some characteristics of ignorance (*jāhiliya*). Your slaves are your brothers and Allāh has put them under your command. So whoever has his brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.’²⁰⁰

This tradition also provides evidence that everything attributed to Jāhiliya is subject to censure, as indicated by the Prophet’s statement, “You still have some characteristics of *Jāhiliyah* (ignorance).” This statement serves as a reproach for the act being referred to, and describing it in such a way necessitates the reproof of Jāhiliyyah itself.

Furthermore, it can be inferred that the act of abusing the ancestry of other families is a practice rooted in *Jāhiliyyah*.

Likewise, this indicates that a person, even if they possess virtues, knowledge, and piety, may still exhibit certain traits that were prevalent in the pre-Islamic, Jewish, and Christian societies. However, this does not imply that the person is to be regarded as an unbeliever or impious.

It further supports the fact that *Jāhiliyyah* practices are censured. Muslim²⁰¹ reports on behalf of Ibn Abbās ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

أَبْغَضُ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثَلَاثَةٌ: مُلْحِدٌ فِي الْحَرَمِ، وَمُبْتَغٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ
سُنَّةِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَمَطْلَبُ دَمِ امْرِيٍّ بَعِيرٍ حَقٌّ لِيُهْرَقَ دَمَهُ.

The most hated persons to Allāh are three: (1) A person who deviates from the right conduct, i.e., an evil doer, in the Ḥarām [sanctuaries of Makkah and Madinah]; (2) A person who seeks that the traditions of the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance, should remain in Islam, and (3) a person who seeks to shed somebody’s blood without any right.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Al-Bukhārī (30, 6050) and Muslim (1661).

²⁰¹ The author ascribed this hadith to Muslim, but it is reported by al-Bukhārī .

²⁰² Al-Bukhārī (6882).

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ informs us that the most detested persons to Allāh are those three. That is because corruption can manifest in both religious or secular matters, and the most severe form of secular corruptions is killing. For that, killing is regarded the second greatest sin after disbelief.

Corruption and its Types

RELIGIOUS CORRUPTION CAN be classified into two types: corruption related to *'amal* (actions) and corruption related to *mahall al-'amal* (the place of actions). The first type of corruption is to desire or adopt pre-Islamic practices, while the second type is to hold heretical beliefs within the Sanctuaries (of Makkah and Madinah). The greatest place of worship is the Sanctuaries (of Makkah and Madinah), and it is considered a graver offence to violate the sanctity of a physical location than that of a specific time period. That is why it is prohibited to engage in hunting and grazing in the Cities of Ḥarām (Makkah and Madinah), but it is not prohibited during the sacred months.

Therefore, it is indeed valid to conclude, as supported by authoritative texts, that the prohibition of killing within the Sacred City (Makkah and Madinah) is perpetual, unlike the prohibition related to the sacred months. That is the reason why, Allāh knows best, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned heresy within the Sanctuary and striving for pre-Islamic practices.

The purpose of this discussion is to emphasize that a Muslim who follows a pre-Islamic practice, regardless of whether they actively strive for it or not, will inevitably fall into one of the three detested categories mentioned earlier. The concept of *ibtigha* (striving) is closely related to *talab* (seeking) and *irada* (volition). This tradition applies to anyone who wishes to enact any of the pre-Islamic practices in Islam. Pre-Islamic practices (*Sunnah*) encompass all *'ada* (pre-Islamic habits), for practice (*Sunnah*) is that which is habitual, i.e., the repeated pattern, which spreads among people in judgment of what is or is not worship.

For example, Allāh used the word *Sunnah* in the verse: “Similar practices/situations (*Sunan*) have passed on before you, so travel throughout the land,”²⁰³ so also the Prophet ﷺ in the tradition: “Assuredly you will follow after the manners/practices (*Sunan*) of those before you.”²⁰⁴

Thus, the act of following entails imitating and enacting a custom. Therefore, anyone who enacts any of the customs of pre-Islamic cultures is essentially following those customs. This general principle prohibits Muslims from adopting or following any practices that were observed by pagans during their festivals and other seasons.

The term pre-Islamic (*Jāhiliya*) is commonly used in the Qur’an and *Sunan* to refer to a certain *hall* (state), or *due’ l-hall* (the person in that state). There are some examples of its usage in this context. For instance, the Prophet’s statement to Abū Dhār, “The jāhiliya is still in you”;²⁰⁵ or ‘Umar’s words, “In the *Jāhiliya*, I vowed to go into seclusion for a whole night”;²⁰⁶ or ‘Ā’ishah’s remark, “In the *Jāhiliya*, marriage used to be of four kinds”;²⁰⁷ or the expression: “Messenger of Allāh, we were in *jāhiliya* and evil”²⁰⁸—that is to say, in a state or way or custom of *Jāhiliya*.

The term *Jāhiliyah*, although originally a descriptive *sifa* (adjective), has by constant usage become a pure *ism* (noun), but one which is closer in meaning to the *masdar* (verbal noun).

The second usage of the term, one says, “an ignorant party,” “an ignorant poet,” in which case the association is to ignorance (*jahl*), which is absence of *ilm* (knowledge), or not following *ilm*. He who does not know the truth is simply ignorant, but if he believes the opposite of truth, then a compounded ignoramus. He is an ignorant if he speaks against the truth, regardless whether he knows the truth or not. An example may be cited the Divine Words:

²⁰³ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:137.

²⁰⁴ Al-Bukhārī (3456, 7320) and Muslim (2669).

²⁰⁵ Al-Bukhārī (30, 6050) and Muslim (1661).

²⁰⁶ Al-Bukhārī (2042, 2043) and Muslim (1656).

²⁰⁷ Al-Bukhārī (5127) and others.

²⁰⁸ Al-Bukhārī (7084) and Muslim (1475,1476).

﴿وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾

And when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] “Peace”²⁰⁹, and the Prophet’s words:

إِذَا كَانَ أَحَدُكُمْ صَائِمًا فَلَا يَرْفُثْ، وَلَا يَجْهَلْ

When one of you is fasting, he should neither use obscene language nor do any act of ignorance.²¹⁰

Bearing on the subject are the words of a poet:

*May no one act ignorantly (rashly) against us / Because we would then
excel the ignorance (rashness) of those acting ignorantly (rashly).*

Examples can be multiplied. Likewise, when someone acts contrary to the truth, even if they are aware that their actions go against it, they are still considered ignorant, as for example in the Qur’an one reads:

﴿إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ﴾

The repentance accepted by Allāh is only for those who do wrong in ignorance and then repent soon [after].²¹¹

The Companions explained: “Whosoever does evil is ignorant.” The reason is that when true knowledge is firmly entrenched in the heart, it becomes difficult for anything contrary to the truth to manifest in one’s words or actions. If untruth does arise, it is due to the inadvertence or weakness of the heart, which goes against the veracity of knowledge. In such cases, knowledge transforms into ignorance.

From here it follows that *ʿamal* (acts) are actually—and not figuratively—included in the term *Īmān* (faith), yet he who abandons some of these acts does not become an unbeliever thereby, or remain outside the term faith basically. The same applies to the term reason

²⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Furqan, 25:63.

²¹⁰ Al-Bukhārī (1894) and Muslim (1151).

²¹¹ Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:17.

and to other similar terms. For this, Allāh usually refers to those with these traits of *jāhiliya* as: *dead, blind, deaf, dumb, astray, ignoramus, and as people of no understanding and obedience*; while he would refer to the believers as: *reasonable, intellectuals, guided, and as possessing light, hearing sense and obedience*.

It becomes clear that before the Prophet's mission, people were in a state of ignorance. Whatever tenets and practices they followed were introduced by the ignoramuses and adopted by the ignorant. Similarly, anything contradicting the teachings of earlier prophets of Judaism and Christianity is also considered ignorance. Such was the prevailing state of ignorance.

Regarding the period following the advent of the Prophet ﷺ, the prevalence of absolute pre-Islamic practices may differ from town to town, as seen in territories inhabited by the unbelievers. It can also vary from person to person, such as in the case of someone who has not yet embraced Islam and remains in a state of *Jāhiliyah*, even though they reside within the territory of Islam.

In another sense, the era of absolute *jāhiliya* came to an end with the arrival of Muhammad ﷺ. Since then, there has always been a segment of his community that continues to uphold and proclaim the truth until the end of days. But *jāhiliya* in a restricted sense may, however, still exist in certain Muslim lands and among a significant number of Muslims. As the Prophet ﷺ mentioned, "Four characteristics dating from the *Jāhiliyah* (pre-Islamic) period persist among my people,"²¹² or as he had said to Abū Dhār, "The *Jāhiliyah* is still in you."²¹³

When the Prophet ﷺ stated: "He who seeks in Islam the practice of the *Jāhiliyah*," it encompasses all its various forms; whether they are absolute or relative; Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Sabianism, idolatry and polytheism, complete or partial, or derived from any of these pre-Islamic entities. All of them, both the innovations and the abrogated tenets became *Jāhiliyah* with the advent of the Prophet ﷺ. Although the term itself is used mostly with reference to the pre-Islamic Arabs, its effects and influences are the same. Both Bukhārī and Muslim

²¹² Mentioned earlier.

²¹³ Mentioned earlier.

report from Ibn 'Umar:

أَنَّ النَّاسَ نَزَلُوا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْحِجْرِ - أَرْضِ
ثَمُودَ - فَاسْتَقَوْا مِنْ آبَارِهَا، وَعَجَنُوا بِهِ الْعَجِينَ فَأَمَرَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُهْرِيقُوا مَا اسْتَقَوْا، وَيَعْلِفُوا الْإِبِلَ الْعَجِينَ، وَأَمَرَهُمْ
أَنْ يَسْتَقُوا مِنَ الْبُئْرِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَرُدُّهَا النَّاقَةُ.

The people encamped along with the Prophet ﷺ in the valley of al-Hijr—the Thamud terrain. They quenched their thirst from the wells thereof and kneaded the flour with it. Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ commanded that the water collected for drinking should be spilt and the flour should be given to the camels and commanded them that the water should be taken from that well where the she-camels (of Hadrat Ṣāliḥ) used to come.²¹⁴

In another report of al-Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn Umar also, he has it:

لَمَّا نَزَلَ الْحِجْرَ فِي غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ، أَمَرَهُمْ أَنْ لَا يَشْرَبُوا مِنْ بُئْرِهَا، وَلَا
يَسْتَقُوا مِنْهَا، فَقَالُوا: "قَدْ عَجَنَّا مِنْهَا وَاسْتَقَيْنَا"، فَأَمَرَهُمْ أَنْ يَضْرَحُوا
ذَلِكَ الْعَجِينَ، وَيُهْرِيقُوا ذَلِكَ الْمَاءَ.

When Allāh's Messenger ﷺ landed at al-Hijr at the time of the military expedition of Tabūk, he ordered his companions not to drink water from its well or reserve water from it. They said, "We have already kneaded the dough with its water and also filled our bags with its water." On that, the Prophet ﷺ ordered them to throw away the dough and pour out the water.²¹⁵

In a tradition quoted by Jābir, the Prophet ﷺ on passing al-Hijr said,

لَا تَدْخُلُوا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُعَدِّينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونُوا بَاكِينَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ
تَكُونُوا بَاكِينَ فَلَا تَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ، أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ.

²¹⁴ Al-Bukhārī (4834) and Muslim (2981).

²¹⁵ Al-Bukhārī (3378 and 3379).

Do not enter (the dwellings) of these people where Allāh's punishment had fallen unless you do so weeping. If you do not weep, do not enter (the places of these people) because Allāh's curse and punishment which fell upon them may fall upon you.²¹⁶

In the hadith, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibited his companions from entering the places where people were being punished unless they were in a state of genuine fear and remorse for the sins that led to the punishment. He also prohibited them from utilizing water from the well of the punished people. Despite the companions' dire need for sustenance during one difficult expedition that was the hardest one they undertook, he instructed them to give the dough, which was kneaded with that water, as food for the carrier animals. Likewise, he also 'prohibited offering *Salāt* prayer in the dwellings of the chastised.'

The tradition reported by Abū Dawūd on the authority of Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ghifari narrates an incident 'while on a journey, 'Alī ﷺ passed through Bābil. The *mu'adhdhin* called him for the afternoon prayer. However, after leaving Bābil behind, 'Alī ﷺ commanded the *mu'adhdhin* to give the *Iqāma*. After the prayer, 'Alī said, "The Prophet ﷺ, my beloved, forbade me to perform prayer in the commentary and in the territory of Bābil for it is accursed."²¹⁷

Abū Dawūd reported a hadith with a different chain of transmitters and wording, going back to Abū Ṣāliḥ from 'Alī as well.²¹⁸ So also Imām Ahmad, but he as it that, 'Alī hated performing *Salāt* in Bābil's territory or the land Allāh caused its people to sink down it.²¹⁹

'Alī's words, "He forbade me to perform *Salāt* in the territory of Bābil for it is accursed," presupposes that prayer must not be offered in an accursed land. This aligns with the famous tradition regarding al-Hijr, where the Prophet prohibited entry into a chastised land, implying that the prohibition includes the performance of prayer and

²¹⁶ Al-Bukhārī (433, 4420) and Muslim (2980).

²¹⁷ Weak, Abū Dawūd (490).

²¹⁸ Weak, Abū Dawūd (491).

²¹⁹ Sound, Ta'liq at-Tagliq (2/231). This tradition is only acceptable of Aliy's practice, not a report from the Prophet ﷺ.

other rites in such a place.²²⁰

With it agree also the Words of Allāh regarding *Masjid ad-Dirar* (the Opposition Mosque), viz.:

﴿ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴾

“Never stand therein,”²²¹ because it was one of the places of chastisement.

He then said:

﴿ أَفَمَنْ أَتَّقَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ آتَسَّ
بُنْيَنَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَاتَّهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ﴾

Then is one who laid the foundation of his building on righteousness [with fear] from Allāh and [seeking] His approval better or one who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a bank about to collapse, so it collapsed with him into the fire of Hell?²²²

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged Muslims to perform prayers in places of grace, such as the three mosques and the mosque at Quba, but he forbade praying in chastised lands. However, it is permissible to transform places of unbelief and insubordination, which are not under the curse of Allāh, into places of belief and worships. The Prophet ﷺ exemplified this by “he enjoined the people of at-Ta’if to turn their idol-house into a Mosque.”²²³ Similarly, “he ordered the people of al-Yamama that they should turn their church into a mosque.”²²⁴ The Prophet’s Mosque itself was once a graveyard belonging to the polytheists, but he built a

²²⁰ Scholars have difference of opinion about the issue of offering prayers in the accursed places; some of them maintained that it is permissible to offer prayers in the places owing to non-authenticity of the traditions that prohibit that, coupled with the fact that the condition of purity required of the place for *Salāt* is met. That coupled with the fact that the places wherein *Salāt* is not allowed to be performed have been specified in the Sunnah. This opinion seems to be the most acceptable one. Allāh knows best.

²²¹ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:108.

²²² Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:109.

²²³ Weak, Abū Dawūd (450) and Ibn Mājah (743).

²²⁴ Sound, an-Nasā’ī (701), Ahmad (39/462), and others.

mosque on that site after removing the graves.²²⁵

Now if the *Shari'a* explicitly prohibits participating with the unbelievers in the places where they have been afflicted, then it follows that participating in the very deeds they performed, which led to their punishment, would be even more strongly forbidden.

Here an objection may arise: The same act performed by the unbelievers is not inherently forbidden if it is stripped of imitation and the intention of imitating them. Merely entering a place, without any connection or intention to imitate the people, is not sinful. It is the participation in specific actions within that place that may lead to punishment. However, I would argue that all practices of the unbelievers, which do not align with the practices of the early Muslims, either stem from unbelief or insubordination, they serve as symbols of unbelief or insubordination, or closely resemble them, or may even lead us towards committing sins. I consider it incontestable, but he who contests this will have to agree that differing from them in these things brings us closer to differing from the unbelievers with all their unbelief and insubordination. Undoubtedly such results set in rather from acts than from the location.

As you can see, following the Prophets ﷺ, the sincere, the martyrs, and the righteous in their deeds is not only beneficial but also more appropriate than pursuing their dwellings and contemplating their abodes.

The Concept and Consequences of Resemblance

INDEED, THIS THESIS is most clearly evident in the report given by Abū Dawūd in his *Sunan*, on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, who quotes the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ تَشَبَهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

He who imitates a people belongs to them.²²⁶

²²⁵ Al-Bukhārī (428) and Muslim (524).

²²⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4031).

The very least one can learn from this tradition is that it emphasizes the prohibition of imitating the unbelievers, even though the explicit meaning suggests that one who imitates them is guilty of disbelief. In this regard, it resembles the Words of Allāh:

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ﴾

Whoever among you takes them for allies (intimate friends) belongs to them.²²⁷

It also aligns with the statement of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, who said, “Whoever settles in the land of the polytheists, celebrates their festivals and carnivals, imitates them, and does all that throughout his life will be raised along with them on Resurrection Day.”²²⁸

This may apply to imitation in general, in which case the one guilty of imitation must be declared an unbeliever. The prohibition of imitation extends not only to complete imitation but also to partial imitation. Alternatively, it may refer to a situation where a person is partially identified with the unbelievers to the extent that he imitates them. The same stipulation applies when there is involvement in unbelief, insubordination, or any symbol thereof.

In any case, since imitation is imitation, the injunction of the Prophet requires it to be considered forbidden.

Anyhow, imitation encompasses both those who perform an act merely because others did so, even though this occurs rarely, as well as those who follow another person in an act based on their own intention, as the very foundation of the act is derived from others.

If someone performs an act and it happens that another person performs the same act independently, without any intention of imitation, this case requires further consideration. However, even in such cases, it may still be forbidden in order to avoid becoming a means of imitation, and because forbidding it emphasizes the importance of being distinct from others.

²²⁷ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:51.

²²⁸ Authentic, *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* of al-Bayhaqī (9/234).

The example of this can be found in the injunctions of the Prophet ﷺ regarding dyeing the beard and the trimming the mustache. The command to “change gray hair, and do not imitate the Jews” indicates that imitation can occur even without our deliberate intention or action. It can happen simply by allowing ourselves to abandon changing something that is natural to us. This form of passive imitation can be more influential than an unintentional act of agreement.

On the subject, Ibn ‘Umar’s tradition is cited that the Prophet ﷺ forbade imitating the non-Arabs, saying, “He who imitates a people belongs to them” (Mentioned by Qadi Abū Ya’la).²²⁹

Based on this tradition, several *ulamā* have argued against adopting certain items of non-Muslim’s attire. Muhammad ibn Harb reports that Ahmad was asked for his opinion on wearing Sindi sandals. Ahmad objected to their use by both men and women, stating that it was acceptable to use them in lavatory and for ablution, but he disliked their use of *sarar*.²³⁰ He considered sandals as part of the clothing of non-Arab.

Similarly, when Sa’īd ibn ‘Āmir was asked about these sandals, he replied that “the practice of our Prophet is beloved to me.”

Al-Murūdhī reported that Imām Ahmad, when expressing his opinion about wearing those sandals, stated: “Personally, I don’t wear them. However, if they are used for walking through muddy areas or in lavatory, it is permissible. They should not be adopted as regular footwear.” And when Imām Ahmad saw a Sindi sandal at the entrance of a lavatory, he commented, “The owner of this sandal is imitating those princes.”

Harb al-Kirmānī asked Ahmad: “What is your opinion about these heavy sandals?” Ahmad replied: “Are you referring to the Sindi sandals?” He continued: “It is permissible to use them in the lavatory and for ablution, or in cases of necessity.” Perhaps he hated walking around with it. He was asked again: “What about sandals made from wooden materials?” He replied: “It is permissible to use them in cases of necessity as well.”

²²⁹ *Tabaqāt al-Hanābila* (2/193-230).

²³⁰ A type of non-Arabic sandals.

Harb reported that Ibn al-Mubāraq was asked about al-Kirmānīyah's sandals, he was not pleased with wearing them. He said: "Are we not free in needing such things?"

Al-Khalāl reported that Sa'īd ibn 'Āmir was asked about wearing Sibtiyah's shoes, to which he replied: "Our Prophet's manner of dressing is beloved to us to the Indian King's. If those shoes were present in Madinah during the Prophet's time, they would have removed them all from Madinah."

Sa'īd ibn 'Āmir was a highly esteemed and knowledgeable leader among the people of al-Basrah. He was renowned for his knowledge and devotion to religion. He served as one of the teachers of Imām Ahmad.

Yahyah ibn Sa'īd al-Qatān mentioned him, saying: "For forty years now, he has been the leading scholar in Egypt." And Abū Mas'ūd ibn Furāt also remarked that there was no one like him among the scholars of Basrah.

Al-Maimuni said, "I saw Abū 'Abdallāh wearing his turban in such a way that it came under his chin. He disliked wearing it in any other fashion, saying, 'The Arabs wear their turbans as far down as their chins.'"

According to the account of al-Hasan ibn Muhammad, Sa'īd ibn 'Āmir strongly disapproved of wearing turbans that did not extend below the lower jaw. He considered it a common practice among Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, and thus disliked it.

Imām Ahmad also objected to wearing items that were symbols of the wicked during his time, such as the color black. He, as well as others, also expressed their disapproval of closing the eyes during prayer, stating that it was a Jewish practice. Bilal ibn Abī Hadrād quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying: "Cultivate the lifeways of Ma'add's progeny, lead a rough life, wear shoes or walk barefoot."²³¹

'Umar is known to have instructed the Muslims accordingly. This will be further discussed in our discussion of the Righteous Caliphs.

At-Tirmidhī reports the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ تَشَبَهَ بِغَيْرِنَا، لَا تَشَبَّهُوا بِالْيَهُودِ وَلَا بِالنَّصَارَى، فَإِنَّ تَسْلِيمَ

²³¹ Weak, *Da'if al-Jam'i* (2483).

الْيَهُودِ الْإِشَارَةَ بِالْأَصَابِعِ، وَتَسْلِيمَ النَّصَارَى الْإِشَارَةَ بِالْأَكْفِ.

He who imitates those other than us is not of us. Do not imitate the Jews and Christians, for the salutation of the Jews is to make a gesture with the fingers, of the Christians to make a gesture with the palms of the hands.²³²

Abū Dawūd reports that once Rukāna wrestled with the Prophet ﷺ, but the Prophet ﷺ overpowered him. Rukāna then mentioned that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say,

فَرُقْ مَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، الْعَمَائِمُ عَلَى الْقَلَانِسِ.

The difference between us and the polytheists is that we wear our turbans over caps.²³³

At-Tirmidhī also reported this tradition. Though it is a weak one, it could however be used as a supportive evidence in this regard. It is evident that the *Shari'a* intends for Muslims to appear distinct in their attire from the polytheists. The same principle applies to the words of the Prophet:

فَصَلِّ بَيْنَ الْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ الدُّفِّ، وَالصَّوْتُ (فِي التَّكَاحِ).

What separates the lawful from the unlawful is the use of tambourine and singing (during marriage ceremony).²³⁴

In light of the existing distinctions between the believers and non-believers in matters of belief and actions, regardless of the turban, it can be inferred that this tradition emphasizes the importance of outward differentiation in appearance as well. Otherwise, the tradition would be meaningless.

The same principle applies to the differentiation between males and females in terms of their physical attributes and outward attire.

The Prophet ﷺ cursed women who imitate men and men who

²³² Sound, but the narration is only traceable to one of the companions, and not the Prophet's statement. Abū Dawūd, (2695).

²³³ Weak, Abū Dawūd (4087) and at-Tirmidhī (1784).

²³⁴ Sound, an-Nasā'ī (3369) and Ibn Mājah (1897), Ahmad (15451).

imitate women.²³⁵ He ordered:

أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ

Drive them out of your houses!²³⁶

He disapproved of a man who, despite being male, adopted the appearance of a woman in an effeminate manner.

Furthermore, it is reported that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās said:

حِينَ صَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ قَالُوا: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ يَوْمٌ تُعَظَّمُهُ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى." فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "فَإِذَا كَانَ الْعَامُ الْمُقْبِلُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صُمْنَا الْيَوْمَ التَّاسِعَ" قَالَ: فَلَمْ يَأْتِ الْعَامُ الْمُقْبِلُ، حَتَّى تُوَفِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

When the Prophet ﷺ fasted on the day of ‘Āshura’ and commanded that it should be observed as a fast, they (his Companions) said: “Messenger of Allāh, it is a day which the Jews and Christians hold in high esteem.” Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said: “When the next year comes, God willing, we would observe fast on the ninth (together with the tenth).” But the Prophet ﷺ died before the advent of the next year. (Reported by Muslim).²³⁷

The same Ibn ‘Abbās is reported by Imām Ahmad as quoting the Prophet ﷺ: “Observe fasting on ‘Āshura’ and differentiate yourselves from the Jews by fasting a day before or after it.”²³⁸

Let us carefully consider the significance of the blessed day of ‘Āshura’, which expiates sins of the year before when observed through fasting. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ not only observed this day himself but also urged and encouraged others to do the same. However, shortly before his death, when he was informed that the Jews and Christians also

²³⁵ Al-Bukhārī (5885).

²³⁶ Al-Bukhārī (5886, and 6834).

²³⁷ Muslim (1134).

²³⁸ Weak, Ahmad (2154).

observed this day, he instructed his followers to differentiate themselves by adding another day to their fasting, intending to do so himself.

Many *ulamā*, including Imām Ahmad, recommended fasting both on the ninth and on 'Āshura'. This was also the position the Companions who urged in favor of. Thus, Ibn 'Abbās is quoted as saying: "Fast on the ninth and the tenth; be different from the Jews."²³⁹

Also 'Umar quoted the Prophet ﷺ:

"إِنَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ، لَا نَكْتُبُ وَلَا نَحْسِبُ، الشَّهْرُ هَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا" يَعْنِي مَرَّةً تِسْعَةَ وَعِشْرِينَ، وَمَرَّةً ثَلَاثِينَ.

We are an Illiterate nation; who neither write, nor know accounts. The month is like this and this, (i.e. sometimes of twenty-nine and sometimes of thirty days). (Reported by Bukhārī and Muslim).²⁴⁰

The Prophet ﷺ characterized his community as distinct from others in that they do not rely on writing nor counting for determining the timing of their worships and festivals. Instead, he rely on the actual sighting of the moon.

More than once the tradition reports:

صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ وَأَفْطَرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ

Start fasting on seeing it (the crescent of Ramadhān) and break your fasting on seeing it (the crescent of Shawwāl).²⁴¹

In another version, "Fast from whiteness to whiteness!" i.e., from one new-moon to the next.

This is why Muslims, with the exception of a few contemporary opponents, unanimously agree that the timing of fasting, breaking the fast, and other religious rites should primarily rely on the actual sighting of the moon whenever possible, rather than by relying on written calendars or calculation. This practice distinguishes Muslims

²³⁹ Authentic, *Mūsānaf Abdur-Razāq* (8739) , *Sunan al-Kubrāh* of Bayhaqī (8404).

²⁴⁰ Al-Bukhārī (1913) Muslim (1080).

²⁴¹ Al-Bukhārī (1909) and (1080).

from other communities, such as the Byzantines, Persians, Copts and Indians, and by such people of the Books as the Jews and Christians who rely on written or computer methods.

Muslim scholars have recounted that before Islam, the People of the Book too had been enjoined to follow the sighting in the observance of their fast and other acts of worship. These scholars base their knowledge on the Word of Allāh:

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ﴾

Decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you.²⁴²

But on their own they changed the method. Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ prohibited commencing the month of Ramadan a day or two ahead of time.²⁴³

This prohibition, as the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence explain, was due to the apprehension, unless something which was beyond the obligatory duration of fast should be added thereto (as the Christians had done). They had added to their fast and set it between winter and summer, elaborating a computation for setting the date.

This tradition can be cited as an argument supporting the prohibition of participating in the unbelievers' festivals. The reason for this is that the unbelievers' festivals are determined using writing or computation, which contrasts with the principle emphasized in the tradition.

Or it is said that if fixing the festivals that Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ legalized by writing or computation is not permissible to, then it should be even more unacceptable to fix other festivals and feasts by writing or computation. Doing so would equate Islam with other faiths.

In short, the tradition presupposes that the Muslim community has been graced with a distinction that aims to maintain its uniqueness in comparison to other faiths. This, in turn, assumes that by not imitating other faiths, Islam is more likely to preserve this distinction. Furthermore, both *Ṣaḥīḥs* report from Humaid ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmān ibn 'Auf that:

أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنَ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، عَامَ حَجِّ وَهُوَ عَلَى الْمَنْبَرِ وَتَنَاولَ قُصَّةً مِنْ

²⁴² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:183.

²⁴³ Al-Bukhārī (1914) and Muslim (1082).

شَعْرٍ كَانَتْ فِي يَدِ حَرَسِيِّ، يَقُولُ: يَا أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ أَيْنَ عُلَمَاؤُكُمْ؟ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَنْهَى عَنِ مِثْلِ هَذِهِ، وَيَقُولُ: "إِنَّمَا هَلَكَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ حِينَ اتَّخَذَ هَذِهِ نِسَاؤُهُمْ".

He heard Mu'awiya ibn Abī Sufyan, who was on the pulpit during a pilgrimage year. Mu'awiya seized a tuft of hair from one of his guards, saying: "O People of Madinah, where are your religious learned men? I heard the Prophet ﷺ forbidding anything like this and saying, 'The Children of Israel perished when their women started using this.'"²⁴⁴

Ibn al-Mūsāyyib reported that:

أَنَّ مُعَاوِيَةَ، قَالَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ: إِنَّكُمْ قَدْ أَحَدَثْتُمْ زِيَّ سَوْءٍ: "وَإِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنِ الزُّورِ" قَالَ: وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ بَعْضًا عَلَى رَأْسِهَا خِرْقَةٌ قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ: أَلَا وَهَذَا الزُّورُ، قَالَ قَتَادَةُ: "يَعْنِي مَا يُكْتَرَّبُ بِهِ النِّسَاءُ أَشْعَارَهُنَّ مِنَ الْخِرْقِ"

That Mu'awiya said one day: "Should I narrate to you the evil make-up, and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade cheating. It was during that time that a person came with a staff and there was a cloth on its head, whereupon Mu'awiya said: Behold, that is cheating. Qatāda explained: This implies how women artificially increase their hair with the help of rags."²⁴⁵

قَدِمَ مُعَاوِيَةُ الْمَدِينَةَ فَخَطَبَنَا وَأَخْرَجَ كُبَّةً مِنْ شَعْرٍ، فَقَالَ: "مَا كُنْتُ أَرَى أَنَّ أَحَدًا يَفْعَلُهُ إِلَّا الْيَهُودَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَلَغَهُ فَسَمَاهُ الزُّورَ."

Mu'awiya came to Madinah and he addressed us and took out a bunch of hair and said: "What do I see that one of you does

²⁴⁴ Al-Bukhārī (5932) and Muslim (2127).

²⁴⁵ Muslim (124, 2127).

but that what the Jews did? (I can well recall) that when this act (adding of artificial hair) reached the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, he named it cheating.”²⁴⁶

The Prophet ﷺ spoke about the practice of women adding artificial hair, noting that it was initiated by the women of the Children of Israel, and he warned his nation against it. This is why Mu’awiya said: “What do I see that one of you does but that what the Jews did.”

If this practice originated with the Jews and was not part of Muslim tradition, then it either be an act that undoubtedly attracts punishment, or one that could potentially lead to punishment, or it could be an act, if abandon, would protect oneself from the offense for which they were once punished. Especially if the reason for such punishment was not distinguished from their other actions, in which case the offensive act is not distinct from others. This necessitates abandoning all aspects of their practice, just as we have been instructed to be indifferent to their traditions, as they are mixture of truth and falsehood.

Furthermore, regarding what Naf’i reports from Ibn ‘Umar, who said that the Prophet ﷺ, or ‘Umar said,

إِذَا كَانَ لِأَحَدِكُمْ ثَوْبَانِ فَلْيَصِلْ فِيهِمَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ إِلَّا ثَوْبٌ وَاحِدٌ
فَلْيَتَّزِرْ بِهِ، وَلَا يَشْتَمِلْ اشْتِمَالَ الْيَهُودِ.

If anyone of you has two garments, let him pray in both; but if he has only one, let him then wrap it around his waist (like an *izar*), and not envelop himself in it like a Jew (with his prayer shawl).” (Abū Dawūd²⁴⁷ and others narrated it with a *Ṣaḥīḥ Isnad*—authentic chain of transmitters).

This meaning undoubtedly arises from the report of Jābir and others, where Prophet ﷺ instructs regarding a narrow garment that it should be worn like an *izar* and one should not be fully wrapped in it. This opinion is held by the majority of learned Muslims, although there are two opinions in Ahmad’s school.

²⁴⁶ Muslim (123, 2127).

²⁴⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (630).

Our purpose is solely to demonstrate that the injunction of the Prophet ﷺ that a man must not fully wrap himself like a Jew (with his prayer shawl)' adds the prohibited items to the list associated with Jews, indicating that this connection led to the prohibition, as mentioned above.

A passage that warns against imitating the People of the Books and that could be appropriately mentioned at the very beginning of this book is:

﴿أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ﴾

Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allāh and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened?²⁴⁸

The Words of Allāh, “And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before,” encompass a complete prohibition against imitating them, especially in their hardheartedness which is a consequence of sin.

In many places of the Qur'an, Allāh described attitudes of the Jews. Here, He says:

﴿فَقُلْنَا أَضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْقُقُ فَيُخْرَجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾﴾

So, We said, “Strike him [i.e., the slain man] with part of it [the cow].” Thus does Allāh bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason. (*) Then your hearts became hardened

²⁴⁸ Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, 57:16.

after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allāh. And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.²⁴⁹

And this:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا
 وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَءَامَنْتُمْ
 بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ
 سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ
 بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ
 لَعْنَتُهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ
 وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا نُزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ
 فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾﴾

And Allāh had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve leaders. And Allāh said, "I am with you. If you establish prayer and give *Zakāt* and believe in My messengers and support them and loan Allāh a goodly loan, I will certainly forgive your sins and admit you to Gardens under which rivers flow. But whoever of you disbelieves after that has truly strayed from the Right Way (*) So for their breaking of the covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their (proper) places (i.e., usages) and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them. But pardon them and overlook [their misdeeds]. Indeed, Allāh loves the doers of good.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:73-74.

²⁵⁰ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:12-13.

Yet, there are individuals within this community who claim to be learned or devout but possess some of these characteristics, which can be discerned by insightful individuals. As for us, we seek refuge in Allāh from anything that is displeasing to Him and His Messenger. It is for this reason that the *Salaf* used to exercise caution in this regard.

Al-Bukhārī reports in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Abū al-Aswad reported that:

بَعَثَ أَبُو مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيُّ إِلَى قُرَاءِ أَهْلِ الْبَصْرَةِ، فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ ثَلَاثُمِائَةٍ رَجُلٍ قَدْ قَرَعُوا الْقُرْآنَ، فَقَالَ: "أَنْتُمْ خِيَارُ أَهْلِ الْبَصْرَةِ وَقُرَاؤُهُمْ، فَاتْلُوهُ، وَلَا يَطْوِلَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَمَدُ فَتَقْسُو قُلُوبَكُمْ، كَمَا قَسَتْ قُلُوبُ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، وَإِنَّا كُنَّا نَقْرَأُ سُورَةَ، كُنَّا نُنْشِبُهَا فِي الطُّولِ وَالشَّدَّةِ بِبَرَاءَةٍ، فَأُنْسِيَتْهَا، غَيْرَ أَنِّي قَدْ حَفِظْتُ مِنْهَا: لَوْ كَانَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ وَادِيَانِ مِنْ مَالٍ، لَا بَتَّعَى وَادِيًا ثَالِثًا، وَلَا يَمْلَأُ جَوْفَ ابْنِ آدَمَ إِلَّا التُّرَابُ، وَكُنَّا نَقْرَأُ سُورَةَ، كُنَّا نُنْشِبُهَا بِإِحْدَى الْمُسَبِّحَاتِ، فَأُنْسِيَتْهَا، غَيْرَ أَنِّي حَفِظْتُ مِنْهَا: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ، فَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَةٌ فِي أَعْنَاقِكُمْ، فَتُسْأَلُونَ عَنْهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ari sent for the reciters of Basra. They came to him and they were three hundred in numbers. They recited the Qur'an, and he said:

You are the best among the inhabitants of Basra, for you are the reciters among them. So continue to recite it. (But bear in mind) that your reciting for a long period may not harden your hearts as were hardened the hearts of those before you. We used to recite a Sūrah which resembled in length and severity to (Sūrah) Bara'at. I have, however, forgotten it with the exception of this which I remember out of it: If there were two valleys full of riches, for the son of Adam, he would long for a third valley, and nothing would fill the stomach of the son of Adam but dust. And we used to recite

a Sūrah which resembled one of the chapters of *Mūsābbihat*, and I have forgotten it, but remember (this much) out of it: Oh people who believe, why do you say that which you do not practice and that is recorded in your necks as a witness (against you) and you would be asked about it on the Day of Resurrection.²⁵¹

Abū Mūsā warned the reciters that time may seem to them over protracted and their hearts should become hardened.

Furthermore, breaking the covenant involved violating everything that Allāh had commanded and forbidden, distorting the Divine Book, distorting words, and providing a biased interpretation of it. A similar statement is reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd.

Ibn ar-Rabi' ibn Abī Umaila al-Fazāri reports: 'Abdullah narrated a story to us, and I have never heard a narration better than this except the Book of Allāh or a tradition passed down from the Prophet ﷺ. He said: "When a long time had passed over the Children of Israel, their hearts became hardened. So, some of them invented their own scripture, following their desires, and allowing what they pleased. They concealed the truth, serving their own lusts until they rejected the true Scripture, abandoning it as if they had never known it. They then said: 'Present this scripture before the Children of Israel. If they follow it, spare them, but if they oppose you, then slay them.' Later, they reconsidered and said: 'Instead, send for such-and-such among their learned individuals and present this scripture before him. If he follows you, no one shall oppose you after him, but if he opposes you, slay him, and no one shall oppose you after him.' They sent for him, and this learned man took a leaf and wrote the Divine Scripture on it. He placed it in a horn and hung the horn around his neck, wearing clothes on top of it. In this manner, he approached them. They presented the book before him and asked, 'Do you believe in it?' Pointing to his chest, he replied, 'I do believe in it. And why shouldn't I?'—referring to the Scripture in the horn. They let him go. This learned man had some colleagues who concealed the matter. When he died, they exhumed him and found

²⁵¹ Muslim (1050).

the horn with the Divine Scripture. They said, ‘Don’t you see what he meant when he said. ‘I do believe in it. And why shouldn’t I?’ Indeed, he meant this Scripture.’ Subsequently, the Children of Israel split into around seventy sects, with the best among them being the People of the Horn.” ‘Abdullah said, “Whoever among you survives will soon witness the disreputable. When a person is confronted with evil against which he is helpless, all he needs is for Allāh to know that in his heart he opposes that evil.”

When Allāh forbade imitating these hardhearted individuals and mentioned at the end of the passage the condition of those who invented monasticism but did not truly adhere to it. He continued the theme with:

﴿اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَيْلًا يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾

Fear Allāh and believe in His Messenger. He will [then] grant you a double portion of His mercy, and make for you with a light by which you will walk and forgive you. For Allāh is All-Forgiving, and Most Merciful (*) [This is] so that the People of the Book may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allāh’s and that all grace is in Allāh’s Hands. He grants it to whoever He wills. For Allāh is the Lord of infinite bounty.”²⁵²

Believing in the Messenger means trusting and obeying him as well as following his *Shari’a*, which includes not practicing monasticism. The Prophet ﷺ was not sent to teach monasticism; rather, he forbade it. He stated that any individual from the People of the Books who embraces his message will merit two rewards. This understanding is supported by authentic traditions transmitted to us through reports

²⁵² Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, 57:28-29.

from Ibn 'Umar and other companions.

This concept becomes even more evident from a Prophetic saying reported by Abū Dawūd in his *Sunan*, in which Sahl ibn Abū Umamah narrated:

أَنَّهُ دَخَلَ هُوَ وَأَبُوهُ عَلَى أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ بِالْمَدِينَةِ فِي زَمَانِ عُمَرَ بْنِ عَبْدِ
الْعَزِيزِ وَهُوَ أَمِيرُ الْمَدِينَةِ، فَإِذَا هُوَ يُصَلِّي صَلَاةً خَفِيفَةً دَقِيقَةً كَأَنَّهَا صَلَاةُ
مُسَافِرٍ أَوْ قَرِيبًا مِنْهَا، فَلَمَّا سَلَّمَ قَالَ أَبِي: يَرْحَمَكَ اللَّهُ، أَرَأَيْتَ هَذِهِ الصَّلَاةُ
الْمَكْتُوبَةُ أَوْ شَيْءٌ تَنَقَّلْتَهُ، قَالَ: إِنَّهَا الْمَكْتُوبَةُ، وَإِنَّهَا لَصَلَاةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا أَخْطَأْتُ إِلَّا شَيْئًا سَهَوْتُ عَنْهُ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقُولُ: "لَا تُشَدِّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَيُشَدِّدَ
عَلَيْكُمْ، فَإِنْ قَوْمًا شَدَّدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَشَدَّدَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَمِثْلُكَ بَقَايَاهُمْ
فِي الصَّوَامِعِ وَالْدِّيَارِ {وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ} " ثُمَّ عَدَا
مِنَ الْعَدِ فَقَالَ: "أَلَا تَرَكِبُ لِتَنْظُرَ وَلِتَعْتَبِرَ؟" قَالَ: نَعَمْ، فَرَكِبُوا جَمِيعًا فَإِذَا
هُمْ بِدِيَارٍ بَادٍ أَهْلُهَا وَانْقَضُوا وَفَنُوا خَاوِيَةً عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا، فَقَالَ: "أَتَعْرِفُ
هَذِهِ الدِّيَارَ؟" فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَعْرِفُنِي بِهَا وَبِأَهْلِهَا، "هَذِهِ دِيَارُ قَوْمٍ أَهْلَكَهُمُ
الْبَغْيُ وَالْحَسَدُ، إِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يُطْفِئُ نُورَ الْحَسَنَاتِ، وَالْبَغْيُ يُصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ أَوْ
يُكَذِّبُهُ، وَالْعَيْنُ تَزِينِي، وَالْكَفُّ، وَالْقَدَمُ، وَالْجَسَدُ، وَاللِّسَانُ، وَالْفَرْجُ
يُصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ أَوْ يُكَذِّبُهُ"

He and his father (Abū Umamah) visited Anas ibn Mālik at Madinah during the time (rule) of Umar ibn Abdul-Azīz when he (Anas ibn Mālik) was the governor of Madinah. He was praying a very short prayer as if it were the prayer of a traveler or near it. When he finished his prayers, my father asked him: "May Allāh have mercy on you! Tell me about this prayer: Is it obligatory or supererogatory?" He said: "It is obligatory; it is the prayer performed by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. I did not make a mistake except in one thing that I

forgot.” He said: “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to say: ‘Do not impose austerities on yourselves so that austerities will be imposed on you, for people have imposed austerities on themselves and Allāh imposed austerities on them. Their survivors are to be found in cells and monasteries.’ (Then he quoted:) “Monasticism, they invented it; we did not prescribe it for them.” Next day he went out in the morning and said: “Will you not go out for a ride, so that you may see something and take a lesson from it?”

He said: “Yes.” Then all of them rode away and reached a land whose inhabitants had perished, passed away and died. The roofs of the town had fallen in. He asked: “Do you know this land?” I said: “Who acquainted me with it and its inhabitants?” (Anas said:) “This is the land of the people whom oppression (*baghy*) and envy (*hasad*) destroyed. Envy extinguishes the light of good deeds, and oppression confirms or falsifies it. The eye commits fornication, and the palm of the hand, the foot, body, tongue and private part of the body confirm it or deny it.”²⁵³

Regarding the description of the Prophet’s prayer as being short, an explanation is provided in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik. Anas says:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُوجِزُ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُكْمِلُهَا

The Prophet ﷺ used to pray a short prayer (in congregation) but used to offer it in a perfect manner.²⁵⁴

Also in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, he was reported to have said:

مَا صَلَّيْتُ وَرَاءَ إِمَامٍ قَطُّ أَخَفَّ صَلَاةً وَلَا أَتَمَّ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَإِنْ كَانَ لَيَسْمَعُ بُكَاءَ الصَّبِيِّ فَيَخَفُّ مُحَافَةً أَنْ تُفْتَنَ أُمُّهُ

I never prayed behind any Imām a prayer shorter and more perfect

²⁵³ Weak, Abū Dawūd (4904)

²⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī (706) and Muslim 188 (469).

than that behind the Prophet ﷺ and he used to make the prayer short whenever he heard the cries of a child lest he should put the child's mother to trial.²⁵⁵

The term shortness used to describe the Prophet's prayer ﷺ is with respect to the prayers of some Muslim leaders and other individuals who came after him. Some people would occasionally prolong the *qiyām* (standing posture) beyond what the Prophet ﷺ would typically do in his prayers. Additionally, they would make the *rukū'* (bowing) and *sujūd* (prostration) shorter than what he would do. It is possible that during that time, this practice had become prevalent among many leaders or a majority of them. They initiated a number of modifications in the manner of performing prayers, including the recitation of other chapters of the Qur'an after reciting the Fatiha in the last two *raka'a* (units) of the four-unit prayers. These practices later became accepted opinions in the schools of certain fiqh scholars.

Furthermore, the *Khawārij* sect at the time had deviated excessively from the way of the Prophet ﷺ in their prayers. The Prophet ﷺ made a statement regarding them, saying:

يَجْفِرُ أَحَدَكُمْ صَلَاتَهُ مَعَ صَلَاتِهِمْ، وَصِيَامَهُ مَعَ صِيَامِهِمْ

Anyone of you would regard his own prayer and fasting as insignificant compared to theirs.²⁵⁶

The method of the Prophet's prayer was well-known among his companions. That is evident when 'Alī ؑ visited al-Basrah, and offered a prayer there, as 'Imran ibn Husayn commented on his prayer, saying that it reminded him of the Prophet's prayer ﷺ.

The Prophet's prayer was known to be moderate. He would shorten the standing and sitting portions of the prayer, while prolonging the bowing and prostration.

An-Nasā'ī reported, on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam from Anas ibn Mālik, providing further explanation. Zayd reports:

²⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī (708) and Muslim 190 (469).

²⁵⁶ Al-Bukhārī (3610, 6163, 6933) and Muslim (1064).

دَخَلْنَا عَلَى أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ فَقَالَ: "صَلَّيْتُمْ؟" قُلْنَا: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: "يَا جَارِيَةُ هَلْمِي لِي وَضُوءًا، مَا صَلَّيْتُ وَرَاءَ إِمَامٍ أَشْبَهَ صَلَاةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ إِمَامِكُمْ هَذَا"، قَالَ زَيْدٌ: "وَكَانَ عُمَرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ يُتِمُّ الرُّكُوعَ وَالسُّجُودَ، وَيُخَفِّفُ الْقِيَامَ وَالْقُعُودَ."

We entered upon Anas ibn Mālik and he said: "Have you prayed?" We said: "Yes." He said: "O slave girl, bring me water for Wudhu! I have never prayed behind any Imām whose prayer more closely resembles the prayer of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ than this Imām of yours." Zayd said: "Umar ibn Abdul Azīz used to complete the bowing and prostration (without rushing) and lighten the standing and sitting."²⁵⁷

Abū Dawūd and Nasāi also reported, on the authority of Sa'īd ibn Jubair, that he said, "I heard Anas ibn Mālik declare, 'I have never prayed behind anyone whose prayer more closely resembled that of Allāh's Messenger than this young man,' referring to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. He said, 'I counted that he uttered ten *tasbihas* when bowing and ten when prostrating."²⁵⁸

Muslim also reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik, the following statement:

"مَا صَلَّيْتُ خَلْفَ أَحَدٍ أَوْجَزَ صَلَاةً مِنْ صَلَاةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي تَمَامٍ، كَانَتْ صَلَاةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُتَقَارِبَةً، وَكَانَتْ صَلَاةُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ مُتَقَارِبَةً، فَلَمَّا كَانَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ مَدَّ فِي صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، إِذَا قَالَ: "سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ" قَامَ، حَتَّى نَقُولَ قَدْ أَوْهَمَ، ثُمَّ يَسْجُدُ وَيَقْعُدُ بَيْنَ السَّجْدَتَيْنِ حَتَّى نَقُولَ قَدْ أَوْهَمَ"

I have never prayed behind anyone such a light and perfect prayer as I prayed behind the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. The prayer of the

²⁵⁷ Sound (981).

²⁵⁸ Weak, Abū Dawūd (2888),

Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was well balanced, so also was the prayer of Abū Bakr. When it was the time of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, he prolonged the morning prayer. When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘Allāh listens to him who praised Him—‘*Sami’āllāhu liman hamidah*’, he stood erect till we thought: He has forgotten, and when he prostrated and sat between the two prostrations till we thought: He has forgotten.²⁵⁹

Abū Dawūd reported it from Anas as saying:

مَا صَلَّيْتُ خَلْفَ رَجُلٍ أَوْجَزَ صَلَاةً مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي تَمَامٍ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا قَالَ: سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ، قَامَ حَتَّى نَقُولَ: قَدْ أَوْهَمَ، ثُمَّ يُكَبِّرُ، وَيَسْجُدُ، وَكَانَ يَقْعُدُ بَيْنَ السَّجْدَتَيْنِ حَتَّى نَقُولَ: قَدْ أَوْهَمَ.

I have never prayed behind anyone more brief than the one offered by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and that was perfect. When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Allāh listens to him who praises Him,” he stood long till we thought that he had forgotten something; then he said *takbir* (Allāh is Most Great) and prostrated and would sit between the two prostrations so long that we thought that he had forgotten something.²⁶⁰

In this authentic narration, Anas ﷺ reported both the brevity and perfection of the Prophet’s prayer. He mentioned that the Prophet ﷺ would extend the two moderate positions, namely the standing posture after bowing and the sitting between the two prostrations. Anas further stated that he never witnessed a prayer that was shorter yet more perfect than the prayer of the Prophet.

It is suggested—Allāh knows best—that the brevity mentioned refers to the standing posture in the prayer, while the perfection refers to the bowing and prostration. This is because, in most cases, the

²⁵⁹ Muslim (473).

²⁶⁰ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (853).

standing posture is performed properly in the prayer, so there is no need to specifically describe it as perfect. On the other hand, the bowing, prostration, and sitting between the two prostrations require more attention to ensure their completeness. In practice, when the standing in prayer is performed moderately and the bowing and prostration are slightly lengthened, the prayer appears perfect, displaying a sense of moderation and appropriateness.

However, if it is said that moderation refers to what is typically performed properly, and appropriateness refers to what is moderate, an inconsistency arises in the statement. For instance, someone who prolongs their standing posture beyond that of the Prophet ﷺ does not necessarily have a less perfect prayer than him. It cannot be concluded that reciting a longer chapter in the prayer deficits the prayer, and that is, in no doubt, not what the expression of the hadith entails.

The basis of this assertion is that moderation and brevity in a prayer are distinct from its completeness and perfection. Zayd ibn Aslam reported that Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz would shorten his standing and the sitting between the two prostrations while emphasizing the perfection of the bowing and prostration. This indicates that the term "perfection" is specifically used to describe a particular aspect of the prayer. Also, all the reports mentioned about Anas indicate that the practice of the Prophet ﷺ was to prolong the bowing, prostration, and the two moderate positions.

In *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Thābit reported that 'Anas ﷺ said to them:

إِنِّي لَا أَلُو أَنْ أُصَلِّيَ بِكُمْ، كَمَا رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُصَلِّي
بِنَا - قَالَ ثَابِتٌ: "كَانَ أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ يَصْنَعُ شَيْئًا لَمْ أَرَكُمُ تَصْنَعُونَهُ -"
كَانَ إِذَا رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الرُّكُوعِ قَامَ حَتَّى يَقُولَ الْقَائِلُ: قَدْ نَسِي، وَبَيْنَ
السَّجْدَتَيْنِ حَتَّى يَقُولَ الْقَائِلُ: قَدْ نَسِي"

I will leave no stone unturned in making you offer the prayer as I have seen the Prophet ﷺ praying for us. Thābit said: 'Anas used to do a thing which I have not seen you doing. He used to stand after the bowing for such a long time that one would think that he

had forgotten (what to do next) and he used to sit in-between the prostrations so long that one would think that he had forgotten (what to do next).²⁶¹

In another version of the Bukhārī, he has it:

كَانَ أَنَسٌ يَنْعَتُ لَنَا صَلَاةَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَكَانَ يُصَلِّي وَإِذَا رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الرُّكُوعِ، قَامَ حَتَّى نَقُولَ: قَدْ نَسِيَ.

Anas used to demonstrate to us the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ and while demonstrating, he used to raise his head from bowing and stand so long that we would say that he had forgotten (the prostration).²⁶²

This narration further clarifies that when Anas reported the prolongation of the Prophet's prayer in the previous narrations, he was referring to the elongation of his bowing, prostration, and the transitional posture between them, in comparison to the practice of the leaders of his time. On the other hand, when Anas mentioned the shortness of the Prophet's prayer, he was referring to the relatively shorter duration of his standing posture in comparison to the prevailing practice at that time.

In a narration of Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Thābit reported Anas as said:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَسْمَعُ بُكَاءَ الصَّبِيِّ مَعَ أُمِّهِ وَهُوَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ، فَيَقْرَأُ بِالسُّورَةِ الْخَفِيفَةِ، أَوْ بِالسُّورَةِ الْقَصِيرَةِ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would hear the crying of a lad in the company of his mother, in prayer, he would then recite a short Sūrah or a small Sūrah.²⁶³

This tradition highlights the abbreviation or shortening in the Prophet's prayer is specifically related to his short recitation of the Qur'an. However, it should be note that this recitation also necessitates

²⁶¹ Al-Bukhārī (821) and Muslim (472).

²⁶² Al-Bukhārī (800).

²⁶³ Muslim (470).

appropriate bowing and prostration postures. Therefore, when Anas described the Prophet's prayer as being moderate, it implies that the durations of each action in his prayer were relatively consistent.

This description of Anas is correct, because it is well-known that "the Prophet ﷺ used to recite in the Fajr prayer in-between sixty and one hundred verses,"²⁶⁴ he would recite in the two units of the Fajr prayer long chapters from *al-Mufaṣṣal*²⁶⁵, the like of: Alif Lām Mīm Tanzīl, Hal Atā, as-Sāfāt, and Qāf, and at other times, he might recite longer or shorter chapters than those. But Umar ؓ at his time used to recite in the Fajr prayer the like of: Yūnus, Hūd, and Yūsuf, perhaps he knew that the people had preference for such.

In the case of Mu'adh ؓ, he once prayed the Isha' prayer behind the Prophet ﷺ. Then when he went to lead Amr ibn 'Awf's clan in Quba Mosque for their Isha' prayer and recited Sūrah al-Baqarah, the Prophet ﷺ disapproved of his act, and said:

أَفْتَانُ أَنْتَ يَا مُعَاذُ، إِذَا أَمَمْتَ النَّاسَ فَخَفِّفْ، فَإِنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِكَ الْكَبِيرُ
وَالضَّعِيفُ وَذَا الْحَاجَةِ. هَلَّا قَرَأْتَ بِسَبِّحِ اسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى، وَالشَّمْسِ
وَضُحَاهَا، وَنَحْوَهَا مِنَ السُّورِ؟

Do you want to cause hardship to the people, O Mu'adh? When you lead people in prayer, shorten it, because the aged, the weak, and the needy pray behind you. Why don't you recite: *Sabih Isma Rabbikal Alā* (Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High), and *Wash-Shamsi wa Duhāha* (By the sun and its brightness) and their likes from other chapters?²⁶⁶

The moderation that the Prophet ﷺ commanded Mu'adh in this tradition, which is also applicable to all other Imāms, was exactly his own practice. This was related by Anas, who stated, "The Prophet ﷺ

²⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī (771) and Muslim (647).

²⁶⁵ *Mufaṣṣal* is the name given to the latter division of the Qur'an. But there is a difference of opinion as to where it begins; perhaps the correct opinion is that it begins from chapter 49.

²⁶⁶ Authentic, reported by al-Bukhārī (705, 6106) and Muslim (460), but not with this text.

is the most moderate and perfect person in his prayers.” Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ instructed that prayers should be offered in the same manner as he was seen praying:

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي

Pray as you have seen me praying.²⁶⁷

However, in situations where the Imām is aware of the preference of his followers for prolonged prayer, he may accommodate that. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would sometimes recite longer chapters during Maghrib prayer, while at other times he would recite shorter chapters like at-Tūr. There may also be specific circumstances that warrant reciting shorter chapters, as was the case when the cries of a child whose mother was behind the Prophet ﷺ.

With this explanation, it is evident that the inconsistency warned against in Anas’s tradition refers to the significant shortening of the bowing and prostration, coupled with the prolonged standing posture. This interpretation aligns with the narrations of other companions regarding the Prophet’s prayer ﷺ as well.

Muslim reports in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that al-Barā ibn Azib said:

رَمَقْتُ الصَّلَاةَ مَعَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَوَجَدْتُ قِيَامَهُ فَرَكَعَتَهُ،
فَاعْتَدَاهُ بَعْدَ رُكُوعِهِ، فَسَجَدَتُهُ، فَجَلَسَتُهُ بَيْنَ السَّجَدَتَيْنِ، فَسَجَدَتُهُ،
فَجَلَسَتُهُ مَا بَيْنَ التَّسْلِيمِ وَالْإِنْصِرَافِ، قَرِيبًا مِنَ السَّوَاءِ.

I noticed the prayer of Muhammad ﷺ and saw his standing, his bowing, and then going back to the standing posture after bowing, his prostration, his sitting between the two prostrations, and his prostration and sitting between salutation and going away, all these were nearly equal to one another.²⁶⁸

In the narration of al-Hakam of al-Barāi’s report, he said:

قَالَ: غَلَبَ عَلَى الْكُوفَةِ رَجُلٌ - قَدْ سَمَّاهُ - زَمَنَ ابْنَ الْأَشْعَثِ، فَأَمَرَ أَبَا

²⁶⁷ Part of the hadith of al-Bukhārī (631, 6008, and 7246).

²⁶⁸ Muslim (471).

عُبَيْدَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ بِالنَّاسِ، فَكَانَ يُصَلِّي، فَإِذَا رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الرُّكُوعِ قَامَ قَدْرَ مَا أَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، مِلءُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلءُ الْأَرْضِ، وَمِلءُ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ، أَهْلَ الثَّنَاءِ وَالْمَجْدِ، لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ، وَلَا مُعْطِي لِمَا مَنَعْتَ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجُدُّ. قَالَ الْحَكَمُ: فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِعَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى فَقَالَ: سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ بْنَ عَازِبٍ يَقُولُ: “كَانَتْ صَلَاةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَرُكُوعُهُ، وَإِذَا رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الرُّكُوعِ، وَسُجُودُهُ، وَمَا بَيْنَ السَّجْدَتَيْنِ، قَرِيبًا مِنَ السَّوَاءِ” قَالَ شُعْبَةُ: فَذَكَرْتُهُ لِعَمْرِو بْنِ مُرَّةَ فَقَالَ: قَدْ رَأَيْتُ ابْنَ أَبِي لَيْلَى، فَلَمْ تَكُنْ صَلَاتُهُ هَكَذَا.

There dominated in Kūfah a man whose name was mentioned as Zaman ibn al-Ash'ath, who ordered Abū 'Ubaidah ibn 'Abdullah to lead people in prayer and he accordingly used to lead them. Whenever he raised his head after bowing, he stood up equal to the time that I can recite (this supplication): O Allāh! our Lord! unto Thee be the praise which would fill the heavens and the earth, and that which will please Thee besides them I Worthy art Thou of all praise and glory. None can prevent that which Thou bestow, and none can bestow that which Thou prevent. And the greatness of the great will not avail him against Thee. Hakam (the narrator) said: 'I made mention of that to Abdur-Rahmān ibn Abī Laila, who in respect of that reported: I heard al-Bara' ibn 'Azib say that the prayer of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and his bowing, and when he lifted his head from bowing, and his prostration, and between the two prostrations (all these acts) were nearly proportionate.' I made a mention of that to 'Amr ibn Murrah and he said: 'I saw Ibn Abī Laila (saying the prayer), but his prayer was not like this.'

Although Al-Bukhārī reported this tradition, his narration does not explicitly mention the standing and sitting postures being nearly

equal to other postures.²⁶⁹ This is because the standing for recitation and the sitting of *at-Tashahud* are typically longer than other postures in prayer. However, due to the Prophet's usual practice of moderation, it may give the impression that the standing and the sitting were also relatively equal to other postures.

The two narrations complement each other, in one of them; al-Barāi mentioned the closeness of the elements without specific details, while in the other he specified. It can be understood that the standing of the Prophet ﷺ was relatively equal to other postures when compared to the prayers of the leaders who came after him. These leaders tended to prolong their standing and shorten the bowing and prostration, in order to highlight the Prophet's distinctive prayer style.

The example of such practice of the Prophet ﷺ is what was reported of his eclipse prayer. He recited a chapter that was close in length to al-Baqarah in single *rak'a*, and then he bowed. His bowing posture was nearly as long as the standing posture, and the same applied to his prostration.

That is the reason why we hold the opinion that in an eclipse prayer, the length of the bowing and the prostration should be nearly equal to the length of the standing posture, being more than half of it. Some of our associates may hold the opinion that the length of the bowing and the prostration should only be equal to the time it takes to recite a hundred verses are recited, were he to read al-Baqarah while standing. However, we consider this opinion to be weak and contradictory to the Sunnah.

What Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Sa'īd and other companions regarding the Prophet's *adhkār* when he raised his head from bowing further strengthens the opinion derived from the traditions of Anas and al-Barāi.

Similarly, in his voluntary prayers, the Prophet would pray alone during the night and recite chapters such as al-Baqarah, 'Āli 'Imrān, and an-Nasā'ī in one *rak'a*. He would then bow for a duration nearly

²⁶⁹ Al-Bukhārī (792, 801, and 820).

equal to the length of the recitations, raise his head and wait in that position for nearly the same duration as the bowing, prostrate for a duration nearly equal to the standing, and sit for nearly the same duration as his sitting.

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ actually demonstrated the standing posture he had commanded, as described by Anas and other companions, and it was also documented by the companions. On one occasion, the Prophet ﷺ observed a prayer on the pulpit, and said:

إِنَّمَا فَعَلْتُ هَذَا لِتَأْتُمُوا بِي، وَلِتَعْلَمُوا صَلَاتِي

I have done this so that you may follow me and learn the way I pray.²⁷⁰

So also, he told Malik ibn al-Huwayrith and his colleague:

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي

Pray as you have seen me praying.²⁷¹

An act may be called brief in relation to what takes longer and may be called long in relation to what is shorter. There is no precise definition for *long* and *short*. Prayer acts do not fall into the category of *'adat*, such as procurement, seizure, hunting, and cultivation of land, in which matters one takes recourse to the conventional elucidation of sense of terms. They are rather *'ibadat* (acts of worship) which derive their description and extent from the *Shari'a*, just as they derive their very basis from it.

If it were possible to refer in these matters to the conventional meaning of the word *act* or of that of *brevity*, then the prescribed regular prayer, which we are urged to perform, in the absence of factors favoring elongation or abridgement, would tend to vary endlessly. For surely every time and clime, every quarter and lane, and every mosque has its own conventional sense of a term and act that may differ from that of their neighbors. This goes against the injunction of Allāh and His

²⁷⁰ Al-Bukhārī (917) and Muslim (544).

²⁷¹ Mentioned earlier, part of the hadith of the Bukhārī (631, 6008, and 7246).

Prophet ﷺ, since what the latter said was, “Pray in the manner in which you observed me prayed,” and not in that which your countrymen call *abridged* or customary. I do not know of any learned man who would maintain that. This will obviously lead to altering the *Shari'a* and to demise of the Sunnah, either by adding to it or detracting therefrom.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Simāk ibn Harb reported that he asked Jābir ibn Samrah about the Prophet's prayer, and Jābir replied:

كَانَ يُخَفِّفُ الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا يُصَلِّي صَلَاةَ هَؤُلَاءِ. قَالَ: وَأَنْبَأَنِي: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقْرَأُ فِي الْفَجْرِ بِقِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَنَحْوَهَا.

He (the Messenger of Allāh) shorted the prayer he did not pray like these people then. He informed me that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to recite “*Qāf wal Qur'anil Majid*,” and a passage of similar length.²⁷²

He reported on his authority as well:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْرَأُ فِي الظُّهْرِ بِاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَعْشَى، وَفِي الْعَصْرِ نَحْوَ ذَلِكَ. وَفِي الصُّبْحِ أَطْوَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.

The Prophet ﷺ used to recite in the noon prayer: “*Wal-Layl Idha Yaghshā* (By the night when it envelopes),” and in the afternoon a chapter like that, but he used to prolong the morning prayer as compared to that (of the noon and the afternoon prayers).²⁷³

That explains what he reported from Jābir ibn Samrah as well, that;

إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقْرَأُ فِي الْفَجْرِ بِقِ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ وَكَانَ صَلَاتُهُ بَعْدَ تَخْفِيفًا

The Prophet ﷺ used to recite in the morning prayer “*Qāf wal Qur'anil Majid*,” and his prayer afterward shortened.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Muslim (458).

²⁷³ Muslim (459).

²⁷⁴ Muslim (458).

He meant by “and his prayer afterward shortened,” after the morning prayer, that after the morning prayer he would shorten the rest of his prayers during the day. This is supported by the first narration that mentions the Prophet ﷺ used to shorten his prayer, along with his recitation of recite “*Qaf wal Qur’anil Majid*.” Additionally, it is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ummu Salamah that she heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ reciting at-Tūr in the morning prayer during the Farewell Pilgrimage while she was somewhere amidst people listening to his recitation, and at-Tūr is almost the same in length with Qaf. This indicates that the Prophet ﷺ consistently recited chapters of similar length in the morning prayer, and he only lived for a short period of time after the Farewell Pilgrimage.

It is also reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn Abbās that his mother, Ummul Fadhl, heard him reciting, “*Wal Mursalāt ‘Urfā*,” and she said: “O my son, you reminded me of this chapter with your recitation. It was the last chapter I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ reciting. He was reciting it in a Maghrib prayer.”²⁷⁵

In this tradition, Ummul Fadhl informed that the chapter was the last one she heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. It is important to note that Ummul Fadhl was not among the *Muhājirāt* (Early Emigrant Women), but rather she was one of the *Mustadh’afin* (Helpless Weak Believers of Makkah), as narrated Ibn Abbās:

كُنْتُ أَنَا وَأُمِّي مِنَ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ

‘My mother and I were among the weak and oppressed,’²⁷⁶ those Allāh excused.

The narration indicates that Ummul Fadhl heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ late. Additionally, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Zayd ibn Thābit reported that he heard the Prophet ﷺ reciting the longer of the two long chapters²⁷⁷, and Zayd was one of the younger companions. He also recited Sūrah

²⁷⁵ Muslim (462).

²⁷⁶ Al-Bukhārī (1357).

²⁷⁷ Al-Bukhārī (764).

al-Mu'minūn in a morning prayer in Makkah, but he was interrupted by a cough when reaching the portion mentioning Mūsā and Hārūn, so he continued by going into the bowing position.

These narrations, along with similar ones, clearly indicate that the Prophet ﷺ consistently recited longer chapters of *al-Mufaṣṣal* in the Morning Prayers throughout his life. This fact is established by various pieces of evidence. Firstly, there is a general consensus among the companions that this was the way the Prophet prayed, and none of them reported otherwise; nor did anyone mention that he shortened his recitation towards the end of his life. Based on this, the jurists unanimously agreed that it is a Sunnah to recite longer chapters of *al-Mufaṣṣal* in the Morning Prayers.

Regarding what Jābir ibn Samrah observed: "And he (the Prophet ﷺ) did not use to pray like these people do," it can be understood that Jābir was referring to those individuals who were exceeding the boundaries set by the Prophet in his prayer, or those who were praying differently. While the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would occasionally shorten his prayer, he would still perform the bowing, prostration, and other postures with perfection, as earlier discussed in the Anas and al-Barā'i's narrations.

Or the case might be that these people used to shorten their recitations, or the recitation alongside all other obligatory elements of the prayer, different to what was the practice of the Prophet ﷺ. A similar example of such abnormal abridgment is mentioned in a report from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, as narrated by Qaz'a. He said:

أَتَيْتُ أَبَا سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيَّ، وَهُوَ مَكْثُورٌ عَلَيْهِ فَلَمَّا تَفَرَّقَ النَّاسُ عَنْهُ قُلْتُ: إِنِّي لَا أَسْأَلُكَ عَمَّا يَسْأَلُكَ هَؤُلَاءِ عَنْهُ، قُلْتُ: أَسْأَلُكَ عَنْ صَلَاةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: مَا لَكَ فِي ذَلِكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَأَعَادَهَا عَلَيْهِ. فَقَالَ: "كَانَتْ صَلَاةُ الظُّهْرِ تُقَامُ فَيَنْطَلِقُ أَحَدُنَا إِلَى الْبَيْعِ فَيَقْضِي حَاجَتَهُ، ثُمَّ يَأْتِي أَهْلَهُ فَيَتَوَضَّأُ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الرَّكْعَةِ الْأُولَى.

I came to Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī and he was surrounded by people. When the people departed from him I said: "I am not going to ask you what these people have been asking you. I want to ask you about the prayer of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ." He (Abū Saʿīd) said: "There is no good for you in this." He (Qaz'a), however, repeated (his demand). He then said: "The noon prayer would start and one of us would go to Baqī', and having relieved himself, would come to his home, then perform ablution and go to the mosque, and would still find the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in the first *rak'ah*."²⁷⁸

Abū Saʿīd's comment indicated that he witnessed people at that time shortening their prayers in a manner that differed from the way Prophet prayed. In *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Abū Barzah was reported to have said:

وَيُصَلِّي الصُّبْحَ، فَيَنْصَرِفُ الرَّجُلُ، فَيَعْرِفُ جَلِيْسَهُ، وَكَانَ يَقْرَأُ فِي
الرَّكْعَتَيْنِ - أَوْ إِحْدَاهُمَا - مَا بَيْنَ السِّتِّينَ إِلَى الْمِائَةِ.

He used to offer the morning prayer at a time when after finishing it one could recognize the person sitting beside him and used to recite between sixty to a hundred verses in one or both the *rak'ah*.²⁷⁹ (And that is the text of al-Bukhārī).

Furthermore, Ibn 'Umar ﷺ was reported to have said:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْمُرُ بِالتَّخْفِيفِ وَيُؤْمِنَا بِالصَّافَاتِ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to enjoin upon us to make the prayer short, and he would lead us in prayer and recite *As-Sāffāt*. (Ahmad and an-Nasā'ī reported it).²⁸⁰

Sulaimān ibn Yasār also quoted Abū Hurairah as saying,

"مَا صَلَّيْتُ وَرَاءَ أَحَدٍ أَشْبَهَ صَلَاةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ

²⁷⁸ Muslim (454).

²⁷⁹ Al-Bukhārī (771) and Muslim (647).

²⁸⁰ Authentic, an-Nasā'ī (826) and Ahmad (4796, 4988, 6471).

فُلَانٍ". قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ "كَانَ يُطِيلُ الرَّكَعَتَيْنِ الْأُولَيَيْنِ مِنَ الظُّهْرِ، وَيُحَقِّفُ الْأُخْرَيَيْنِ، وَيُحَقِّفُ الْعَصْرَ، وَيَقْرَأُ فِي الْمَغْرِبِ بِقِصَارِ الْمُفْصَلِ، وَيَقْرَأُ فِي الْعِشَاءِ بِوَسَطِ الْمُفْصَلِ، وَيَقْرَأُ فِي الصُّبْحِ بِطَوْلِ الْمُفْصَلِ".

"I have never prayed behind anyone whose prayer more closely resembled that of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ than so and so's." (The narrator) Sulaimān said: "He used to make the first two *rak'as* of the Zuhr (noon prayer) lengthy and the last two shorter, and he would make 'Asr (afternoon prayer) shorter, in Maghrib (sunset prayer) he would recite the short *Mufaṣṣal* Sūrahs, in Isha' (evening prayer) the medium-length *Mufaṣṣal* Sūrahs, and in Subh (morning prayer) the *Mufaṣṣal* Sūrahs." (An-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah²⁸¹ reported it, and the chain of its transmission is in accordance to the prerequisite of the authenticity of Imām Muslim).

Muslim reported on the authority of 'Ammar ibn Yāsir what further establishes the later conclusion concerning the people's abnormal shorting of their prayers. He quoted the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to have said:

إِنَّ طَوْلَ صَلَاةِ الرَّجُلِ، وَقِصَرَ خُطْبَتِهِ، مِثْنَةٌ مِنْ فَهْمِهِ، فَأَطِيلُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَاقْصُرُوا الْخُطْبَةَ، وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا.

The lengthening of prayer by a man and the shortness of the sermon is the sign of his understanding (of faith). So, lengthen the prayer and shorten the sermon; verily, there is charm (in precise) expression.²⁸²

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ made the prolongation of the prayer an indication of a good understanding of the religion and ordered that the prayer should be prolonged. Though this order is given concerning the Friday prayer, it is possible that it is applicable to all other prayers

²⁸¹ Authentic, an-Nasā'ī (982), a part of it by Ibn Mājah (826).

²⁸² Muslim (869).

because the expression with which the order was given was general. Even if this order is said to be in respect of the Friday prayer alone, despite the fact that the Friday prayer involves a larger population that combines a large number of the weak, the aged, and the needy compared to other prayers, and in spite of the fact that it is observed at noon, the hottest time of the day, and usually preceded by two sermons, it is more appropriate that the order be applicable to the morning prayer, among other prayers, which is observed in coolness and involves a lesser population.

However, this lengthy discussion is made regarding the limitations contained in the manners of the Prophet's prayer because of Anas's narration mentioned earlier in the discussion. This is because it is possible that one believes that there are contradictions between it and other narrations that have been reported concerning the issue, or that he takes to some of the narrations at the expense of the others, without even having the correct understanding of what he adheres to.

Emphasis on Self-Restraint: Its Types and Effects

RETURNING TO THE other half of Anas's narration, the Prophet's expression is: "Do not impose austerities on yourselves so that austerities will be imposed on you, for people have imposed austerities on themselves, and Allāh imposed austerities on them. Their survivors are to be found in cells and monasteries." Then he quoted, "Monasticism, they invented it; we did not prescribe it for them."

In this verse, the Prophet ﷺ rejects severity in religious observances by going above and beyond what has been prescribed. Severity might occur from supposing something is compulsory or commendable in acts of worship when it is neither, and occasionally from perceiving pleasures to be unlawful or detestable when they are neither. This is because people like the Christians overtaxed themselves and were therefore overtaxed by Allāh, to the point that this situation eventually led to the newfangled monasticism of which they are victims.

Therein is a warning about how abhorrent Christian monasticism was to the Prophet ﷺ, yet not a few of our pious men have been guilty of some of these things, sometimes due to misinterpretation, in which case they may be excused, and sometimes without interpretation or justification.

It also points out that an initial act of severity towards oneself results in further severity from Allāh, either by law or through divine decree. As an illustration of the former, consider the Prophet's ﷺ apprehension over the excess of lawfully obligatory and forbidden actions during his mission, such as his fear when people gathered to offer the *tarawih* prayer with him. Or when they inquired about matters that had not been declared unlawful. Or, if a person vows to perform some pious deed, its execution becomes incumbent upon him, but making the vow itself is forbidden. Similar is the case of all other obligatory acts of atonement for a host of reasons.

Regarding severity through divine ordination, we have not infrequently witnessed or heard about a person who engaged himself in extravagant speech about things and became afflicted, for a number of reasons, with severity in matters that he must now consider either lawfully binding or unlawful. For instance, when a person's obsession with ritual cleanliness beyond the prescribed limits, he was afflicted with factors that actually compelled him to do things that were both extremely burdensome and harmful.

This tradition's interpretation is compatible with the verse we presented previously in support of the concept that conformity with the People of the Books in these *loads* and *fetters* should be detestable.

The passage was the Word of Allāh:

﴿وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

And relieves them of their burdens and the shackles which were upon them.²⁸³

Al-Āsār (burdens): goes back to the extremely obligatory things.

Al-Aglāl (shakles): goes back to the extremely prohibited things.

²⁸³ Sūrah al-'A' rāf, 7:157.

That is because *al-Isr* (the singular form of *Al-Āsār*) denotes burdens and overtaking that are commonly experienced in cases of obligatory acts when exaggerated, whereas *al-gil* (the singular form of *Al-Aglāl*), refers to putting someone in shackles and manacles; just as the chained person is unable to move freely, so also the burdens of the sins incurred by engaging in prohibited acts cause severity, as evidenced in the passage:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتٍ مَّا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

O you who believe! Do not prohibit the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allāh does not like the transgressors.²⁸⁴ (Considering the cause for which it was revealed).

This tradition reported by both Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik provides more support for this conclusion as well. Anas says:

جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَهْطٍ إِلَى بَيْوتِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَسْأَلُونَ
عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوبًا،
فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَدْ غَفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ
مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أَصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ
آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَرِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ
أَبَدًا، فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَقَالَ: "أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ
فُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا، أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتْقَاكُمْ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي
أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْفُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي
فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي."

²⁸⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:87.

A group of three came to the apartments of the Prophet's wives, inquiring about the Prophet's way of worship, and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "How can we compare ourselves with the Prophet ﷺ whom Allāh has granted forgiveness for all his sins, past and future." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever." Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said such-and-such? By Allāh, I am more submissive to Allāh and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, pray and sleep, and also marry women. So, he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of mine)."²⁸⁵

This is the version of Bukhārī, Muslim has it that:

أَنَّ نَفَرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَأَلُوا أَزْوَاجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ عَمَلِهِ فِي السِّرِّ؟ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: "لَا أَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ،" وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: "لَا أَكُلُ اللَّحْمَ،" وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: "لَا أَنَامُ عَلَى فِرَاشٍ،" فَحَمِدَ اللَّهُ وَأَثَنَى عَلَيْهِ. فَقَالَ: "مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ قَالُوا كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ لَكِنِّي أَصَلِّي وَأَنَامُ، وَأَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي."

Some men among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked the wives of Prophet ﷺ about the acts that he performed in private. Someone among them said, "I will not marry women." The second said, "I will never eat meat." And the third said, "I will never sleep on beds." Upon hearing that, the Prophet ﷺ praised and extolled Allāh, and then commented: "What has happened to these people who said such-and-such? Whereas, I observe prayer and sleep too, and I observe fast and suspend observing them; I marry women also. He who turns away from my Sunnah, is not one of mine."²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī (5063)

²⁸⁶ Muslim (1401).

Numerous traditions confirm the foregoing, stating clearly that the Prophet's Sunnah, which is to be moderate in acts of worship and in giving up *shahwa* (desire and lust) is better than the Christian monasticism, since the latter entails giving up all desires, including those for marriage, etc., and going to extremes in acts of worship like fasting and prayer. Nonetheless, whether as a result of misinterpretation or ignorance, certain jurists and so-called devout went against this view.

Abū Dawūd reports that:

أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، ائْذَنْ لِي فِي السِّيَاحَةِ، قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ سِيَاحَةَ أُمَّتِي الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى"

A man asked the Prophet ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allāh, grant me the permission for *siyāha* (moving about in the land in devotion for Allāh's worship), to which the Prophet ﷺ replied: "Indeed, 'Siyāha' for my nation is *jihād* in the cause of Allāh."²⁸⁷

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ stated that for his nation *siyāha* is expressed in the *jihād*.

In another tradition he says, "Verily, 'Siyāha' is fasting" or he says: "the 'Sāihūn—the people who do *siyāha*' are those who fast frequently," or something of the like. And that is the interpretation given in some Quranic verses.²⁸⁸

As for the practice of travelling without a *siyāha* (fixed goal), this, then, is not a practice of the Muslim community. That is why Imām Ahmad says, "*siyāha* without purpose (i.e., aimless wandering on the land) is neither part of Islam nor the practice of the Prophets or the righteous." A great number of our brothers engaged in this forbidden wandering due to misinterpretation or ignorance of the prohibition, despite the fact that it is a sort of innovated monasticism of which it was said: "There is no monasticism in Islam."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2486).

²⁸⁸ See Qur'an (9:112 and 66:6).

²⁸⁹ It was mentioned earlier in the book.

Here, we wish to make clear the opposition set forth by the true faith of Islam, on the one hand, to those Jews whose hearts have become hardened against the invocation of Allāh's name and His revealed guidance, which sustains the inner life of man, and on the other hand, to those Christians who have invented monasticism. If, despite this, some of us Muslims, reputed for our knowledge and piety, have a share of this or that, they then somewhat resemble the Jews and somewhat the Christians.

Another example of excess: Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: عَدَاةُ الْعَقَبَةِ وَهُوَ عَلَى نَاقَتِهِ "الْقُطْ لِي حَصَى" فَلَقِطْتُ لَهُ سَبْعَ حَصِيَّاتٍ، هُنَّ حَصَى الْحَذْفِ، فَجَعَلَ يَنْفُضُهُنَّ فِي كَفِّهِ وَيَقُولُ: "أَمْتَالُ هَؤُلَاءِ، فَارْمُوا" ثُمَّ قَالَ: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْعُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ، فَإِنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ الْعُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ"

On the Day of al-'Aqaba, while he was on his she-camel, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Pick up some pebbles for me." Seven pebbles, like those used for slinging, were picked up for him. He began to shake them in his palm as he said, "The size of these may be thrown." He further said, "O people! Keep clear of excessiveness in matters of religion, for it was excessive religious zeal that ruined those before you." (Ahmad, an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah reported it from the narrations of 'Awf ibn Abī Jamil, from Ziyad ibn Husayn, from Abī al-'Āliya, on the authority of Ibn Abbās.)²⁹⁰

The statement: "Avoid excessiveness in matters of religion," applies to all types of excesses in beliefs and actions. Excessiveness refers to going above the limits by adding in appreciation or denunciation something beyond what is due.

Christians commit more excesses in their beliefs and actions than any other religious group. Indeed, the Divine Words, "O People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion,"²⁹¹ are aimed at them.

²⁹⁰ Authentic, Ahmad (1851, 3284), an-Nasā'ī (3057), and Ibn Mājah (3029).

²⁹¹ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:171.

This general prohibition was made in respect of throwing of *al-Jimār*. The prohibition against excessive throwing of *al-Jimār* falls under this general prohibition, as some people may believe it preferable to throw big stones instead of the requisite pebbles due to the size disparity. The Prophet ﷺ made the reason for the prohibition to the fact that the people who came before us were ruined because of their excessive religious zeal, as is the case in Christian practice. It follows, however, that the further one stays away from assimilating with their modes and manners, the less likely one is to perish in their error. It also implies that perdition would still be feared for one who assimilates even a portion of their lifestyles.

The Prophet ﷺ warned us against imitating their practice of discriminating between the noble and the weak when applying prescribed *hudud* (punishments). He commanded that these punishments should be implemented equally. However, many shrewd individuals in high positions of authority may believe that exempting chieftains from punishment contribute to better governance.

Concerning a Makhzumi woman who had committed theft and after Usama had interceded on her behalf with the Prophet ﷺ, both Bukhārī and Muslim quote the Prophet ﷺ on ‘Ā’ishah’s authority, as saying:

”يَا أُسَامَةَ أَتَشْفَعُ فِي حَدٍّ مِنْ حُدُودِ اللَّهِ؟“ ثُمَّ قَامَ فَاخْتَطَبَ، فَقَالَ: ”أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الشَّرِيفُ تَرَكُوهُ، وَإِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الضَّعِيفُ أَقَامُوا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ، وَإِيمُ اللَّهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا“

“O Usama! Do you intercede (with me) to violate one of the legal punishment of Allāh?” Then he got up and addressed the people, saying, “O people! The nations before you (Children of Israel) went astray because if a noble person committed theft, they used to leave him, but if a weak person among them committed theft, they used to inflict the legal punishment on him. I swear to Allāh that if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad committed theft, I will cut off her hand.”²⁹²

²⁹² Al-Bukhārī (3475, 6788), Muslim (1688) and others.

The Banū Makhzum were among the most prominent clans of the Quraysh; it was difficult for them to see the hands of one of their women severed, but the Prophet ﷺ made it clear that the Children of Israel perished because they exempted men of position from punishments. He further declared that if his own daughter Fatima—the noblest of women—were to steal, Allāh forbid, he would cut off her hands. This was to demonstrate that not even the Prophet's own daughter could be exempted from the obligation of justice and from the general application of rulings, let alone the daughter of someone else.

This tallies with the account given by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of al-Bara' ibn al-'Azib, concerning:

مَرَّ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَهُودِيٍّ مُحَمَّمًا مُجْلُودًا، فَدَعَاهُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: "هَكَذَا تَجِدُونَ حَدَّ الزَّانِي فِي كِتَابِكُمْ؟"، قَالُوا: نَعَمْ، فَدَعَا رَجُلًا مِنْ عُلَمَائِهِمْ، فَقَالَ: "أَنْشُدْكَ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ عَلَى مُوسَى، أَهَكَذَا تَجِدُونَ حَدَّ الزَّانِي فِي كِتَابِكُمْ" قَالَ: لَا، وَلَوْلَا أَنَّكَ نَشَدْتَنِي بِهِدَا لَمْ أُخْبِرْكَ، نَحْدُهُ الرَّجْمَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ كَثُرَ فِي أَشْرَافِنَا، فَكُنَّا إِذَا أَخَذْنَا الشَّرِيفَ تَرَكْنَاهُ، وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا الضَّعِيفَ أَقَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ، قُلْنَا: تَعَالَوْا فَلْنَجْتَمِعَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ نَقِيمُهُ عَلَى الشَّرِيفِ وَالضَّعِيفِ، فَجَعَلْنَا التَّحْمِيمَ وَالْجُلْدَ مَكَانَ الرَّجْمِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَوَّلُ مَنْ أَحْيَا أَمْرَكَ إِذْ أَمَاتُوهُ"، فَأَمَرَ بِهِ فَرَجِمَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: ﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الرُّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ﴾ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ ﴿إِنْ أُوْتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ﴾، يَقُولُ: اثْتُوا مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَإِنْ أَمَرَكُمْ بِالتَّحْمِيمِ وَالْجُلْدِ فَخُذُوهُ، وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكُمْ بِالرَّجْمِ فَاحْذَرُوا، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرُونَ﴾ ﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ ﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ﴾ فِي الْكُفْرِ كُلِّهَا

There happened to pass by the Prophet ﷺ a Jew blackened (disgraced) and lashed. The Prophet ﷺ called them (the Jews) and said, “Is that the punishment that you find in your Book (Torah) as a prescribed punishment for adultery?” They said, “Yes.” He ﷺ then called one of the scholars amongst them and said, “In the name of Allāh, Who revealed the Torah to Moses, I call upon you to tell if that is the prescribed punishment for adultery that you find in your Book?” He said, “No. Had you not asked me in the name of Allāh, I would not have given you this information. We find stoning to death (as punishment prescribed in the Torah). But this (crime) became quite common amongst our aristocratic class. So when we caught hold of any rich person (indulging in this offence) we spared him, but when we caught hold of a helpless person we imposed the prescribed punishment upon him. We used to tell ourselves, let us agree (on a punishment) which we can inflict both upon the rich and the poor. So, we decided to blacken the face with coal and flog as a substitute punishment for stoning.” Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said, “O Allāh! I am the first to revive Your command when they had made it dead.” He then commanded and the man (the offender) was stoned to death. On the occasion Allāh revealed:

“O Messenger, don’t get yourself be troubled by those who compete with one another in unbelief, such men who say with their mouths, “We believe” but their hearts believe not; and the Jews who listen to falsehood, listen to other people, who have not come to you, changing words from their meanings, saying, “If you are given this, then accept it.”²⁹³It was said (by the Jews): “Go to Muhammad; if he commands you to blacken the face and award flogging (as punishment for adultery), then accept it, but if he gives verdict for stoning, then avoid it. It was (then) that Allāh sent down (these verses): “And whosoever does not judge by that which Allāh has revealed – they indeed are the wrongdoers”, “And whosoever does not judge by what Allāh has revealed (then) such (people) are the rebellious to Allāh.”—all concerning the disbelievers.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:41.

²⁹⁴ Muslim (1700).

In respect of the excessive religious zeal for which the People of the Book were ruined, Muslim also reports on the authority of Jundab ibn 'Abdullah al-Bajali; Jundab states:

سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِخَمْسِ، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ:
 "إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي مِنْكُمْ خَلِيلٌ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدِ اتَّخَذَنِي
 خَلِيلًا، كَمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي خَلِيلًا
 لَأَتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيلًا، أَلَا وَإِنْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ
 قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، أَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ،
 إِنِّي أَنهَاكُمُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ."

I heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ five days before his death saying, "I stand acquitted before Allāh that I took any one of you as friend, for Allāh has taken me as His friend, as he took 'Ibrāhīm as His friend. Had I taken any one of my Ummah as a friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a friend. Beware of those who preceded you and used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you must not take graves as mosques; I forbid you to do that."²⁹⁵

In this verse, the Prophet ﷺ mentions that the people who came before us used to worship at the graves of their Prophets and righteous men. He then prohibited his nation from doing so; saying, "I forbid you to do that," a statement implying that the basis for the prohibition is imitating their practice. It follows that the imitation could be either the main reason or the purpose for which the prohibition is made. Invariably, their practice is a sign or cause for which the prohibitions are determined in our respect.

In any case, it is evident that what is generally required of a Muslim differs from the modes and manners of the People of the Book. To emphasize the prohibition, Jews and Christians have been cursed for their acts of worshipping the graves in several traditions. Among which is the narration of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه in Ṣaḥīḥayn where the Messenger

²⁹⁵ Muslim (532).

of Allāh ﷺ says:

قَاتَلَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

May Allāh curse the Jews! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.²⁹⁶

In another version of Muslim, he has it:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.²⁹⁷

It is also reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah and Ibn Abbās that they both said:

لَمَّا نَزَلَ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَفِقَ يَطْرَحُ حَمِيصَةً لَهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، فَإِذَا اغْتَمَّ بِهَا كَشَفَهَا عَنْ وَجْهِهِ، فَقَالَ وَهُوَ كَذَلِكَ: “لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ” يُحَدِّثُ مَا صَنَعُوا

When the disease of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ got aggravated, he covered his face with his *khamisa* (a woolen blanket), but when became short of breath, he would remove it from his face and say, “It is like that! May Allāh’s curse is on the Jews and the Christians because they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.” The Prophet ﷺ was warning (Muslims) of what those people had done.²⁹⁸

In *Ṣaḥīḥayn* as well, on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah, it is reported that:

أَنَّ أُمَّ حَبِيبَةَ، وَأُمَّ سَلَمَةَ ذَكَرْنَا كُنَيْسَةً رَأَيْنَاهَا بِالْحَبَشَةِ فِيهَا تَصَاوِيرُ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “إِنَّ أَوْلِيكَ، إِذَا كَانَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ، فَمَاتَ، بَنَوْا عَلَى

²⁹⁶ Al-Bukhārī (437) and Muslim (530).

²⁹⁷ Muslim (530).

²⁹⁸ Al-Bukhārī (435, 3453, 4443, 5815) and Muslim (531).

قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا، وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ الصُّورَ، أَوْلَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ”

Umm Habiba and Umm Salama made mentioned before the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ of a church which they had seen in Abyssinia and which had pictures in it. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “When a pious person amongst them (among the religious groups) dies they build a place of worship on his grave, and then decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allāh.”²⁹⁹

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ was also reported to have said:

لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَائِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ، وَالْمُتَّخِذِينَ
عَلَيْهَا الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed women who visited graves, people who built mosques there and those who lit lamps there.³⁰⁰

It is reported by the four collectors of as-Sunan, and at-Tirmidhī asserted that it is a sound hadith; in some of his collections he rated it as authentic.

The Prophet’s cautioning against and condemnation of imitating the People of the Book in erecting a place of worship over the grave of a righteous person clearly stipulates a prohibition against imitation in such an act, and is an indication that one should be wary of their practices in general, because one cannot be certain that their other actions are less objectionable.

²⁹⁹ Al-Bukhārī (427, 434, 1341, 3873) and Muslim (528).

³⁰⁰ Weak with this expression. Abū Dawūd (3236), at-Tirmidhī (320), and an-Nasā’ī (3243). However, Ibn Mājah reported it with sound chains of transmitters but a different text (1574, 1575 and 1576); “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed the women who frequently visit graves, those who built mosques over them, and those who erected lamps there. This narration is sound with this text.

It is well known that numerous people of this nation have been guilty of converting graves into places of worship, with or without erecting structures over them. According to the Sunnah, both of these actions are prohibited, and anyone commits them is accursed. However, this is not the place to elaborate on the subject's tradition data. Our objective is rather to establish a general principle, despite the fact that numerous scholars from the parties of the followers of Malik, ash-Shāfi'ī, Ahmad and others have acknowledged its prohibition. Thus, the *Salaf* would go to great lengths to avoid anything that led to a similar practice.

It would be out of place to refer to tradition-based sources on the subject, except for what Abū Ya'la al-Mausalī reported through his chain of transmitters extending up to 'Alī ibn al-Husayn

who saw a man going to an opening in the Prophet's grave and enter it in order to pray. So he asked the man not to do so, saying, "Come, I shall relate to you a tradition that I heard from my father who heard it from my grandfather, who heard the Prophet ﷺ say, 'Do not turn my grave into a place of *Īd* or turn your houses into graves; for your salutation will reach me no matter where you are.'"³⁰¹

In his *Sunan*, Sa'īd ibn Mansūr reported from Suhail ibn Abī Suhail, saying, "Seeing me at the grave, al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib cried out my name while he ate his evening meal in Fatima's house. 'Come here,' he said, 'Have dinner.' I replied, 'I don't want any.' He then inquired, 'What is the matter, I see you at the grave.' I responded, 'I was giving salutation to the Prophet ﷺ.' Thereupon he remarked, 'Well, you can do that when you go to the mosque.' He subsequently added, 'The Prophet ﷺ said, *Do not transform my grave into an Īd, or your houses into graves. Allāh cursed the Jews who made the graves of their Prophets into sanctuaries. Make as-Salāt for me, indeed your Salāt will reach me no matter regardless of where you are.*" You, here, and someone in Spain are the same."³⁰²

³⁰¹ Sound, it has supportive narrations that elevated it into a sound tradition. *Musnad Abī Ya'la al-Mūsālī* (469).

³⁰² Sound, it is supported by the immediate previous narration. Imām Ismail ibn J'afar, Abū Ishaq, reported it in his book *Fadhail as-Salāt 'alā an-Nabiy* (436).

That is the reason why the scholars, among whom is Ahmad and some disciples of Malik, as well as some other authorities mentioned that if a man salutes the Prophet ﷺ and says what he has to say, and further wants to make *as-Salāt* for the Prophet ﷺ, he should face the *qibla* leaving the room (the Prophet's grave is) on his left.

III

Abolishing the Pre-Islamic Practices, Customs, Worships and Traditions Through the Prophet's Farewell Message

MUSLIM REPORTED IN his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Jābir's narration of the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet ﷺ, who said: "After noon on the Day of 'Arafah, the Prophet ﷺ ordered *al-Qaswā* (his she-camel) to be brought. She was prepared for him, and he rode on her till he got down the valley (of 'Urnah) and then delivered the sermon. He said:

"إِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ حَرَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ، كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا، أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ تَحْتَ قَدَمِي مَوْضُوعٌ، وَدِمَاءُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعَةٌ، وَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ دَمٍ أَضَعُ مِنْ دِمَائِنَا دَمُ ابْنِ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، كَانَ مُسْتَرْضِعًا فِي بَنِي سَعْدِ فَقَتَلَتْهُ هَذِيلٌ، وَرَبَا الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ، وَأَوَّلَ رَبًّا أَضَعُ رَبَانَا رَبَا عَبَّاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ،

فَإِنَّهُ مَوْضُوعٌ كُلُّهُ، فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي النَّسَاءِ، فَإِنَّكُمْ أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانِ
 اللَّهُ، وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ، وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَنْ لَا يُوطِئَنَّ
 فُرُشَكُمْ أَحَدًا تَكَرَّهُوهُ، فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ ذَلِكَ فَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبْرَجٍ،
 وَلَهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَقَدْ تَرَكَتُ فِيكُمْ مَا
 لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ إِنْ اعْتَصَمْتُمْ بِهِ، كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْتُمْ تُسْأَلُونَ عَنِّي، فَمَا
 أَنْتُمْ قَائِلُونَ؟" قَالُوا: "دَشَّهْدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ بَلَّغْتَ وَأَدَيْتَ وَنَصَحْتَ،" فَقَالَ:
 "بِإِصْبَعِهِ السَّبَابَةِ، يَرْفَعُهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَيَنْكُتُهَا إِلَى النَّاسِ" اللَّهُمَّ، اشْهَدْ،
 اللَّهُمَّ، اشْهَدْ" ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، ثُمَّ أَدَّنَ، ثُمَّ أَقَامَ فَصَلَّى الظُّهْرَ، ثُمَّ أَقَامَ فَصَلَّى
 الْعَصْرَ، وَلَمْ يُصَلِّ بَيْنَهُمَا شَيْئًا، ثُمَّ رَكِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،
 حَتَّى آتَى الْمَوْقِفَ."

“Verily your blood and your property are as sacred and inviolable as the sacredness of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this town of yours. Behold! Everything pertaining to the Days of *Jāhiliyah* (Ignorance) is under my feet completely abolished. Abolished are also the *dima*’ (blood-vengeance) of the Days of Ignorance. The first claim of ours on blood-vengeance which I abolish is that of the son of Rabi’a ibn al-Harith, who was nursed among the tribe of Bani Sa’d and killed by Hudhail. And the usury of the *Jāhiliyah* period is abolished and the first of our usury I abolish is that of ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib, for it is all abolished. Fear Allāh concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allāh, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by Allāh’s word. You too have right over them, and that should not allow anyone to sit on your bed whom you do not like. But if they do that, you can beat them but not severely. Their rights upon you are that you should provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner. I have left among you the Book of Allāh, and if you hold fast to it, you would never go astray. And you would be asked about me

(on the Day of Resurrection), (now tell me) what would you say?” They (the audience) responded: “We will bear witness that you have conveyed (the message of your Lord), accomplished His mission, and exhorted your nation (of all that will bring them close to Paradise and distant them from Hellfire).” He (the narrator) said, He (the Prophet) then raised his forefinger towards the sky and pointing it at the people, (said), “O Allāh, be witness, O Allāh, be witness” saying it thrice. (Bilal then) pronounced *Adhān* and later on *Iqāma* and he (the Prophet) led the Dhur prayer, and then prayed Dhur. He (Bilal) then pronounced *Adhān* and later on *Iqāma* for ‘Asr and he then led the ‘Asr prayer without performing any other prayers in between the two. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then mounted his camel and came to the place of stay.³⁰³

The Prophet said: “Everything pertaining to the *Jāhiliyyah* has been put under my feet.” And this include the general run of the pagan acts of worship and practices, such as their invocation, festivals, and so on. After the general, the Prophet ﷺ proceeded to abolish more specifically blood-vengeance and seizure of property which were permissible according to pre-Islamic beliefs, as well as usury payments that were still owed. He also freed the killer of the man he had killed during the *Jāhiliyyah* or before the advent of Islam, and invalidated the liability of vengeance that ensued from a man slain also before Islam. These cases were declared null and void either because they were particularly mentioned after setting forth the general principle or because this was the abandonment of certain things they considered rightful, but not because it was their standing practice. Thus, they do not come under the general annulment, just as all those debts, loans, etc., that were contracted through right transactions do not come thereunder.

This excludes those practices of the pre-Islamic era which were firmly incorporated in Islam through divine sanction, for instance, the *manāsik* (pilgrimage rites), blood-money to the amount of a 100 camels’ worth for a slain person, etc., for the affairs pertaining to the *Jāhiliyyah* are understood to mean only such of their practices that were

³⁰³ Muslim (1218).

not approved by Islam. This applies to all of their practices in general, even though they were not explicitly prohibited by Islam.

The same idea forms the subject of the tradition reported by Abū Dawūd, an-Nasā'i, and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Abū al-Husain al-Misrī, i.e., al-Haitham ibn Shafiy, who said, "I and my friend, Abū 'Amir—a man from the Ma'āfir clan—set out to pray at *īliya*. The teacher of the people of *īliya* was a man from al-Azd called Abū Raihana, one of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. My friend arrived at the mosque ahead of me. I followed him and took my place beside him. My friend then asked me, 'Did you get in time to hear the lessons given by Abū Raihana?'

'No,' I replied.

'I heard him say,' said my friend,

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ عَشْرٍ، عَنِ الْوَشْرِ، وَالْوَشْمِ،
وَالْتَّنْفِ، وَعَنْ مُكَامَعَةِ الرَّجُلِ الرَّجُلَ بِغَيْرِ شِعَارٍ، وَعَنْ مُكَامَعَةِ الْمَرْأَةِ
الْمَرْأَةَ بِغَيْرِ شِعَارٍ، وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَ الرَّجُلُ فِي أَسْفَلِ ثِيَابِهِ حَرِيرًا، مِثْلَ الْأَعَاجِمِ،
أَوْ يَجْعَلَ عَلَى مَنْكَبَيْهِ حَرِيرًا مِثْلَ الْأَعَاجِمِ، وَعَنِ التُّهْبِيِّ، وَرُكُوبِ التُّمُورِ،
وَلُبُوسِ الْخَتَامِ، إِلَّا لِذِي سُلْطَانٍ.

that the Prophet ﷺ forbade ten things: Sharpening the ends of the teeth, tattooing, plucking hair (from one's face or eyebrow), men sleeping together without an undergarment, women sleeping together without an undergarment, men putting silk at the hem of their garments like the Persians, or putting silk on their shoulders like the Persians, plundering, riding on panther skins, wearing signet rings, except in the case of one in authority.³⁰⁴

In another narration of Abū Raihana, he said: "It was said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ says: so and so." This tradition is established from the narrations of 'Ayāsh ibn 'Abbās.

³⁰⁴ Weak, Abū Dawūd (4049), an-Nasā'i (5091) and others. Al-Imām Abū Dawūd, after reporting the hadith, said: among these things, it is only the prohibition of wearing of ring that does not have supportive basis.

This tradition has frequently proven difficult for most Islamic jurists because the use of little silk is justified in numerous other texts. Its prohibition stems from a fundamental principle, namely that the Prophet ﷺ disapproved of its use by men on the bottom of their garments or on their shoulders, like the Persians; thus, what is prohibited is a particular type of use that was particularly popular among the Persians. He prohibited it for this reason, not because it was silk. If it had been prohibited as silk materials, it would have been prohibited for all uses, not just two. That is why he ﷺ said concerning it, 'like Persians.' The basic principle in the adjectival clause, then, serves to limit and not to clarify the qualified part.

In this way, we can explain the report of Abū Dawūd with an authentic chain of transmitters; going back to Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Uruba to 'Imran ibn Husayn that, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

"لَا أَرْكَبُ الْأَرْجُونَ، وَلَا أَلْبَسُ الْمُعْصَفَرَ، وَلَا أَلْبَسُ الْقَمِيصَ الْمَكْفَفَ بِالْحَرِيرِ" قَالَ: وَأَوْمَأَ الْحَسَنُ إِلَى جَيْبِ قَمِيصِهِ، قَالَ: وَقَالَ "أَلَا وَطِيبُ الرَّجَالِ رِيحٌ لَا لَوْنٌ لَهُ، أَلَا وَطِيبُ النِّسَاءِ لَوْنٌ لَا رِيحَ لَهُ" قَالَ سَعِيدٌ: أَرَاهُ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا حَمَلُوا قَوْلَهُ فِي طِيبِ النِّسَاءِ عَلَى أَنَّهَا إِذَا حَرَجَتْ فَأَمَّا إِذَا كَانَتْ عِنْدَ زَوْجِهَا فَلْتَطَيَّبُ بِمَا شَاءَتْ.

"I do not ride on purple, or wear a garment dyed with saffron, or wear shirt hemmed with silk." Al-Hasan al-Basri (the transmitter of the hadith from 'Imran), pointed to the collar of his shirt. The report continued: "The perfume used by men should have an odor but no color, and the perfume used by women should have a color but no odor." Sa'īd said: "I think he said: 'They interpreted his tradition about perfume used by women as applying when she comes out. But when she is with her husband, she may use any perfume she wishes.'"³⁰⁵

Or it is taken that it detestable for her to use such perfume. This assertion could also be made for the first narration, though questionable.

³⁰⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4048).

Similarly, it is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* from Rāfi'i ibn Khadīj, who reported that he asked the Prophet ﷺ:

"يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا لَأَقْوِ الْعَدُوَّ غَدًا، وَلَيْسَتْ مَعَنَا مَدَى،" قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَفْتَدَبِحُ بِالْقَصَبِ؟" فَقَالَ: "مَا أَنْهَرَ الدَّمَ، وَذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ، فَكُلُوهُ، لَيْسَ السِّنُّ، وَالظُّفْرُ، وَسَأُحَدِّثُكَ، أَمَّا السِّنُّ فَعِظْمٌ، وَأَمَّا الظُّفْرُ فَمَدَى الْحَبَشَةِ"

“O Messenger of Allāh, we shall meet the enemy tomorrow and we have no knives with us. Can we slaughter the animals with reeds?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Use whatever causes blood to flow, and eat the animals if Allāh’s name has been mentioned on slaughtering them. Do not slaughter with teeth or claws and I will tell you why. It is because teeth are bones (i.e. cannot cut properly) and claws are the tools used by the Abyssinians (whom we should not imitate for they are infidels).”³⁰⁶

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited slaughtering with fingernails because it is the knife of the Abyssinians, and with a teeth, as it is a claw. However, the Islamic Jurists differ as to the reasons for the prohibition; the scholars of the Hanafiyah doctrine maintain that the prohibition is because killing in these two ways resembles or can lead to strangulation, and strangulation is prohibited. They, therefore, allow slaughtering with them—the teeth and the claws—if they had been removed from the animals that possessed them. They assert that it is permissible to slaughter with any sharp and unattached instrument and that this would not result in strangling. However, the majority of the scholars maintain an absolute prohibition of slaughtering with these objects, as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ allowed slaughtering with anything that caused the animal’s blood to flow out, but specifically exempted these two. Therefore, despite the fact that these objects are sharp, they are not allowed for slaughtering in any way. If the reason for the prohibition was

³⁰⁶ Al-Bukhārī (2488, 2507, 3075, 5498, 5503, 5509, 5543) and Muslim (1968).

to prevent strangulation, there would be no point in forbidding the two separately; the fear of the possible occurrence of something in relation to what is prohibited is considered a reason for prohibition only when the actual reason for the prohibition is not evident or doubtful, not when the reason is known and unquestionable. Aside from that, saying that the reason for the prohibition is to avoid strangling is contrary to the reason given by the Prophet ﷺ in the tradition.

Furthermore, looking at the generality of the reason stated for the prohibition, these people also differ as to whether it is permissible to slaughter with other kinds of bones or not. Among the followers of the Schools of Thought—the Hanabilah's doctrine and others—there are two conflicting opinions about this issue.

The third opinion, however, considered the importance of the statement: “but for the claws, it is because it is the knife of the Abyssinians”—the claws being the Abyssinian's knife—after the resolution: “I shall inform you about that,” to be the sole cause for the prohibition or an indication for the cause, or at least one of the reasons for which the prohibition is made or the criterion for the reason in the sense that the Abyssinians are known, among other nations, for the practice, possibly because the claws of their animals are long, and they thereby use them for slaughter. The prohibition is thus made not to imitate them in the practices for which they are solely known.

However, it is possible that the prohibition on slaughtering with the bone is similar to the prohibition of purifying oneself with the bone at toileting; not to cause impurity to it for the Jins, because the blood is an impurity. It is not the aim here to discuss the issue of slaughtering; it has many other associated issues that cannot not be fully addressed at this point.

Furthermore, Bukhārī and Muslim narrate on the authority of Sa'īd ibn al-Mūsāyib who said:

"الْبَحِيرَةُ: الَّتِي يُمْنَعُ دَرُّهَا لِلطَّوَاعِغِ، فَلَا يَحْلُبُهَا أَحَدٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ،
وَالسَّائِبَةُ: كَانُوا يُسَيِّبُونَهَا لِإِلَهَتِهِمْ لَا يُحْمَلُ عَلَيْهَا شَيْءٌ" قَالَ: وَقَالَ أَبُو

هُرَيْرَةَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "رَأَيْتُ عَمْرَو بْنَ عَامِرِ
الْحِزْرَاعِيَّ يَجْرُ قُضْبَهُ فِي النَّارِ، كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ سَيَّبَ السَّوَائِبَ

"*Al-Bahira* was an animal whose milk was reserved exclusively for idols and so nobody was allowed to milk her, while *as-Sa'iba* was an animal which they (i.e., infidels) used to set free in the names of their gods, so that it would not be used for carrying anything." He further said, "Abū Hurairah quoted the Prophet ﷺ, 'I saw 'Amr ibn 'Amir al-Khuza'i dragging his intestines in the hell, for he was the first man who started the custom of releasing animals (for the sake of false gods).'"³⁰⁷

It is common knowledge that 'Amr ibn Luhaiyy was the first to install '*al-Ansāb*'—the stones upon which the Arabs slaughter their sacrificed animals for worship—around the Sacred House. As it is said, he in imitating the people of al-Balqa' in Trans-Jordan imported these stones from there. He also introduced the *sā'iba*, the *wasila*, and the *ham* practice for the first time. The prophet ﷺ told us in the narration that he saw him dragging his entrails in hell.

It is well known that prior to him, the Arabs adhered to their progenitor 'Ibrāhīm's (Abraham's) creed, i.e., monotheism; the munificent *Hanafiyah's*. But subsequently they imitated 'Amr ibn Luhaiyy who was then a leading man of Makkah, for the Khuza'a were the custodians of the Ka'bah before the Quraysh, and the rest of the Arabs used to fashion themselves after the people of Makkah because there was the House of Allāh and to it one turned for the pilgrimage, and these people of Makkah were held in honor since the days of 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham). However, 'Amr imitated the Syrians he had observed. He was drawn to their practices. He believed that liberating animals such as the *bahira*, *sā'iba*, *wasila*, and *hami* would be an act of worship and religion. But what he did was basically introduce polytheism to the Arabs (the followers of the creed of 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham) and forbid that which was lawful in essence. He acted in this manner in imitation of those on earth. This deviation grew

³⁰⁷ Al-Bukhārī (3332,3333, 4623) and Muslim (2856).

and spread until majority of Arabia adopted polytheism and the ancient good faith was abandoned. At this point, Allāh sent the Prophet ﷺ who subsequently resuscitated the creed of 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), re-established monotheism, and made lawful what they had made unlawful.

In these passages of Sūrah al-'An'ām, Allāh speaks about the people:

﴿وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرِعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِلشُّرَكَائِنَا فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ لِيُرِدُّوهُمْ وَلَيْلِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَحَرْثٌ حَجَرْنَا لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ بِرِعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَمَ حَرَمَتِ ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَمَ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ أَسْمَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصَفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾

And they (the polytheists) assign to Allāh from that which He created of crops and livestock a share and say, "This is for Allāh," by their claim, "and this is for our associate-gods." But what is for their associate-gods does not reach Allāh, while what is for Allāh-this reaches their associate-gods. Evil is that which they rule (*) And likewise, to many of the polytheists their evil associates have made (to seem) pleasing the killing of their children in order to bring about their destruction and to cover them with confusion in their religion. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have done so.

So leave them and that which they invent (*) And they say, “These animals and crops are forbidden; no one may eat from them except whom we will,” by their claim. And there are those (camels) whose backs are forbidden (by them) *and those upon which the name of Allāh is not mentioned*—(all of this) an invention of untruth about Him. He will punish them for what they were inventing (*) And they say, “What is in the bellies of these animals is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our females. But if it is (born) dead, then all of them have shares therein.” He will punish them for their description. Indeed, He is Wise and Knowing (*) They will have lost who killed their children in foolishness without knowledge and prohibited what Allāh had provided for them, inventing untruth about Allāh. They have gone astray and were not (rightly) guided.”³⁰⁸ Until the end of the Chapter.

Here, the above types of people are addressed, and during the address, Allāh, therefore, says:

﴿سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا
مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

Those who associated [others] with Allāh will say, “If Allāh had willed, we would not have associated [anything] and neither would our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything.”³⁰⁹

It is common knowledge that this prohibition originated by giving up the permissible in the name of piety, which, in essence, resulted from imitation of the infidel, even though the pious did not intent to imitate them.

It should now become clear to you that imitating the infidels is the root of the effacement of Allāh’s religion and His laws, as well as the emergence of disbelief and disobedience. Likewise, the source of all virtue lies in preserving the ways of Prophets and their precepts.

³⁰⁸ Sūrah al-’An’ām, 6:136-140.

³⁰⁹ Sūrah al-’An’ām, 6:148.

Consequently, the influence of innovation on religion grew stronger, even if it was not motivated by the desire to imitate the infidels; and even more so if both conscious and unconscious imitation converged. Therefore, it occurs in the tradition:

مَا ابْتَدَعَ قَوْمٌ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا نَزَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ مِثْلَهَا

Whenever a people resorted to innovation, they lost a corresponding measure of Sunnah.³¹⁰

Similarly, in his *Sunan*, Abū Dawūd reports on the authority of Abū ‘Umair ibn Anas, who reported it from his *Anṣār* uncles, that:

اهْتَمَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِلصَّلَاةِ كَيْفَ يَجْمَعُ النَّاسَ لَهَا، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: "انْصَبْ رَأْيَةَ عِنْدَ حُضُورِ الصَّلَاةِ فَإِذَا رَأَوْهَا آذَنَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا، فَلَمْ يُعْجِبْهُ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ: "فَذَكَرَ لَهُ الْقُنْعُ - يَعْنِي الشُّبُورَ" وَقَالَ زِيَادٌ: "شُبُورُ الْيَهُودِ" - فَلَمْ يُعْجِبْهُ ذَلِكَ، وَقَالَ: "هُوَ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْيَهُودِ" قَالَ: "فَذَكَرَ لَهُ التَّافُوسُ،" فَقَالَ: "هُوَ مِنْ أَمْرِ التَّصَارِي". فَأَنْصَرَفَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ مُهْتَمٌّ لَهُمْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَرَى الْأَذَانَ فِي مَنْامِهِ، قَالَ: "فَعَدَا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ،" فَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي لَبَيْنَ نَائِمٍ وَيَقْظَانَ، إِذْ أَتَانِي آتٍ فَأَرَانِي الْأَذَانَ،" قَالَ: "وَكَانَ عَمْرُ بْنُ الْحَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَدْ رَأَاهُ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ فَكَتَمَهُ عِشْرِينَ يَوْمًا،" قَالَ: "ثُمَّ أَخْبَرَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،" فَقَالَ لَهُ: "مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تُخْبِرَنِي؟" فَقَالَ: "سَبَقَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ زَيْدٍ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ،" فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "يَا بِلَالُ، فَمُ فَانْظُرْ مَا يَأْمُرُكَ بِهِ

³¹⁰ Weak, Ahmad (16970). But this is not the text of this tradition in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad, it rather occurs as: "ما أخذت قَوْمٌ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا رُفِعَ مِثْلُهَا مِنَ السُّنَّةِ" but the meaning is the same. However, the text quoted here by the author occurs in a saying of ‘Hassan ibn Atiyah’, popularly and authentically reported in the books of Aqīdah on the authority of Imām al-Awzā’i. Check for instance *al-Ibānah al-Kubrāh* (1/351).

عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، فَافْعَلُهُ" قَالَ: "فَأَدَّنَ بِلَالٌ"، قَالَ أَبُو بَشِيرٍ: "فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو عَمِيرٍ، أَنَّ الْأَنْصَارَ تَزْعُمُ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ زَيْدٍ، لَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مَرِيضًا لَجَعَلَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُؤَدِّنًا."

The Prophet ﷺ was anxious as to how to gather the people for prayer. The people told him, "Hoist a flag at the time of prayer so that when people see it, they will inform one another to prayer. But this did not appeal to him. Then someone mentioned to him about the *shofar* —a trumpet used by the Jews, but this did not please him either. Ziyad said, "A horn of the Jews." He (the Prophet) said, "This is the matter of the Jews." Then they mentioned to him the bell of the Christians. He (the Prophet) said, "This is a matter of the Christian." 'Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn 'Abdir-Rabbihi returned anxiously from there because of the Prophet's concern. While he was asleep, *adhān* was demonstrated to him in a dream. Next day he came to the Prophet ﷺ and informed him about it, saying, "I was between sleep and wakefulness, all of a sudden someone came (to me) and taught me the *adhān* (call to prayer)." 'Umar ibn al-Khattab had also seen it in his dream before, but he kept it hidden for twenty days. Later he told the Prophet ﷺ who asked him, "What did prevent you from saying it to me?" He said, "Abdullah ibn Zayd had already told you about it before me, so I was ashamed." Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Bilal, stand up, and see what 'Abdullah ibn Zayd tells you (to do), then do it." Bilal then called them to prayer (performed the *adhān*).

Abū Bishr reported on the authority of Abū Umayr: "The *Anṣār* thought that if Abdullah ibn Zayd had not been ill on that day, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would have made him *Mu'adhin*."³¹¹

Sa'īd ibn Mansūr also reported in his *Sunan* through his chain of transmitters, going down to 'Āmir ash-Sh'abī, that: the Messenger of

³¹¹ Sound, Abū Dawūd (498).

Allāh ﷻ was very anxious about the matters of the prayers, such that it was noticed in him, and among the things he was worried about was how to gather the people for the prayers. So, the bell was mentioned to him, but he said: “that is a Christians practice.” He then decided to send callers on the streets to call the people for the prayers, but he said: “I wish not to cause distractions to the people who might already be in their prayers with callings upon others.” The narration then mentioned the call to prayer ‘Abdullah ibn Zayd saw in his dream.

The narration of Anas reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* gives a support to this narration, he says:

لَمَّا كَثُرَ النَّاسُ، قَالَ: ذَكِّرُوا أَنْ يَعْلَمُوا وَقْتِ الصَّلَاةِ بِشَيْءٍ يَعْرِفُونَهُ،
فَذَكِّرُوا أَنْ يُورُوا نَارًا، أَوْ يَضْرِبُوا نَاقُوسًا فَأَمَرَ بِلَالٌ أَنْ يَشْفَعَ الْأَذَانَ،
وَأَنْ يُوتِرَ الْإِقَامَةَ.

When the number of Muslims increased, they discussed the question as to how to know the time for the prayer by some familiar means. Some suggested that a fire be lit (at the time of the prayer) and others put forward the proposal to ring the bell. Bilal was then ordered to pronounce the wording of *adhān* twice and of the *iqama* once only.³¹²

Also in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Ibn ‘Umar was reported to relate that:

كَانَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ حِينَ قَدِمُوا الْمَدِينَةَ يَجْتَمِعُونَ فَيَتَحَيَّنُونَ الصَّلَوَاتِ،
وَلَيْسَ يُنَادِي بِهَا أَحَدٌ، فَتَكَلَّمُوا يَوْمًا فِي ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: “اتَّخِذُوا
نَاقُوسًا مِثْلَ نَاقُوسِ النَّصَارَى،” وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: “قَرْنَا مِثْلَ قَرَنِ الْيَهُودِ،”
فَقَالَ عُمَرُ أَوْلَا تَبْعَثُونَ رَجُلًا يُنَادِي بِالصَّلَاةِ؟ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “يَا بِلَالُ قُمْ فَنادِ بِالصَّلَاةِ.”

When the Muslims arrived in Madinah, they used to gather and guess the time for prayer, and no one gave the call for prayer. One day they spoke about that and some of them said, “Let us use a

³¹² Al-Bukhārī (606) and Muslim (378).

bell like the Christians do,” others said, “No, a trumpet like the horn used by the Jews.” ‘Umar then suggested that a man should call (the people) for the prayer; so Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said, “O Bilal, get up and pronounce the *adhān* for prayers.”³¹³

This is not the place to dwell on all the points connected with this tradition, such as the interpretation of the rise of the *adhān*, the visions of ‘Abdullah ibn Zayd and ‘Umar, and ‘Umar’s suggestion, as well as the report, “The Prophet ﷺ had (already) heard the *adhān* on his *Isrā’*—night-journey, etc.” This is not the place to elaborate on it or to respond to issues embedded in the discussion.

The objective is rather to demonstrate that when the Prophet ﷺ disapproved the use of mouth-blown Jewish trumpet and hand-operated Christian bells, he did so because the former was a Jewish practice, and the latter a Christian one. Because defining the nature of a thing immediately after the injunction implies that the nature itself is the basis for injunction, this is the case. Consequently, all Jewish and Christian practices are prohibited. This is despite the fact that, according to tradition, the Jewish trumpet dates back to the time of Moses, when it was used. The Christian bells are a later addition, as the vast majority of Christian rules were created by Christian scholars and monks.

Because trumpet and bell sounds are associated with Jewish and Christian rituals, and because Christians regularly use their bells outside of church, such noises must continue to be abhorrent even when they are not associated with prayer.

Adhān is a distinguishing mark (*shi’ār*) of the true religion of Islam, containing proclamation of Allāh’s name. It opens the gates of heaven, send demons fleeing, and invoke heavenly compassion.

Many Muslims, including kings and other than them, have fallen for the rites of the Jews and Christians, to the extent that we have seen them burning incense and using tiny bells on this wretched mini-Thursday,³¹⁴

³¹³ Al-Bukhārī (604) and Muslim (377).

³¹⁴ The mini-Thursday, according to the Christians’ doctrine, is the Thursday that precedes the last Thursday of their days of fasting. They celebrate this Thursday in preparation for the big and last one. The author elaborated on that much later

and to the extent that some of the Muslim kings went so far as to have horns blown and drums beaten at all five times of the prayer—exactly what the Prophet ﷺ hated. One of them used to do have his at sunrise and sunset in imitation of Dhul-Qarnayn; as claimed, and charged his provincial princes to do a little of that too.

When imitation of Jews and Christians, on the one hand, and of non-Arabs such as the Romans and Persians, on the other hand, became rampant among the Eastern Kings, and they committed some other crimes that violated the tenets of Islam and thus plunged into doing things that displeased Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, Allāh brought these impious Turks, who were predestined to fight them, and these Turks wreaked tremendous destruction on the believers throughout Muslim lands. All of this corroborates the aforementioned saying of the Prophet ﷺ, “Assuredly you will follow after the manners of those before you.”

In the time of the Prophet ﷺ and subsequent eras, Muslims were known to face battle in the name of Allāh and with Allāh-inspired *sakina* (composure).

Qais ibn ‘Abād, a great *Tābi’i*, said:

كَانَ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَكْرَهُونَ رَفْعَ الصَّوْتِ
عِنْدَ ثَلَاثٍ: عِنْدَ الْقِتَالِ، وَعِنْدَ الْجَنَائِزِ وَعِنْدَ الذِّكْرِ.

The companions of the Prophet ﷺ preferred a subdued voice in three conditions: in the battle field, at funerals and while mentioning Allāh’s name.³¹⁵

The body of the previous tradition material leads one to conclude that solemnity and sobriety were the prevailing dispositions of Muslim on these occasions: when their hearts were filled with invocations of Allāh and mention of His glory and bounty, just as they were at prayer. In the past, People of the Book and non-Arabs used to raise their voices in certain circumstances, a practice of which numerous Muslims have

in the book.

³¹⁵ Authentic, Az-Zuhd of Ibn al-Mubāraq (247), al-Mūsānāf of Abdur-Razāq (11201, 33420) and as-Sunan of al-Bayhaqī (7182, 18466).

now become guilty. This is not the appropriate place to discuss that extensively.

Also, ‘Amr ibn Maymūn al-Awdī reported that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said:

إِنَّ الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَانُوا لَا يُفِيضُونَ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ وَيَقُولُونَ:
أَشْرَقَ ثَبِيرٌ، وَأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَالَفَهُمْ ثُمَّ أَفَاضَ قَبْلَ
أَنْ تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ.

The *Mushrikūn* did not use to depart from Jam` (Muzdalifah) until the sun had risen, and they used to say: “Let the sun shine on Thabir (a mountain in Makkah)”. But the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ contradicted them and departed from Jam` before sunrise.³¹⁶

He reportedly stated, “Our line of conduct is different from that of the *Mushrikūn*” which is recounted in at least some versions of this narration. In the same way that the people used to leave ‘Arafāt before sunset, the Prophet ﷺ was differed; he left ‘Arafāt after sunset. For this reason, staying at ‘Arafāt till after sunset is compulsory; according to the majority of the scholars, and according to others, it is a pillar for the acceptance of *Hajj* rituals. People also detested staying in al-Jam` till al-Jam`’s entire daybreak in the morning (*al-Muzdalifah*). It is evident from the narration that opposing the *Mushrikūn* is the objective for the disputes.

Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ is quoted on behalf of Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman as saying:

لَا تَشْرَبُوا فِي آنِيَةِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ، وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا فِي صِحَافِهَا، فَإِنَّهَا لَهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَنَا فِي الآخِرَةِ.

“Do not drink from gold and silver vessels, nor eat from dishes made of these; for they have them in this world, but you will have them in the next.” (Agreed upon).³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Al-Bukhārī (1684 and 3838).

³¹⁷ Al-Bukhārī (5426, 5632, 5633) and Muslim (2067).

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar said:

رَأَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ ثَوْبَيْنِ مُعْصَفَرَيْنِ، فَقَالَ:
"إِنَّ هَذِهِ مِنْ ثِيَابِ الْكُفَّارِ فَلَا تَلْبَسْهَا."

The Prophet ﷺ saw me wearing two clothes dyed in saffron. Whereupon he remarked, "These are the clothes worn by infidels, so do not wear them." (Reported by Muslim)³¹⁸

The basis for the prohibition is that "these are the clothes worn by infidels." It may indicate that the unbelievers let themselves to wear these clothes to enjoy their worldly lot; or that they are just accustomed to wearing them. It further states, "They seek enjoyment by using gold and silver vessels in this world, whereas these are meant for the believers in the next."

It is on account of this that the *ulamā* believe the use of silk and gold and silver utensils to be an act of imitating the infidels.

Abū ‘Uthmān an-Nahdī is quoted by Bukhārī and Muslim as follows:

كَتَبَ إِلَيْنَا عُمَرُ وَنَحْنُ بِأَدْرَبِجَانَ: "يَا عْتَبَةَ بِنِ فَرْقَدٍ، إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ كَدِّكَ، وَلَا مِنْ كَدِّ أَبِيكَ، وَلَا مِنْ كَدِّ أُمَّكَ، فَأَشْبِعِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ مِمَّا تَشْبَعُ مِنْهُ فِي رَحْلِكَ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّنْعَمَ، وَزِيَّ أَهْلِ الشَّرِكِ، وَلَبُوسَ الْحَرِيرِ، فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنِ لَبُوسِ الْحَرِيرِ"، قَالَ: إِلَّا هَكَذَا، وَرَفَعَ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِصْبَعِيهِ الْوُسْطَى وَالسَّبَابَةَ وَضَمَّهُمَا."

While we were stationed at Adharbijan with ‘Utba ibn Farqad, ‘Umar wrote us a letter, saying, "O ‘Utba ibn Farqad, this wealth (the conquered country) is neither the result of your own labor nor the result of the labor of your father, nor the result of the labor

³¹⁸ Muslim (2077).

of your mother. So feed Muslims have their fill of food in their saddlebags just as you do yourself. Beware of the life of pleasure, and the dress of the polytheists and wearing of silk garments, for the Prophet ﷺ forbade the wearing of silk garment except this much, which the Prophet ﷺ indicated to us by raising his middle finger and forefinger and joining them.”³¹⁹

Abū Bakr al-Khallal narrates that Hudhaifa ibn al-Yamān came to a house where he saw two novelties: pitchers of brass and of lead. So, he did not enter it, saying, “He who imitates a people is of them.”

In another narration, it is said: “He saw something of non-Arab dress, he then returned and commented thus: ‘He who imitates a people is of them.’”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṣaliḥ as-Sawwāq said: “We were at a banquet.” When Ahmad ibn Hanbal entered the room, his eyes were fixed on a silver-encrusted chair. He then retreated. The host overtook him but he refused him and exclaimed, “Zoroastrian fashion! Zoroastrian fashion!”

It is reported, with Ṣaliḥ as the transmitter: “If there was an intoxicant or something disreputable—e.g., vessels of gold and silver used by the Zoroastrians, or a wall covered with cloth—at a party, Ahmad would walk out without eating the food.”

Indeed, it would take us too much time to track down all of the traditions and Quranic verses pertaining to this topic.

³¹⁹ Al-Bukhārī (5830), but only a part of it, and Muslim (2069).

IV

Companions' and Salaf's Consensus on Differing from Unbelievers' Practices

The First Aspect of Evidence for Consensus

TO ARGUE THE issue from point of view of the Consensus of the Companions and the *Salaf* after them, this also reveals several aspects. Among the Prophet Companions, 'Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, and subsequently the Islamic leaders—*a'imma* in general, and all the Islamic jurists had stipulated that the *dhimmis* (the free non-Muslims under Muslim rule), undertake to pledge the following: "We shall respect the Muslims; stand up for them in our assemblies should they choose to sit therein; we shall not imitate them in any of our garments—whether caps, turbans, sandals, or in the manner of parting the hair; nor shall we imitate them in their speech; nor shall we adopt the same surnames as they do; nor take or carry arms; nor ride

on saddlebacks; nor gird ourselves with swords; nor engrave our rings with inscriptions in Arabic; nor sell wine. We shall clip the forepart of our heads, preserve our old garb, and wear our belts; we shall not expose the cross over our churches; nor display a cross or any of our religious books in streets and markets frequented by Muslims; and when using bells, we shall sound them softly in our churches. We shall not raise our voices at our funerals, nor kindle fire while carrying our dead along Muslim streets.” Harb reported it with a sound chain of transmitters.

In another version reported by al-Khallal: “That we shall muffle the sound of knockers inside our churches; we shall not display the cross over the churches, nor shall we raise our voices while praying or reciting in our churches should Muslims be present around, nor expose the cross or a book in a Muslim market, nor go out into the open celebrating *Ba’uth* (Easter)—on *Ba’uth* they used to go *en masse* as we do on the Day of ‘Aḍḥā and on the Day of Fitr—and *Sha’anin* (Palm Sunday), nor raise our voices while escorting our dead, nor kindle fire while carrying them along Muslim markets, nor let our funeral processions pass through a Muslim quarter, nor sell wines. . . . We shall preserve our old garb and shall not imitate Muslims by wearing caps, turbans or sandals, or by parting hair, or in riding beasts. We shall clip the forepart of our heads and shall not part our forelocks, and shall wear belts on our waists.”

These stipulations are well-known in books of jurisprudence and canonic scholarship, and agreed upon by all the religious scholars, such as the leading Imāms from the past and present. If it were not for the fact that these stipulations are so well known among the students of jurisprudence, we would mention the wordings of each group. These stipulations are of different kinds.

The first kind seeks to set the infidels apart from the Muslims in hairstyle, garb, names, usage of riding animals, speech, etc., so that Muslims and non-Muslims do not resemble one another in outward appearance. ‘Umar and the Muslim community as a whole were dissatisfied with this differentiation and sought a more comprehensive one, the details of which are discussed elsewhere.

This fact demonstrates the consensus of the Muslims on maintaining an outward distinction between themselves and the infidels, and on abandoning assimilation to them.

Thus, upright Muslim leaders such as 'Umaryn³²⁰ used to enforce these rules with greater stringency in an attempt to achieve their goal. This goal emerges from the report of al-Hafiz Abū 'sh-Shaykh al-Asbahani who quotes Khalid ibn 'Urfuta on the subject of *dhimmi* obligations: "Umar sent an edict to the garrison towns to the effect that they—i.e., the Christians—shall clip their forelocks, nor shall they wear the garb of the Muslims, so that they are easily identifiable."

Concerning a problem that arose during his lifetime, al-Qadī Abū Ya'la said, "The *dhimmis* are ordered to wear a distinctive mark in their raiment, but if they refrain to do so, then it is not permissible for any Muslim to wear the same cut of clothes as the unbelievers, because the unbelievers are not obliged to wear a certain cut of clothes."

I say: A difference may arise here: is it they who are compelled to look different, or we who must effect dissimilarity ourselves should they avoid the distinctive mark? But as far as the necessity of mutual dissimilarity is concerned, I am unaware of any dissension among the Islamic scholars.

The same al-Asbahani quotes 'Umar as writing, "Do not exchange letters with *dhimmis*, lest amity be generated between you and them, nor call them by their surnames; you must humiliate them but do not wrong them. Order their women not to tighten their waistbands or let their forelocks hang, and to stand up in their markets so we can tell them apart from Muslim women. If they refuse, let them either willingly or unwillingly embrace Islam."

Again, the same al-Asbahani: "Some people of Bani Taghlib, wearing turbans resembling those worn by the Arabs (Muslims?) approached 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' they said, 'consider us as Arabs.' He inquired, 'Who are you?' They replied, 'Banū Taghlib.' 'Aren't you the middling Arabs?' They replied, 'We are Christians.' 'I need scissors,' he said. He then clipped something from their forelocks, threw off their turbans and tore the cloak of every one of them into a span-sized piece so they could belt themselves. He then

³²⁰ Umar ibn al-Khattāb ﷺ and Umar ibn Abdul-Azīz ﷺ.

commanded, ‘You must not ride on saddles but only on packsaddles, and you must let your legs come down one side of the horse.’”

It is reported that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz wrote, “Bells should not be rung outside the churches.” He further continued, “You must prevent the Christians from wearing cloaks, silk garments, and turbans. Pursue this matter energetically and publicize it so that the prohibition is not ignored by anyone. I have received reports that many Christians under your authority have repeatedly worn turbans, abandoned wearing belt, allowed their hair to hang over their earlobes and shoulders, and abandoned clipping. Indeed if these actions have occurred within the scope of your authority, it indicates weakness and inefficacy. Therefore, ensure that all my orders, both positive and negative, which have not been implemented, are put into operation without any further permissiveness and concessions.”

I have not recorded everything they used to enjoin regarding the People of the Book, since here we are concerned with how to be distinct from them. During his reign, Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Mutawakkil meted out the same treatment to the *dhimmi*s. It is well-known that al-Mutawakkil consulted Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others, on how he issued stipulations, and how Imām Ahmad replied on the subject.

One of the restrictions is the suppression of the objectionable display of items of their cult, such as wine, knockers, lights, and festival processions. Another is the suppression of symbols of their faith, such as (loud) liturgical chanting.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه, the Muslims during his reign, the scholars after him, and whoever else Allāh assisted in governing the affairs of Muslims—all unanimously agreed upon the prohibition of their display of specific symbols within *dar al-Islam* and strictly enforced this prohibition. How, then, can Muslims themselves participate in such practices and show such symbols.

Furthermore, respect may not be shown to them, and they should be held in contempt, as laid down by the *Shari’a*.

Evidently, honoring their festivals, etc., means agreeing with them, which in a way, equates to jointly honoring those festivals. As much as the negligence given towards the affairs of their false religion, this action cheers and pleases them.

The Second Aspect of Evidence for Consensus

ANOTHER ASPECT OF consensus: Numerous Companions and the *Ṭābi'ūn* made use of this principle at various times and in numerous rulings until it became widespread. Narrated Qais ibn Abi Hazim:

دَخَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَلَى امْرَأَةٍ مِنْ أَحْمَسَ يُقَالُ لَهَا زَيْنَبُ، فَرَأَاهَا لَا تَكَلِّمُ،
فَقَالَ: "مَا لَهَا لَا تَكَلِّمُ؟" قَالُوا: "حَجَّتْ مُصِمَّةً"، قَالَ لَهَا: "تَكَلِّمِي،
فَإِنَّ هَذَا لَا يَحِلُّ، هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ"، فَتَكَلَّمْتُ، فَقَالَتْ: "مَنْ أَنْتَ؟"
قَالَ: "امْرُؤٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ"، قَالَتْ: "أَيُّ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ؟" قَالَ: "مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ"
، قَالَتْ: "مِنْ أَيِّ قُرَيْشٍ أَنْتَ؟" قَالَ: "إِنَّكَ لَسَأُولٌ، أَنَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ"، قَالَتْ:
"مَا بَقَاؤُنَا عَلَى هَذَا الْأَمْرِ الصَّالِحِ الَّذِي جَاءَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْدَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ؟" قَالَ:
"بَقَاؤُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَا اسْتَقَامَتْ بِكُمْ أَيْمَتُّكُمْ"، قَالَتْ: "وَمَا الْأَيْمَةُ؟" قَالَ:
"أَمَا كَانَ لِقَوْمِكَ رُءُوسٌ وَأَشْرَافٌ، يَأْمُرُونَهُمْ فَيَطِيعُونَهُمْ؟" قَالَتْ: "بَلَى،"
قَالَ: "فَهُمْ أَوْلِيكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ."

Abū Bakr went to a lady from the Ahmas tribe called Zainab (bint *al-Muhājir*) and found that she refused to speak. He asked, "Why does she not speak." The people said, "She has intended to perform *Hajj* without speaking." He said to her, "Speak, for it is illegal not to speak, as it is an action of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance." So she spoke and said, "Who are you?" He said, "A man from the Emigrants." She asked, "Which Emigrants?" He replied, "From Quraysh." She asked, "From what branch of Quraysh are you?" He said, "You ask too many questions; I am Abū Bakr." She said, "How long shall we enjoy this good order (i.e. Islamic religion) which Allāh has brought after the period of ignorance?" He said, "You will enjoy it as long as your Imāms keep on abiding by its rules and regulations." She asked, "What are the Imāms?" He said, "Were there not heads and chiefs of your nation who used to order the people and they used to obey them?" She said, "Yes." He said,

“So they (i.e. the Imāms) are those whom I meant.”³²¹ (al-Bukhārī reported it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*).

Now, when a prohibition follows a description of the prohibited, it indicates that the thing described called for the prohibition. Thus, Abū Bakr indicated that the description of silence as a pagan practice necessitates its prohibition and abstention.

A practice of the pagan days means a practice specifically associated with the pre-Islamic Arabs and that which was not prescribed in Islam. It includes all acts of worship which the pagans used to perform and whose performance was not sanctioned by Allāh in Islam, even though they may not have been explicitly mentioned, such as the *whistling* and *clapping*; for the Qur’an says about the infidels:

And their prayer at the House is nothing but a whistling and clapping of hands.³²²

Adopting these ways amounts to approaching and acceptance of an act of *Jāhiliyyah* that is not prescribed by Islam.

The same holds for exposing oneself to the rising sun at the Sanctuary—without so much as even seeking shade—or abandoning circumambulation in old clothes, or giving up everything that is done outside the Sanctuary, and other similar pagan practices that they had adopted for worship. There is an explicit prohibition on all these acts. This, however, does not apply to the running between as-Safa and al-Marwa and other rites of the pilgrimage, for these became Islamic ceremonies, although the pagans also had observed them.

It was mentioned shortly that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb wrote a letter to the Muslims in Persia, wherein he states: “Behold! Do not dress in the idol worshipper’s dressings...” that is a prohibition for all the Muslims present in the place not to wear anything belonging to the *Mushrikūn* (idol worshippers).

Imām Ahmad quotes ‘Umar in his *Musnad*: “You may put on an *izār*, cloak, sandals, boots of yellow leather, and trousers, and you may

³²¹ Al-Bukhārī (3834).

³²² Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:35.

go out to receive the mounted traveler, walk briskly, but you should remain true to Ma'add. Cast off desires, disregard life of ease and comfort and the garb of the non-Arabs. Beware of silk, for the Prophet ﷺ forbade it, saying, 'Do not wear silk except to this extent,' which extent he indicated by his two fingers."

He also reported on the authority of Abū Uthman an-Nahadi, who said:

جَاءَنَا كِتَابُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَنَحْنُ بِأَدْرَبِيحَانَ: يَا عُثْبَةَ بْنَ فَرْقَدٍ
وَيَاكُمْ وَالتَّنَعُّمَ، وَزِيَّ أَهْلِ الشَّرْكِ، وَكِبُوسَ الْحَرِيرِ، فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَانَا عَنْ لُبُوسِ الْحَرِيرِ، وَقَالَ: "إِلَّا هَكَذَا" وَرَفَعَ
لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إصْبَعَيْهِ

While stationed at Adharbijan, we received a letter from Umar, saying, "O 'Utba ibn Farqad, beware of luxury, of the polytheists' garb, and of silken garments; because the Prophet ﷺ forbidden for us wearing silk except this much which the Prophet ﷺ indicated to us by raising his middle finger and forefinger and joining them."³²³ (This narration is authentically established in accordance with the conditions for the authentication of both al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

The first account states 'Umar's injunction in favor of Ma'addi raiment, which is the garb of Bani Ma'add ibn 'Adnan, who are Arabs, and against that of the non-Arabs and polytheists. Allāh knows this is no secret, it is well known and has been presented in *marfu'* fashion.

In his *Musnad*, he also reports through his chain of transmitters, passing through Hammad ibn Salama to 'Ubayd ibn Adam that 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb was at *al-Jābiyah*, 'Ubayd then mentioned the conquest of Jerusalem and said, "I heard 'Umar ﷺ asking Ka'b, 'Where do you think I should pray?'

'Behind the Rock, if you ask me,' replied Ka'b.³²⁴ 'The whole of Jerusalem is before you.'

³²³ Authentic, Musnad (92).

³²⁴ The Ka'b mentioned here is Ka'b al-Ahbār.

'You are imitating the Jews,' said 'Umar. 'No, I'd rather where the Prophet ﷺ himself prayed.' So he faced in the direction of Ka'bah and prayed. Subsequently, he came and spread his cloak and swept the dust off the house with it, and the people did likewise."³²⁵

I say: The Prophet's prayer at Jerusalem during the night of his ascension is reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through Hammad ibn Salama to Anas, who reported the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as saying:

أُتِيْتُ بِالْبُرَاقِ، وَهُوَ دَابَّةٌ أَبْيَضٌ طَوِيلٌ فَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ، وَدُونَ الْبَعْلِ، يَضَعُ حَافِرَهُ عِنْدَ مُنْتَهَى طَرَفِهِ، قَالَ: "فَرَكِبْتُهُ حَتَّى أَتَيْتُ بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ،" قَالَ: "فَرَبَطْتُهُ بِالْحَلْقَةِ الَّتِي يَرِبُطُ بِهَا الْأَنْبِيَاءُ،" قَالَ "ثُمَّ دَخَلْتُ الْمَسْجِدَ، فَصَلَّيْتُ فِيهِ رَكْعَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ خَرَجْتُ فَجَاءَنِي جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ، وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ، فَاخْتَرْتُ اللَّبَنَ، فَقَالَ جِبْرِيلُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اخْتَرْتَ الْفِطْرَةَ، ثُمَّ عُرِجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ.

I was brought al-Buraq, who is an animal white and long, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, who would place his hoof a distance equal to the range of version. I mounted it and came to the Temple (Bait Maqdis in Jerusalem), then tethered it to the ring used by the prophets. I entered the mosque and prayed two rak'as in it, and then came out and Gabriel brought me a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. I chose the milk, and Gabriel said, "You have chosen the natural thing." Then he took me to heaven.³²⁶

Hudhaifa ibn al-Yamman used to deny that the Prophet ﷺ had prayed there, for no tradition thereof had reached Hudhaifa. He firmly believed that had the Prophet ﷺ prayed there, praying there would have been made obligatory for the Muslim community.

'Umar, reproached Ka'b for imitating the Jews; imitating, that is, by suggesting 'Umar to face in the direction of the Rock, it is an imitation to the people who believe that the Rock is a permanent *qibla*, while

³²⁵ Musnad Ahmad (261).

³²⁶ Muslim (162).

it will not even occur to a Muslim to make it the direction he faces when he intends to pray.

‘Umar took the right course in this case, as he consistently did in his life devoted to pleasing Allāh. He contributed more than anyone else, to the success of the Islamic cause. Through him, Allāh strengthened Islam, humiliated both unbelief and unbelievers, and ensured the observance of the rites of the true faith. He curbed anything that threatened to weaken the bonds of Islam, acting in obedience to Allāh, His Messenger ﷺ, the Holy Book, and the Prophet’s Sunnah, following in the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr, consulting early believers like ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Talha, az-Zubair, Sa’d, ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Auf, Ubayy ibn Ka’b, Mu’adh ibn Jabal, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ūd, Zayd ibn Thābit and others who possessed knowledge, understanding, and valuable opinions for Islam and the Muslims community. That is why he is emulated in matters such as defining the status of the People of the Book under Islam and prohibiting the appointment of an unbeliever to a position of responsibility or honor over Muslims, to a position of honor, which goes against the divine command to humble them. There are even reports of him burning non-Arabic books. He thwarted the rise of heretics and their agendas, exemplified by his treatment he applied to Sabigh ibn ‘Asl at-Tamīmi, a story we will revisit in our discussion of non-Muslim festivals. This story reflects the prohibition of socializing and mingling with unbelievers during such occasions and avoiding learning their non-Arab idiom. It also highlights his unwavering commitment to preventing imitation of the unbelievers and foreign elements contrary to Islam. Furthermore, the practices, ordinances, and prescribed punishments established by ‘Umar based on the Prophet’s example, were subsequently upheld by ‘Uthmān, who followed ‘Umar’s lead in these matters. It is widely recognized that ‘Uthmān concurred with ‘Umar in this regard.

Sa’id narrates in his *Sunan*: ‘Alī went out and saw some people in the state of *as-Sadl*, so he said, “What is the matter with them? They look like Jews who have come out of their synagogues.”

Ibn Mubāraq and Hafṣ ibn Giyāth also reported this narration,

their report stated that: “He saw some people praying while they are in the state of *as-Sadl*, he then commented: This people look like Jews who have come out of their synagogues.”

It has as well been reported from Ibn ‘Umar and Abū Hurairah that: “they despise someone being in a state of *as-Sadl* while praying.”

Abū Dawūd reported it with his chain of transmitters through ‘Atā’, who narrated from Abū Hurairah that:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنِ السَّدْلِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ وَأَنَّ
يُغْطِي الرَّجُلُ فَاةَ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade *as-Sadl*³²⁷ during prayer and that a man should cover his mouth.³²⁸

This tradition has also been narrated on the authority of ‘Atā’ with a *Mursal* report—a direct report from the Prophet ﷺ without mentioning from whom he heard it.

However, Āmir ibn al-Ahawal said: I asked ‘Atā’ about *as-Sadl*; he hated doing it while praying. I asked him, “Is this a view reported from the Prophet ﷺ?” And he answered affirmatively. This verdict, therefore, confirms the authenticity of the report he established from the Prophet ﷺ. Except that it has also been established from him that he did not consider *as-Sadl* to be impermissible and that he used to observe the prayers while in was in the state of *as-Sadl*. However, it could be that he used to practice the act but later became aware of its impermissibility and then left it, or that the ruling for the impermissibility of the act escaped him when he performed it. It is a well-known argument in the science of hadith: if a transmitter or reporter of a particular narration behaves opposite to what he reports, does this invalidate or not invalidate his report? The renowned judgement of Ahmad and the vast majority of the scholars of hadith is that this action does not invalidate his report because his contradictory behavior might be due to a number of other factors rather than being the likelihood of the weakness of the report.

³²⁷ The meaning of *as-Sadl* will be explained by the author shortly.

³²⁸ Sound, Abū Dawūd (643) and at-Tirmidhī (378).

Abdur-Razāq also reported on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydah ibn Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd, who said, "My father (Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd) detested *as-Sadl* while praying," he added, "and my father used to mention that the Prophet ﷺ forbade it."

The majority of the scholars despised *as-Sadl* absolutely. This is the opinion of Abū Hanīfah, ash-Shāfi'ī, and the famous one of Ahmad. It is also reported from Ahmad that he only despised *as-Sadl* if one wore a wrapper –*Izār*, and allowed it if he wore a shirt. He distinguished between the two wears in order to harmonize the available reports on the subject, resulting in the conclusion that the prohibition only applies to the habitual dresses.

Moreover, the scholars also differ as to: does *as-Sadl* spoil the prayer or not?

Ibn Abī Mūsā says, Regarding the status of the prayer of a person who prays while he does *as-Sadl*, there are two opinions from the scholars: the first is that he should repay the prayer, and the second is that he should not. However, famous opinion holds that the prayer is not re-paid.

Abū Bakr, Abdul-Azīz adds in his commentary that if *as-Sadl* does not reveal the private parts, one should not redo the prayer. That is according to the conventional opinion of the scholars. Though there are scholars who never hated *as-Sadl*, the likes of Malik and others.

As-Sadl according to Ahmad, entails covering oneself with a wrapper; wrapping up one shoulder with one side of the wrapper while the other side does not extend to the second shoulder. He said that this is the practice of the Jews.

Hanbal reported him to have explained that: *as-Sadl* is to wrap oneself up with one side of a wrapper without putting up the other side of it. It is a practice of the Jews; they do it when they wear any kind of dress, however it is not permissible during prayers.

Ṣaliḥ, his son, also reported: "When I asked my father about *as-Sadl* during the prayer, he replied: "That one put on a wrapper without casting up its both sides over each other." And that is the general opinion of the scholars about *as-Sadl*.

However, Abū al-Hasan al-Amādī and Ibn ‘Aqīl mentioned that *as-Saddl* is trailing of garment, but beyond the heel. In that sense, there will be no difference between *as-Saddl* and *al-Isbāl*—trailing of garment from beyond the ankle. What they have said is a mistake, and it is contrary to the opinions of all other scholars. Though *al-Isbāl* is generally agreed to be forbidden, and the reports that prohibit it are even more numerous than those that of *as-Saddl*, and there is no doubt that it is forbidden, it is, however, not the same as *al-Isbāl*.

We do not intend to investigate this issue in depth; rather, we want to demonstrate that ‘Alī compared those who did *as-Saddl* to the Jews, demonstrating clearly his dislike for their actions, demonstrating that differing from the practice of the Jews is an established practice among the companions. We shall also mention from ‘Alī ﷺ what supports this tradition of his hatred of speaking the Jewish language.

Going back to the report from the Prophet ﷺ, we can also see that it forbade covering the mouth during the prayers. It has been said that the act of covering the mouth is the practice of the Pagans at their worship around the “Fire.” Consequently, the connection between the prohibition of *as-Saddl* and covering of the mouth in the tradition is evident, as both are unbeliever practices. Though each of them has its own separate reason for the prohibition, there is no sin in prohibiting a thing for more than one reason.

This, then, was the attitude of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. As for that of the other Companions, here, too, much has come down, e.g., as presented earlier, how Hudhaifa ibn al-Yamman was invited to a banquet and how upon seeing a non-Arab garb he walked out saying, “He who imitates a people is of them!”

Through his chain of narrators, Abū Muhammad al-Khallal transmits on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās, “A man asked, ‘Shall I take an anal injection—enema?’ He replied, ‘Yes, but do not expose the private parts; do not follow the practice of the polytheists.’”

His words, “Do not follow the practice of the polytheists,” are of general validity.

Abū Dawūd reported that al-Hasan ibn 'Alī narrated to him on the authority of al-Hajjaj ibn Hassan, "We called on Anas ibn Mālik, who said, 'My brother³²⁹ Mughirah told me: then, you were a little boy, and at that time, you had two side locks or locks of hair. He patted you on the head, invoked Allāh's blessing upon you, and said, Shave off these, or clip them, for such is the appearance of the Jews!'"³³⁰

The prohibition in this case is because sporting forelocks gives one the appearance of a Jew. Giving a factor as a reason for prohibition implies that this factor should be reprehensible and preferably absent. It is clear, therefore, that Jewish appearance, even to the extent of a hairdo, must be avoided. And that is the point we are trying to make.

Mu'awiya reportedly said, "Leveling graves is a practice of the Prophet. The Jews and Christians, however, used to raise them; so do not imitate them."

This report of Mu'awiya is in consistent with what Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Fadhlah ibn 'Ubayd that he ordered the grave to be levelled and then said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh ordering that the graves to be leveled."³³¹

It is also reported that 'Alī said: the Prophet sanctioned that,

أَنْ لَا تَدَعَ تِمْنَالًا إِلَّا طَمَسْتَهُ وَلَا قَبْرًا مُشْرِفًا إِلَّا سَوَّيْتَهُ

Do not leave an image without obliterating it, or a high grave without levelling it.³³²

Allāh willing, we shall mention 'Abdullah ibn Amar ibn al-'Āṣ's saying, "He who settles in the land of the polytheists, celebrates their festivals of Nairuz and Mahrajan, and dies upon that, will be raised along with them on Resurrection Day."³³³

It has been confirmed that 'Ā'ishah disliked *Ikhtisār* (holding one's waist during the prayer) and said, "Do not imitate the Jews." It was mentioned earlier in al-Bukhārī's report.

³²⁹ In the Sunan of Abū Dawūd, it is reported as 'my sister'.

³³⁰ Weak, Abū Dawūd (6065).

³³¹ Muslim (968).

³³² Muslim (969).

³³³ It will be well discussed as the author mentions it later, Allāh willing.

And Saʿīd ibn Mansūr, through his chain of transmitters, quotes Ismaʿīl ibn Abdur-Rahmān ibn Dhuyayb as saying: “I entered al-Juhfa mosque with Ibn ‘Umar. His eyes sported some balconies, so he walked out to a place and offered prayer there. He then said to the keeper of that mosque, ‘I see these—i.e., balconies—in your mosque. By these you imitate the stelae set up in pre-Islamic times for worship; so order that they are demolished.’”

Saʿīd also narrates from Ibn Masʿūd that ‘he disliked praying in a niche, saying that niches are found in churches; so do not imitate the People of the Book.’

It is reported on the authority of ‘Ubayd ibn Abī Saʿd that the Prophet’s Companions used to say, “The erection of altars (i.e. niches) in mosques will be a sign of Resurrection.”

Much has come down from the Companions on the subject.

Some of examples mentioned here may be well-known. We are unaware of anyone who disagrees with what we have mentioned in general about the Companions, such as their dislike about imitating the infidels and non-Arabs, but there are differing opinions and interpretation on some of these issues, which are outside the scope of this discussion. This can be compared to the consensus reached on the subject of obeying the Qur’an and the Sunnah, despite the fact that interpretation might lead to disagreements on specific issues.

In conclusion, we know that the Companions believed that it is detestable to imitate the infidels and non-Arabs.

The Third Facet in Establishing Consensus

A THIRD ASPECT of the consensus reached on the issue at hand emerges from the description by the general body of Muslim scholars, the earliest as well as the most recent, and their followers of the motivation underlying the prohibition, namely to be different from and in opposition to the infidels and non-Arabs. It is difficult to analyze the entire body of opinion in this regard, a part of which will reach everyone with even the most fundamental understanding of *fiqh*. This will, following reflection

and examination, provide the knowledge necessary for agreeing with the *a'imma* regarding the prohibition against concord with the infidels and non-Arabs and the command to oppose them.

In addition to what has been said about countless other scholars, I will focus on only one aspect of the contemporary scholars' religious perspectives.

Among other things, the determining principle in Abū Hanifa's school of thought is that delaying the prayer is preferable to speeding it up, with certain exceptions, such as on a cloudy day or when offering the noon prayer earlier in winter, whereas other scholars hold that offering it early is preferable in general. These, however, feel it preferable to delay the *Fajr* (dawn), *Dhuhr* (noon), *ʿAsr* (afternoon), and *Ishā* (evening) prayers—unless when the sky is clear in the winter.

They further said, "Speeding up the *Maghrib* (sunset) prayer is commendable; delaying it is undesirable because it bears an element of imitating the Jews." This is also the opinion of other scholars. As presented earlier, this is the reason why it has come down textually. It was also said: "Prostration in a niche is disapproved of since it resembles the act of the People of the Book, in which a particular place is assigned to the priest, unless he happens to be prostrating in a niche." This, too, is evidently the position of Ahmad and others, and many *Ṣaḥīḥ* traditions transmitted on the authority of the Companions, including Ibn Mas'ūd, etc., may be cited in support.

They also said that it was permissible to pray in front of a hanging Qur'an or sword, as they are not objects of worship. This leads one to conclude that praying before objects their likes are worshipped is unacceptable. Nor would it be grievous if the prayer was offered on a rug with images on it, for this would then imply disregarding the pictures: however, prostration directly on the image is forbidden. This would be comparable to worshipping the image itself, which is reprehensible and disapproved of, because a man prays solely to glorify Allāh.

It was also said that a guy who wore a garment with pictures on it would be disapproved of because he would resemble someone who carries idols. Pictures of inanimate beings are not objectionable because they are not worshipped anyway.

They also said that fasting on *Yaum ash-Shakk*, which one suspended to be, and mistook for, a day of Ramadan, is unacceptable. This is imitating the People of the Book, who prolonged their fasting season.

They added that the *imām* and those following him should return *en masse*, arriving in Muzdalifah after sunset, for this expresses opposition to the polytheists.

They also said that in the light of stipulated texts, men and women are not allowed to eat, drink, anoint, and perfume from vessels of gold and silver, for this is like imitating the manners of the polytheists and luxuriating like the opulent and the spendthrift.

Concerning the prohibition of wearing silk, it was said that during Abū Yūsuf and Muhammad's argument against Abū Hanīfah, the use of silk as bedding, hanging and cloth was condemned on the grounds that such was the garb of the Sasanian Persia and imitating them is prohibited. 'Umar said, "Beware of the garb of non-Arabs."

In his *al-Jami' as-Saghir*, Muhammad says, "Signet rings may be made of silver only." This clearly stipulates that the use of stone, iron, and brass is unlawful for mounding signet rings; according to a generally accepted tradition that the Prophet ﷺ saw a man wearing a brass signet ring and said, "What is the matter—you smell of idols?" He saw one of iron on another and remarked, "How is it that I see you appear like one doomed to hell fire?"³³⁴

Such instances are abundant in the school of Abū Hanīfah and his followers, and even more so in the school of Malik and his followers. Malik, as reported by Ibn al-Qasim in *al-Mudawwana*, went even so far as to say that the use of *al-Ājamiya* (non-Arab clothes) is not permissible for the states of *ihrām*, prayer, and oath. He further reflected that 'Umar forbade the use of non-Arab idioms, saying, "It is corruption." He disapproved of taking a single stone blocking the way as *sutrah*,³³⁵ but if there were many, it was permissible.

It is said that Malik disliked taking breaks from work on Fridays, just as the People of the Book did on Saturday and Sunday.

³³⁴ Weak, Abū Dawūd (4223), at-Tirmidhī (1785), an-Nasā'ī (5195) and others.

³³⁵ Something a praying person places before him, or faces, to prevent people from passing directly before him.

He was once asked: “Glorifying Allāh involves showing honor to a grey-haired Muslim³³⁶; hence, should then one stand up for a man of distinction and insight?” To which he replied, “I don’t think so. You don’t have to stand up, but it is nice to give him a place in an assembly. A woman standing up for her husband until he is seated is one of the customs of pre-Islamic origin. Perhaps people may be expecting him at an occasion and when he appears, they stand up to honor his entrance. This is not an Islamic attitude, and it is something against which we are warned, because it constitutes imitation of the People of the Book and non-Arabs.” And that which is not a Muslim act is worse than a Kufan act, though the Kufans are known to go far in this imitation of non-Muslims. The followers of Abū Hanīfah even considered declaring those who imitate the infidels in garb or festivals themselves infidels.

A certain follower of Malik observed: “Cutting a watermelon in their festivals is like slaughtering a pig.”

Ash-Shāfi’ī followers have mentioned this principle in various discussions, supported by texts and acknowledged by other scholars. For example, in their explanation of the prohibition of offering prayer at prohibited times, such as during exact sunrise and sundown, they say, ‘At this time, the polytheists prostrate themselves before the sun, as mentioned in the tradition, “Verily, at this time the infidels prostrate themselves for it.”’³³⁷

About *Sahūr* and delaying it, they mention, “that is what differentiates our fast from that of the People of the Book.” And about garments, “making a man resemble a woman and vice versa is forbidden.”

They also mentioned that the *Mushrikūn* used to stand at ‘Arafah till after sunset and move on from al-Jam’ after sunrise, and the Sunnah opposes those practices of the *Mushrikūn*; standing at ‘Arafah is only to sunset and leaving al-Jam’ is before sunrise, as it is in the narration: “Do the opposite of what the polytheists do” and the other: “Our line of conduct is different from that of the *Mushrikūn*.”³³⁸

³³⁶ It occurs in an authentic tradition, Abū Dawūd (4843).

³³⁷ Muslim (832), part of a long hadith.

³³⁸ Both had been mentioned earlier in this book.

In the discussion of stipulations about the *dhimmis*, it was mentioned that they should be prevented from becoming like Muslims and Muslims like them, so that Muslims should be quite distinct from non-Muslims.

One of their groups went so far as to prohibit imitating the people of innovations in what might be called their distinctive symbols, although they were in essence sanctioned by the Sunnah. For instance, one of their groups favored raising graves above the ground. Ash-Shāfi'ī's opinion on the subject was that levelling was preferable, while Ahmad and Abū Hanifah were for raising. Subsequently, a party of ash-Shāfi'ī disciples altered their position. They said that nowadays levelling is in vogue among the *Rāfidbah*; thus, levelling would be tantamount to imitating them in that, which is their distinguishing mark.

Yet another group said: "But surely we shall level; for once we did that, it would no longer remain their distinctive mark."

Both groups agreed upon the prohibition of imitating the people of innovations in whatever constituted their specific feature, but they differed as to whether levelling falls into that category or not.

If such was their position about imitating the people of innovation, how much more so the infidels.

The utterances of Ahmad and his disciples on the subject are out of number. We have presented a portion thereof in our discussion of texts of the Prophet sayings ﷺ such as, "He who imitates a people is one of them," "Clip the mustache and leave the beard; do not imitate the polytheists," and "For whereas they are meant for them in this world, for you in the next."³³⁹

These are some of his other positions: "I do not like that anyone abandons his grey hair undyed, so that he does not look like the People of the Book." He once said to one of his students: "I prefer that you dye your hair so that you don't look like the Jews." He hated that one shaved his nape, saying: "It is the practice of the Pagans, and whoever follows the way of a people is of them." He was also reported to have submitted: "I hate wearing *as-Sarār* sandals; it is a non-Arab wear." He

³³⁹ All these narrations have been mentioned earlier in this book.

also hated that months are named after non-Arabic names or individuals with Persian's names; e.g., '*Ādbramāhu*'. And he said to the fellow who invited him to a banquet: "Zoroastrian fashion! Zoroastrian fashion?" He then dusted off his hand on the fellow's face.

A lot of these positions had been recorded from Imām Ahmad.

Harb al-Kirmāni asked him: "Is it allowed that one tie up his waist while praying?" He replied: "If he does that when wearing al-Qabai' dress, there is no problem, but not over a shirt. He added: "Wearing it over a shirt is a Pagan outfit." He asked him again: "What about when one is on journey, can one wear it to hold up his dress?" He replied affirmatively. However, he did not dislike putting on an ornamented belt or a turban and the like, but he hated wearing ropes because they looked unpleasant.

I say: By the same token, his associates hate that one uses a band as Christians and Jews do, according to their authentic submissions, but they allow other dresses even in prayers. They even say that if one prays with a shirt that has open side pockets, he should belt up so that he does not expose his nakedness, as occurred in a narration.³⁴⁰

Some jurists from Hanabilah School, the like of al-Qadī Abū Y'ala, Ibn 'Aqīl, Shaykh Abū Muhammad Abdul-Qadir al-Jaylī, and some others from other schools, concerning different types of dresses, submitted that: "Whatever is different from the raiment of the Arabs and resembles that of the non-Arabs is disapproved."

Some others, such as Abū al-Hasan al-Amadī, popularly known as Ibn al-Baqdādī (from what I assume he reported from Abū Abdullah ibn Hadmid) say: "It is not impermissible to wash one's hand after eating in the vessel from where he ate, it was mentioned from Imām Ahmad that there was a report that the Prophet ﷺ did that." He said: "It is a permissible practice according to the general opinion of the scholars, and we permit it too, it is only a common public view that it is detestable."

Hand washing after eating is an Islamic recommended practice. So, when a washbowl is presented to a group of people after a meal, it should not be withdrawn until they all wash their hands, for removing it before it goes around everyone is a non-Arab practice. Ash-Shaykh

³⁴⁰ He refers to the authentic tradition reported by Ahmad, (9017 and 10105).

Abū Muhammad Abdul-Qadir al-Jaylī said, “It is a desirable practice that the people should wash their hands in a single bowl, not everyone with his separate bowl, because the tradition has it that: ‘Do not strew one another apart, so that Allāh does not dispel you apart.’” There is also another report that the Prophet ﷺ says: “Do not raise the washbowl until it goes around everyone.”

And what they said, according to Abū Muhammad Abdul-Qadir, is that shaving the head is an undesirable practice. It is also one of the two known opinions of Imām Ahmad. They all submitted that it is a non-Arab practice; more so, the Prophet ﷺ had warned that “whoever follows the way of life of a people is of them.”

In this vein, some scholars from ash-Shāfi’ī and Ahmad schools have condemned certain practices solely because they are common practices among the people of innovation. For instance, some of them considered it desirable to wear a ring on the left hand because doing otherwise was a common practice of the innovators, and more so because there are traditions that support wearing on the left hand.

Some of the scholars who belong to this category from ash-Shāfi’ī school considered raising the graves from the ground level preferable to levelling it, even though levelling them is the Sunnah, only because levelling them was once a well-known practice of some people of innovation.

Here we are not concerned with settling these very questions, nor is our discussion about what has been said on the subject, pro and con. All we seek to state clearly are those points where the scholars show perfect agreement, such as on the detestable nature of the act of imitating non-Muslims.

Scholars often express a measure of uncertainty about some ramifications of this principle, owing either to the variety of arguments pertaining thereto or to the lack of conviction of some of them as to whether these should at all be included in this principle. This, e.g., emerges from the following report of al-Athram: “I heard Abū ‘Abdullah being asked if it was all right to wear silk in war? To which he replied, ‘I hope there is nothing wrong with it.’ I also heard him being asked if it was all right to wear ornamented belts. To which he replied, ‘As for

belts, some people have objected to their use, saying that it was the garb of the non-Arabs, while they themselves used to belt their turbans.”

He connected the two points because he believed there is a benefit in using belts that cancels out the element of imitation present in them. It has been reported that a certain pious figure of early Islam wore a belt; for this reason, he related from someone else and refrained from giving his opinion.

However, if one is asked to give Imām Ahmad's opinion on a certain subject, and he provides someone else's opinion without indicating his approval or disapproval, can one, then, consider his statement authoritative? His followers have two views:

The first one: Yes; for had he not agreed with the opinion of this someone else, he simply would have given a different answer to the questioner, who had asked him to supply his opinion and not someone else's.

And the second: No; not by just one statement, for all he has done is merely report, and merely reporting does not indicate agreement. As for wearing belts, there is a tradition and a discussion, but they would be out of place here.

A similar example, indicative of his wavering, is where he speaks about the use of the Persian bow. According to al-Athram: “I asked Abū ‘Abdullah about the Persian bow. ‘Once it was the bow of the Arab people themselves,’ he replied, adding subsequently, ‘some people have indeed used the tradition ‘quiver and skins’, on the authority of ‘Umar to justify it.’”

“You mean the tradition quoted by Abū ‘Amr ibn Himas?”

“Yes. Only the so-called Persian bow used to have a quiver. As for arrows, well—they are but horns.”

Al-Athram said: “I asked Abū ‘Abdullah concerning the interpretation of the verse: ‘Our hearts are within coverings [i.e., screened]...’³⁴¹ as given by al-Mujāhid: ‘like an arrow's quiver? He replied: ‘If the arrow's case is called a Ju’fah –quiver, then there is no much meaning to what he said, the linguists should be consulted for that.’”

³⁴¹ Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:5.

He also said that Abū ‘Abdullah was asked whether a coat of mail should have an opening. “Khalid ibn Ma’dan’s coat of mail had an opening of a cubit long in the front,” he replied.

“How about the opening in the back?” he was asked again.

“That I don’t know,” he replied. “As far as the front is concerned, I have heard about it; about the back, I haven’t, unless it gave you more roominess while riding or some other convenience.”

He added: “Some people justified that with the verse:

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ﴾

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power.³⁴²

Al-Athram enquired: “But the people of Khurasan have argued on this basis; they argued that the Arabian bow is of no benefit to them and that they prefer the Persian one.” He replied: “How come the Arabian bow is of no benefit to them? Isn’t it true that the Muslims conquered the world with Arabian bows?” Al-Athram added: “The people of al-Thagr also preferred the Persians,” to which he replied: “But I saw a man in Syria holding an Arabian bow to his shoulder.” On the occasion, al-Athram reported the following tradition of the authority of Ali, who said: “Once the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was inclined on his Arabian bow, having a rest, and he saw a man holding a Persian bow, he ﷺ said to him: “Throw it away, it is accursed, only use the Arabian bow and the *Qinā* spear; with it, Allāh will establish the religion and strengthen you on land.”³⁴³

Our associates have had other lengthy discussions concerning this issue of the Persian bow and other things of the like; however, this portion is not the rightful place for its elaboration.

I have pointed out that, as you see, scholars hesitate and differ due to the contradictory nature of two arguments about all such things that do not belong to the Muslim way of life but are nevertheless useful. Of these two arguments, one imposes adherence to the Muslim

³⁴² Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:60.

³⁴³ A similar narration is reported by Ibn Mājah (2810), but weak.

way of life, while the other refers to making use of such things as are beneficial and contain no harm, though these last constitute neither acts of worship nor any of their complements but rather fall in the sphere of worldly things.

As you will have seen, Ahmad's treatment of the subject generally allows for concession, either directly on the authority of 'Umar or on the act of Khalid ibn Ma'dan—all of which is done in an effort to establish the argument that that is how people acted during the lifetime of the *Salaf* who, in turn affirmed the practice. It follows, therefore, that the practice belongs to the Muslim mode of life and not to that of the non-Arabs and People of the Book.

This, then, is the conclusive point in the argument. The practice of Khalid ibn Ma'dan alone cannot be the decisive *hujja* (argument).

So much is available on the subject from all the Muslim religious leaders, including the Companions, the *Tābi'ūn*, and other scholars, that one can at best mention a tenth of it.

While discussing the views of some of them, we have already mentioned that, which will indicate the views of others. Even if one excluded what we have mentioned, one knows about the unanimous agreement of Muslims upon the repugnance inherent in imitating the People of the Book and non-Arabs, though one may at times find them holding different opinions about certain ramifications thereof, owing either to the belief of some of them that a certain practice does not come under the outward manifestation of the unbelievers or the belief that it contains a preferable argument or some other reason. This situation may be likened to the general agreement of Muslims over following the Qur'an and Sunnah, though depending on an interpretation, one of them may partly disagree with the other two.

V

Imitating the Unbelievers is Analogous to Imitating Devils

PARALLEL TO THE injunction against imitating the unbelievers is the prohibition of imitating devils. Muslim quotes the Prophet ﷺ in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on Ibn ‘Umar’s authority:

لَا يَأْكُلَنَّ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ بِشِمَالِهِ، وَلَا يَشْرَبَنَّ بِهَا، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَأْكُلُ
بِشِمَالِهِ، وَيَشْرَبُ بِهَا

None of you should eat with his left hand and drink with that (left hand), for the Satan eats with left hand and drinks with that (left hand).³⁴⁴

Another version has it that:

إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِيَمِينِهِ، وَإِذَا شَرِبَ فَلْيَشْرَبْ بِيَمِينِهِ فَإِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ يَأْكُلُ بِشِمَالِهِ، وَيَشْرَبُ بِشِمَالِهِ

When any one of you eats, let him eat with his right hand, and when he drinks, he should drink with his right, for the Satan eats

³⁴⁴ Muslim (2020).

with his left hand and drinks with his left hand.³⁴⁵

In another narration he reported:

لَا تَأْكُلُوا بِالشَّمَالِ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَأْكُلُ بِالشَّمَالِ

Do not eat with the left (hand), for the Satan eats with the left.³⁴⁶

The prohibition against eating or drinking with the left hand is based on the fact that Satan does that. We know, therefore, that it is instructed to behave differently than Satan. There are several examples of that effect.

Similarly, the believers were urged to distinguish themselves from those Bedouins whose faiths were imperfect, for perfect faith would have led them to the *hijra*. Those Bedouins who professed but did not participate in the *hijra* proved deficient, as the Qur'an states:

﴿الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ﴾

The Bedouins are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely not to know the limits of what [laws] Allāh has revealed to His Messenger.³⁴⁷

Another example: Muslim transmits on the authority of Ibn 'Umar:

لَا تَغْلِبَنَّكُمْ الْأَعْرَابُ عَلَى اسْمِ صَلَاتِكُمْ، أَلَّا إِنَّهَا الْعِشَاءُ، وَهُمْ يُعْتَمُونَ بِالْإِيلِ.

Let the Bedouins not gain upper hand over you in regard to the name of your prayer; indeed, it is (the night prayer should be called) *al-'Isha'* for the Bedouins call it *'Atama* (derived from the root *'atama*) signifying camel milking at nightfall (and the idea of delay).³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ It is the same narration, only the texts are different.

³⁴⁶ Muslim (2019).

³⁴⁷ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:97.

³⁴⁸ Muslim (644).

In another version the Prophet ﷺ says:

لَا تَغْلِبَنَّكُمُ الْأَعْرَابُ عَلَى اسْمِ صَلَاتِكُمُ الْعِشَاءِ، فَإِنَّهَا فِي كِتَابِ
اللَّهِ الْعِشَاءِ، وَإِنَّهَا تُعْتَمُ بِجِلَابِ الْإِبِلِ.

Do not let the Bedouins overwhelm you concerning the name of your prayer *al-'Isha'*, for it is mentioned as *al-'Isha'* in Allāh's Book, they designate camel milking at nightfall (and the idea of delay).³⁴⁹

In yet another tradition:

لَا تَغْلِبَنَّكُمُ الْأَعْرَابُ عَلَى اسْمِ صَلَاتِكُمُ الْمَغْرِبِ ” قَالَ الْأَعْرَابُ:
وَتَقُولُ: هِيَ الْعِشَاءُ.

Do not let the Bedouins overwhelm you concerning the name of your prayer *al-Maghrib* (sunset). The Bedouins call it *al-'Isha'*.³⁵⁰

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ disapproved of giving in to the Bedouins by calling the Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers as *al-'Isha'* and *al-'Atma* respectively.

To some of our scholars, this aversion means total aversion to the name; while others maintain the view that what is really detestable is the too frequent employment of the name, to an extent where it may supplant the other. This latter view, tough, is more widely embraced within our community.

In either case, the tradition clearly forbids agreement with the Bedouins as well as the non-Arabs in the matter.

³⁴⁹ The same portion with the previous.

³⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī (563).

VI

*Distinguishing Between
Unbelievers, Devils, Bedouins,
and Non-Arabs: Clarifying
Differences and Ambiguities in
Emulating Them*

*Human Diversity and Distinction are
Independent of Linage*

IT SHOULD BE noted that between imitating the infidels and devils and imitating the Bedouins and non-Arabs, there are differences that must be considered and ambiguities that should be clarified.

To begin with, unlike unbelief and Satanism, which are both repulsive to Allāh, His Messenger, and His believers, Bedouinism and non-Arabism are not. Rather, there are two types of Bedouins: the harsh, the coarse on the one hand and the believing, the pious on the other.

Referring to the harsh and the rude among them, Allāh says:

﴿ الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمُ الدَّوَائِرَ ۗ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

The Bedouins are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely not to know the limits of what [laws] Allāh has revealed to His Messenger. And Allāh is Knowing and Wise (*) And among the Bedouins are some who consider what they spend as a loss and wait for you turns of misfortune. Upon them will be a misfortune of evil. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.³⁵¹

He also says:

﴿ سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ۗ يَقُولُونَ بِالسَّيْتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۗ بَلْ كَانُوا اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْفَلِبَ الرُّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا ۖ وَزُيِّنَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۖ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۖ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٢﴾ ﴾

Those who remained behind of the Bedouins will say to you, “Our properties and our families occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts. Say, “Then who could prevent Allāh at all if He intended for you harm or intended for you benefit? Rather, ever is Allāh, of what you do, Aware (*) But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, and that was made pleasing in your hearts. And you assumed an assumption of evil and became a people ruined.³⁵²

³⁵¹ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:97-98.

³⁵² Sūrah al-Faḥ, 48:11-12.

About the pious people among them, He says:

﴿ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ أَلَّا يَأْتِيَهَا قُرْبَةً لَهُمْ سَيَدْخِلُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ إِنْ أَلَّ اللَّهُ عَفْوَ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

But among the Bedouins are some who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and consider what they spend as means of nearness to Allāh and of (obtaining) invocations of the Messenger. Unquestionably, it is a means of nearness for them. Allāh will admit them to His mercy. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.³⁵³

Thus, there were numerous Bedouins who rushed to the Prophet ﷺ and excelled many a city-dweller in the quality of their faith.

Consider this verse, in which Allāh praised some Bedouins and reproached some others, as He did with the city-dwellers:

﴿ وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴾

And among those around you of the Bedouins are hypocrites, and (also) from the people of Madina. They have persisted in hypocrisy. You, [O Muḥammad], do not know them, (but) We know them. We will punish them twice (in this world); then they will be returned to a great punishment.³⁵⁴

Here, it is mentioned that there are hypocrites among both the Bedouins, as well as among the city dwellers. In fact, the Sūrah at-Tawbah, where this verse occurs, is nearly entirely dedicated to reproaching the hypocrites among the Madinan and Bedouin Arabs. The chapter also praises the early believers; those who kindly followed their paths among the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār*, and the Bedouins, who saw what they

³⁵³ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:99.

³⁵⁴ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:101.

spent (during religious uprisings) as a means of nearness to Allāh and obtaining invocations of the Messenger.

Likewise, the non-Arabs, among the Persians, the Romans, the Turks, the Barbarians, and the Abyssinians, are also not of a single kind; among them are Muslims, non-Muslims, the good, and the bad. Allāh affirms this assertion when He says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفُسُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Verily, is All-Knowing and All-Aware.³⁵⁵

The Prophet ﷺ was also reported to have said in an authentic tradition:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عُبْيَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَفَخَرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ، وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ، أَنْتُمْ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

Allāh, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestors. One is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust.³⁵⁶

In another tradition, Saʿīd al-Jurayrī reported with authentic chain of transmitters that Abū Nadhrah said:

حَدَّثَنِي مَنْ سَمِعَ خُطْبَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمَنَى فِي وَسْطِ أَيَّامِ التَّشْرِيقِ وَهُوَ عَلَى بَعِيرِهِ، فَقَالَ: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ، وَلَا

³⁵⁵ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:13.

³⁵⁶ Sound, it has been mentioned in this book earlier.

لِعَجْمِي عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ، إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى، أَلَا قَدْ بَلَغْتُ؟،
قَالُوا: "نَعَمْ." قَالَ: "لِيُبَلِّغَ الشَّاهِدُ الْعَائِبَ"

Someone among the people who heard the Prophet's sermon on the midday of the days of *at-Tashrīq* at Mina (during his Farewell Pilgrimage) told me that the Prophet ﷺ gave a sermon while he was sitting on his ride, and said, "O people! Behold, your Lord, the Great and the Almighty, is one! Behold, your Father (Adam) is one! Behold, there is no superiority to Arabs over non-Arabs and there is no superiority to the black over the white except for the fear of Allāh. Hope I have conveyed the message?" They replied, "Yes." He then said, "Let those who are present convey it to those who are absent."³⁵⁷

Abū Nadhrah is reported to have narrated this tradition with another chain of transmitters on the authority of Jābir ؓ.

Also 'Amr ibn al-'Ās ؓ is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ آلَ أَبِي فُلَانٍ لَيْسُوا لِي بِأَوْلِيَاءَ، إِنَّمَا وَلِيِّيَ اللَّهُ، وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

That is so and so tribe are not my supporters, my supporter is Allāh, then the pious believers.³⁵⁸

In this tradition the Prophet ﷺ denounced his tribe being his supporter, but Allāh, then the pious believers of all of tribes which implies that what is taken into account as far as the inferences drawn to the names or titles is what these names and titles denote in terms of good or bad. And there are many of those names and titles, which are clearly stated in both the Qur'an and Sunnah, viz; *al-Mu'min* (the Believer), *al-Kāfir* (the Unbeliever), *al-Bar* (the Kind), *al-Fajir* (the Lewd), *al-'Ālim* (the Knowledgeable), *al-Jahil* (the Ignorant), etc.

Furthermore, some non-Arabs have been specifically praised in the Qur'an and Sunnah. We have this verse for instance:

³⁵⁷ Authentic, taken from a lengthy tradition reported by Ahmad (23489),

³⁵⁸ Al-Bukhārī (5990) and Muslim (215).

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ، وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا
بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾﴾

It is He who has sent among the unlettered (Arabs) a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book (i.e., the Qur'an) and wisdom (i.e., the Sunnah) - although they were before in clear error (*) And (to) others amongst them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.³⁵⁹

And this tradition in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of Abū Mughīth from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه who said:

كُنَّا جُلُوسًا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، إِذْ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ سُورَةُ
الْجُمُعَةِ، فَلَمَّا قُرَأَ: ﴿وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ﴾ قَالَ رَجُلٌ: "مَنْ
هَؤُلَاءِ؟ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَلَمْ يُرَاجِعْهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَتَّى سَأَلَهُ
مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا، قَالَ: وَفِينَا سَلْمَانُ الْفَارِسِيُّ قَالَ: فَوَضَعَ النَّبِيُّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدَهُ عَلَى سَلْمَانَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ عِنْدَ
الشُّرَيَّا، لَنَالَهُ رِجَالٌ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ"

We were sitting in the company of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when Sūrah al-Jumu'a was revealed to him and when he recited the portion: "Others from amongst them who have not yet joined them," a person amongst them said, "O Allāh's Messenger!" But the Prophet ﷺ made no reply, until he questioned him once, twice or thrice. And there was amongst us Salman the Persian. The Prophet ﷺ placed his hand on Salman and then said, "Even if the faith were near the Pleiades, a man from amongst these people would surely find it."³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Sūrah al-Jumu'ah, 62:2-3.

³⁶⁰ Al-Bukhārī (4897) and Muslim (2546).

In another report of Muslim, Yazīd ibn al-Asam narrated that Abū Hurairah quoted the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to have said:

لَوْ كَانَ الدِّينُ عِنْدَ الشُّرَيَّا، لَذَهَبَ بِهِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ فَارِسَ - أَوْ قَالَ - مِنْ
أَبْنَاءِ فَارِسَ حَتَّى يَتَنَاوَلَهُ

If the religion were at the Pleiades, even then a person from Persia would have taken hold of it, or he said: someone from the Persian descendant would have surely found it.

In another version: “If the knowledge were to be at the Pleiades, men from the Persian descendant would have found it,” at-Tirmidhī reported it on the authority of Abū Hurairah that while the Prophet ﷺ was explaining the verse: “And if you turn away [i.e., refuse], He will replace you with another people,” said: “these people are the Persian descendants.” Many other traditions have been reported on the excellence of the Persians.

What confirms the excellence of the Persians that was mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ was later found among the people of Persia; the freemen and the clients amongst them, either from the classes of *Tābi'ūn* and those who followed them; where we had people like al-Hasan al-Basari, Ibn Sirin, 'Ikrimah and others, or among others who came later, who excelled in terms of faith, religion, and knowledge, and became more famous and recognized than many Arabs.

Also from other non-Arab tribes, such as the Abyssinians, Romans, Turks, among whom a large number of them excelled faith and religion more than many Arabs, as is widely known among the knowledgeable. This is because the real excellence and superiority are determined by a person's level of commitment to what Allāh sent with His Messenger ﷺ in terms of faith and knowledge, both specific and general. Simply put, the more of these traits a person possesses, the higher his greatness.

The supremacy of names and titles is established only by virtues commended in the Qur'an and Sunnah, like; al-Islam, *al-Īmān* (faith), *al-Bir* (righteousness), *at-Taqwā* (God-fearingness), *al-'Ilm* (knowledge), *al-'Amal as-Ṣaliḥ* (good deeds), *al-Iḥsān* (kindness), etc., and not by

other measures; being an Arab fellow or non-Arab, or being a black or white man, or being a city-dweller or Bedouin.

Therefore, what is discussed regarding the prohibition of imitating Bedouins and non-Arabs, as well as the reality that regions or origins are not important, has additional grounds, which are simply reconciled by the principle that:

Allāh created the sedentary people so that they look for human perfection in the attainment of knowledge, religion and gentleness of heart—traits that are not as essential for the Bedouin. Desert living, on the other hand, requires greater physical prowess as well as mental and verbal fortitude than sedentary life. This, then, is the premise, though the situation can be reversed in the face of a deterrent and desert life might sometimes be preferable to a sedentary life.

It was for this reason that Allāh raised His Messengers from among the sedentary people.

Allāh says:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْ اِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ اَهْلِ الْقُرُيِّ ﴾

And We sent not before you (as messengers) except men to whom We revealed from among the people of cities.³⁶¹ That is so because the messengers attained perfection in all the affairs, even their genealogies.

Considering the said basis, Allāh says:

﴿ الْاَعْرَابُ اَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَاَجْدَرُ اَلَّا يَعْلَمُوْا حُدُوْدَ مَا اَنْزَلَ اللهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ ﴾

The Bedouins are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely not to know the limits of what (laws) Allāh has revealed to His Messenger.³⁶²

This verse was revealed after these passages:

³⁶¹ Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:109.

³⁶² Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:97.

﴿إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ
 الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا
 رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَأْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ خَبَارِكُمْ
 وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
 فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ
 لَتَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَمَا وَنَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن
 اللَّهُ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا
 وَأَجْدَرُ أَنْ يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾﴾

The cause (for blame) is only upon those who ask permission of you while they are rich. They are satisfied to be with those who stay behind, and Allāh has sealed over their hearts, so they do not know (*) They will make excuses to you when you have returned to them. Say, “Make no excuse—never will we believe you. Allāh has already informed us of your news (i.e., affair). And Allāh will observe your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger; then you will be taken back to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, *and He will inform you of what you used to do*” (*) They will swear by Allāh to you when you return to them that you would leave them alone. So leave them alone; indeed they are evil; and their refuge is Hell as recompense for what they had been earning (*) They swear to you so that you might be satisfied with them. But if you should be satisfied with them—indeed, Allāh is not satisfied with a defiantly disobedient people (*) The Bedouins are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely not to know the limits of what (laws) Allāh has revealed to His Messenger. And Allāh is Knowing and Wise.³⁶³

Apparently, Allāh revealed in the earlier verse while rebuking the

³⁶³ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:93-97.

hypocrites from Madinah who used their excuse for staying behind from Tabūk expedition: “The Bedouins are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy.”

In a nutshell, preferences and superiorities are all determined by the level of knowledge and faith one possesses. Allāh made this clear when He said:

﴿ يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ﴾

Allāh will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees.³⁶⁴

Also, in the portion:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ ﴾

But those who were given knowledge and faith will say.³⁶⁵

The opposite of faith is either an open disbeliever or an undisclosed hypocrite, while the opposite of knowledge is ignorance. In spite of that, Allāh described the Arabs from the city dwellers as stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy and as those who were more likely not to know the limits of what Allāh revealed in His Book and the Sunnah. And the limits here refer to the borderlines as to the meanings and the implications of the terminologies used in both the Qur’an and Sunnah, such as: *as-Salāt* (Prayers), *az-Zakāt* (compulsory alms giving), *as-Siyām* (Fasting), *al-Hajj* (pilgrimage), *al-Mu’min* (Believer), *al-Kāfir* (Unbeliever), *az-Zāni* (Fornicator), *as-Sāriq* (Thief), *ash-Shārib* (Drunker), etc., which the people did not know who they rightly refer to, or bear them, or who should be responsible for any of the rulings thereof. In the same vein, Abū Dawūd and some other reporters have it on the authority of Ibn Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ سَكَنَ الْبَادِيَةَ جَفَا، وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ الصَّيْدَ غَفَلَ، وَمَنْ أَتَى السُّلْطَانَ
اَفْتُنَ

³⁶⁴ Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:11.

³⁶⁵ Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30:56.

Whoever lives in the desert will become hard-hearted, and whoever follows game will be preoccupied with it (and neglectful toward other duties), and he whoever follows the ruler will put himself through trial.³⁶⁶

In another narration of Abū Dawūd there occurs an addition: “And the nearer a man comes to the ruler the farther he moves away from Allāh.”³⁶⁷

So, being hard-hearted is a trait known among the people of the desert, and that is why it is said to someone who is harsh, “You are a hard-hearted Arab, you are a crude,” referring to his harsh nature.

Furthermore, the word “Arab” primarily refers to the desert Arabs. All the tribes have their city-dwellers as well as the villagers, so those who are referred to as “Arab” are the desert Arabs, just as the Roman villagers are the “*Urman*” and the villages around them, the Persian villagers are the “*Akrād*” and the people around them, and the desert people of Turkey are the “Tatar” and the villagers around them. That is the principal geographical interaction between these people, except for any little annexations or deductions that may occur.

Delving into Arab and Non-Arab Distinctions

SO, THE TRUTH is that the Bedouins of every community come under the same rulings as the Bedouin Arabs, which presupposes that the aforementioned principle holds for every tribe and that the sedentary classes are more distinguished than their desert counterparts, although some individuals among the desert people may excel most of the sedentary people.

It follows therefore that the specific qualities of the Bedouins distinguishing them from the traits of the sedentary people—by this I mean those who lived during the period of the *Salaf* such as the Companions

³⁶⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (2859), at-Tirmidhī (2256), an-Nasā’ī (4309).

³⁶⁷ Weak, Abū Dawūd (2860).

and *Tābi'ūn*—are found wanting or detestable when compared to the distinction enjoyed by the people who have sedentary traits.

Now if one were to imitate them in something which does not constitute a practice of the settled *Muhājirūn*, this, then, would be either something objectionable or leading thereto. This is equally true in the case of Arabs and non-Arabs.

The belief of *Ahlu as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'a* as far as genealogical preference and superiority are concerned is that the Arab stocks are superior to all other non-Arab stocks put together—the Hebrews, Syrians, Byzantines, Persians, and many more. And, just as the Quraysh are the most distinguished Arabs, the clan of Banū Hāshim are the most distinguished Quraysh, while the Prophet ﷺ is the most distinguished man of all humanity, both in person and lineage.

However, the distinct positions attained by the Arabs, the Quraysh and the Banū Hāshim were not only because the Prophet ﷺ was raised from them, though that was a great excellence on its own, but because they had genealogical nobility themselves. That is why it is authentically established that the Prophet ﷺ was raised in a noble household; otherwise, the reverse would have been the case.

For this, Abū Muhammad, Harb ibn Ismā'il al-Kirmāni, a student of Imām Ahmad, in his description of the Sunnah said: “It is the doctrine of the great people of knowledge, the scholars of hadith, and the foremost scholars of *Ahlu as-Sunnah*; the exemplaries. It is also the doctrine of the scholars I've met in Iraq, Hijaz, Syria, and some other places. So, whomever deviates from it, or Abūses it or anybody who calls to it, is a deviant, and he will be considered as someone who is out of the path of the Islamic unity; a deviant from the methodology of the Prophet ﷺ, the only true path. It is the doctrine of my teachers; Ahmad, Ishāq ibn 'Ibrāhīm ibn Mikhlad, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr al-Humaydī, Sa'id ibn Mansūr, and many others. Of what they generally agreed upon is that: *al-Īmān*, the faith, involves declaration (of both the heart and the mouth), execution of that which is proclaimed (by the heart and the limbs), and doing all that with purity of intention.” After a lengthy explanation of what the Sunnah entails, he said, “We

recognize the right of the Arabs, their superiority and antecedence, and we have love for them, for the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘To have love for Arabs is part of faith, while hating them is hypocrisy,’³⁶⁸ and we will not do as the communists and the despicable Arab clients do; they do not love the Arabs, or do they recognize their superiority, their position is an innovation in the religion and a contradiction to the established Sunnah.”

This very submission was also reported from Imām Ahmad; I guess, Ahmad ibn Sa’id al-Istikharī was said to have reported it from him, and it is the submission of the majority of the people of knowledge.

A group of people went so far as to claim that the Arab race has no advantage over the non-Arab. These are called the *Shu’ūbiya* by virtue of their assistance to the *Shu’ūb* in contrast to the *qabā’il*, for *qabā’il* is used in reference to the Arab nations as *shu’ūb* is to the non-Arabs’.

Some even prefer certain types of non-Arabs to Arabs. As often is the case, this type of assertion does not proceed from reason but from a kind of hypocrisy existing either in belief or in acts that originate in response to a bias along with doubts that lead to such a conviction. It is for this reason that it occurs in the tradition: Loving Arabs is part of faith, while hating them is hypocrisy. It may be observed however that a discussion of such problems is not entirely free from an element of bias and when it comes to biases, Satan makes most from both sides. These (elements) are unlawful in any discussion of problems.

Allāh commands the believers to hold fast to His Rope together and forbids them disunity or differences among themselves; he also encourages them to seek to settle disagreements amongst them. In addition, the Prophet ﷺ says:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ، وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ، وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالْحَمَى السَّهَرِ

The similitude of believers in regard to their mutual kindness,

³⁶⁸ Weak, *Mustadrakh* of al-Hakim (6998), *Mu’jam al-Awsat* of at-Ṭabarānī (2537), *Musnad* of al-Bazar (6997)

compassion, and sympathy is that of one body. When one limb of it aches, the whole-body aches, because of fever and wakefulness.³⁶⁹

He also says:

لَا تَقَاطِعُوا وَلَا تَدَابِرُوا وَلَا تَبَاغُضُوا وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
إِخْوَانًا كَمَا أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ

Don't sever relations (of kinship and others); don't bear enmity against one another, don't bear against one another; and don't feel envy against the other and live as fellow-brothers as Allāh has commanded you.³⁷⁰ The two traditions are authentic. There are numerous traditions on this issue as well.

However, the distinguished positions of the Arabs, the Quraysh, and the Banū Hāshim are special cases with distinctive evidences, of which this tradition is one that at-Tirmidhī reported on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Nawfal, from al-'Abbās ibn Abdul-Muttalib رضي الله عنه, who said:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ قُرَيْشًا جَلَسُوا فَتَذَاكَرُوا أَحْسَابَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَجَعَلُوا
مَثَلَكَ كَمَثَلِ نَخْلَةٍ فِي كَبُوتٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِهِمْ مِنْ خَيْرِ فِرْقِهِمْ وَخَيْرِ
الْفَرِيقَيْنِ، ثُمَّ تَخَيَّرَ الْقَبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ قَبِيلَةٍ، ثُمَّ تَخَيَّرَ الْبُيُوتَ
فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ بُيُوتِهِمْ، فَأَنَا خَيْرُهُمْ نَفْسًا، وَخَيْرُهُمْ بَيْتًا"

“O Messenger of Allāh! Indeed, the Quraysh have sat and spoken among themselves about the best of them, and they made your likeness as that of a palm tree in a wasteland.” So, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed, Allāh created the creation and made me from the best of them; from the best of their categories and the best of the

³⁶⁹ Al-Bukhārī (6011) and Muslim (2586).

³⁷⁰ Muslim (2563) with this texts, al-Bukhārī and others also reported it, but with only close wordings.

two categories (Arabs and Non-Arabs), then He chose between the tribes and made me from the best tribe, then He chose between the houses and made me from the best house. So, I am the best of them in person and the best of them in house.”³⁷¹ (At-Tirmidhī after reporting it, commented that this tradition is a sound one, and ‘Abdullah ibn al-Harith is the son of Nawfal).

The meaning of the phrase, “a palm tree in a wasteland” is that the palm tree is good in and of itself, but it grew in a poor land; the Prophet ﷺ explained that he was the best of mankind both in person and lineage.

At-Tirmidhī also reported another version on the authority of al-Muttalib ibn Abī Wadā’a, who said:

جَاءَ الْعَبَّاسُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَكَأَنَّهُ سَمِعَ شَيْئًا فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فَقَالَ: “مَنْ أَنَا؟” قَالُوا: “أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ.” قَالَ: “أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ قَبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ قَبِيلَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ بُيُوتًا فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ بَيْتًا وَخَيْرِهِمْ نَفْسًا.”

Al-Abbās came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and it is as if he heard something, so the Prophet ﷺ stood upon the *Minbar* (pulpit) and said: “Who am I?” They said: “You are the Messenger of Allāh, upon you be peace.” He said: “I am Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abdul-Muttalib, indeed Allāh created the creation, and He put me in the best [group] of them, then He made them into two groups, so He put me in the best group of them, then He made them into tribes, so He put me in the best of them in tribe, then He made them into houses, so He put me in the best of them in tribe and lineage.”³⁷² (At-Tirmidhī commented that it is a sound tradition).

³⁷¹ See the next reference, At-Tirmidhī (3607).

³⁷² See the next reference, At-Tirmidhī (3532, 3608).

Ahmad also reported the tradition in his *Musnad*, its chain of transmitters goes back to al-Muttalib ibn Abi Wadā'a, on the authority of Al-Abbās رضي الله عنه, who said:

بَلَغَهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعْضُ مَا يَقُولُ النَّاسُ، قَالَ: فَصَعِدَ الْمِنْبَرَ، فَقَالَ: "مَنْ أَنَا؟" قَالُوا: "أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ،" فَقَالَ: "أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ، وَجَعَلَهُمْ فِرْقَتَيْنِ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِ فِرْقَةٍ، وَخَلَقَ الْقَبَائِلَ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِ قَبِيلَةٍ، وَجَعَلَهُمْ بُيُوتًا، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ بَيْتًا، فَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ بَيْتًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ نَفْسًا."

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was informed of some of what the people were carrying about. So, he ﷺ mounted the *Minbar* (pulpit) and said: "Who am I?" They said: "You are the Messenger of Allāh." He said: "I am Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, indeed Allāh created the creation, and He put me in the best [group] of them, then He made them into two groups, so He put me in the best group of them, then He made them into tribes, so He put me in the best of them in tribe, then He made them into houses, so He put me in the best of them in tribe and lineage."³⁷³

As it is in the narrations, the Prophet ﷺ informed us that Allāh made the creation into two groups, and he was fixed into the best of the two groups.

However, the statement: "Allāh created the creation and made me from the best of them; from the best of their categories, and the best of the two categories" has likelihood of one of two implications:

One: that the creation referred to involves mankind and the Jinn alone, or it involves all that is created on land, of which mankind is the best of them, or it refers to the creations all over, including the angels.

³⁷³ Sound; its chains of transmitters strengthen one another. This text is that of Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad* (1788).

This last possibility suggests that the class of mankind is superior to that of the angels, which is not far from the truth.

He then divided mankind into two groups: the Arabs and the non-Arabs. He then divided the Arabs into tribes, with the Quraysh being the best of them. The Quraysh were then divided into houses, with Banū Hāshim being the best of them.

Two: that the creation in the statement refers solely to mankind, and that he ﷺ was fixed into the best of them; the 'Ibrāhīm lineage or the Arab's genealogy. 'Ibrāhīm's lineage was then divided into two groups; the Isma'il and Ishāq lineages, while the Arab lineage was divided into 'Adnān and Qahtān lineages. He ﷺ was then made of Isma'il counterpart, from 'Adnān family.

Allāh then divided the Isma'il or 'Adnān family into tribes, with the Quraysh being the most distinguished. Being that as it may, the tradition establishes the superiority of Arabs over other people. This superiority then makes it necessary to love the Quraysh, then the Banū Hāshim, and the Arab folks, as explained by the Prophet ﷺ.

To that effect, at-Tirmidhī reported on the authority of al-Muttalib ibn Abī Wadā'a, who said:

أَنَّ الْعَبَّاسَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، دَخَلَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُغَضَّبًا وَأَنَا عِنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ: "مَا أَغَضَبَكَ"؟ قَالَ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا لَنَا وَلِقَرَيْشٍ، إِذَا تَلَّاقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ تَلَّاقُوا بِوُجُوهِ مُبَشَّرَةٍ، وَإِذَا لَقَوْنَا لَقَوْنَا بِغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ"، قَالَ: "فَعَضِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَتَّى احْمَرَّتْ وَجْهُهُ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا يَدْخُلُ قَلْبَ رَجُلٍ الْإِيمَانَ حَتَّى يُحِبَّكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ آذَى عَمِّي فَقَدْ آذَانِي فَإِنَّمَا عَمُّ الرَّجُلِ صِنُو أَبِيهِ".

Al-Abbās ibn Abdul-Muttalib entered upon the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in a state of anger while I was with him. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ asked him: "What has angered you?" He replied: "O Messenger

of Allāh ﷺ, what is it with us and the Quraysh, whenever they meet one another it is with glad faces but when they meet us they meet us with other than than.” He said, “So, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ became angry, until his face reddened, then he said, ‘By Whom my soul belongs, no one of you will possess (a complete) faith until he loves you for the sake Allāh and His Prophet.’ He then declared: “O you people, whoever hurts my uncle has indeed hurt me, for the uncle of a man is the Sinw of his father.”³⁷⁴ (At-Tirmidhī commented that the tradition is soundly authentic).

Ahmad reported it also, but on the authority of ‘Abdul-Muttalib ibn Rabīa that:

دَخَلَ الْعَبَّاسُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا لَتَخْرُجُ فَنَرَى قُرَيْشًا تَحَدَّثُ، فَإِذَا رَأَوْنَا سَكَتُوا،" فَغَضِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَدَرَّ عِرْقٌ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "وَاللَّهِ، لَا يَدْخُلُ قَلْبَ امْرِئٍ إِيمَانٌ حَتَّى يُحِبَّكُمْ لِلَّهِ، وَلِقَرَابَتِي."

Al-Abbās ibn Abdul-Muttalib came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and said: “O Messenger of Allāh! We go out and see Quraysh discussing but when they see us they stop their discussion.” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ became angry, and thereupon sweats ran down in-between his eyes, he then said: “By Allāh, none of you will possess faith until he loves you for the sake of Allāh and for my family relationship with you.”³⁷⁵

Among these traditions, two are reported from ‘al-Abbās ibn Abdul-Muttalib on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn al-Harith. One of them points to the excellence of the Prophet’s tribe, while the other establishes the necessity of loving his tribe. ‘Abdullah ibn al-Harith reported it directly from al-Abbās at times, and sometimes through ‘Abdul-Muttalib ibn Rabīa, the son of al-Harith ibn ‘Abdul-Muttalib,

³⁷⁴ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (3758).

³⁷⁵ Weak, Ahmad (1777, and 17515).

who is also one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. One may think that there is a mix-up in the two chains of transmitters, but that is not true. We are not going to dwell upon this issue here; it suffices to note that the narrations are capable of establishing what we are driving at, especially when there are other narrations that have the same meanings.

Ahmad, Muslim, and at-Tirmidhī reported Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' as having said:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: “إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى كِنَانَةَ مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، وَاصْطَفَى قُرَيْشًا مِنْ كِنَانَةَ، وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ قُرَيْشِ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، وَاصْطَفَانِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ.”

I heard Allāh's Messenger ﷺ as saying: “Verily Allāh granted eminence to Kinanah from amongst the descendants of Isma'il, and he granted eminence to the Quraysh amongst Kinanah, and he granted eminence to Banū Hāshim amongst the Quraysh, and he granted me eminence from the tribe of Banū Hāshim.”³⁷⁶

Ahmad and at-Tirmidhī reported it with the text:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ (اصْطَفَى مِنْ وَلَدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِسْمَاعِيلَ)، وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بَنِي كِنَانَةَ، وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ بَنِي كِنَانَةَ قُرَيْشًا، وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ قُرَيْشِ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، وَاصْطَفَانِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Indeed Allāh (has chosen Isma'il from the children of 'Ibrāhīm, and He)³⁷⁷ chose Banū Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He chose the Quraysh from Banū Kinanah, and He chose Banū Hāshim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banū Hāshim.”³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ Muslim (2276) and at-Tirmidhī (3606).

³⁷⁷ This part that mentions the choice of Isma'il alone from the children of 'Ibrāhīm is weak; it contradicts the authentic traditions in respect of this issue.

³⁷⁸ Authentic, except the mentioned part. At-Tirmidhī (3605) and *Musnad* of Ahmad (16987).

At-Tirmidhī commented that this hadith is sound.

This tradition indicates that Isma'il and his descendants are the most distinguished group of 'Ibrāhīm's descendants,³⁷⁹ and they are preferred to the descendants of Ishāq, and apparently the descendants of Ishāq, who are the Children of Isra'īl, are the most distinguished of the non-Arabs because many prophets were raised among them and they were given scriptures. If this is true, then the preference of the descendants of Isma'il over others has no doubt. This is a good conclusion, except that the narration established that Isma'il given preference among the children of 'Ibrāhīm and Kinanah from his descendants, and not that all of his descendants were given preference over others. But it could be said that since their father (Isma'il) is given preference and the preference of a group of his descendants over others is also established, then, there will be no meaning to mentioning his preference in the tradition if it does not suggest the superiority of his descendants. And mentioning Isma'il, not Ishāq, will also have no meaning, coupled with the fact that all the traditions given so far have elements of preference.

Furthermore, there are many other traditions that could establish the excellence of the Quraysh, then the Banū Hāshim, and could aid in establishing their superiority over all human races—but this is not the place to go into that in depth. Just as the Quraysh is to the 'Arab, so also the 'Arab is to other tribes of mankind according to the Shari'a stipulations, as it is going to be explained.

³⁷⁹ Base on the weakness of the mentioned part of the narration, some scholars argue that, that Allāh preferred Isma'il to Ishāq is not correct, since preferrene is not established for any prophet over another except with authentic evidence. Rather; Allāh chose both Isma'il and Ishāq as prophets, and He did not prefer anyone of them over the other. However, He preferred the descendants of Isma'il over the children of Israil (Ya'qūb), the descendants of Ishāq. And that is the reason why the author ﷺ did not say that Allāh preferred Isma'il and his descendants to Ishaq and his descendants as the part suggests, but to Ishaq's descendants. Allāh knows best.

Understanding the Prohibition of Holding Animosity Towards Arabs

Allāh favored the Arabs and their language through some specific stipulations, and He did grant other tribes and gave the Quraysh some priorities to other Arabs as well, including the Caliphate on the Precepts of Prophethood. In addition, He accorded Bani Hāshim the prohibition of taking *Sadaqah* (alms) but favored them with the permissibility of taking from the war booties, among other advantages. Allāh, the Most Glorified, granted each of these classes the proportion of favors suitable for each of them, He is All-Knowing and the Most Wise. He did all that by His Choice and Knowledge.

He says:

﴿اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ﴾

Allāh chooses from the angels messengers and from the mankind.³⁸⁰

He says also:

﴿اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ﴾

Allāh knows best where (with whom) He places His message.³⁸¹

Much has also been said regarding the following verses in relation to this issue of the Arab's superiority.

﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ﴾

And indeed, it (the Qur'an) is a remembrance (glory) for you and your people. And you (all) will be questioned about it.³⁸²

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾

There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:75.

³⁸¹ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:124.

³⁸² Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43:44.

³⁸³ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:128.

And from the traditions that were cited in support of the issue is this narration of ‘Amr ibn Dinār from Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما who said:

أَنَا لَقَعُودٌ بِنِجَاءِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، إِذْ مَرَّتِ امْرَأَةٌ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُ الْقَوْمِ: هَذِهِ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ، فَقَالَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ: إِنَّ مَثَلَ مُحَمَّدٍ فِي بَنِي هَاشِمٍ كَمَثَلِ الرَّيْحَانَةِ، وَسَطِ التَّنِّ، أَوْ قَالَ: التَّنِّ، فَاِنْطَلَقَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَخْبَرَتْهُ، فَخَرَجَ وَيَعْرِفُ فِي وَجْهِهِ الْعَضْبُ، فَقَالَ: "مَا بَالُ أَقْوَالٍ تَبْلُغُنِي عَنْ أَقْوَامٍ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ سَبْعًا، فَاخْتَارَ الْعُلْيَا فَسَكَّنَهَا، وَأَسْكَنَ سَائِرَ سَمَاوَاتِهِ مَنْ شَاءَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ، ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ، وَاخْتَارَ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ بَنِي آدَمَ، فَاخْتَارَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ الْعَرَبَ، وَاخْتَارَ مِنَ الْعَرَبِ مُضَرَ، وَاخْتَارَ مِنْ مُضَرَ قُرَيْشًا، وَاخْتَارَ مِنْ قُرَيْشِ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، وَاخْتَارَنِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، فَأَنَا مِنْ خِيَارٍ إِلَى خِيَارٍ، فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ الْعَرَبَ فَلِحَبِّي أَكْرَمَهُمْ، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ الْعَرَبَ فَلِبُغْضِي أَبْغَضَهُمْ"¹

Once we sat at the dooryard of the Prophet ﷺ, then a woman passed, some of the people said: “She is Muhammad’s daughter.” Abū Sufyan then commented: “The like of Muhammad amidst the Banū Hāshim is like a sweet basil amidst the decayed ones,” or he said: “amidst the ill-smelling ones.” The woman went and informed the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and he came out and he was angry, he then said: “What is that which reached me from a people among you?” Then he made this address: “Allāh created the seven heavens; He preferred for Himself the uppermost place above them and fixed up in them who His Wishes of the His creatures. He then created other beings and preferred the mankind to all others, He then distinguished the Arab folks from the mankind, and then *al-Mudhar* from the Arab. From *al-Mudhar*, He distinguished the Quraysh, and from the Quraysh Bani Hāshim, He then chose me from Bani Hāshim, so, I am the

best of mankind chosen from the best group of them. Whosoever loves the Arab, he loves them for my sake and whoever hates them, he hates them out of his hatred for me.”³⁸⁴

There is this other tradition reported by at-Tirmidhī on the authority of Salman ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ told him:

"يَا سَلْمَانَ لَا تَبْغِضْنِي فَتُفَارِقَ دِينَكَ"، قُلْتُ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ أَبْغِضُكَ وَبِكَ هَدَانِي اللَّهُ؟" قَالَ: "تَبْغِضَ الْعَرَبَ فَتَبْغِضَنِي"

“O Salman! Do not detest me and thereby go out of your religion.” I said: “O Messenger of Allāh! How could I detest you while Allāh has guided me by you?” He replied: “If you detest the Arab, you have detested me.”³⁸⁵

The Prophet ﷺ made having hatred for the Arabs a reason that takes one out of the religion, and he made the hatred for them the hatred for him.

This address to Salman - the foremost adherent of Islam among the Persians, whose eminence is authentically registered, suggests a warning for the rest of the Persians, for Allāh knew that Satan would engross some of them into doing something that was prohibited.

This methodology was used by the Prophet ﷺ when he said:

"يَا فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، يَا عَبَّاسَ عَمَّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا يَا صَفِيَّةُ عَمَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا سَلُونِي مِنْ مَالِي مَا شِئْتُمْ."

“O Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, I cannot avail you at all against Allāh; O Abbās, the uncle of the Messenger of Allāh’s, I cannot avail you at all against Allāh; O Safiya, the aunt of the Messenger of Allāh, I cannot avail you at all against Allāh; you may ask me what you want of my worldly belongings.”³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Weak, *Muʿjam at-Ṭabarānī as-Sagīr* (6182) and al-Kabīr (13650) and *Shuʿab al-Īman* of al-Bayhaqī (1330)

³⁸⁵ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (3927) and Ahmad (23731).

³⁸⁶ Authentic, reported both in al-Bukhārī (2753 and 4771) and Muslim (205 and

This narration is considered as a warning to anyone who may have a family relation to any of these three people not to abandon good deeds, both in speech and actions, solely because of their closeness to them. Because if the Prophet ﷺ could not avail the people themselves against Allāh, how could he avail their relations.

So, Salman's narration demonstrates that hating the Arab folks or having enmity for them is disbelief or may lead to disbelief because of their position, and that having love for them is a way of attaining sound faith; had the hatred for them been just as having hatred for any other tribes, the hatred for them would not have necessitated leaving the religion or amount to hating the Prophet ﷺ, rather; it will be like any other form of aggressions between people. However, making it a reason for leaving the religion and harboring hatred against the Prophet ﷺ implies that the hatred for them is not like the hatred for others, which denotes their superiority over others. Because love and hatred are instruments for preferential treatment; making the hatred for a particular person highly detestable is a confirmation of his excellence, which implies that loving him is an act of worship because of the position he attained and the fact that the love for him is adversary to developing hatred against him. Likewise, if developing hatred against someone leads to a punishment, then loving him becomes a means of earning reward and, in turn, a determination of his excellence.³⁸⁷

Salman, in the narration, passed on the message from the Prophet ﷺ that the Arabs are favored over the non-Arabs either as an order from him ﷺ or a conveyance; if it is an order, then it must be obeyed, and if it is a conveyance, then it must be believed.

In another version of Salman's narration, it is reported that Salman said: "O people of Arab! You have two advantages over us; we cannot lead you in prayers, and we cannot marry your women." Muhammad ibn Abī 'Umar al-'Adnī and Sa'īd (ibn Mansūr) and others reported it.

Some jurists who made being an Arab a condition for compatibility in marriage with an Arab woman used this statement of Salman as

206), but not with this textual arrangement.

³⁸⁷ Shaykul Islam cited some other narrations on the issue afterwards, some of which are fabricated and others weak, as he did confirm himself. There is no point retaining these narrations here.

evidence. In addition, Imām Ahmad inferred from it in a report that compatibility in marriage is the right of both the man and woman, and that a couple could be separated solely on this basis.

Also in the statement: some of the followers of Imām Shafi’i and Ahmad have said that dignity should be an element to be considered in choosing the Imām for prayers.

The like of this tradition is reported by Rabi’ ibn Fadhalah that he set out for journey in the company of twelve riders, all of whom, except him, are from the companions of the Prophet ﷺ including Salman al-Fārisī –the Persian. It was time for a prayer, so they scrambled among themselves for whom to lead the prayer. So, one of them led the prayer, but he prayed four units of prayer. When he finished the prayer and turned to the people, Salman said repeatedly to him: “What is this? What is this? You should have prayed only two units, we are more in need of the lessening.” Then the people said to him: “O Abū Abdullah! Lead us in our prayers, you are more entitled to it than any of us,” so he said: “No, you the descendants of Isma’il are the leaders, we are viziers.”

There are other traditions on the issue, the authenticity of some of which is questionable while others are even fabricated.

This principle was effectively enforced by ‘Umar, who, in establishing his famous *diwan al-’ata’* (pension register), listed the people according to their genealogy, beginning with those closest to the Prophet ﷺ and listing non-Arabs after the Arabs. This policy was faithfully continued by the remaining Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Umayyads, and the Abbāsids until a change occurred.

Factors Favoring the Arab Identity

THE REASON FOR the dignity attained by the Arab—Allāh knows best—is what they are characterized by, in terms of their intellect, language, moral values, and righteousness, because excellence is attained either by the endowment of a beneficial knowledge or involvement in righteous deeds.

The basis of knowledge is an intellectual strength, a result of comprehension and retentive memory, all of which find their fullest expression in speech, which is a compound of rhetoric and style. Arabs have better qualities of understanding, retentive memory, explanation, and expression of speech than any other tribe. They are endowed with a language so perfect that it distinguishes them from other people in their manners of composition and expression, both collectively and individually. Their language is characterized by the quality of collecting enormous meanings in as few words as the speaker may wish. He could make a perfect and concise distinction between any two synonymous words.

For example, in their expression of animal species, they may use collective names for a group of animals and then distinguish them from other things based on their distinctive characteristics, which range from their sounds, offspring, places, and children, etc.

As regards actions, their foundation is morality. Moral traits are inherent to the soul. Arabs are more likely to do good deeds than any other group of people. They are closer to generosity, sagacity, courage, loyalty, and other such praiseworthy moral qualities. However, prior to the arrival of Islam, their nature rendered them incapable of performing good deeds. They possessed neither divine knowledge nor a *Shari'a* handed down to them by a Prophet, nor were they also occupied with certain purely rational sciences such as medicine, arithmetic, etc. By nature, they were predisposed to poetry and oratory. This was all their knowledge consisted of, or whatever they remembered of their genealogy and accounts of battles, or what they needed for their world, such as the knowledge of the movements of stars and wars. When Allāh sent His incomparable message through Muhammad, which they accepted only after the Prophet ﷺ had struggled with them fiercely and treated them in a way that diverted them from the pre-Islamic practices and disbelief which had barred the functioning of their innate qualities – in other words, when they received the great guidance from the Prophet ﷺ, those corruptions melted away from their hearts and they became illuminated by the guidance Allāh had revealed to His servitor, His

Messenger. They accepted Islam with this intrinsic ability for good. They acquired perfection by the innate faculties of their souls, and the perfection that Allāh bestowed upon them was like to a land that is fertile but uncultivated, or like a place where thorny shrubs grew with the result that it became a shelter for swine and predatory animals. Once it was cleared of harmful trees and animals and the best seeds and fruits were sown in it, it produced a unrivalled harvest. Thus, the early Muslims among the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* became Allāh's noblest creatures after the Prophets, and the best after them, for whomever follows them with righteousness, among Arabs or non-Arabs, until the Day of Resurrection.

People who lacked integrity at the time were of two types: Jews and Christians who refused to accept the guidance brought by the Prophet ﷺ, and unbelievers from non-Arabs who lacked what the Arabs possessed. At the time, the majority of non-Arabs were unbelievers among the Persians and Romans. Then the religion came with the need to follow the way of the foremost believers, who were under the guidance that Allāh is pleased with, and to be different from others; either because of their sins or a defect embedded in them or because of their involvement in what could cause a defect.

When the *Shari'a* prohibited Muslims from imitating the non-Arabs, it meant to include all old or new practices of the non-Arab unbelievers and also those of the non-Arab Muslims which were not in vogue among the early pious predecessors, in much the same way as the appellation Arab paganism includes all pagan practices prior to the advent of Islam and also those to which many of the Arabs reverted. Any Arab who imitated the non-Arabs became attached to them, and vice versa. Thus, such Persians attained knowledge and faith, no doubt, through following the true faith of Islam with all its complements, the Arabic language being one of them. Some Arabs who proved deficient proved deficient in following the true faith or by following non-Arabs, as against the Sunnah injunction to differ from them. This is clear.

Further, when Allāh revealed His Book in the Arabic language, had His Prophet ﷺ convey this Book and wisdom in Arabic and made the

early converts speak it, comprehension of faith and knowledge thereof became contingent upon first comprehension of this language, with the result that a knowledge of the language became part and parcel of faith itself; and the habit of talking in it made the understanding of religion easier for the believers, bringing them ever closer to the performance of token religious services and to imitating the early converts among the *Muhājirūn* and *Ansār* in every respect.

Allāh willing, we are going to mention some of what the scholars say about the necessity of making Arabic a native language and the aversion of speaking any other language unless absolute necessary. Language has impacts on a lot of things, e.g, acquisition of knowledge and morals. Also, people's customs contribute largely to their observance of the will of Allāh, be it His commands or prohibitions. For this, the *Shari'a* stipulates the adherence to the way of the pious predecessors, both in the manners of speech and in actions, and it warns against going out of their ways as well.

Consequently, the prohibition of imitating the non-Arabs is stipulated so as not to lose the grace of the excellence of following the pious predecessors, or not experience the imperfection that is constituted in the non-Arab traits. This is what prompted the non-Arab Muslims of the generations after the early pious believers, among the Persians and other non-Arabs, to imitate the early pious believers' struggle, which fetched them the advantage of achieving the best followership ever for the early righteous believers. Some of these people even rose to positions of knowledge-based authority over a large number of people, including Arabs. And that was why any Persian Muslim who was found closely adhering to the guidance of the early believers used to be highly respected; it was such that al-Masma'i, on the authority of Abū Tahir as-Silafī, was reported to have said: "A non-Arab from Asbahān is like a non-Arab Qurayshi."

As-Silafī on the authority of *al-Majishun* from Usamah ibn Zayd (al-Laythī) also quoted that Sa'īd ibn al-Mūsāyyab as saying: "Were I not from the Quraysh, I would have wished to be from Asbahān in Persia."

Another version of this tradition reads: “If I were not a Quraysh man, I would have wished to be from Asbahān, for the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘If the religion were at the Pleiades, a person from the non-Arab world, most like a Persian or someone from Asbahān would have taken hold of it.’”³⁸⁸

It was said that Salman al-Fārisī was from Asbahān, as was ‘Ikrimah; Ibn Abbās’s boy, and many others. And it is clear from its features that the Islamic ancient monuments are most apparent in it than in any other place; while Al-Hāfidh Abdul-Qadir ar-Rahāwī was commenting on this, he said: “I do not know a place where hadith is most taught than Asbahān, except Baghdad.”

Furthermore, the great Islamic scholars who were under the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ; among the scholars of hadith, Fiqh, and several other Islamic fields, were more available in Asbahān than in any other place. That is to say, their judges used to be jurists among the scholars of hadith, such as Ṣaliḥ ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abū Bakr ibn Abī ‘Asim. But I do not know the present state of things there right now.

Also, all the places of Asbahān and their people are usually praised, but they are not just praised; the cause for the praise is what was mentioned about their followership and imitation of the early pious believers. However, there may be preferential accords to a person over another, or a speech over the other, or an action over its counterpart, only because of the difference of opinion that may occur as to whether or not a person or speech or an action corresponds better to the way of the most pious believers, in accordance with the general ruling: “the excellence is determined only by the followership to the way of the early Arab Muslims, and it is accorded to anyone only in accordance to the level of his followership to them,” and that is what we are driving here.

Then we will conclude this section with two important notes:

One: It is imperative that when a Muslim engages in a study of or discusses the issue of preferential accord, he approaches it with religious consciousness and rationality. By doing so, he can develop good

³⁸⁸ A like of this narration was earlier quoted from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and other sources.

intentions and avoid seeking superiority over others, despising them or, oppressing them. Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of ‘Iyādh ibn Himār al-Mujāshī’i رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ أَنْ تَوَاضَعُوا حَتَّى لَا يَفْخَرَ أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ، وَلَا يَبْغِيَ
أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ

Verily, Allāh revealed to me that you should be humble, so that no one boasts over another or you oppress one another.³⁸⁹

Allāh, the Most Glorified, through the mouthpiece of His Prophet ﷺ prohibits two kinds of transgression: boastfulness and oppression. Boastfulness is a transgression; though the transgressor might possess that which he boasted about, an oppressor has no cause at all. Both are, however, condemned. If someone is from a virtuous class, like being from the Arab, the Quraysh, or the Banū Hāshim, mentioning that should not be on the basis of feeling the virtue; doing that will be wrong because the virtue of his being from these classes does not fetch him the virtue in person; – collective excellence is not necessarily reflected in a given individual –, as explained earlier. Indeed, an Abyssinian is often more distinguished in Allāh’s eyes than many a full-blooded Qurayshite. More importantly, having such feeling necessitates his expulsion from the class, not to mention his boasting about another person.

However, if someone is not from the Arab or Quraysh or Banū Hāshim tribes, he should know that his belief in the message brought by the Prophet ﷺ, his obedience to his commands, his love for him, his imitation of the early believers; the people whom Allāh extolled, and his upholding of the truth upon which he was raised are sufficient to grant him the grace of being better than many of the supposed virtuous, which is the real excellence.

We can take lessons from what ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه did when he instituted the register of pensions. It was said to him: “Amir al-Mu’minīn (the leader of the Muslims) should start the register with himself,” he

³⁸⁹ Muslim (2865).

replied: “No, put him where he should be.” So, the people were listed according to their genealogy, beginning with the closest people to the Prophet ﷺ, then those who followed them, until it became his turn far in ‘Ady’s clan of Quraysh genealogy, almost at the end of the Quraysh lineage orderliness. However, his devotion to the truth and all of his religious activities elevated him far above almost all of the Quraysh, let alone other tribes.

Two: The terms “Arab” and “Ajam” have become rather obscure. Though the latter stands lexically for all non-Arabs, it is employed generally to designate the Persians, who, compared to other non-Arabs, possess greater knowledge and faith. The term “Arab,” on the other hand, originally referred to a group of people who:

- (a) Spoke Arabic.
- (b) Descended from the Arab.
- (c) Inhabited Arab land.

In this context, the term “Arab land” refers to the Arabic Island; extending from *al-Qalzum* Sea (the Red Sea) to *al-Basrah* Sea (the Arabian Gulf), and from the extreme end of the Yemen Stone to the beginning axis of Syria; thus, Yemen was counted as parts of their lands but not Syria. That was the Arab land before the advent of Islam and in the initial state of Islam. However, Islam conquered many nations around the Arabian Peninsular, and the early Arab Muslims lived in several domains; ranging from its extreme east to its extreme west, as well as along the Syrian and Armenian Seacoasts, which had previously belonged to the Persians, Romans and Barbarians.

Then the places were further divided into two:

Places where the inhabitants spoke only Arabic, or Arabic as a local language with other languages as foreign languages, though there was some solecism in the Arabic language at the time. The majority of these places were in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Andalusia other nearby areas. I guess Persia and Khorasan were like that before as well. Other places where people spoke other languages included Turkey, Khorasan, Armenian, Azerbaijan, and others. Summarily, the places were divided into three:

- the original Arabic land;

- the Arabic land by virtue of transformation or transmission;
- and non-Arabic lands.

So, they also divided their lineage:

- The people who were originally Arabs and lived in the Arabic land and spoke Arabic, or those who spoke Arabic but lived in foreign lands, or those who lived in the Arabic land but spoke a language other than Arabic.
- People who were born in the Arab world, or were descendants of the Banū Hāshim but became non-Arab due to language, geography or a combination of the two.
- People who did not know their origin, whether they were of Arab or non-Arab genealogy. These people now constitute the majority of the population, regardless of whether they live in Arabic land, speak Arabic, or both.

Also, they were subdivided into three in terms of the language:

- People who spoke Arabic fluently with the Arabic intonation.
- People who spoke Arabic but not with Arabic intonation. They combined the people who learnt Arabic with the people who did not speak Arabic originally, as is the case of many people of knowledge who learnt Arabic.
- And those who knew very little Arabic.

However, among the last two groups were people for whom Arabic later became their major language, and among them were those who spoke more of other languages, while others combined the two, either perfectly or habitually.

Therefore, if the Arabs were so divided in their genealogy, language, and places, the definition of who is an Arab person would be based on those divisions, especially the genealogy and language. For instance, what was mentioned of Banū Hāshim in relation to the prohibition of taking alms and the permissibility of taking specific shares from the war booty will have to do with their genealogy, even though they speak other

than Arabic. Likewise, what was mentioned of the rulings concerning the Arabic language and morals will be given to whoever possesses the virtues, even though he is not from the Arabic genealogy, and will not be given to someone from Banū Hāshim if he does bear the virtues.

At any rate, all I intend here is this: As mentioned, the prohibition of imitating the non-Arabs has to be considered from the perspective of the attitude of early Islam as represented by the early Muslims. Thus, the closer one is to the pattern of the early Muslims, the more distinguished he is, and conversely, the farther one is from this pattern, the less distinguished he is, regardless of whether he is an Arab by descent or by language at present. This is attested to by the opinion of the *Salaf*.

Al-Hāfidh Abū Tahir as-Silafī reported through the chain of transmitters going back to Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Alī, who said: "Whoever is born a Muslim is an Arab person." This is because, at the time, whoever was born into Islam was born in Islamic territory, and he would grow up acting as such.

He also reported through his chain of transmitters on the authority of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever speaks Arabic is an Arab person, and whoever has two children born into Islam is also an Arab person."³⁹⁰ That was how he reported it, but I believe he added: "And whoever grows up and realizes that his both parents are Muslims is an Arab."

If this narration is authentic, it then implies that language is the basis upon which one is regarded as an Arab, so it is also enough to be linked into the Arab lineage by virtue of having one's parents live in the Islamic state, as the narration has it. Abū Hanīfah used this tradition to create a difference between someone whose parents are Muslims or are free men and women and who is not, since both could be non-Arabs or manumitted slaves.

However, Abū Yūsuf believed that someone whose father is a Muslim has the same right in that regard as someone whose both parents are Muslims, while in the School of Thought of both ash-Shāfi'ī and

³⁹⁰ Weak, there is a weakness in the chain of its transmitter, Shaykh al-Islam confirmed.

Ahmad, that is not regarded as a basis for creating differences between Muslims. Ahmad stated that clearly.³⁹¹

So, anyone who ponders about what we discussed in this section will understand the reasons for adhering to *Shari'a*-stipulated laws and orders, as well as the dangers in dissociating from them, as clearly enumerated. He will also realize the causes and effects of those commands as well as the wisdom behind them.

³⁹¹ A fabricated narration was quoted afterwards, but there is no meaning to retaining it here.

VII

Refuting the Argument Ensued from the Principle: “What Applied to Those Before Us Applies to Us.”

SOMEBODY MAY INVEIGH: many counter-arguments can be advanced against what you have said so far about the prohibition of imitating the people of the Books, among the Jews and the Christians, and other people before the advent of Islam, among the non-Arabs and the Bedouins. Some of these bases could give rise to such arguments:

The principle: “The laws binding upon the people before us is binding on us, except those rejected by our own laws.”

The passage of the Qur’an:

﴿فِيهِدِهِمْ أَقْتَدَهُ﴾

So follow their guidance.³⁹²

The verse:

³⁹² Sūrah al-’An‘ām, 6:90. The guidance meant is that of the people before us.

﴿ ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴾

Then We revealed to you (O Muhammad) that you follow the way (creed) of 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham).³⁹³

Allāh's address of the Torah:

﴿ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا ﴾

By which the Prophets, those who submitted (themselves to Allāh's Wills), gave judgment.³⁹⁴

And other similar passages of the Qur'an, though you acknowledge this principle, which is also the general view of the *Salaf* and the majority of the scholars.

It works also against you the report of Ibn 'Abbās:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ فَوَجَدَ الْيَهُودَ صِيَامًا، يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “مَا هَذَا الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي تَصُومُونَهُ” فَقَالُوا: “هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَظِيمٌ، أَنْجَى اللَّهُ فِيهِ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ، وَغَرَّقَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ، فَصَامَهُ مُوسَى شُكْرًا، فَنَحْنُ نَصُومُهُ”، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “فَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ وَأَوْلَى بِمُوسَى مِنْكُمْ فَصَامَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ”

The Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madinah and found the Jews observing fast of 'Āshura'. So, the Prophet ﷺ asked them, “What is this day that you are observing by fasting?” They replied, “It is a great day, the day on which Allāh delivered Mūsā (Moses) and his people and drowned Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his people, so Moses observed it as a fast out of gratitude, and we do so out of respect for him.” The Prophet ﷺ then said, “We are more entitled to Moses than

³⁹³ Sūrah an-Naḥl, 16:123.

³⁹⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:44.

you are.” So, the Prophet ﷺ observed fast and enjoined to that effect.’ (This tradition is agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).³⁹⁵

Also, the tradition of Abū Mūsā where he reported:

كَانَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ تَعُدُّهُ الْيَهُودُ عِيدًا، قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
"فَصُومُوهُ أَنْتُمْ."

The Jews used to consider ‘Āshura’ as a festival. So, the Prophet ﷺ said (to the Muslims): “You fast on that day.” (Agreed upon, but that is Bukhārī’s version.)³⁹⁶

Muslim has it as,

كَانَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ يَوْمًا تُعَظَّمُهُ الْيَهُودُ، وَتَتَّخِذُهُ عِيدًا، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "صُومُوهُ أَنْتُمْ."

The Jews used to honor ‘Āshura’ and celebrate it as a festival. So, the Prophet ﷺ said: “You fast on that day.”³⁹⁷

Yet another version of Muslim:

كَانَ أَهْلُ حَيْبَرَ يَصُومُونَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ، يَتَّخِذُونَهُ عِيدًا وَيُلْبِسُونَ نِسَاءَهُمْ فِيهِ حُلِيِّهِمْ وَشَارَتَهُمْ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
"فَصُومُوهُ أَنْتُمْ"

The people of Khaibar used to fast on the day of ‘Āshura’ and celebrate it as a holiday, decorating their women with ornaments and marks. So, the Prophet ﷺ said: “You fast on that day.”³⁹⁸

It is reported on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās, who said: “The People of the Book used to let their hair hang down and the polytheists used

³⁹⁵ Al-Bukhārī (2004) and Muslim (1130).

³⁹⁶ Al-Bukhārī (2005).

³⁹⁷ Muslim (1131).

³⁹⁸ Muslim (1131).

to part their hair. The Prophet ﷺ liked to do the same as the People of the Book in matters about which he had received no command; so, the Prophet ﷺ let his forelock hang down, but afterwards he parted it.” (Agreed upon)³⁹⁹

These arguments could be responded to as follows:

For the principle: “The laws binding upon the people before us bind on us except those rejected by our own laws,” its application is based on two premises, both of which are invalidated by the matter of imitating the unbelievers.

1. It can be construed as law if it can be established through some authoritative source—such as an account given by Allāh in the Qur’an or conveyed through His Prophet ﷺ, or an account which has been *bi ‘t-tawātur* (recorded uninterruptedly)—that such-and-such is really a law for them. A mere reference to their assertions or to their Scriptures is admittedly invalid. If, despite this, the Prophet ﷺ inquired about what they did, and they supplied it and acted on what was in the Torah, it was because their falsehood would not have cut any ice with him, rather; Allāh would have taught him to distinguish their falsehood from their truth, as He had previously informed him where and when they were lying. We, on the other hand, cannot be immune to their falsehood. He who has brought us the report and whom we have followed may be an immoral person, if not an unbeliever. It is established in a tradition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* category that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Should the People of the Book inform you of something, do you neither refute nor accept their assertion.”⁴⁰⁰
2. If our law does not contain any explicit statement concerning a matter under consideration, but it does contain a specific statement of agreement or disagreement, then our law supersedes the earlier law prohibiting agreement with non-Muslims, and it does not follow that the matter was law for those who came before us. Even

³⁹⁹ Al-Bukhārī (5917) and Muslim (2336).

⁴⁰⁰ Al-Bukhārī (4485).

if we admit a legal code from the past, the practice of our Prophet ﷺ and his Companions was contrary to it. And we are enjoined to follow them and their practice. Our Prophet ﷺ instructed us that our practice should be different from that of the Jews and Christians. Similarly, incidental stipulations, not in general practice, and permanent *shi'ar* (symbols) may occur.

And even then, this has to be conditional, viz., that our Prophet ﷺ and his Companions reportedly did not act contrary to it, and that the source of the given stipulation can be found in our faith and indeed can be traced to a Prophet. Examples: a ransom fixed as one sheep to be paid by one who vowed to kill his own son; or, for instance, circumcision enjoined in the creed of 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham); etc. This, at any rate, is not the scope of our discussion.

It is well established that the Prophet ﷺ used to observe 'Āshura' as a fast even before he asked the Jews about it, and that the Quraysh also used to observe it as a fast.

Thus, Bukhārī and Muslim cited from 'Ā'ishah, who said:

كَانَ يَوْمُ عَاشُورَاءَ تَصُومُهُ فُرُشٌّ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصُومُهُ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ صَامَهُ، وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ، فَلَمَّا فُرِضَ رَمَضَانُ، قَالَ: "فَمَنْ شَاءَ صَامَهُ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ تَرَكَهُ" وَقَالَتْ: "كَانَ يَوْمًا تُسْتَرُّ فِيهِ الْكَعْبَةُ".

The Quraysh used to observe 'Āshura' as a fast in the Pre-Islamic days. The Prophet ﷺ used to observe it as fast. When he migrated to Madinah, he observed it as a fast and commanded others to do the same. But when Ramadan fasting became obligatory, he said: "Anyone who desires to observe it as a fast may do so, or give it up." She continued: "It was the day that Ka'bah used to be covered."⁴⁰¹

Bukhārī and Muslim report, again, from 'Ā'ishah that:

⁴⁰¹ Al-Bukhārī (5917).

كَانَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ تَصُومُهُ قُرَيْشٌ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصُومُهُ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ صَامَهُ، وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ، فَلَمَّا فَرَضَ رَمَضَانَ تَرَكَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ صَامَهُ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ تَرَكَهُ.

'Āshura' used to be observed as a fast by the Quraysh in the Pre-Islamic days. The Prophet ﷺ observed it then. When he came to Madinah, he observed it as fast and enjoined others to do the same. But when the fast of Ramadan was made obligatory, then whoever wishes to observe it as a fast may do so, or give it up.⁴⁰²

In Bukhārī and Muslim also from Abdullah ibn 'Umar's report, he said:

أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ كَانُوا يَصُومُونَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ، وَأَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَامَهُ، وَالْمُسْلِمُونَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُفْتَرَضَ رَمَضَانَ، فَلَمَّا افْتَرَضَ رَمَضَانَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ عَاشُورَاءَ يَوْمٌ مِنْ أَيَّامِ اللَّهِ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ صَامَهُ وَمَنْ شَاءَ تَرَكَهُ"

The people of the pre-Islamic era used to observe 'Āshura' as a fast. The Prophet ﷺ used to observe it as a fast, as did the Muslims before Ramadan was made compulsory. When Ramadan became compulsory, he said: "'Āshura' is like any other day," he said, "Whoever wishes to observe it as a fast may do so, or give it up."⁴⁰³

Thus, the Prophet's fast was not based on the People of the Book' books. His statement, "We are more entitled to Moses than you are," was to emphasize his own fast and to inform the Jews that what you do in conformity with Moses, we do too, only we are more entitled to Moses than you are.

Moreover, an answer to this and to the statement, "The Prophet ﷺ liked to do the same as the People of the Book in matters about

⁴⁰² Al-Bukhārī (2002).

⁴⁰³ Muslim (1126).

which he had received no command,” may be attempted from a variety of perspectives:

1. That was the case at first. Later, Allāh abrogated it and enjoined the Prophet ﷺ to be different from the People of the Book. It occurs in the body of the tradition that the Prophet ﷺ let his forelock hang down in agreement with them, but afterwards he parted it. For this reason, parting the hair became the distinctive sign of the Muslims, and one of the obligations imposed upon the *dhimmis* was that they shall not part their hair. This was similar to when Allāh initially prescribed facing Bait al-Maqdis in prayers in conformity with the People of the Book but later abrogated it and enjoined facing the Ka’bah instead, stating that as foolish as they are, the Jews and others will soon ask, “What has turned them from the *qibla* – direction they observed previously?”⁴⁰⁴ And Allāh announced to the Prophet ﷺ that they would never be satisfied with him unless he followed their *qibla*. He also stated that if the Prophet ﷺ were to follow their whims after receiving knowledge, he would not have Allāh as a friend or helper. Furthermore, if he follows their whims after the knowledge has been revealed to him, he will undoubtedly be among the evildoers. And: “There is a direction for everyone to which he turns.”⁴⁰⁵ Likewise, Allāh variously stated to the Prophet ﷺ that He has made a *shir’a* (law) and a *minhaj* (way) for everyone. The symbol is part of the dispensation.

What further elucidates the matter is that the fast of ‘Āshura’ which the Prophet ﷺ had used to observe and about which he remarked, “We are more entitled to Moses than you are,” became, shortly before the Prophet death, the subject of a stipulation to differ from the Jews. This is why Ibn ‘Abbās, the man who reported that the Prophet liked to do the same as the People of the Book in matters about which he had received no command, and who transmitted the Prophet’s remark, “We are more entitled to Moses than you are,” was the severest among

⁴⁰⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:142.

⁴⁰⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:148.

the Companions when it came to opposing the Jewish fast of 'Āshura'; as mentioned above it was he who transmitted the command to differ from them.

In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim reports al-Hakam ibn al-'Araj as saying:

انْتَهَيْتُ إِلَى ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، وَهُوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ رِدَاءَهُ فِي زَمْزَمَ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: "أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ صَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ،" فَقَالَ: "إِذَا رَأَيْتَ هَيْلَالَ الْمُحَرَّمِ فَاعْدُدْ، وَأَصْبِحْ يَوْمَ التَّاسِعِ صَائِمًا"، قُلْتُ: "هَكَذَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصُومُهُ؟" قَالَ: "نَعَمْ."

I ran into Ibn 'Abbās as he was reclining using his mantle as a pillow near the fountain of Zamzam. I asked him, "Tell me about fasting of 'Āshura'." He replied, "When you see the crescent moon of Muharram then count the (days) and observe fast on the ninth day." I asked him, "Is that how Muhammad used to fast?" He replied, "Yes."⁴⁰⁶

Muslim reported Ibn 'Abbās as quoting the Prophet ﷺ:

لَئِنْ بَقِيتُ إِلَى قَابِلٍ لِأَصُومَنَّ التَّاسِعَ يَغْنِي يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ

If I am spared till next year I shall fast on the ninth"⁴⁰⁷ - that is to say, together with the tenth ('Āshura').

Ibn 'Abbās's statement has proceeded:

صُومُوا التَّاسِعَ وَالْعَاشِرَ وَخَالَفُوا الْيَهُودَ

Fast on the ninth together with the tenth and be different from the Jews.⁴⁰⁸

Such has been established to be his practice and he motivated it as opposition to the Jews.

⁴⁰⁶ Muslim (1133).

⁴⁰⁷ Muslim (1134).

⁴⁰⁸ Authentic, *Mūsānnaḥ* of Abdur-Razaq (7839), and through his chain, al-Baihaqī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* (8404).

In his *Fawa'id*, Dawūd ibn 'Amr quotes Isma'il ibn 'Ulaiya as saying: It was mentioned in the presence of Ibn Abī Najih that Ibn 'Abbās used to say, “The Day of 'Āshura' is the ninth.” Ibn Abī Najih replied, “What Ibn 'Abbās said was rather, I hate to see you fasting one day only; you should rather fast also a second day either before or after the tenth.”

What further establishes the fact that Ibn Abbās intended by his statement: 'fast on the ninth day', to fast on the ninth and tenth days in opposition to the Jews, not that 'Āshura' is the ninth day, is what at-Tirmidhī reported that he said:

أَمَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِصَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ يَوْمِ عَاشِرِ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ordered that 'Āshura' be fasted on the tenth day.⁴⁰⁹

Sa'īd ibn Mansūr in his Sunan reported on the authority of Ibn Abbās that the Messenger of Allāh said: “Fast on the day of 'Āshura', oppose the Jews; fast a day before or after it.”⁴¹⁰

Ahmad also reported it with the text, “fast a day before it or a day after it.”⁴¹¹

This is the opinion of Ahmad, clearly stated. He even used to pass verdict based on it.

Athram reported him as saying: “I bear the opinion of observing the fasting of 'Āshura' on the ninth and tenth (of Muharram), because of the narration of Ibn 'Abbās: “fast on the ninth and tenth.”

Harb al-Kirmāni also mentioned that he asked him about the fasting of 'Āshura' specifically which day it is? He replied: “the ninth and tenth days.”

Al-Maymun reported him to have as well said: “Whoever intends to fast the 'Āshura' should fast on the ninth and tenth, unless there is a mistake in the counting, he should then fast for three days – the ninth, tenth and eleventh, that is the opinion of Ibn Seerin.”

⁴⁰⁹ Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (755).

⁴¹⁰ Weak, the chain of its transmitters contains a weak narrator.

⁴¹¹ Weak, Ahmad (2154).

Some of our associates submitted that it is only preferable to fast on the ninth and tenth, and that it is enough to fast only on the tenth. However, what could be inferred from the position Ahmad maintained on the issue is that he detested fasting on the tenth day alone. His response to the person who asked him about the day specifically suggests that, as do his commands and his recognition of observing it in two days as Sunnah. In addition to that, he has held the opinion formed by Ibn Abbās and what is popularly known of Ibn ‘Abbās is that he detested fasting on the tenth alone.

Furthermore, whatever imitation of the Jews that was effected in Islam was effected in the early days of the *hijar*, and was abrogated subsequently. The reason for the imitation at the time was that in those days, the Jews apparently never had any distinguishing features from the Muslims; neither in their hairstyle nor in their garb or symbols.

Thus, it is established from the Qur’an, Sunnah, and the Consensus, whose perfect manifestation occurred in the time of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه that according to divine legislation unbelievers should be opposed and Muslims should be different from them in ritual, symbol, and practice.

The reason is that the non-Muslims could not have been effectively opposed till after the emergence and rise of Islam, as reflected in the *jihād* and in the imposition of *jizya* (poll tax) and *ṣagār* (lowliness) upon the non-Muslims.

Thus, at first, when Muslims were weak, they were not enjoined to oppose the non-Muslims, but once the faith was fully formulated, proclaimed, and made victorious, the opposition was prescribed.

The same holds even for the present. If a Muslim finds himself in *dar al-harb* or *dar al-kufr* (non-Muslim land) without a war, he is no longer under the injunction to oppose them in their external mode of life, as this could be harmful; rather, it may even be deemed commendable for, or almost obligatory for, a man to participate at times in their external affairs, as it may even be in the interest of the faith, which is to summon them to Islam, or to gather information about their internal matters to be passed on to the Muslims, or to stave off

any harm they may be contemplating against the Muslims, and similar other purely righteous objectives.

As to *dar al-Islam* and the glorious Islamic period, where the poll tax and lowliness are imposed upon non-Muslims, Muslims are enjoined to differ from them. Thus, conforming to and differing from non-Muslims depends on the circumstances of a given time, which demonstrates the wisdom of these traditions.

2. Even if we assume that the act of imitation of the Jews that was practiced in Islam in the early days of the *hijar* was not abrogated, it was the Prophet ﷺ alone who was qualified to effect accord with them, because he could tell their right from their wrong in accordance with his Allāh-given guidance. We only follow him. As for us, we are not permitted to accept anything of their religion, whether words or deeds. Such is the well-known consensus among Muslims, which follows from the Prophet's faith. If one were to say that it is desirable for us to accord with the People of the Book of our own time, then he is as good as having departed from the Islamic faith.
3. If it is said that the Prophet's agreement with the People of the Book in matters about which he had received no command should necessitate imitating them, then the Prophet has commanded opposition to them, and has commanded us to follow his practices and those of the early Companions among the *Muhājirūn* and *Ansār*. The point at issue is just this: We are forbidden to imitate them in anything that the *Salaf* did not uphold. But that which they did, there can be no doubt about it. We, however, do not abandon any divine injunction just because the infidels do that. Even if the non-Muslims agree with us in some practice one can always perceive some difference in the divine injunction by virtue of which the true faith will differ from that which was abrogated and tampered with.

VIII

Though a Muslim May Not Intend Imitating the Unbelievers, Yet, He Is Guilty of Imitation as Long as He Does Their Acts

WE MENTIONED THE arguments from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Consensus, as well as the traditions of the practices of the Companions and the opinions of the scholars, which demonstrates that imitating the non-Muslims is generally forbidden and that living differently from them is prescribed, which, depending on the circumstances, can be either *ijabi* (compulsory) or *mustahabb* (commendable). It was also mentioned that, in accordance with the Divine Will and the Prophet's injunction, it is permissible to be different from non-Muslims, irrespective of whether the person who undertook an act intended to imitate them or not. Similarly, the prohibition of imitating them applies equally to both intended or unintended imitation; for the most part, Muslims do not seek to imitate them, and in such acts as leaving the hair grey or sporting long mustaches, etc., an intention cannot even be imagined.

The non-Muslims' acts fall into three categories:

(a) Those prescribed in our own religion; they being prescribed also for them, or we do not know whether or not they were prescribed for them, but we see them being practiced by non-Muslims at present.

(b) Things that were once lawful but were subsequently abrogated by the law of the Qur'an.

And (c) such as were never lawful but were invented by them.

Each of these three categories obtains in respect of acts of *'ibādāt* (worship) exclusively or *'ādāt* (customs) only—i.e., *adab* (popular lore)—or else in a blending of both. Thus, in all, there are nine cases.

1. An act which was laid down either in both dispensations or only in ours, and yet is practiced by the non-Muslims. For instance, the fast of 'Āshura' or the institution of prayer and fasting. Contrariety occurs here in the *sifat* (details) of a given act, e.g., the Sunnah prescribes that we fast both *Tāsu'a* (ninth) and *'Āshura'* (tenth), or as we are enjoined to hasten in breaking the fast and in offering the sunset prayer, in contrast to the People of the Book, or delay the *sahur*, once again in contrast to them. Another example is that we are commanded to offer prayer wearing sandals in opposition to the Jews. This occurs frequently in rules about worship and in customs as well.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The niche in the side of the grave is for us and the excavation in the middle is for others."⁴¹²

He also prescribed orienting Muslim graves in the direction of Ka'bah to distinguish them from those of unbelievers.

Basically, burial is one of the prescribed customs-related activities. Subsequently, the details and features of each prophet's ways differ. But there are matters of worship involved therein.

Wearing sandals while praying, that is prescribed for us, is connected with acts of worship as well as customs, but removal of footwear in prayer was prescribed for Mūsā (Moses). The same holds for dissociating from

⁴¹² It has been mentioned and verified before.

a menstruating woman. The same is true of a variety of other rulings that we share with the People of the Books, though we differ in details.

2. An act that was initially prescribed but was subsequently entirely abrogated, for instance the Sabbath and the obligatoriness of a certain fasting or prayer. We clearly cannot agree with them on these points. It makes no difference whether these acts were positively mandatory for them as acts of worship or forbidden as customs. For instance, someone must not refrain from eating fats and all animals with fingernails out of *tadayyun* (piety). The same applies to the blend of custom and worship represented, for example, in festivals that were prescribed for them. A prescribed festival includes acts of worship, which may be prayer, invocation of Allāh's name, charitable gifts and sacrifice, as well as customs such as having *tawassu'* (increment) in food and clothing, abandonment of usual jobs on festival days, and engaging in permissible plays during festivals, etc. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ told Abū Bakr, who had reprimanded two slavegirls for singing in the house of the Prophet ﷺ: "Let them be, Abū Bakr, every people has their festival, and this is ours." And the Abyssinians, in the Prophet's Mosque, used to play with their lances on the festival days and the Prophet ﷺ used to watch them.

During the Islamic festivals, certain acts of worship are prescribed either as obligatory or as merely commendable, which are not prescribed as such for another time. Also, certain customs from which people derive greater pleasure than at any other time are deemed permissible, commendable, or compulsory. It is for this reason that *fitr*—not observing fasting—is made obligatory on the occasion of both festivals, in one of which the *'id* prayer is coupled with the offering of *sadaqa* (charity) and in the other with animal sacrifice; both serving as means for nourishment.

Accord with them in this kind of abrogated acts of worship or customs or both is more abominable than accord shown in those things that are in essence prescribed. Thus, agreement in these cases is *muharram* (forbidden), as we shall mention, though it may only be *makrūha* (repugnant) in the other case.

3. An act of worship, a custom, or both that was invented by them. This is, of course, most abominable; for if Muslims themselves had invented it, it would be bad enough, but it is even worse because Prophet ﷺ never instituted it, and it is merely an invention of the unbelievers. Here, agreement with them would mean an obvious abomination. And this is the principle.

Another principle: Anything in which they are imitated—be it an act of worship or a custom or both—can be seen as recent accretion and heresy among the Muslim community, because the discussion here is centred upon their practices, not on what was prescribed for us and was practiced by our pious predecessors.

All instances from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Consensus, indicating the abomination and repulsiveness of innovation, either by forbidding it outright or requiring its elimination, include similarity in these matters and combine both factors, viz., that they are recent innovations and Muslim observance thereof constitutes imitating the unbelievers. In either case, prohibition prevails, since imitation is in general forbidden, even if the act was attempted by anyone in the early days, and so is innovation, even if the unbelievers did not practice it. Now if the two descriptions converge in an act, they turn into two independent reasons for declaring the act abominable and forbidden.

IX

Having Accord With The Unbelievers In Their Festivals Is Impermissible

Reasons for the Inappropriateness of Participating in Disbelievers Festivals

HAVING ESTABLISHED THE principle in the matter of accord with the unbelievers, we proceed: Accord with them in their festivals is not permissible. For two reasons:

The First Way: Agreement with the People of the Book in Matters Beyond Our Faith

THE FIRST IS the general reason that was mentioned earlier, viz., that an agreement with the People of the Book in something which is neither a part of our religion nor even a mere custom of our *Salaf*

will lead to the *mafsadah* (evil) of having accorded with them, while abandoning it would lead to the *maslahah* (benefit) of having differed from them. Even though an accord with them in a given matter may be purely accidental and not adopted from them, yet, differing from them is required. Because differing from them carries benefits for us, as pointed out earlier. He who agrees with them allows himself to miss this benefit, even though no harm has been incurred. How much more evil is the convergence of the two—actual harm and forfeiture of benefit.

Insofar as it is a newfangled innovation, there is no doubt that in this way it is apparent that accord with non-Muslims about a certain deed is reprehensible, the least that can be said of it is that it is reprehensible. The same holds true for an innovation. Many signs indicate that congregating with non-Muslims during their festivals is prohibited. For example, the Prophet's words: "He who imitates a people is one of them."⁴¹³ From here, it follows that any accord with them is absolutely prohibited. Another Prophet's statement: "Be different from the polytheists," and other such examples. The arguments we offered from the Qur'an and Sunnah that forbid us to tread in the path of the Allāh-displeasing and gone-astray also work for that. Their festivals are, at any rate, one of their paths, among other examples we offered.

Whoever ponders about the general evidences offered from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Consensus, as well as the Juristic Deductions made, will have a clear picture of how this issue of their festivals falls within the scope of the prohibition of imitating the non-Muslims that is established from those evidences. It will be clear to him as well that the non-Muslims's practices upon which their religions are based include their festivals, or rather, the festivals signify the symbols of those false religions. It will also be apparent to him that all their practices are forbidden for us, except those that are not peculiar to them, or those that are not watchwords of their religions, like, the act of praying with or without wearing sandals; both are permissible for us. Furthermore, it will be clear to him the difference between operating within the

⁴¹³ It has been mentioned and verified earlier.

scope of that which is permissible, even though some of the practices of non-Muslims fall within it, and engaging in practices that are based on their teachings, whether one intends to imitate them or not.

The Second Way: Referring to the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the Consensus, and Consideration

THE SECOND WAY is to refer the matter of the unbelievers' festivals itself to the Qur'an, Sunnah, Consensus, and points of *i'tibar* (consideration).

From the Qur'an:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ﴾

And [they are] those who do not witness “*az-Zūr*,” and when they pass near ill speech, they pass by with dignity.⁴¹⁴

A number of the *Tābi'ūn* and some other later scholars had various interpretations to this verse in relation to this subject.

Abū Bakr al-Khallāl reported in his book *al-Jam'i* that Muhammad ibn Seerin explained “*az-Zūr*” as the “Palm Sunday” festival of the Christians.

He also reported Mujahid and ar-Rabi' ibn Anas to have interpreted it as “festivals of the *mushrikūn*, i.e., idol worshippers.”

It was reported that 'Ikrimah explained it as: “game (or games) sought for in the *Jāhiliyah*.”

Al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā while discussing the prohibition of participating in the idol-worshippers' festivals, reported on the authority of Abū Shaykh al-Asbahāni that aḍ-Ḍahāk interpreted “*az-Zūr*” as idol-worshippers' festivals.

On the same authority, he reported that aḍ-Ḍahāk interpreted it as words relating to “*shirk*” (associating partners with Allāh), and from 'Amr ibn Murrah as “following the practices of the polytheists and intermingling with them.”

⁴¹⁴ Sūrah al-Furqan, 25:72.

On the same authority, as well, he reported that Umar exclaimed: “Beware of the non-Arabs’ lingo and entering into the non-Muslims’ places of worship during their festivals.”

The interpretation of “*az-Zūr*” as the polytheists’ festivals by this group of *Tābi’ūn* does not contradict the interpretation of other scholars who had it as *shirk*, or the idols that were being worshipped in the *Jāhilīyah*. So also, there are no contradictions between these ones and the interpretations of those who had it as “assemblies of *khana* (obscenity), or *ghinā’* (music), because the methodology of interpretation of terminologies among the *Salafis* is that they, most times, mentioned a kind or kinds of the things that might be required to be explained and not all its varieties or kinds. Like when one is asked to describe bread, and presents a loaf of it only to describe a kind of it, not intending to say that the loaf presented is the only type of bread available.

Some scholars interpreted “*az-Zūr*” as falsehood. However, that interpretation is questionable, as the verse mentions “those who do not **witness** ‘*az-Zūr*’ and not ‘those who do not testify to *az-Zūr*.’” According to Arabic linguists, if someone declared: “I witnessed so and so,” he meant that he attended it. Like when Ibn ‘Abass said: “I witnessed *’Īd* prayers with the Prophet ﷺ”;⁴¹⁵ or Umar’s statement: “Booty is for those who witnessed (attended) the battle,”⁴¹⁶ etc. But if “witness” is used with “to,” like when someone says: “I was a witness to so and so thing,” then, he means that he testified to it.

Moreover, the *Tābi’ūn* who interpreted “*az-Zūr*” as an act of plating or camouflaging, as it is in the tradition:

الْمُتَشَبِّعُ بِمَا لَمْ يُعْطَ، كَلَابِيسَ تَوَيِّي زُورٍ

The one who boasts of receiving what he has not been given is like him who has put on two garments of “*az-Zūr*” (falsehood).⁴¹⁷

They did that because, in this context, *az-Zūr* means exhibiting

⁴¹⁵ Al-Bukhārī (962).

⁴¹⁶ Authentic, *Sunan Sa’id ibn Mansur* (2791), *Musnad ibn Sa’d* (588), *Musnad Abdur-Razaq* (9681), *Mūsānaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (33225) and others.

⁴¹⁷ Al-Bukhārī (5219) and Muslim (2129 and 2130).

the opposite of the hidden, such that the opposite is believed to be the truth. This is why some of them call it “outward beautification” of a thing, be it out of lust or obscurity, while it is internally bad. Such is the case with *shirk*, music, and the likes; they look appealing outwardly but are actually destructive.

As for interpreting it as idol worshippers’ festivals, because those festivals are adorned out of both lust and obscurity, participation in them is forbidden. There is nothing to benefit from those festivals; what could be derived from any pleasure in participating in them is also no benefit due to the punishment attached to it. Therefore, it is no doubt that they are *Zūr* (plating and misrepresentation) and the verse prohibits attending them. Now, if Allāh advises one to refrain from watching such functions, which is simply being present by sight and/or hearing, at these festivals, how much more so when the witnessing becomes actual participation in what is an act of *az-Zūr*?

Moreover, the fact that the verse praises those who do not attend non-Muslims’ festivals is sufficient as a deterrent against attending them or any functions of their kind, as well as an exhortation not to attend them or even a manifestation of their detestation, since the verse presents them as *az-Zūr*.

Nevertheless, it is more appropriate to say that the verse prohibits participation in these festivals than to conclude that it forbids witnessing them alone, for the verse calls it *az-Zūr*, and because Allāh discourages one from proclaiming *az-Zūr* even if the person who utters it bears the consequences alone.

For instance, in the case of *al-Mutadhāirūn*⁴¹⁸, He says:

﴿وَأَنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مَنَّكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا﴾

They utter an ill word and a *Zūr* (false statement).⁴¹⁹

In another passage, He commanded thus:

⁴¹⁸ Men who make their wives unlawful for themselves by liking them to any of the forbidden women for them to marry.

⁴¹⁹ Sūrah ar-Rahmān, 58:2.

﴿وَأَجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ﴾

And shun saying a *Zūr* (false statement).⁴²⁰

The same way is the effects of practicing the *Zūr*.

It could be concluded that prohibiting the proclamation of a *Zūr* is more appropriate than prohibiting its practice. If Allāh praises those who do not attend it, then there is no doubt that practicing it is disfavoured and discouraged. If it had been permissible but not preferable to engage in it, Allāh would not have praised not attending it, because there is no difference between attending such permissible functions and not attending them, regardless of whether one benefits from them or not.

It could be argued that encouraging people to refrain from witnessing this function is a better way of praising those who do not practice it, because whoever believes that attending it is not permissible will definitely not practise it, and because these people do not normally engage in evil acts because Allāh praised His humble servants, those who do not perpetrate evil on the land. He says:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا﴾

And the slaves of the Most Beneficent are those who walk on the earth with humility.⁴²¹

Allāh described these people as His servants, and since serving Allāh is obligatory, one must possess this quality.

However, this conclusion is debatable, due to the fact that some of the qualities mentioned in the verse are not compulsory qualities a Muslim must have, coupled with the fact that the people whom Allāh refers to in the verse are the rightful possessors of those qualities; people of high integrity. Therefore, there could be people who will not desist from committing the act even though giving up witnessing it, is encouraged because they do not possess the qualities. The following

⁴²⁰ Sūrah al-Hajj, 22:30.

⁴²¹ Sūrah al-Furqan, 25:63.

passages of the Qur'an testify to that.

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴾

The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts become fearful.⁴²²

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ﴾

Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, are the knowledgeable.⁴²³

So also the tradition:

لَيْسَ الْمِسْكِينُ الَّذِي تَرُدُّهُ اللَّقْمَةُ وَلَا اللَّقْمَتَانِ

A *miskin* (needy) person is not the one who can be turned away with a morsel or two...⁴²⁴

And the tradition:

مَا تَعُدُّونَ الْمُفْلِسَ فِيكُمْ

Who do you reckon to be the poor among you?⁴²⁵

مَا تَعُدُّونَ الرَّقُوبَ فِيكُمْ؟

Who do you reckon to be the childless among you?," and many others.⁴²⁶

⁴²² Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:2.

⁴²³ Sūrah Fatir, 35:28.

⁴²⁴ Al-Bukhārī (1479 and 4539) and Muslim (1039).

⁴²⁵ Muslim (2571) and others, but not with this next.

⁴²⁶ Muslim (2608).

In these illustrations the author meant that there could be special people with high integrity among a group of people bearing a common name, who then will be treated specially because of their special position, as it is in the verse where Allāh refers to the rightful possessors of those qualities, though other Muslims fall within the scope of the servants of Allāh with them. Allāh knows best.

Regardless of whether the Qur'an intended to outright prohibit the practice, deem it merely detestable, or commend its renunciation, it is obvious that, in light of the Qur'an, it is commendable to completely renounce any concord with the unbelievers. For many men, in view of the liberal spending on the family that such festivals call for or certain worldly goals that they might gratify, may be construed as commendable while they involve conforming to the customs of unbelievers.

1. As for the Sunnah, Anas ibn Mālik reportedly said:

قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمَدِينَةَ وَلَهُمْ يَوْمَانِ يَلْعَبُونَ فِيهِمَا، فَقَالَ: "مَا هَذَانِ الْيَوْمَانِ؟" قَالُوا: "كُنَّا نَلْعَبُ فِيهِمَا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ،" فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَبْدَلَ كُمْ بِهِمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا: يَوْمَ الْأَضْحَى، وَيَوْمَ الْفِطْرِ."

Allāh's Messenger came to Madinah, and the people used to have two days in which they engaged in games. So, the Prophet ﷺ asked, "What are these two days?" They replied, "We used to engage in games during these days in the pre-Islamic era." The Prophet ﷺ then said, "Verily, Allāh has replaced them for you with what is better than them: The day of *'Adhā* and the Day of *Fitr*." (Reported by Abū Dawūd).⁴²⁷

We can infer from the tradition that:

- 1- Neither did the Prophet ﷺ acknowledge those pagans' festivals nor did he allow Muslims to participate in the games as was usual. Rather, he said, "Verily Allāh has replaced them for you with what is better than them." When there is a substitution of one thing for another, it means that the one that is substituted has been removed and that the two are not maintained. The terminology used in the tradition is used to indicate that only one of the two is continuously maintained.

This kind of usage is found in many passages of the Qur'an. For

⁴²⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1143).

instance, the Word of Allāh:

﴿أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا﴾

Will you then take him and his descendants as allies other than Me while they are enemies to you? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange.⁴²⁸

﴿وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِ أُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ﴾

So, We sent upon them the flood of the dam, and We replaced their two [fields of] gardens with gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and something of sparse lote trees.⁴²⁹

﴿فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ﴾

But those who wronged changed (those words) to a statement other than that which had been said to them.⁴³⁰

﴿وَلَا تَبَدَّلُوا الْخَيْرَ بِالْأَلْبَسِ﴾

And do not substitute the defective (of your own) for the good.⁴³¹

It is also found in some traditions. It occurs in the tradition where the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ spoke about the situations in the grave: “It would then be said to him (the believer), ‘look at your place in the Hell, Allāh has replaced it for you with a place in the Paradise’, and it will be said to the other (an unbeliever): ‘look at your place in the Paradise, Allāh has substituted it for you with a place in the Hell.’”⁴³²

And from Umar’s inquiries from Labeed (after embracing Islam): “What about your poetry?” He replied: “Allāh has replaced it for me with al-Baqarah and Ali-’Imrān.”⁴³³

⁴²⁸ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:50.

⁴²⁹ Sūrah Saba’, 34:16.

⁴³⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:59.

⁴³¹ Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4:2.

⁴³² This statement occurs in many traditions, take for example: al-Bukhārī (1338, 1374) and Mulim (2874).

⁴³³ Reported in Labīd’s biography, see *Kanzul ‘Umāl* (3/850), but without a chain of transmitters.

The term is frequently used in Arabic to indicate what has been explained.

Thus, the statement: “Verily, Allāh has replaced them for you with what is better than them,” denotes that one of the two events has been exchanged for the other, especially since the statement ‘with what is better than them’ implies that we have been compensated with something superior to what was available in the pre-Islamic period.

Moreover, the Prophet’s remark, “Verily Allāh has replaced them for you with what is better than them,” which he uttered after asking them about the two pagan festivals and receiving the response, “We used to engage in games during these days in the pre-Islamic era,” demonstrates the prohibition of the two pagan festivals, followed by their substitution by the two Islamic ones. If the Prophet ﷺ had not intended the prohibition of the two pagan festivals, mentioning the substitution would have been superfluous, because the Muslims were observing the two obligatory Islamic festivals as lawful, and would not have abandoned their observance in favour of those two pagan festivals.

Also, Anas’s statement: “And the people had two days in which they engaged in games before relating the Prophet’s remark, ‘Verily Allāh has replaced them for you with what is better than them’” indicates that he understood that the two given days were compensations for the two days that had been taken away.

Moreover, those two festivals had ended in Islam; there was no sign of them throughout the Prophet’s lifetime or the rule of his caliphs. Had he not forbidden people from frolicking there and from engaging in whatever else they had previously done, they would have without doubt persisted in their habit, since habits do not change unless some agent attempts to eradicate them. The nature of women, children, and most men particularly looks forward with eager anticipation to the day that they celebrate as a festival for idling and games. As a result, many kings and leaders have failed to change people’s customs regarding their festivals, due to a compelling inner need of people for them and the customary gathering of masses for celebration. Had the Prophet ﷺ not prohibited them explicitly, they would have certainly remained, maybe

in a weaker form. Thus, it is clear that a positively vigorous deterrent emanating from the Prophet ﷺ exists on the matter, leading to the conclusion that whatever that the Prophet ﷺ vigorously prevented is unlawful. This is the only meaning of the word ‘unlawful’. It is self-evident; and there is no room for dispute. If people had reverted to the practices of those two pagan festivals by engaging in one or more of the customary activities associated with them and exhibited permissiveness in this regard, there would have been a conflict between the celebration and its prohibition.

The danger posed in the festivals of the People of the Book, which are recognized in Islam, is greater than the danger stemming from pagan festivals, which are not recognized. The Muslim community has been warned against imitating the Jews and Christians and it has been said that some of its members would disobey this prohibition. This is not the case with paganism because paganism will return only towards the end of time, when all believers will be wiped out by death. Regardless, the threat posed by the People of the Book’s festivals are at least as great as that from paganism—if not greater, for the danger of an evil with an active agent is greater than that of a powerless evil.

2. A second tradition: Abū Dawūd reports on the authority of Thābit ibn adh-Dahhāk:

نَدَرَ رَجُلٌ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ يَنْحَرِ إِبِلًا بِبُؤَانَةَ
فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: "إِنِّي نَدَرْتُ أَنْ أَنْحَرَ إِبِلًا بِبُؤَانَةَ،"
فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "هَلْ كَانَ فِيهَا وَثْنٌ مِنْ أَوْثَانِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يُعْبَدُ؟" قَالُوا: "لَا،" قَالَ: "هَلْ كَانَ فِيهَا عِيدٌ مِنْ أَعْيَادِهِمْ؟" قَالُوا: "لَا،"
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَوْفِ بِنَدْرِكَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا وَفَاءَ لِنَدْرِ
فِي مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ، وَلَا فِيمَا لَا يَمْلِكُ ابْنُ آدَمَ."

In the time of the Prophet ﷺ a man took a vow to slaughter a camel at Buwānah. So, he came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “I have taken

a vow to sacrifice a camel at Buwānah.” The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Did the place contain any idol worshipped in pre-Islamic times?” They (the people) said: “No.” He asked: “Was any pre-Islamic festival observed there?” They replied: “No.” The Prophet ﷺ then said: “Fulfil your vow, for a vow to do an act of disobedience to Allāh must not be fulfilled, neither must one do something over which a human being has no control.”⁴³⁴

Abū Dawūd also reports on the authority of Sārah bint Miqsam ath-Thaqafī that she heard Maimūnah bint Kardam said:

خَرَجْتُ مَعَ أَبِي فِي حِجَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَسَمِعْتُ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ: رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَجَعَلْتُ أُبْدُهُ بَصْرِي فَدَنَا إِلَيْهِ أَبِي وَهُوَ عَلَى نَاقَةٍ لَهُ مَعَهُ دِرَّةٌ كَدْرَةَ الْكُتَّابِ فَسَمِعْتُ الْأَعْرَابَ وَالنَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ، الطَّبْطَبِيَّةَ الطَّبْطَبِيَّةَ فَدَنَا إِلَيْهِ أَبِي فَأَخَذَ بِقَدَمِهِ، قَالَتْ: فَأَقْرَرَهُ وَوَقَفَ فَاسْتَمَعَ مِنْهُ، فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ إِنْ وُلِدَ لِي وَلَدٌ ذَكَرٌ أَنْ أُحْرَجَ عَلَى رَأْسِ بُوَانَةٍ فِي عَقْبَةِ مَنِ الثَّنَائِيَا عِدَّةً مِنَ الْغَنَمِ، قَالَ: لَا أَعْلَمُ إِلَّا أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: حُمْسِينَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "هَلْ بِهَا مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ شَيْءٌ؟" قَالَ: لَا، قَالَ: "فَأَوْفِ بِمَا نَذَرْتَ بِهِ لِلَّهِ" قَالَتْ: فَجَمَعَهَا فَجَعَلَ يَذُبُّهَا، فَاثْقَلَتْ مِنْهَا شَاءً، فَطَلَبَهَا وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: "اللَّهُمَّ أَوْفِ عَنِّي نَذْرِي فَظْفِرْهَا فَذَبِّحْهَا."

I went out with my father to see the *hajj* performed by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. I saw the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and I fixed my eyes on him. My father came near him while he was riding his she-camel. He (the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ) had a whip like the whip of scribes. I heard the bedouin and the people say: “The whip, the whip.” My father came near him and held his foot. She said that he (the Prophet ﷺ) admitted, waited and listened to him. He said: “O Messenger

⁴³⁴ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3313).

of Allāh, I have made a vow that if I'm blessed with a male child, I shall slaughter a number of sheep at the end of Buwānah in the dale of hill." [The narrator said: I do not know (for certain) that she said: Fifty (sheep)]. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Is there any of these idols (worshipped)?" He replied: "No." Then he said: "Fulfil the vow you have taken for Allāh." He (the man) then gathered them (i.e. the sheep) and began to slaughter them. A sheep among them ran away. He searched for it saying: "O Allāh, fulfil my vow on my behalf." So, he found it and slaughtered it.⁴³⁵

He reports a similar tradition, transmitted in brief also by Maimūnah bint Kardam ibn Sufyan, on the authority of her father, through a different chain of narrators. This version adds that the Prophet ﷺ asked:

"هَلْ بِهَا وَثْنٌ، أَوْ عِيدٌ مِنْ أَعْيَادِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ؟" قَالَ: "لَا،" قُلْتُ: "إِنَّ أُمَّيْ هَذِهِ عَلَيْهَا نَذْرٌ، وَمَشِيٌّ أَفَاقُضِيهِ عَنْهَا"، وَرَبَّمَا، قَالَ ابْنُ بَشَّارٍ، أَنْقَضِيهِ عَنْهَا، قَالَ: "نَعَمْ".

"Does it contain an idol or was a festival of pre-Islamic period celebrated there?" He replied: "No." I (her father) then said: "This mother of mine has taken a binding oath; may I fulfill it on her behalf?" [The narrator, Bashshar, sometimes relate it as: "May we fulfill it on her behalf?"] He replied: "Yes."⁴³⁶

In another version, transmitted by 'Amr ibn Suh'aib on authority of his father, from his grandfather, Abū Dawūd also reported:

أَنَّ امْرَأَةً، أَتَتْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَتْ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ أَنْ أَضْرِبَ عَلَى رَأْسِكَ بِالذُّفِّ،" قَالَ: "أَوْفِي بِنَذْرِكَ" قَالَتْ: "إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ أَنْ أَذْبَحَ بِمَكَانٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا، مَكَانٌ كَانَ يَذْبَحُ فِيهِ أَهْلُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ،" قَالَ "لِصْنَمٍ؟" قَالَتْ: "لَا،" قَالَ: "لِوَثْنٍ؟" قَالَتْ: "لَا،" قَالَ: "أَوْفِي بِنَذْرِكَ"

⁴³⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3314).

⁴³⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3315).

A woman came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “Messenger of Allāh, I have taken a vow to play the tambourine before you.” He said: “Fulfil your vow.” She said: “And I have taken a vow to perform a sacrifice in such and such a place, a place in which people had performed sacrifices in pre-Islamic times.” He asked: “For an Idol?” She replied: “No.” He asked: “For an image?” She replied: “No.” He said: “Fulfil your vow.”⁴³⁷

Demonstrations: The man in the first tradition had vowed to perform a sacrifice of cattle, either camels or sheep, at the place he mentioned. The Prophet ﷺ therefore asked him whether the place contained any idols worshipped in pre-Islamic times and was told that it did not, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ further asked whether any pre-Islamic festival was observed there and was told that no such thing was observed. He then said, “Fulfill you vow,” adding subsequently, “for only a vow to do an act of disobedience to Allāh must not be fulfilled.”

The tradition dictates that offering sacrifices at their festival sites and where their idols are lodged constitutes an act of disobedience to Allāh for a number of reasons:

First, the Prophet’s command, “Then fulfill your vow,” is introduced with the word “then” and made to follow a description of some *wasf* (characteristics). Evidently, therefore, a cause-and-effect relationship exists between the description of characteristics and the command. In other words, it is the description of characteristics that necessitated the command. Thus, the absence of the aforementioned two characteristics from the vow will be the reason for compliance with the command, showing that the presence of these characteristics will prevent this compliance. Had these involved no disobedience to Allāh, fulfilling them would have been permissible.

Second, the Prophet ﷺ followed up his command with the words, “for only a vow to do an act of disobedience to Allāh must not be fulfilled.” If the very situation that prompted these words of general bearing were not meant to be included in them, the statement would

⁴³⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3312).

have been incoherent. Though the thing vowed in itself did not constitute disobedience to Allāh, the Prophet ﷺ nevertheless inquired about the aforementioned two possibilities, and only then did he command, “Fulfill your vow,” that is to say, fulfill it in so far as there is nothing objectionable to prevent slaughter there. The Prophet’s ﷺ reply was thus a command to fulfill the vow in the absence of the objectionable factor and a prohibition in the presence thereof. One already knew that a vow must be fulfilled; now one also knew which of the vows must not be fulfilled. A general statement, when it occurs due to a reason, is inevitably applied to the reason itself.

Third, had sacrifice at a *maudi’ al-’id* (festival site) been permissible, the Prophet ﷺ would have doubtless allowed the man to fulfill his vow, just as he had allowed the woman who had taken the vow to play the tambourine before him to do that. Rather, he would have made the fulfillment of his vow mandatory if slaughtering in the place contained in the vow is obligatory. Now if slaughtering at a place where their festival is held is forbidden, how can there be acceptance of the festival itself by performing some act connected with it?

From here it emerges that the term *’id* (festival) denotes a recurrent phenomenon, a periodical congregation of people either annually, monthly, or weekly. The term includes several points. It is recurrent, like the Day of Fitr and Friday; people congregate on such a day, perform certain *’ibādāt* (rites) and observe *’ādāt* (customs); sometimes the festival is tied to a certain place and sometimes it is not. All these acts are referred to as *festivals*.

As for the period of *’id*, he says about Friday: “Allāh made this day a festival for the Muslims.”

As for the *’id* being a periodical congregation wherein certain acts of worship are performed, that is evident from Ibn Abbās’s statement: “I witnessed *’id* prayers with the Prophet ﷺ.”⁴³⁸

And as for it being observed in places, it is inferred from the Prophet’s statement: “Do not turn my grave into a festival.”⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Al-Bukhārī (962).

⁴³⁹ Mentioned earlier.

The term *ʿid* could be used to represent a day together with the acts that are observed therein, and it is the most commonly used. As it is in the prophet's caution to Abū Bakr:

يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عِيدًا، وَهَذَا عِيدُنَا.

Leave them alone, Abū Bakr; every people has a festival, and this is ours.⁴⁴⁰

So, by his words, "Was any pre-Islamic festival observed there?," the Prophet ﷺ intended one of their recurrent gatherings, which was considered a festival among them. When he was told that no such thing was observed there, only then did he enjoin, "Fulfill you vow."

It follows that the area's being a pagan festival site should have invalidated slaughtering there, regardless of the vow, just as its being an abode of pagan idols should have had the same result, or else the statement would be incoherent as a whole and unsatisfactory in detail.

Evidently that is so because it would have led to the veneration of a certain area in which the pagans held their festivals, or to participation with the pagans in such festivals, or to a revival of the pattern of a pagan festival, etc., for the elements involved: the nature of the festival, its place, and timing.

If the prohibition was, as is readily obvious, against particularizing a spot, then it was on account of the area being the site of a recurrent pagan festival. When the pagan element was removed, the slaughter was permitted, but the condition of specification remained in force. It is thus clear that we should be wary of whether an area is one of the places for pagan festivals. If we have to be wary of the places, how much more of the festival itself? The Prophet ﷺ was averse to the spot because it was the area of *shirk* through idolatry, the implication being that *shirk* and idolatry are all the more liable to be forbidden.

If, on the other hand, the prohibition was because slaughtering there meant accord with them in their festival, this, then, is exactly the problem that concerns us here, since mere slaughtering in that area is

⁴⁴⁰ Al-Bukhārī (952 and 3931) and Muslim (892).

rejected in this case because it constitutes accord with unbelievers in holding a festival, for there is no other danger there.

The first of the possibilities seems, however, to be the most evident. Because the Prophet ﷺ only asked whether it was a place where they had observed their festival. He did not ask whether a sacrifice was performed at the time of their festival. Indeed, he asked, “Was any of their festival observed there?” It is clear that no pagan festival existed at the time of the question from the other version of the tradition, which stated that the question was raised during the farewell pilgrimage.

If the Prophet ﷺ forbade sacrifice in an area where the infidels had once celebrated their festivals, despite the fact that those infidels had embraced Islam and that the questioner was not adopting the spot for a festival, in fact all he wanted was permission to slaughter there, then this amply demonstrates that it was for the explicit purpose of prohibiting a means by which something of their festival might have continued to thrive, and out of fear lest slaughter there should tend to revive the local cult and festival. Although Allāh knows such a festival served merely as a fair where they conducted business and played games, as the *Anṣār* had remarked, “These are two days during which we used to sport in pre-Islamic times,” the inescapable conclusion was that the Muslims did not consider these festivals as being meant for religious devotion. That is why the Prophet ﷺ differentiated between an area being dedicated to idolatry or merely to a festival.

This is the strongest prohibition against celebrating any pagan festivals, for whatever reason.

Festivals of the infidels, whether the *Kitābiyyun* (People of the Book) or the *ummiyyun* (unlettered people), are placed by Islam in the same category, just as the unbelief of both parties is viewed as being equally unlawful, though their respective unbeliefs may differ in degree. As for a Muslim, he should avoid both equally. However, it may be, the People of the Book were nevertheless granted the right to practise their religion, including their festivals, under the Islamic rulership. But this was on the condition that they not practise their festivals or anything else pertaining to their religion demonstratively. On the other hand,

the *ummiyun* were not granted this right; however, the People of the Book festivals which are practised as acts of religious worship, are even more forbidden than a festival of mere fun and frolic. It is so because worshipping something that displeases Allāh and is reprehensible to Him is graver than following the passion for something that is merely forbidden by Him. And hence *shirk* is greater than adultery, and *jihād* against the People of the Book is, for the same reason, superior to battle against idolaters, with the result that a Muslim killed by them merits the reward of two martyrs.

Now, if the *Shari'a* wanted to root out the idolaters' festivals, fearing that a Muslim would be defiled by anything related to these unbelievers, whom Satan will never be able to establish their ascendancy in the Arabian peninsula, the fear of him being plagued by the characteristics of the remnants of the People of the Book is even greater, and the prohibition against such conduct is even more emphatic. And how is that possible, especially since a tradition has already been mentioned to the effect that a party among the Muslim community is inevitably going to tread in their path?

3. As mentioned in the above tradition, as well as in others, there were certain festivals in pre-Islamic times during which people would gather together. It is also known that when Allāh sent His Prophet ﷺ, those festivals were completely eliminated.

There is no doubt that if the Prophet ﷺ had not prohibited and refrained them, the people would simply not have given up those festivals because the need for them was present not only in man's nature, which is eager of what is pursued in festivals especially the nugatory ones, such as games and pleasure, but also in his habits which become accustomed to what recurs in festivals, because habit is second nature. In the face of the existing and pressing need, without an equally vigorous deterrent, those festivals would never have been wiped out.

Thus, one can be certain that the Prophet ﷺ, the leader of Allāh pious servants, used to forbid his community, emphatically, from celebrating the festivals of the infidels, striving to eliminate and eradicate them in

every way possible. The fact that Islam tolerates the religious practices of the People of the Book is by no means intended to perpetuate their festivals as far as the Muslims are concerned, just as it is not intended to perpetuate the impact of those religions in the rest of their acts of unbelief and insubordination. Rather, the Prophet ﷺ endeavored to his maximum in enjoining his community to differ from them even in many things that could be ordinarily permissible and in the manners of worship, such that agreement with them in this respect will not become an instrument that promotes agreement in other respects, and that being at variance with them in this sphere should serve as a barrier against agreement with them in all other spheres. The greater the dissimilarity between one and the people doomed to hell, the farther one is from their acts.

This is the extreme of wishing good to his community and giving it pertinent counsel, due no doubt to Allāh's blessing upon him and upon Muslims. And yet most people are ungrateful!

4. Both Bukhārī and Muslim quote 'Ā'ishah:

دَخَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعِنْدِي جَارِيَتَانِ مِنْ جَوَارِي الْأَنْصَارِ تُغَنِّيَانِ بِمَا تَقَاوَلَتِ الْأَنْصَارُ يَوْمَ بُعَاثَ، قَالَتْ: "وَلَيْسَتْا بِمُعَنِّيَتَيْنِ،" فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: "أَمْزَامِيرُ الشَّيْطَانِ فِي بَيْتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَذَلِكَ فِي يَوْمِ عِيدٍ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عِيدًا وَهَذَا عِيدُنَا"."

Abū Bakr came to visit me while I had two girls with me from among the girls of the *Anṣār* and they were singing what the *Anṣār* said to one another at the Battle of Bu'āth. They were not, however, songstresses. Upon this Abū Bakr said: "What the playing of this wind instrument of Satan in the house of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ." It was the day of *īd*. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Abū Bakr, every people have a festival and it is our festival (so let them play on)."⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴¹ Al-Bukhārī(952) and Muslim (892).

In another version, it is reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ says:

دَعُهُمَا يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عِيدًا، وَإِنَّ عِيدَنَا هَذَا الْيَوْمُ.

Leave them Abū Bakr, for every nation has an `Id, and today is our `Id.⁴⁴²

Another version in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* has it as:

دَعُهُمَا يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، فَإِنَّهَا أَيَّامٌ عِيدٍ، وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ أَيَّامٌ مِنِّي.

Leave them Abū Bakr, for these days are the days of `Id, (the days of Mina.)⁴⁴³

Arguments may be established from a variety of angles:

Firstly, the phrase, ‘every people have a festival and it is our festival’, implies that all people have their festivals, just as the Qur’anic phrases:

﴿وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّيًا﴾

For each (religion) there is a (prayer) direction toward which it faces.⁴⁴⁴

And:

﴿لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شُرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا﴾

To each of you We have ordained a (specific) code of law and a way of life.⁴⁴⁵

These presuppose that every person has been associated with a “divine law” and a “way.” The Arabic alphabet “*Lām*” in those sentence formations denotes that. Now if the Jews have a festival and the Christians have a festival, these are then exclusively associated with them. We do not participate with them in these festivals just as we do follow their *qibla* (prayer direction) and *Shari’a* (code of law). By the same token, we should not call upon them to join us in our festivals.

⁴⁴² Al-Bukhārī (3931).

⁴⁴³ Al-Bukhārī (987 and 3529) and Muslim (892).

⁴⁴⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:148.

⁴⁴⁵ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:48.

Secondly, the phrase ‘and this is our festival’ means this is our only festival. (In another version of the same tradition) his words, “Our festival is this day,” because the Arabic alphabets *Alif* and *Lām* in the sentence formation give that engrossment, lead to the conclusion that the genus of our festival is dependent on the genus of that day, as it is in the tradition:

تَحْرِيمُهَا التَّكْبِيرُ، وَتَحْلِيلُهَا التَّسْلِيمُ

Saying “Allāhu Akbar” makes it a sacred state, and making “at-Taslim” (salutation) brings the sacred state to an end.⁴⁴⁶

It was not the Prophet’s intention to restrict festivals to those that were done on that day alone or to the day itself; he rather wished to allude to the permissible ones. According to the jurists, “the section of the ‘*id*’ prayer, the ‘*id*’ prayer is such and such; for discussions that affect both ‘*id*,’ and “it is not permissible to fast on the ‘*id*’ day.”

As well as the phrase, “for today is...”, which refers to the kind of today. And as the person leading people out for the ‘*id*’ prayer proclaims: “this is Muslims’ prayer” or something like that.

This tradition of ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir رضي الله عنه says that the Messenger of Allāh says:

يَوْمُ عَرَفَةَ، وَيَوْمُ النَّحْرِ، وَأَيَّامُ التَّشْرِيقِ عِيدُنَا أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَهِيَ أَيَّامُ
أَكْلٍ وَشُرْبٍ.

The day of Arafah, the day of sacrifice, and the day of At-Tashrīq are days of our ‘*id*, O people of Islam, and they are days of eating and drinking.⁴⁴⁷ (Abū Dawūd, at-Tirmidhī, and an-Nasā’ī reported it, and at-Tirmidhī rated it as *Hasan aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*).

This tradition is also relevant to this issue. It distinguishes us from others in matters of ‘*id*’ by mentioning the peculiarity of those five days to us. These days combine the two terms of ‘*id*’ celebrations: the

⁴⁴⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (61, 618), at-Tirmidhī (3, 238), and Ibn Mājah (275, 276).

⁴⁴⁷ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (2319), at-Tirmidhī (773), an-Nasā’ī (3004), and Ibn Mājah (1316).

celebration in terms of places and in terms of seasons. The *'id al-'Adḥā'*'s season is longer than others, and that is why it is named the 'Great *'id'* (Festival). Because the acts of worship in this festival are numerous and more perfect, or because it is observed within a longer season, it has a number of rulings; we do have a festival that is observed in more than a day except for this.

Thirdly, the Prophet ﷺ allowed the girls to play the tambourine and sing because of the consideration that 'there is a festival for every people, and this is ours.' The implication is that an exception was made because singing to the accompaniment of a tambourine occurred in a Muslim festival day, and thus does not extend to unbelievers' festivals, because Muslims are not permitted to partake in the same amusement at non-Muslim festivals as they are at their own. If the same amusement permitted in our festivals were also permitted in non-Muslim festivals, the Prophet ﷺ would not have said, "Every people has a festival, and this is ours." For the methodology of sentence formation in Arabic language, when a ruling is preceded by the alphabet '*al-Fā'*', it denotes that what follows the alphabet is the condition for the permissibility of that ruling. In which case, the reason for which playing and amusement are allowed is peculiar to Muslims.⁴⁴⁸

There is also an indication here that Muslims are not permitted to imitate non-Muslims in games, etc.

5. The Jews and Christians continued to inhabit Arab lands until 'Umar banished them during his caliphate. There were Jews in Madinah during the Prophet's lifetime ﷺ. He had concluded a truce with them, which they themselves violated, tribe by tribe. The Jews continued to be in Madinah, though not in a great number. When the Prophet ﷺ died, his coat of mail was pawned to a Jew. In Yemen, however, they were more numerous, while the Christians were found at Najran and elsewhere, and the Persians in Bahrain.

As well-known as it is, all of these people had festivals to celebrate.

⁴⁴⁸ The author further makes a brief discussion on the sentence formation.

Well-known also is the fact that the need for what is enacted during festivals; such as eating, drinking, displaying of clothing and ornaments, recreation and relaxation, etc., stays alive in man's mind unless countered by a deterrent. This is especially true of the minds of women, youngsters, and many a carefree man.

Furthermore, one who has knowledge of the biographies of early Muslims realizes that the Muslims during the Prophet's time ﷺ did not participate in any of the affairs of unbelievers, nor did they change their habits during non-Muslims festivals. Rather, for the Prophet ﷺ and the rest of the Muslims, non-Muslim festival days were like all other days. They did not mark such a day in any way, except for what scholars differed on in terms of the permissibility of marking the difference between Muslims and non-Muslims by fasting on a non-Muslim festival day, as we shall see shortly.

If it hadn't been for the refrainment and prohibition that Muslims understood from their religion, which they inherited from their Prophet ﷺ, there would have been people who would have participated in their festivals with non-Muslims, especially since human nature and habits always incline toward amusement.

The state of things with the Muslims continued in this manner until the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The only thing that was present among some Muslims at the time was that they used to dispassionately look to see how the non-Muslims performed their festivals, but 'Umar رضي الله عنه and some other companions forbade them of that, as it is going to be mentioned. If that was the case, how would they react if it existed among the Muslims those who imitated the unbelievers, or if some of them practiced what might necessitate such imitation?

Rather, when some Muslims later devised a way of registering their difference with non-Muslims during their festivals by fasting on those festival days, a number of scholars forbade that, stating that such acts might be tantamount to honoring those days. A close examination of this position might be enough to conclude that what Muslims inherited from their Prophet ﷺ on this issue was none other than the prohibition of participating in non-Muslim festivals.

6. Abū Hurairah reports the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ السَّابِقُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، بَيَدَ أَنَّهُمْ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا،
ثُمَّ هَذَا يَوْمُهُمُ الَّذِي فُرِضَ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَاخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ، فَهَدَانَا اللَّهُ، فَالْتَأَسَ
لَنَا فِيهِ تَبَعَ الْيَهُودُ عَدَا، وَالتَّصَارَى بَعْدَ عَدٍ.

We (Muslims) are the last (to come) but (will be) the first on the Day of Resurrection although the former nations were given the Holy Scriptures before us. And this was their day (Friday) that was prescribed for them but they disagreed on it. So Allāh gave us the guidance for it (Friday) and they came after us with regard to it, the Jews observing the next day (i.e., Saturday) and the Christians the day following that (i.e., Sunday).⁴⁴⁹

Another authentic version has it as:

بَيَدَ أَنَّهُمْ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا، وَأُوتِينَاهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ، وَهَذَا يَوْمُهُمْ
الَّذِي فُرِضَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ، فَهَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهُ.

Because they were given the Book before us, and we were given after them, and this was the day that was prescribed for them, but they disagreed on it, Allāh guided us to it. They, then, came after us with regard to it, the Jews observing the next day and the Christians the day following that.⁴⁵⁰

Abū Hurairah and Hudhaifah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْجُمُعَةِ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَنَا، فَكَانَ لِلْيَهُودِ يَوْمُ السَّبْتِ، وَكَانَ
لِلتَّصَارَى يَوْمُ الْأَحَدِ، فَجَاءَ اللَّهُ بِنَا فَهَدَانَا اللَّهُ لِيَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ، فَجَعَلَ
الْجُمُعَةَ، وَالسَّبْتَ، وَالْأَحَدَ، وَكَذَلِكَ هُمْ تَبَعَ لَنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، نَحْنُ الْآخِرُونَ
مِنْ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا، وَالْأَوَّلُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، الْمَقْضِيُّ لَهُمْ قَبْلَ الْخَلَائِقِ " وَفِي

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Bukhārī (876 and 3486) and Muslim (855, 21).

⁴⁵⁰ Muslim (855, 19)

رَوَايَةٌ وَاصِلٌ الْمَقْضَى بَيْنَهُمْ.

Allāh diverted those who were before us away from Friday. For the Jews, (they chose for their prayer) *Sabt* (Saturday), and for the Christians, it was Sunday. And Allāh brought us (this nation) forward and guided us to Friday (as the day of our congregational prayer). So, the days were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In this order would they (Jews and Christians) come after us on the Day of Resurrection. We are the last of (the nations) among the people in this world, but the foremost among the creation to be judged on the Day of Resurrection. In a narration: *to be judged among them*.⁴⁵¹

In other traditions, the Prophet ﷺ called Friday a day of *'id*, and that is why he forbade singling out Fridays for fasting. However, in this narration, he stated that Friday is for us, while Saturday is for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians.

Furthermore, the specialties given in this narration amount to three different systems: the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian systems, each of which has specific characterizations different from those of the others. Consequently, if Muslims participate in the Jewish festivals on Saturday or with Christians on Sunday, it is no doubt that they have gone out outside the stipulations of this tradition, which is not permissible. And just as doing so is not permissible in the weekly celebrations, so also it is not permissible in the yearly ones, for there is no difference between the two. Rather, if the Jewish festivals that were forbidden for the early Muslims at Madinah were used to be determined by the Arabian method of time reckoning, then, participating in those of the non-Arabs that are determined by the Roman Polar, Persian, or Hebaric methods is graver.

Moreover, his statement ﷺ:

بَيَّنَّا أَنَّهُمْ أَوْثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا، وَأُوتِينَاهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ، وَهَذَا يَوْمُهُمُ
الَّذِي فُرِضَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ، فَهَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهُ.

⁴⁵¹ Muslim (806).

Should be interpreted thus,

Because they were given the Book before us, and we were given after them, and this was the day that was prescribed for them, but they disagreed on it, Allāh guided us to it. (as understood from this other tradition):

أَنَا أَفْصَحُ الْعَرَبِ بَيْدَ أُمَّيٍّ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ، وَاسْتُرْضِعْتُ فِي بَنِي سَعْدِ بْنِ بَكْرٍ

I am the most eloquent man of the Arab lineage, for I am from Quraysh tribe and was nursed by the clan of Sa'd ibn Bakr's.⁴⁵²

So, the meaning of the hadith—Allāh knows best—is that: we are the last to be created among the nations, but the first to be judged and put in the Paradise on the Day of Judgement, as mentioned in another tradition, this nation will be the first to enter the Paradise, and its Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ will be the first for whom its gate will be opened, for we were given the Book after them, but, then, they were guided to that which they disagreed about concerning the day of weekly congregation; a day before their respective days, so, our good deeds would be arranged before theirs. By that token, our recompense would be awarded to us before theirs.

7. Kuraib, Ibn 'Abbās' maid, reported:

أَرْسَلَنِي ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، وَنَاسٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيَّ
أَمْ سَلَمَةَ: "أَيُّ الْأَيَّامِ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَكْثَرَهَا صِيَامًا؟"
قَالَتْ: "كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصُومُ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ وَيَوْمَ
الْأَحَدِ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يَصُومُ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ، وَيَقُولُ: "إِنَّهُمَا يَوْمَا عِيدِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ،
فَأَنَا أَحَبُّ أَنْ أُخَالِفَهُمْ".

Ibn 'Abbās and some other Companions sent me to Umm Salma

⁴⁵² Fabricated, *as-Silsilah adh-Dha'ifah* (1689) and *Dha'if al-Jāmi' as-Sagīr* of Imām al-Albani (1303).

to ask her on which days the Prophet ﷺ used to fast most. She replied, “He used to fast on Saturdays and Sundays more than any other days, and he used to say, “They are festival days for the *mushrikūn*, and I rather like to oppose them.”⁴⁵³ (Ahmad and an-Nasā’ī reported it)

So, these are some texts that discuss the permissibility of appearing different from them in their festivals, even if by way of commendability.

However, we are going to mention the tradition in respect of the prohibition of observing a voluntary fasting on Saturdays and the fact that the reason given for it was the need to appear different to the People of the Book. We shall as well discuss the ruling concerning observing Saturday fasting singly as presented by the scholars; they unanimously agreed to the need to appear different to non-Muslims, they only disagreed as to whether or not it was permissible to make observance of fasting on their festival days a way of registering our difference with them, as observing its fasting might amount to honoring those days, and whether or not we could differentially treat their festivals as to the method of reckoning with them, distinguishing those that are determined by the Arabian method of time from those that are determined by non-Arab methods, as it will be explained.

Consensus:

1. As previously mentioned, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians continued to live in Muslim garrison towns by paying *jizya*, and celebrating their festivals, even as many hearts continued to yearn for some of what they practiced. However, during the period of the *Salaf*, Muslims did not participate in any of these activities. Had not a deterrent generating revulsion and prohibition against the unbelievers’ practices been propped up in their hearts, many would have been guilty of transgression. If an incentive is present and any deterrent is absent, an act undoubtedly must take place. Thus, we know that a deterrent religion was present, with the

⁴⁵³ Sound, Musnad Ahmad (26750), *Sunan al-Kubrāh* (2788 and 2789), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaimah* (2167), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibān* (3616 and 3646), and others.

conclusion that the religion here is the religion of Islam, which prohibits conformity with the unbelievers. And that is the point here.

2. Mention has been made earlier in connection with the obligations imposed by 'Umar, agreed upon by the Companions, and after them by the jurists in general, that the *dhimmis* such as the People of the Book, shall not openly celebrate their festivals, especially Palm Sunday and Easter, in *dar al-Islam* (Muslim land). If Muslims unanimously prohibit the *dhimmis* from publicly celebrating their festivals, how can Muslims themselves be allowed to celebrate them? Is it not a graver matter when a Muslim, rather than a non-Muslim, publicly celebrates such a festival?

It is because we have prohibited them from celebrating their festivals due to the impiety inherent in these festivals, for they are either sins or tokens of sin. Either way, a Muslim is prohibited from practicing them, even though there is nothing more serious about a Muslim's observance of these festivals than that it emboldens the infidel to practice them on account of the strength the latter draws from observing the former practice them. How possibly can a Muslim do such a thing? Indeed, such conduct carries evil, part of which we shall have occasion to expose in due course.

3. What was earlier mentioned on the authority of Abū Shaykh al-Asbahāni was that 'Umar exclaimed to the Muslims: "Beware of the non-Arabs's lingo and entering into the non-Muslims places of worship during their festivals."

Also, in the chapter on the detestable character of visiting the *dhimmis* in their churches and on imitating them in their festivals of Nairūz and Mahrajan, al-Baihaqī reports with an authentic chain of transmitters that 'Ata' ibn Dinar quotes 'Umar as saying:

لَا تَعْلَمُوا رَطَانَةَ الْأَعَاجِمِ وَلَا تَدْخُلُوا عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي كَنَائِسِهِمْ يَوْمَ عِيدِهِمْ. فَإِنَّ السَّخْطَةَ تَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمْ.

Do not learn the lingo (*ratāna*) of non-Arabs, nor visit the *mushrikūn* in their churches on their festivals, for (Allāh's) wrath descends upon them.⁴⁵⁴

He also reports 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr, with an authentic chain of transmitters, as said:

مَنْ بَتَى فِي بِلَادِ الْأَعَاجِمِ فَصَنَعَ نَيْرُوزَهُمْ وَمَهْرَجَانَهُمْ، وَتَشَبَّهَ بِهِمْ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ وَهُوَ كَذَلِكَ، حُشِرَ مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

One who settled in the lands of the non-Muslims, celebrated their Nairuz and Mahrajan, and imitated them till his death, will be raised with them on the Resurrection Day.⁴⁵⁵

He also reports with his chain of transmitters that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said:

اجْتَنِبُوا أَعْدَاءَ اللَّهِ فِي عِيدِهِمْ.

Keep away from the enemies of Allāh in their festivals.⁴⁵⁶

He reports on the authority of Hisham ibn Hasān, that Muhammad ibn Sirīn narrated:

أَتَى عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَدِيَّةِ النَّيْرُوزِ فَقَالَ: "مَا هَذِهِ؟" قَالُوا: "يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هَذَا يَوْمُ النَّيْرُوزِ." قَالَ: "فَاصْنَعُوا كُلَّ يَوْمٍ فَيْرُوزًا."

A gift for *Nairūz* (festival) was brought for 'Alī عليه السلام, he asked: "What is this for?" The people replied: "O leader of the Muslims! Today is *Nairūz* festival," he then remarked: "Observe your *Fairūz* everyday."⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ *As-Sunan al-Kubrāh* of al-Baihaqī (18863)) and *al-Kunā wa al-Asmā* of ad-Dulābi (1842).

⁴⁵⁵ Authentic, *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* of al-Baihaqī (18864).

⁴⁵⁶ The same reference (18862).

⁴⁵⁷ Weak, the same reference (18865). There is a breakoff in the chain of its transmission; Muhammad ibn Sirīn never heard hadith from 'Alī عليه السلام. The tradition is therefore not suitable as an evidence for the permissibility of accepting gifts from non-Muslims during their festivals. It is not even evident that 'Alī عليه السلام collected the gift from the people, rather he passionately rejected it, and even

According to al-Baihaqī this tradition contains the aversion to particularizing a day with something that *Shari'a* has not chosen to particularize it with.

Here is 'Umar, forbidding Muslims to speak the non-Muslim's language and even merely visiting him in his church on his festival day. How can Muslims be permitted to do some of what they do, or to do that which is a requirement of their faith? Is not accord with them in their deeds graver than accord with them in their language? Are not some of their festival practices more serious than merely visiting them during their festivals—despite the fact that divine wrath descends upon them on their festival days by virtue of their practices? Does anyone who participates in their practices, whether fully or partially, escape the punishment for himself? Moreover, does not 'Umar's word, "Keep away from the enemies of Allāh," constitute a prohibition against visiting them and congregating with them on their festivals? How about him, who celebrates their festivals?

In the case of Abdullah ibn 'Amr, he declared: "One who settled in the lands of the non-Muslims, celebrated their Nairūz and Mahrajan, and imitated them till his death, will be raised with them on the Resurrection Day." This declaration implies that he considered an infidel to be someone who is guilty of all these crimes altogether or that he considered him to have committed great sins for which he is due in Hell, though the first consideration has a higher probability. Someone who partakes in only a part of those things is invariably considered a sinner, because each of those items has its own degree of effect in that all of them are tantamount to infidelity; if any of them were permissible, it would not have had such an effect. So, they all have separate effects.

Furthermore, Abdullah ibn 'Amr mentioned settling in non-Muslim lands among those graver sins because at the time the non-Muslims could only manage to celebrate their festivals openly in their lands. They were not permitted to celebrate their festivals openly in the Muslim lands and no Muslim was allowed to participate with them either. As

hated calling the festival by its name as al-Baihaqī remarked after reporting the tradition, and that is the reason why the author mentined it here to establish non-permissibility of imitating the unbelievers in their festivals.

a result, any Muslim who wishes to participate in their festivals must settle with them.

If ‘Alī ﷺ hated calling the festival by its name, how, then, about imitating their practices?

Imām Ahmad was reported to have written down this fact, which could be inferred from what ‘Umar and ‘Alī said.

We mentioned earlier on as well that al-Qadī Abū Ya’lā prohibited attending non-Muslim festivals.

In his book, *‘Umdat al-Hādīr wa Kifāyat al-Musāfir*, Imām Abū al-Hasan al-Āmidī, known as Ibn al-Baghdadi, writes that it has been textually stipulated by Ahmad in a report given by Muhnan that Christian and Jewish festivals should not be attended. Ahmad explains that the word *zūr* in Divine Words *wa’l-ladhina la yashhaduna’z-zūra* (those who do not witness [or testify] to *zūr*) refers to Palm Sunday and other festivals of the People of the Book. However, there is no objection to attending fairs during their festivals. In Ahmad’s view, Muslims should not enter their churches and synagogues. The prohibition, however, does not apply to edibles sold at their fairs, even if the wares contribute to ameliorating those products and are found in abundance during non-Muslim festivals.

In his *Jami’*, under the heading *It is Detestable for Muslims to Flock to Non-Muslim Festivals*, al-Khallal quotes Mahnan:

I asked Ahmad for his opinion about attending these Syrian festivals such as Tur Tabūr, Dair Ayyub, etc. Muslims attend them and their fairs to purchase sheep, cattle, flour, wheat, barley, and other wares. Except that the Muslims only buy goods at these fairs and do not enter churches. Ahmad replied, “No objection, if all they did was attend their fairs without entering their churches.”

Here, Ahmad ﷺ permits attending their fairs with the condition of not entering their churches. Thus, al-Khallāl inferred the prohibition of entering their churches, which was exactly what was textually stipulated by Ahmad, so as to prevent the Muslims from imitating the non-Muslims, as earlier discussed.

On learning the non-Arab lingo and naming months after non-Arabic titles, says Abū Muhammad al-Kirmāni, called Harb: “I asked Ahmad, ‘What is your opinion about the days and months of the Persians, which they call by names that we do not know?’ He expressed an extreme dislike for the practice, reporting that Mujahid felt revulsion toward anyone using Adhramah and Dhimah. I further asked, ‘And what if it is the name of a person?’ He disliked that too. He said, ‘I asked Ishaq (ibn Rahwaih), ‘What if a book is dated in terms of Persian months such as Adharmah, Dhimah?’ To which Ishaq replied that if none of these names is objectionable, then he would hope it was all right to use them.” He said, “Ibn al-Mubarak found swearing by Yazdan detestable and said that one cannot be sure if the word did not refer to something that was worshipped (apart from Allāh). The same holds for Persian and Arabic names in such cases.” He said, “I asked Ishaq a second time if it was all right for a man to learn the names of the Byzantine and Persian months, to which Ishaq replied that there was no harm in taking a name if one knew what it meant in their languages.”

That fact that Ahmad considered these names detestable has two reasons:

1. When the meaning of a name is not known, it may have the sense of something unlawful. Thus, a Muslim should not utter something whose meaning he does not know. It is for this reason that non-Arabic (such as Syriac, Hebrew, etc.) incantations and amulets are detestable because they may contain words that it is not permissible to utter.
This is precisely the meaning that Ishaq took into consideration. But once it is known that the meaning is detestable, there can be no doubt about its being detestable. If, on the other hand, the meaning is not known, Ahmad would still consider it despicable, though Ishaq, possibly, would not.
2. It is detestable that a man should become habituated to speaking in non-Arabic, because Arabic language is one of the symbols of Islam and Muslims. Languages are among the prominent symbols by which nations are told apart. Thus, many or most jurists disapproved of calling

on Allāh, in prayers i.e., *ṣalawāt* or *dhikr*, in a non-Arabic language.

Scholars differ about whether one can say the *adhkār* (glorifications of Allāh) that are said in prayers in a non-Arabic language. These *adhkār* are of three distinct categories: the first is the Qur'an that is recited in prayers, followed by the compulsory *adhkār* other than the Qur'an, such as *at-Tahrīmah*,⁴⁵⁸ or *at-Tablīl*,⁴⁵⁹ and *at-Tashāhud*, according to the scholars who maintain that those are compulsory *adhkār*, and the third are those that are not compulsory, such as *Du'ā*, *tasbīh*, *takbīr*, and the likes.

As for the Qur'an, according to the majority of scholars, it is not recited except in Arabic language, whether one is capable of reciting it or not, which is undoubtedly the correct opinion. Some scholars even maintain that it is forbidden to translate any chapter of the Qur'an or even any part at all.

Abū Hanīfah and his disciples only disagree as to who is capable of learning Arabic language.

As for the compulsory *adhkār*, they differ as to who is not capable of saying it in Arabic language. Can he read the translation? Two opinions were reported from the disciples of Ahmad: the permissibility and non-permissibility. But the one that has the greatest likelihood of being the opinion of Ahmad is non-permissibility, which is also the opinion of Malik and Ishāq, while the second is the opinion of Abū Yūsuf, Muhammad, and ash-Shāfi'i.

For other *adhkār*, two opinions were reported as well:

1. He should not say it in any language other than Arabic language, and if he does, his *Salāt* (prayer) is null and void. This is the opinion of Malik, Ishāq, and some of the disciples of ash-Shāfi'i.
2. Although saying it in language other than Arabic is detestable, it does not invalidate the prayer. This is an opinion that was textually stipulated by ash-Shāfi'i. Some of the disciples of Ahmad also allowed that for someone who was not capable of saying it in Arabic language.

⁴⁵⁸ *Takbiratul Ibrām*—the first *Allāhu Akbar* with which one assumes starting the *Salāt*.

⁴⁵⁹ *At-Taslīm*—the saying of *as-Salāmu alaykum* to end the prayer.

Explicit discussions have been made in the Book of Fiqh concerning this issue of speaking other than Arabic language in acts of worship, such as the prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, and *adhkār*; like *at-Talbiyah*,⁴⁶⁰ *at-Tasmiyah*⁴⁶¹ when slaughtering animals, and during contracts making or annulments, such as wedding contacts, or the oath of condemnation, etc.

However, adopting them as names, either for human beings or for monthly calendars, without any genuine reason is undoubtedly prohibited if the meanings are not known. But if their meanings are known, what is apparent from Ahmad's remarks is that he hated them as well, for he expressed his extreme dislike for names like Adhramah and Dhimah even though their meanings are not bad.

And I guess he was asked about supplications in prayers in Persian, to which he expressed his hatred, and said: "What a bad language!"

For this opinion, he took after Umar's prohibition of learning the *ratāna* (lingo) of non-Arabs as well as his prohibition of attending non-Muslim festivals. Malik also was reported to have said: "One should not assume the position of *hirām* with a non-Arabic language, nor should he supplicate or swear with it," 'Umar is said to have prohibited speaking non-Arabic language, he remarked thus: "Non-Arabic language is a deception."

Malik, here, supported his argument with 'Umar's outright prohibition of learning lingo of non-Arabs.

As-Silafi with a chain of transmitters going back to Abdullah ibn Abdul-Hakam reported Ash-Shāfi'i to have said: "Allāh called the people who sought his bounties in business transactions *Tujār* (tradesmen), and Arab never seized to refer to them as such, so also the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ called them by it by virtue of their business, as registered in Arabic language. However, the name *Simsār* (broker) is a non-Arabic name, so we prefer that someone who is acquainted with Arabic language calls him *Tājir* (trader), and that he only refers to thing by their Arabic names. That is because Allāh preferred Arabic language to any other

⁴⁶⁰ The glorification that is chanted during *hajj* to indicate one's answering of his Lord's Calls.

⁴⁶¹ The saying of *Bismillah*.

language, for which He revealed His Book in Arabic language and chose it as the language of His last Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ. On account of this, we say: “It is necessary that whoever is capable of learning Arabic language do so; it is supposed to be everyone’s passionate native language, without necessarily forbidding him to speak other than it.”

Here, Ash-Shāfi’ī despised anyone who knows Arabic naming anything other than Arabic, or mixing it with other languages.

The opinion of these *Imāms* regarding this issue was exactly what was reported from the Companions and the *Tābi’ūn*, as we shortly mentioned from ‘Umar and ‘Alī ؓ.

Furthermore, Ibn Abī Shaibah in his book *al-Mūsānaf* reported on the authority of Ibn Buraidah that ‘Umar said: “No one speaks the Persian language except that he is deceptive, and his sense of honor diminishes afterwards.”

He also reported that ‘Atā said: “Do not learn the *ratāna* (lingo) of non-Arabs, nor visit their churches on their festivals, for (Allāh’s) wrath descends upon them.”

This was exactly what was reported from ‘Umar.

He also reported through his chain of transmitters that Muhammad ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Waqās heard some people discussing in Persian, and he thus remarked: “What a Pagan practice after Islam.”

As-Silafi reported on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever can speak Arabic language should not speak a non-Arabic language, for such acts bring about hypocrisy.”⁴⁶²

In another narration, he reported it as: “Whoever is able to speak the Arabic language should not speak the Persian language, for such acts bring about hypocrisy.”⁴⁶³

Perhaps, this is ‘Umar’s statement, liking it to the Prophet ﷺ requires it having good bases.

However, it is reported that some of them employed words from non-Arabic languages.

Abū Khalid reports: “Abū ‘Āliyah spoke with me in Persian.”

⁴⁶² Weak, reported by al-Hakim in *al-Mustadraq* (4/87).

⁴⁶³ Baseless.

Mundhir ath-Thawree reports: “A man asked Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah for some *al-Jibna* (cheese). He then sent his slave girl to buy some, he said to her: ‘Buy some *Nabiz* for us.’ The girl then later came with some cheese.”

In short, using non-Arabic words in Arabic speech was not such a serious matter after all. Non-Arabic words were mostly used because the addressee was a non-Arab or because he was accustomed to Persian speech and they wanted to bring the subject matter closer to his comprehension. It is similar to when the Prophet ﷺ put a shirt on Umm Khalid, daughter of Khalid ibn Sa’id ibn al-’Āṣ—she was then a small girl who had been born in Abyssinia after her father had migrated there—said to her: “O Umm Khalid, this is *sana!*”⁴⁶⁴

Sana in the Abyssinian language means good, or pretty.

Abū Hurairah reportedly said to someone with abdominal pain: “*Ashkam badrad.*”⁴⁶⁵

This statement was reportedly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, but that is never the case.

As for becoming accustomed to non-Arabic speech, despite the fact that Arabic is a symbol of Islam and the language of the Qur’an, to the extent that this other language becomes a habit of a whole city with its dwellers, of an entire household, of a man and his associates, or marketers, princes, officials, jurists, etc., this, then, is undoubtedly detestable, because, as mentioned earlier, it would be tantamount to imitating non-Arabs.

It was for this reason that when the early Muslims settled in Syria and Egypt, where the native language was Greek, in Iraq and Khorasan, where Persian was spoken, and in North-West Africa (al-Maghrib), where the natives spoke Berber, in each case they made the natives of these countries acquire the habit of speaking Arabic, till a time came when it prevailed upon the peoples of these countries, Muslims or non-Muslims. Such was also the case in Khorasan previously. Subsequently, the Arabs there became neglectful in the matter of language and accustomed

⁴⁶⁴ Bukhārī (3847, 5823, and 5845).

⁴⁶⁵ The word “Ashkam” in Persian language is said to mean *al-Batn* (belly).

to Persian speech, until finally Persian prevailed, with the result that Arabic was abandoned by most of them. This is certainly detestable.

What should rather happen is that people should employ Arabic language as a means of communication, such that little ones acquire it directly from homes and schools. This process will make Islamic symbols more apparent and will make it easy for Muslims to learn and understand the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ, as well as the *Salaf*'s explanations of them, unlike when people are already familiar with one language and later want to shift on to another, which is no doubt difficult.

We should take into consideration the fact that language promotes good understanding and morals and assists in strengthening faith. It also encourages people to be like the early Muslims, like the Companions and the *Tābi'ūn*. Being like them assists one's development in reasoning, morals, and faith.

Learning Arabic language is part of religious obligations; a good understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah is compulsory and cannot be understood without a good understanding of Arabic language, without which an obligation cannot be fulfilled.

However, there are categories for learning and understanding the Arabic language; some are compulsory on every Muslim, while others are sufficient for only a few Muslims to learn. To this effect, Ibn Abī Shaibah, on the authority of 'Umar ibn Zayd reported that 'Umar ؓ wrote to Abū Mūsā ؓ: "To proceed! Learn the Sunnah, learn Arabic language, and seek to understand the Qur'an with Arabic for the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic language."

In another tradition, 'Umar was reported to have said: "Learn Arabic language, for it is part of your religious obligation, and learn about *farā'id* (legal heirs), for it is part of your religious duty."

What 'Umar urged Muslims to do here is learn Arabic and Fiqh, combines what a Muslim is required to know about utterances and actions, because learning Arabic language opens the door to learning everything about speeches and utterances, whereas learning the Sunnah is about learning religious practices.

Points of *i'tibār* (consideration):

1. Festivals are one of the elements of the Divine Law, along with *manāhij* (holy ways) and *manāsik* (sacred rites), about which Allāh says:

﴿لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ﴾

For every (religious) community, We have appointed rites which they perform.⁴⁶⁶

For example, *qibla*, prayer, and fasting. Therefore, there is no difference between participating with non-Muslims in a festival and in other holy ways. Participating in their festivals, in whole or in part, is thus synonymous with participating in unbelief, in whole or in part. Rather, festivals are those that most particularly serve to differentiate one religious law from another and constitute their most prominent symbols. Following non-Muslim festivals would thus be equivalent to following one of the unbelievers' most distinctive ways of life and one of its most visible symbols, with the inescapable conclusion that such behavior would possibly culminate in the most complete expression of unbelief.

Looking this issue at the basics, participating in non-Muslim festivals is at the very least a disobedience to Allāh, and the Messenger of Allāh has pointed out that every religion has its festivals, saying:

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عَيْدًا، وَهَذَا عَيْدُنَا

Every people (religion) has a festival, and this is ours.⁴⁶⁷

Therefore, participating with them in their festivals is graver than dressing in their waistbands or wearing any other clothing belonging to them. Because those dresses are not part of their religious fundamentals, they only adopted them to distinguish themselves from the Muslims. Whereas the observance of festivals is a fundamental concept of their religion, cursed be it and its adherents! So, participating with them in their festivals will amount to imitating them in a peculiar concept of their religion, which without doubt will earn the person Allāh's wrath

⁴⁶⁶ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:67.

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Bukhārī (952 and 3931) and Muslim (892).

and anger.

To use an example, you could say: Non-Muslims' festival is unbelievers' code of law or a symbol from their religious symbols, so imitating them thereof is forbidden for Muslims, just as following any of their codes of law is forbidden for Muslims. This illustration is clearer than the partial inferences drawn earlier.

Further, all that is connected with their festivals, acts of worship, or customs is so by virtue of their being special days; otherwise, they would be like all other days that are not connected with anything particular. Observing such a day is not Islamic—rather, it is unbelief.

2. All the festival practices of the non-Muslims plainly amount to disobeying Allāh because they are either newfangled, abrogated, or innovations. And although one cannot imagine these practices capable of any good, one might at best regard them as similar to a Muslim's prayer in the direction of Jerusalem, provided that is done out of devoutness. But lavish indulgence in customs of food, clothing, sport, and recreation is simply a corollary of the religious festival, just as it is a corollary of an Islamic festival. Consequently, its status is essentially the same as when some Muslims institute a newfangled festival during which they go out into an open area and act in accordance with certain rites and customs that are approved for the Day of *Fitr* and/or the Day of *'Adḥā*, or when they raise a structure for circumambulation and pilgrimage and prepare food for those who may visit it for those purposes, even if a true Muslim should disapprove of all that. While the innovators change everyday conditions or parts of them by preparing special food, displaying of finery in garb, incurring additional expenditure, etc., without, however, attaching any religious significance to the newfangled customs. This, of course, is most abominable and of gravest religious consequence, just as is the conformity with the Allāh-displeasing ones.

Granted that the People of the Book are permitted to practice their innovated and abrogated religions on condition that they do not make

a show of it, a Muslim cannot be permitted to practice an innovation or revive an abrogation, either secretly or publicly. Imitating the infidels is like imitating the innovators, or even worse.

3. Permissiveness about a little of such a practice would lead to more. Then there is the risk that once the practice spreads, ordinary people will join in, forgetting its origin and allowing it to become their habit, or rather their own festival, which will then be set up as a rival to, or even surpass, the festival granted by Allāh. This may almost doom Islam to death and give a new lease on life to unbelief. Similarly, Satan seduces many Muslims into doing what they at the end of the Christian fast—gifts, merry-making, expenses, clothing children, and other activities that give their festival the appearance of a Muslim festival. This is even truer of areas closer to Christian populations, whose Muslim dwellers, weak as they are in knowledge and faith, allow themselves to be fully dominated by these festivals which appear to them as even more appealing than the festival granted by Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ. This is what I have been told by reliable people, and it's confirmed by my own observations in and around Damascus, Syria, despite the fact that this is a land of knowledge and faith.

Now, this Thursday, which marks the end of the Christian fast rotates with their fast lasting for seven weeks. Though it occurs in the early part of the season Arabs call summer and people in general call spring, this fast is celebrated sometimes early and sometimes late in the season because it has no fixed date in the solar year—like the Thursday that falls in early *Nisan* (April)—but rather keeps revolving within about thirty-three days. It does not commence before the second of February nor after the second of March, and they begin it on that Monday, which comes closest to the equinox in this duration, so as to observe it both under the solar and lunar calendars.

At any rate, all that is innovation which they have introduced by mutual agreement and with which they counter the precepts brought by Prophets. The Prophets have, however, timed all devotional acts

according to the lunar calendar. It was the Jews and Christians who distorted their precepts. Our scope does not permit us to undertake a presentation of that distortion here.

This Thursday (Maundy Thursday) is followed by Friday (Good Friday) which they take to be the Friday on which, according to their false assumption, Christ was crucified. It is known as *Jum'at as-Salabūt* (the Friday of the Crucifixion). It is followed by Saturday night, when, as they claim, Jesus was interred. I think they call it *Lailat an-Nūr* or *Sabt an-Nūr*. They arrange a swindle and spread the story thereof among the rank and file, thus enhancing their state of error. They make them believe that during this night, divine light descends from heaven in the Church of Qumama in Jerusalem, allowing the people to carry what is ignited by the descending divine light as a blessing to their respective locations. Any rational person understands that all of this is fabrication and concoction. Then, on Saturday, they seek out the Jews. Sunday is their most important holiday, during which, as they claim, Jesus was resurrected.

On the following Sunday, which they call *al-Ahad al-Hadīth* (the New Sunday), they put on new clothes and do certain things. They consider all these days to be festival days, in much the same way that we Muslims do the Day of *Arafā*, the Day of *Nahr*, and the Days of *Mina*. During their fast, they abstain from fats and meats. Then, in the early stages of breaking the fast, most or some of them consume animal products, such as milk, eggs, meat, and sometimes only eggs. Their religious practices, both deeds and tenets, during their festivals are far too numerous to list. That is why the accounts about their beliefs and doctrines, though substantially correct, show certain variations.

The reason for this (apparent correctness of their practices) is the assertion that what their religious leaders, such as scholars and monks, have laid down is obligatory, becoming a law that Jesus himself laid down from heaven. In every period, they have been thus abrogating certain things and prescribing certain others as lawful or unlawful, formulating beliefs, etc., which run counter to those held previously, assuming all the while that such activity was indeed synonymous with the divine act of abrogation of an earlier law by a later one.

In this respect, Jews and Christians are poles apart. The Jews simply deny that Allāh abrogates precepts or sends forth a Prophet bearing a *Shari'a* that is different from that held hitherto, just as Allāh informed us in the Qur'an:

﴿سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَدَهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

The foolish among the people will say, “What has turned them away from their *qibla*, which they used to face?”⁴⁶⁸

The Christians, on the other hand, arrogate to their learned and monks the right to establish new precepts and annul the old ones. That is why the Christians have not succeeded in formulating a permanent *Shari'a*.

Our purpose here is not confined to a detailed knowledge of their false tenets, but it will suffice for us to know the disreputable so clearly that we can on the one hand differentiate between it and the permissible, the reputable, and on the other hand between it and the commendable, the obligatory, so that this knowledge may enable us to shun and avoid it, in the same way we know other unlawful matters which we are instructed to shun. One who is unable to recognize the disreputable as a whole or in detail simply cannot avoid it. However, a general knowledge would be sufficient here, unlike with obligatory duties, which—since they must be carried out and cannot be carried out unless one knows them in detail—must of necessity be known in detail.

In enumerating some of their disreputable religious practices, I am indeed motivated by my own observation of some Muslim groups that have succumbed to them, while many of them do not even know of the Christian origin of these practices. Accursed be Christianity and its adherents!

I have also been told that on the Thursday preceding that Thursday, or on a Saturday or some other day, the Christians visit tombs and burn incense on them, as well as in their homes, not because of its pleasant odor, but because it carries blessings and wards off evil—or so they claim. They consider incense-burning a sacrifice, an animal offering. This

⁴⁶⁸ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:142.

is accompanied by incantations to the beat of a small copper knocker and the repetition of special formulas. They hang crosses on the doors of their houses and do similar disreputable things. I am not aware of all of their practices, and what I have mentioned here is what I have personally seen many Muslims do and which, in its origin, derives from these Christians. Throughout this Thursday, the markets remain filled with the sounds of these tiny knockers and with the mostly absurd wording of incantations by astrologers and others, all of which is either unlawful or smacks of unbelief.

Except for a very few whom Allāh wishes to guide, all or most common people—and by common people, I mean those who do not know the essence of Islam, for despite their claim to have religious knowledge and faith, many people participate in these practices—are given the explanation that incanted incense-burning, by virtue of its blessing, neutralizes the effects of the evil eye, sorcery, ailments, and pests. They draw pictures of snakes and scorpions and paste them in their houses, believing that these pictures—accursed be he who draws them, and angels do not enter the house where they are found—prevent pests from coming inside. This is a kind of Sabian sorcery. Many, it reached me, attach such pieces to the gates of their houses.

On the Thursday preceding the Thursday in question, multitudes of men visited tombs and burned incense there. To this latter Thursday they give the name *al-Khamis al-Kabir* (Great Thursday), while to Allāh it is an ignominious and wretched Thursday, as are its followers and those who celebrate it. Because anything that is false and yet venerated, be it a time, place, stone, tree, or structure, should be deliberately held in disdain, just like worshipped idols, which, had they not been worshipped, would be like all other stones.

Among their disreputable practices is that they seduce people to handout their produce; sheep, chickens, milk, and eggs, by imposition in most cases, so they combine two unlawful features: first, eating a Muslim's goods unjustly and second, performing Christian rites.

This is taken as an occasion for sending deputies to the fields for grinding grain, coloring eggs, incurring stupendous expenses, donning

children in decorative clothes, etc. Such practices are horrendous to a believer—a believer whose heart is not as yet dead but who rather knows the reputable and shuns the unreputable.

A great many of such people spread their clothes under the sky, in fervent hope of the blessing of Mary's passage descending upon them. Would anyone who exists in him with an iota of faith doubt the fact that *Shari'a* has not stipulated these disreputable practices of the Jews and the Christians, some of which we have mentioned here? Some of these disgusting practices might even be found displeasing to the people who invented them themselves.

Worse, they spray their house-doors and cattle with *khaluq*, *mughbra*, and other similar materials, which practices are not most abominable to Allāh. May Allāh save us from the evil of innovators, and to Him belongs power.

Basically, the cause of these practices is the marking of unbelievers' festivals with features of recent origin or partial imitation of Muslim practices.

The following will clearly demonstrate that. They very much venerate the last week of their fast (Lent) by calling the Thursday and Friday falling within this week as Great Thursday (Mauny Thursday) and Great Friday (Good Friday). They are particularly observant about the rituals of this week, as Muslims are in the last ten days of Ramadan. The Sunday, which marks the beginning of this week, is also celebrated by them and is given the name of Sha'anin (Palm Sunday), according to some reports from them. However, some of them assert that: Palm Sunday is the first Sunday of their fast. On it, they go out carrying olive leaves, etc., imagining that this would enact the scene and events of the day when Christ, mounted as he was on a she-asse followed by her colt, entered Jerusalem, enjoining that the reputable be done and the disreputable be abandoned, whereupon the riff-raff stormed him, the Jews having appointed some of them with sticks to smite him with, but leaves sprouted on those sticks and the rabble fell in prostration before him. Thus, Palm Sunday is celebrated in imitation of that event. Indeed, it is the one that is referred to by 'Umar in his

contract and in books of jurisprudence as being proscribed for the Christians to celebrate demonstratively within the territory of Islam. The Christians call this festival as well as any other day on which they go out into the open as *Ba'uth* (Easter). *Ba'uth* is a generic noun for a day of religious demonstration, such as the Muslims do on the occasions of *Fitr* and *Nahr*.

The miracles that they attribute to Christ come well within the realm of possibility. In this matter, we neither refute them, since this is possible, nor accept it, since they are ignorant and corrupt.

But as far as participation with them in their festivals is concerned, this is like revitalizing a religion that they have invented themselves or a religion that Allāh has long since abrogated.

To come back to Maundy Thursday, they call it Great Thursday. They claim that on a similar day, the Table (i.e., *ma'ida*) had been sent down; the Table about which Allāh says:

﴿قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا
لأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَارزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ﴾

Jesus, son of Mary, said, “O Allāh, our Lord, send down to us a table (spread with food) from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first and last of us—and as a sign from You. Provide for us! You are indeed the Best Provider.”⁴⁶⁹

Thus, Maundy Thursday is the festival of the Table, while Easter Sunday is called by them *id al-Fishi* or *id an-Nūr* or *id al-Kabir*. It is the festival during which they color eggs and other items for their children. That is because they eat animal produce such as milk, meat, and eggs, while during the fast they abstain from them, eating instead grains and grain preparations such as bread, raisins, and sesame (cakes), etc.

Most of the practices reported from the Christians, and many others, have been embellished by Satan for many so-called Muslims, causing them to respect and revere those practices. Such conduct has

⁴⁶⁹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:114.

led them to modify these practices either by an increase or decrease in their number or by simply reverting their order, either because some of what they did was done also by the Christians themselves or because in the process of adaptation they were acting on their own, quite in the same spirit that led them also to introduce changes in some elements of the true faith of Islam. Marking these and other similar days by doing something out of the ordinary—while Islam does not consider them eligible for any special treatment, and indeed attaching anything special to them derives from their false religion, but rather, the very act of marking them with something special is an element of the infidels' faith—is simply conforming with the Christians. Not even an ignorant would believe that such deviation from the normal course is undertaken in the spirit of differing from the infidels, such as by fasting on 'Āshura', because in the case of 'Āshura', it was laid down for us to begin with, while they, too, had observed it. Here we differ from them in the details of 'Āshura'. But, according to the principle we presented earlier, it simply does not behoove us to participate with them in something that was never a part of our faith and instead belonged to their innovated or abrogated religion.

To originate a certain practice during such days that are special to them and not to us amounts to imitating them in the very act of associating something venerable with these days. This is evident from the argument of the scholars who maintain the impermissibility of observing fasting on the days of *Nairūz* and *Mahrajan* as a way of registering our opposition to them, for non-Muslims honor those days for which they set their festivals.

This is even more clearly demonstrated by the following. Over time, the matter got to a point where many Muslims, during non-Muslim festivals, such as this Maundy Thursday—a non-Muslims festival, table (feast) festival, celebrated at the last Thursday of their fasting, called Great Thursday, which is indeed wretched Thursday, took to the habit of congregating in large assembly places, coloring eggs, cooking milk, marking their beasts in red, preparing foods such as they would hardly prepare during an Islamic festival, and exchanging gifts as are exchanged

during the pilgrimage season.

The general run of such Muslims had forgotten the origin and reason for these practices, becoming used to them as much as, or even more than, the customs of the festivals of *Fitr* and *Nahr*. Satan was further aided in misleading them by the fact that this Christian festival coincides with the spring season which marks the beginning of the solar year when meat, milk, and eggs are found in abundance; this despite the fact that the Christian festival, as presented earlier, does not have a definite day during the solar year but rather keeps rotating backwards and forwards within about thirty-three days.

All this goes to justify the Prophet's ﷺ fear:

لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ.

Surely you would follow the practices of those before you.⁴⁷⁰

These practices consist of imitating the unbelievers in some details connected with their festival without refraining therefrom. But assimilation in some details is conducive to the assimilation of these glaring abominations, something certainly forbidden, and how much more if it led to what constitutes infidelity to Allāh, such as seeking blessing from the cross, receiving baptism, or uttering, for instance, 'The Lord is one but the paths may be different', or some such acts and words as may imply that either the Christian or Jewish *Shari'a*, though altered and abrogated, may lead towards Allāh or that parts thereof may be commendable and worthy of belief even if they may run counter to Islamic faith. These and similar practices mean simply one thing: infidelity to Allāh, His Prophet ﷺ, the Qur'an, and Islamic faith, as is undisputed in the Islamic community. At the root of all these evils lie the facts of *resemblance* and *participation*.

This will help illustrate to you the ideal position of the *Shari'a* (in this matter), and also part of the divine wisdom inherent in prescribing for the Prophet ﷺ a course of action in which the infidels are opposed in all their affairs, so that opposition and being at variance should strike

⁴⁷⁰ Bukhārī (3456, 7320) and Muslim (2669).

most decisively at the very source of evil and put men farther away from falling into the error that has claimed many victims.

Know that even if we had not seen that *conformity* led to these abominations, what we know of human nature and the evidence we brought forth of the fundamental principles of the *Shari'a* would have been enough to outright forbid such *dhari'a* (instrumentality). How much more of such detestable and disgusting practices, some of which are capable of completely leading one out of Islam, will be the result of those imitations.

The heart of the matter is this: "imitation" leads to mostly infidelity or insubordination, or to both of them in general. Absolutely nothing can be gained by being led this way; whatever does lead to that state is forbidden. Therefore, "imitating non-Muslims" is forbidden.

There is also a second preamble that is perfectly coherent and devoid of any doubt. An investigation into the actual application of the *Shari'a* to cases indicates that whatever leads to infidelity is mostly forbidden, as is that which leads thereto, however imperceptibly or indirectly, and so is that which leads thereto without there being an expedient need warranting that, in light of the rule about "means," an elaboration of which occupies us elsewhere in a separate book.

The truth of the first preamble is borne out by actual events that are apparent to anybody, regardless of whether he is endowed with insight or not. No one dispute the fact that a "means," "the state of being led" is a perfectly natural trait which the Islamic *Shari'a* had taken into consideration at the time of stipulating a bar on the general run of *means*. We have established in our book *Iqamat ad-Dalil 'ala Butlan at-Tablil* about thirty such principles, either approved by the Consensus or textually traceable to the Prophets, as evidence in this regard.

4. Seasons and festivals, like prayer, alms-tax, fasting, and pilgrimage, are a major source of benefit for the spiritual and material life of mankind. For this reason, every *Shari'a* has provisions for them, as Allāh informed us:

﴿وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ
بِهِيمَةٍ الْأَنْعَامِ﴾

And for every [religious] community We have appointed a rite (of sacrifice) that they may mention the name of Allāh over what He has provided for them of (sacrificial) animals.

He says also:

﴿لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ﴾

For every (religious) community We have appointed rites which they perform.⁴⁷¹

Furthermore, Allāh has prescribed through the Seal of the Prophets such deeds as contain betterment for mankind in the most perfect manner. This perfection is mentioned in the Qur'anic verse:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favor upon you.⁴⁷²

For this reason, this verse was revealed during the greatest Muslim festival, the Day of *Nahr*, which coincides the two elements of place and time, which the Prophet ﷺ instituted for the Muslims collectively, and on which Allāh banished both infidelity and its followers. The precepts are food and sustenance of the hearts, as observed by Ibn Mas'ūd: "Every host wishes his banquet to be attended; the Qur'an is the banquet of Allāh!"⁴⁷³

It is in the nature of the body that when it is hungry and has eaten as much as it needs, it is no longer in need of more and just would not take any more food, except under compulsion and duress. Often, this is harmful for the body or, at least, unprofitable, simply because it is not the same as the food that strengthens it. Likewise, if a worshipper satisfies some of his needs by performing sacrosanct deeds, his interest in the lawful ones and in deriving benefit from them diminishes to a

⁴⁷¹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:67.

⁴⁷² Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3.

⁴⁷³ Sound, *Mūsānaf Abdur-Razq* (5998) *Sunan ad-Darimi* (3350) and *Shu'ab al-Iman* of al-Baihaqī (2356).

degree corresponding to his substitution of the unlawful. Such is not the case of him who fervently desires and strives for the lawful, for then his love of it increases, so does his want for the benefits accruing from it, leading him to perfect faith and submission.

You find a person who frequently gives ear to songs with the ostensible purpose of inner betterment quite deficient in his desire for listening to the Qur'an, and at times even disliking that. By the same token, one who frequently undertakes journeys to visit *mashāhid* (shrines), and their likes is divested of the same love of, and veneration for, pilgrimage to the Sacred House, which is cherished by a heart infused with Sunnah. Similarly, he who is addicted to looking for wisdom and mores in the utterances of the sages of Persia and Byzantine will not regard as longingly the wisdom of Islam and its mores; and he who gives himself up to listening to the stories and biographies of kings will not be as attentive to those of Prophets, etc.

And that is why we have it in a tradition reported from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

مَا ابْتَدَعَ قَوْمٌ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا نَزَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ مِثْلَهَا.

Whenever a people resorted to innovation, they lost a corresponding measure of Sunnah.⁴⁷⁴ (Imām Ahmad reported it)

Whoever has the grace to look inwardly at himself compared to others, among the scholars, the devout, the leaders, and even the general public, will concede the correctness of this illustration. For this reason, Islam frowns greatly at innovation and its people, because if one were to emerge from innovation—i.e., that is, without losing or gaining anything into the bargain—the matter may not have been so serious after all, but the crux of the matter is that it simply corrupts his heart as well as his faith, which corruption begins with a decline in the benefit of *Shari'a* in his case, because the heart cannot accommodate both

⁴⁷⁴ Weak, Ahmad (16970). But this is not the text of this tradition in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad, rather it occurs as: "مَا أَخْدَت قَوْمٌ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا رُفِعَ مِنْهَا مِنَ السُّنَّةِ", but the meaning is the same. However, the text quoted here by the author occurs in a saying of Hassan ibn Atiyah, popularly and authentically reported in the books of Aqīdah on the authority of Imām al-Awzā'i. Check for instance *al-Ibānah al-Kubrāh* (1/351).

the substitute and the substituted. Concerning those two pre-Islamic festivals, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَبْدَلَ كُمْ بِهِمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا

Verily Allāh has replaced the two for you with what is better than them, etc.⁴⁷⁵

Consequently, his heart, having already nourished itself on these innovated acts, would be prevented from deriving nourishment, or full nourishment, from those positive deeds favored by the *Shari'a*. Inevitably, his condition will worsen imperceptibly, just as a body fed on improper food does.

This will give you a clear idea of some of the harm that inheres in innovation. And once it is known, the fondness and the joy Allāh has created in the heart for festivals will not remain hidden, nor will all the care and concern that is shown for them by incurring great expenses, getting together, feeling relaxed, and taking pleasure and delight. All of this necessitates reverence for festivals, since so many things depend on them. For this reason, the *Shari'a* lays down that an open invocation to Allāh be made in festivals and that additional *takbirs* be performed in the festival prayer and during the sermon that are not found in the rest of the prayers. So also, the *Shari'a* stipulates therein the exaltation of Allāh, whereupon the blessings of Allāh that are of great benefit to man descend, especially at *'id al-kabir*, as we are informed by Allāh:

﴿وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَكَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ﴾

And proclaim to the people the ḥajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass—(*) So they may witness the benefits (in store) for them.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1143).

⁴⁷⁶ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:27-28.

The liberality granted to the hearts in regard to natural customary practices during the festivals assists people in carrying out what is prescribed of the Islamic rites therein. Therefore, if the minds are allowed to undergo such liberality, either wholeheartedly or partially, on other than those days recognized by the *Shari'a* as festivals, people's minds tend to turn tail from the stipulated festivals by the *Shari'a*, and lose what they harbor in their minds of love and honor for those festivals, leading to them losing affections for good deeds. Consequently, minds become heavily corrupted.

This situation at least becomes one of someone who fervently attends to two things at a time. Take for instance two people who are both concerned with observing an Islamic festival as prescribed by the *Shari'a*, but if one of them also focuses on another festival together with the one they both wish to observe, you will notice that the person who focuses solely on the prescribed festival is more concerned with it than the other. This illustration is a clearly perceivable one, except for someone whose mind is derailed from the truth or heedless of it; it is quite obvious to whoever is blessed with the understanding of some hidden wisdom in the Islamic precepts.

Worse than that is that this person will develop tepidity towards the Islamic festival after he might have spent huge amounts of money during the other festival for clothing and other needs of his children, thereby killing the zeal for the Islamic festival in them. It is said to anyone who claims the ability to keep the spirit for both: 'concentrating on the prescribed one is far better.'

5. Imitating the infidels in some of their festivals might give them a chance to rejoice in the falsity that exists in their hearts. This is especially true when they are vanquished under the humiliation of *jizya* and insignificance. Because they would believe that Muslims have become their subsidiaries in some aspects of their faith. This will give their hearts strength and joy. This may even make them covet an opportunity to take advantage of it and despise the weak. At any rate, this, too, is a clearly perceivable matter, and no sane person would ever doubt that. How can one hope to participate in something that leads to needless honoring them when one is enjoined to despise them?

6. Part of their festival practices amount to outright unbelief; another part is unlawful, still another part is permissible if divested of the harm of imitating the infidels. However, the point is that it may escape the rank and file of Muslims how to distinguish between the harmless and the harmful. But if in imitating the infidel the unlawful element remains unclear to the learned, it is certain to plunge the unlearned into imitating the non-believers in the unlawful. This is what actually happens.

The difference between this point and that of *adhari'a* (instrumentality) earlier discussed is that, on the point of instrumentality, it was said that imitating the unbelievers in a little thing might bring about imitating them in far more egregious practices, while the point here is that imitating them in anything of their practice, whether little or big, might plunge the unlearned into imitating them to such an extent that they will not be able to distinguish between right and wrong of it. So, the former was an assumption drawn out of the nature of such involvement, while the latter takes care of the ignorance that occurs in the mind, the result of poor ideology.

7. As I have established about imitation itself, Allāh has laid it in the instinct of man, or rather, of all creatures, that two similar things should interact and influence each other. The greater the similarity, the wider the mutual influence on morals and character. Eventually, the matter will come to a point where it will be impossible to distinguish between the two except in existential identity only.

Because human all belong to the same species, their common association with that species allows for the most interaction. Then, between man and other animals, there is a common sharing of an intermediate genus. Therefore, there must be some kind of proportionate interaction. For instance, there is between him and the vegetable kingdom a sharing of a remote genus. Therefore, there must be some sort of interaction.

In light of this law, human beings receive and exert influence, and by participation and social interaction, they acquire the habits and morals of one another. Likewise, were a man to live among a certain kind of animal, he would doubtless end up acquiring some of that animal's characteristics. That is the reason why traits such as haughtiness and

pride are found among cameleers, while equanimity is found among those who tend sheep. Keepers of camels and donkeys display certain bad qualities that are eventually borrowed from camels and donkeys. This also goes for those who keep dogs. On the other hand, domestic animals come to acquire certain characteristics of men, viz., living together, affection, and a lack of hatred.

Imitation and assimilation in external matters cause imitation and assimilation in internal matters through mutual participation and imperceptible progression.

We observe that those Jews and Christians who live amidst Muslims show less unbelief than those who do not, just as we observe that those Muslims who have extended contacts with Jews and Christians are less pious than those whose contacts are confined to the sphere of Islam.

A common external pattern involves affinity and intimacy, even if time and space are distant. This, too, can be observed. Imitating them in their festivals, even slightly, becomes a means of acquiring their heinous morals, and anything that threatens with imperceptible and intractable corruption is forbidden.

We are of the opinion that imitating them externally becomes instrumental in, or comes dangerously close to, imitating their despicable morals and even beliefs. How this works and how this comes about can neither be seen clearly nor defined. The corruption resulting from imitation may remain hidden and evasive of precise formulation. Once it has set in, its eradication becomes difficult and, at times, even impossible. Naturally, anything that brings about such corruption will be prohibited by the *Shari'a*, as demonstrated by definite principles.

8. Outward similarity promotes a kind of sympathy, friendship, and fellowship in internal attitudes; conversely, inner friendship promotes outward assimilation. Man's perception and experience testify thereto. When two men hailing from the same town meet elsewhere, there is much friendship and fellowship between them, even though in their home town they may have been strangers and indifferent to each other.

Being compatriots is a quality they have in common as aliens abroad. Even if two individuals who look alike in turbans, hairstyles or mounts happen to meet on a journey or run into each other in an alien land, they will be discovered to have more affection for each other than for others. Similarly, people in the same profession have as much affection for their coworkers than they do for people outside their profession. The same is true in regard to hostility and enmity on account of matters either secular or spiritual. And even though their estates and countries may be far removed from one another, the kings and princes will be found to have a feeling of kinship among themselves—an affinity leading to mutual assimilation and regard. All of this comes about in response to human nature, unless some religious or other interest gets in the way.

Now if imitation in mundane matters involves sympathy and fellowship, how much more of such attitudes would result from assimilation in spiritual matters? A mutual friendly attitude becomes even more pronounced in these situations. Yet friendship and fellowship with the unbelievers contradict the faith, as reflected in the Words of Allāh:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰ أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُضْحِكُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتِ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾﴾

O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is (one) of them. Indeed, Allāh guides not the wrongdoing people (*) So you see those in whose hearts is disease (i.e., hypocrisy) hastening into association with them, saying, “We are afraid a misfortune may strike us.” But, perhaps Allāh will bring

conquest or a decision from Him, and they will become, over what they have been concealing within themselves, regretful (*) And those who believe will say, "Are these the ones who swore by Allāh their strongest oaths that indeed they were with you?" Their deeds have become worthless, and they have become losers.⁴⁷⁷

And of what reflects the displeasure of Allāh upon the People of the Book is this Word of Allāh:

﴿لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِآتِ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمَا مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَٰكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾﴾

Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel, by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and (habitually) transgressed (*) They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing. () You see many of them becoming allies of the unbelievers (i.e., the polytheists). How wretched is that which they have put forth for themselves in that Allāh has become angry with them, and in the punishment, they will abide eternally. (*) And if they had believed in Allāh and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them as allies; but many of them are defiantly disobedient.⁴⁷⁸

Allāh, the Most Gracious and the Most High, makes it clear in the passages of the Qur'an that belief in Him and in His Prophet ﷺ and what he was sent with, implies that one does not keep unbelievers

⁴⁷⁷ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:51-53.

⁴⁷⁸ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:78-81.

as allies. In other words, keeping unbelievers as friends and allies necessitates unbelief because the absence of the prerequisite demands the absence of the inevitable.

He says also:

﴿لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ﴾

You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him.⁴⁷⁹

Here, Allāh, the Most Gracious, informs us that no Mu'min will ever keep an unbeliever as an ally, so whoever keeps an unbeliever as an ally is not a Mu'min, for an outward imitation becomes instrumental to keeping them as friends, which is prohibited, as explained shortly.

Know that the evils prompted by the imitation of non-Muslims are condemned in a number of ways. We, however, wish to limit this discussion to those we have mentioned.

⁴⁷⁹ Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:22.

X

Establishing the Two Categories of Imitation of Non-Muslims

THE IMITATION OF non-Muslims in areas not of *Sharī'a* falls into two categories:

1. Conscious imitation: Knowing that the object of imitation is one of the distinctives of their faith. Now, a particular act, one of the defining characteristics of their faith, would be performed either for the exclusive purpose of being in accordance with them, though this rarely happens, or to satisfy a desire whose fulfilment depends on this act. A third possibility is that one may do so with the hope that it will be profitable in both this world and/or the next. Unquestionably, all of this is prohibited. What is less obvious, however, is that some of these practices are prohibited because they constitute graver sins, which at times, for *shar'i* reasons, outright unbelief.
2. Imitation of an act which one does not know to be an act of the unbelievers, such an act is further reducible to two kinds:

- a. That which was originally borrowed from the unbelievers, either exactly as they practice it or with modifications to time, location, or practice. Typically, it is the one that common people have been guilty of committing, such as their practices on wretched Thursday and Christmas. The reason is that they have grown up with the habit of doing them; the sons have inherited them from their fathers, even most of them are not even aware of the foreign origin of these practices. The stipulation against them shall be communicated to an individual convicted of them. If he does not give them up, he will automatically fall into the first category.
- b. That which was not originally borrowed from the unbelievers, but which they too observe. Here, there is no danger of imitation, though the benefit accruing from maintaining a posture contrary to theirs may be missed. The degree of reprehensibility and prohibitedness of such an act will depend on the *shar'i* justification that it is an act of imitation, as our imitating them is equivalent to their imitating us. Regarding the desirability of abandoning it entirely for the benefit of seeming different from them, when abandoning it does not bring about any negative consequence, then, it is self-evident.

From this, it follows that sometimes the *Shari'a* obliges us to appear different from them and sometimes it obliges them to appear different from us, as in the case of garb and similar matters. At other instances, the issue is only commendable, such as with beard dyeing, praying while wearing sandals, and prostration, but at other times, imitating them leads to reprehensibility, such as with the sunset prayer and breaking the fast late. This is not the case when it comes to imitating them in anything that is basically derived from them, for this would be in essence forbidden, as we have presented earlier.

XI

Defining Festivals and Affirming the Prohibition of Muslim Involvement in Unbelievers' Celebrations

THE WORD "FESTIVAL" (*'id*) is a generic noun that encompasses every day and location where people congregate, as well as every deed they devise in such a setting. Therefore, the prohibition is not against their festivals in particular, but rather to all such times and locations that are sacred to them yet have no validity in Islam. Whatever actions they initiate within this context likewise fall under the heading. The rule prohibiting their festival applies equally to the days before and after the festival days during which certain practices are introduced in connection with the festivals, as well as to the places connected to the locations where they observe their festivals, as well as certain practices they observe in connection with the actual practices of their festival. This action should not be taken. Some Muslims may refrain from following some of their festival practices, such as those of Maundy Thursday and

Christmas, but they may tell their homes, “We will celebrate it next week or next month,” with the presence of the unbelievers’ festival acting as an incentive. Without it, the family would not have requested a given thing from him. These are the consequences of imitation. A man in such circumstances should refer his family to the festival of Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ and fulfill their rights sufficiently during it to prevent them from admiring a non-Islamic festival. If, despite this, Allāh forbid, they cannot be pleased, then he who displeases his family for the sake of Allāh will not only be pleased by Allāh but also his family.

A wise man should guard himself against yielding to women in this respect. Thus, it is reported by Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Asmā’ bint Zayd, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا تَرَكْتُ بَعْدِي فِتْنَةً أَضَرَ عَلَى الرَّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

I have not left behind me a trial more injurious to men than women.⁴⁸⁰

It is submission to women, in most cases, that brings on the corruption of kingship and empire.

Another tradition in Bukhārī’s collection has it:

لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ

Never will succeed such a nation that makes a woman their ruler.⁴⁸¹

It is reported in another version as:

هَلَكَتِ الرَّجَالُ إِذَا أَطَاعَتِ النِّسَاءَ

Men are ruined once they submit to women.⁴⁸²

When one of the mothers of the believers persistently questioned the Prophet ﷺ on the priority of Abū Bakr, the Prophet ﷺ exclaimed:

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Bukhārī (5096) and Muslim (2740 and 2741).

⁴⁸¹ Al-Bukhārī (4425 and 7099).

⁴⁸² Weak, Ahmad (20455).

إِنَّكُنَّ صَوَاحِبُ يُوسُفَ

You are all (like) female companions of Yūsuf (Joseph).⁴⁸³

Meaning, the women have the habit of nagging men, just as elsewhere in the tradition it occurs:

مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلِ وَدِينٍ أَغْلَبَ لِيذِي لُبٍّ مِنْكُنَّ

I have not witnessed among those lacking in intellect and religion, more overwhelming to a man of wisdom than you (women).⁴⁸⁴

When the poet al-A'asha—A'asha Bahila—recited to the Prophet ﷺ some verses of his poem where he said: “Women are [the] worst conquerors,” the Prophet ﷺ began to repeat after him, “Women are [the] worst conquerors.”⁴⁸⁵

It was for the same reason why Allāh was obliging to Zakariyā (Zachariah) when He said:

﴿وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ﴾

And We made his wife suitable for him.⁴⁸⁶

Some scholars have said that: “It is necessary one prays ardently that Allāh forgive for him his wife.”

⁴⁸³ Al-Bukhārī (664, 678, 679, 682, 712, 713, 716, 3384, 3385, 7303) and Muslim (418, 420).

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Bukhārī (304, 1462) and Muslim (79).

⁴⁸⁵ Weak, Ahmad (6885) and *Sunan al-Kubrāh* of al-Baihaqī (21115).

⁴⁸⁶ Sūrah al-'Anbiyā', 21:90.

XII

The Underlying Reasons for Prohibiting the Celebration of Unbelievers' Festivals

Some of the Innovations Practiced by Certain Muslims in this Regard

THE FESTIVALS OF the infidels are numerous and varied. It is not for a Muslim to inquire about or become familiar with them. Rather, it is sufficient for him to know in which practice is associated with infidels, as well as its day and location of the practice. If he doesn't know as much, he should at least remember that these practices have no foundation in Islam. These practices must have been either invented by someone or borrowed from unbelievers. The least that can be said about the matter is that these acts and festivals fall under the category of innovation.

We warn against what we have seen many people fall into; for instance, the wretched Thursday which marks the end of their fast since according to their claims, it is the Festival of the Table. They also name it the Festival of the Evening Feast. And it is the week that stretch from Sunday to next Sunday, and it is their greatest feast. Among the disreputable acts associated with this week are women strolling outdoors, burning incense on graves, spreading clothes on rooftops, hanging inscribed sheets of paper to doors, and turning this week into an incense-selling season. This is disreputable; assigning a particular time for such transactions, so also the buying and selling of incense for incantations, either at this period or at any other time, as well as purposely going out to buy sorcerer's incense, because it is the practice of the Christians and Sabians to use incense and incantations as an offering, unlike perfumes that are applied just like other scents, like musk and others, or those that are for external use or others with an ordinary smell. The incenses are to be used exactly as perfumes.

Disreputable is also the practice of commemorating this period by cooking rice pudding, *bsisa*, lentils, or coloring eggs, among other things. As for gambling with eggs, selling such eggs to, or buying them from, a gambler, their juridical status is self-evident.

Also, included under this heading are the practices of cultivators, such as dotting the cattle in red, scratching up trees, or gathering various plants for blessing and soaking in their water.

This also includes what women sometimes do: plucking olive leaves, bathing in their water or intending to take bath in a similar manner. The basis of such a practice is clearly baptism. Other similar practices are: suspension of the more usual activity, such as crafts, trade, instruction and learning, and treating it as a day of leisure and enjoyment, derived from engaging in horse games, etc., in a manner that contradicts the preceding and succeeding days.

Our rule should be that nothing of the kind be done on such a day, rather it should be considered like any other day, because of what was mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ forbidding the people of Madinah from the two days they used to observe during the pre-Islamic time, and his prohibition of slaughtering animals in the place where the pagans used to observe their festival.

The ceremonies undertaken by many people in the winter on 24th December, which they claim that it is the birth of Jesus, fall under this same heading. Hence, anything that occurs during this time, such as kindling fires, preparing foods, lighting candles—in short, are abominations. Making a festival out of this birthday is a Christian cult and has no basis in Islamic faith. Absolutely there is no mention of it is found in the age of the *Salaf*. Its origin is derived from the Christians, and a natural explanation is linked to it, and that its occurrence in the winter—a suitable time for kindling fires and preparing special dishes.

The Christians, moreover, claim that some—and I believe it was eleven—days after his birth, Jesus was baptized by John (Yahya) in the water of baptism. So, the Christians baptize at this time and they call it *'Īd al-Ghitas*. Many ignorant women has contracted the habit of conducting her child to the bathroom at this time, claiming that it will benefit the child. This rite belongs to the Christian faith and is one of the forbidden and the most disreputable acts.

The judgments we have earlier mentioned applies indiscriminately also for Persian festivals such as Nairuz and Mahrajan, as well as the festivals of Jews or other types of unbelievers, non-Arabs and the Bedouin.

Prohibition of Actions that Support Disbelievers on Their Festivals

JUST AS IT is forbidden to emulate the infidels' festival rituals, a Muslim who imitates them shall not be aided in this regard either. He will rather be exhorted to shun these practices. Therefore, if a Muslim extends an invitation to a feast on the days of their festivals, it should not be accepted. Nor a Muslim should accept gifts sent to him especially during non-Muslim festivals in contravention of the norm or other days, in particular if such a gift was something that was used to imitate them, for instance, candles, and the like on Christmas and/or gifting eggs, milk and sheep on Lesser Thursday. Similarly, a Muslim should not receive any gift during these festivals for the sake of celebration, especially if it is made from what is used to mimic them.

A Muslim must not sell items that may enhance Muslims to imitate the non-Muslims in their festivals, like selling food and clothing. It is because such acts come under assisting a detestable course. However, as for their selling items as would assist them in their festivals or Muslims attending their festival fairs to buy useful items from them, we have already presented Ahmad's position, that he was asked about attending the Syrian festivals such as Tur, Yanur, Dair Ayyub, and others. Muslims attend them and their fairs; they purchase therein sheep, cattle, flour, wheat, barley and other wares. Except that Muslims buy goods at these fairs and do not enter churches. Ahmad replied, "No objection, if all they did was to attend their fairs without entering their churches."

Said Abū al-Hasan al-Āmidi: "Ahmad has stipulated in the report of Mahnan that there is no objection in attending their fairs where they sell during their festivals." Āmidi adds: "What the Muslims are really forbidden is entering their convents and churches, but this stipulation does not extend to edible items such as food in their fairs, even if their wares contribute to abundance and decoration during those festivals."

From this statement, it would seem that Ahmad permitted attending their fairs in general terms solely for buying or selling, because he said there is no harm as long as Muslims do not enter their churches and only attend their fairs. This statement applies as much to the seller as it does to the buyer, especially if the Muslims are the antecedent of the pronoun *they* in Mahnan's phrase, "They purchase therein," for then it would appear that Ahmad clearly stipulated the permissibility of Muslim buying at non-Muslim fairs.

There is also another, perhaps even stronger, possibility that Ahmad gave permission for attendance at the fairs only (*faqat*), or for buying from them, but did not address himself to the question of selling to them, because all that Mahnan asked him was to give his opinion about the permissibility of attending fairs set up by the unbelievers during their festivals, and that he concluded his query by admitting himself, "Muslims only buy goods at these fairs but do not visit them in their churches." This is because Mahnan ibn Yahya was a native of Syria, a learned man, and a *faqih* in his own right.

It would seem, though Allāh knows best, that Mahnan having perhaps heard about the prohibition of attendance at their festivals, asked Ahmad if attendance at their fairs also did not have the same consequence, to which query Ahmad replied by giving leave of attendance at fairs. But Mahnan did not solicit his opinion about selling goods to them, either because the juridical status of such a proposition was evident to him or because a need for it had not yet been felt.

Āmidi's statement likewise affords two possibilities, of which the most evident is the permissibility also of selling, because he said, "What the Muslims are really prohibited from doing is entering their churches, etc."

Ahmad's positive endorsement of attendance at fairs for buying only without, however, entering the churches is legitimate; for this involves neither witnessing something disreputable nor rendering assistance in an act of disobedience to Allāh. Buying from them is in itself permissible and does not amount to encouragement of insubordination to Allāh, rather, it may be viewed as diverting a potential deal from the unbelievers which, had it not been diverted and they instead bought it for their festival, would have reflected a kind of assistance rendered to them and would have resulted in attracting their crowds. In this way, evil can be curtailed. Then there used to be fairs also during the *Jāhiliyah*. Muslims attended them; even the Prophet ﷺ attended some of them. Some of these would be set up during the pilgrimage season, others during other *bāṭil* (ungainly) festivals.

A further consideration is that goods that encourage insubordination are commonly sold at these fairs. Supposing there is a market where weapons are sold to the one will would use them to kill the innocent, or grapes and *'aṣīr* (grape juice) to the one who will use it to make wine, then there comes a man and buys it, would it not be infinitely better that he did so, especially if the seller in this market happens to be a *dhimmi*⁴⁸⁷? Scholars are predisposed to such transactions.

Furthermore, it is permitted for a person to travel to *dar al-harb* to make a purchase, as revealed by the tradition about Abū Bakr's trade

⁴⁸⁷ A free non-Muslim under Muslim rule.

trips undertaken during the Prophet's lifetime to Syria, then in the *dar al-harb*, and also on the basis of the tradition quoted by 'Umar and other traditions I have discussed elsewhere. This is despite the fact that many items inciting one to insubordination may have been sold there.

The sale or gift by a Muslim to an unbeliever of food, garments, flowers, etc., which would aid the latter in his holiday festivities, is then a kind of assistance rendered to him in enabling him to celebrate his festival. It is moreover based on a rule, viz.: that a Muslim must not sell grapes or grape juice to the unbelievers, who would then use it for brewing wine. Likewise, he must also not sell them weapons that they may use against Muslims.

The tradition about 'Umar sending an embroidered cloak as a gift to a polytheist brother of his in Makkah indicates that it is permitted to sell silk. Silk is in general permissible; what is not, however, is its excessive use by some people. According to the more authentic of the two reports, use of silk is permissible in treating a malady. However, wine is not permitted under any circumstances. It is also permissible to manufacture silk and trade in it.

This principle is, however, somewhat ambiguous. One may argue the permissibility of the first of Ahmad's two possibilities: the permissibility and non-permissibility of selling at their fairs, coupled with the fact that such two textual reports have been transmitted from him regarding the transportation of trade items to *dar al-harb*, one may argue that selling them goods in festivals is essentially the same as transporting these goods to *dar al-harb*; for transportation of garment and food to enemy territory, in short, rendering assistance to their religion. In as much as we prohibit carrying these items to enemy territory, it is more suitable that we put an embargo on their sale here (within *dar al-Islam*). Most principles and formulations on the subject mandate that this practice be avoided. The question therefore remains: Is this prevention for the purpose of prohibition, or is it merely in terms of contempt? This will come later. However, Abdul-Malik ibn Habib mentioned that scholars unanimously agree that this act is detestable, and that in the Maliki's school of thought, it is forbidden.

Abdul-Malik ibn Habib in *'al-Wadhīha'* said, "Malik disliked eating animals slaughtered by Christians for their churches; he categorized it as a detestable act but did not prohibit it." Malik and those who followed his example disliked eating animals slaughtered in the name of Christ, for the cross, or in the name of any of their saints and monks. And that is our opinion as well, in accordance to the Words of Allāh:

﴿ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ﴾

He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allāh.⁴⁸⁸

This verse refers to the animals they slaughtered for their idols. However, some scholars used to maintain the permissibility of eating from these animals; they argue that Allāh has made it lawful for us to eat the slaughtered animals of the People of the Book and He knows that they will slaughter them in these ways. Ibn Wahab reported this on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ubādah ibn al-Sāmit, Abū ad-Dardā', Sulayman ibn Yasār, 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-Azīz, Ibn Shihāb, Rabī'a, Yahya ibn Sa'īd, Makhūl, and 'Atā'.

Ibn Malik continued: "However, it is preferable not to eat from what they slaughter for their festivals, saints, dead, and churches. Consuming such animals has another defect, and that constitutes an expression of adoration for their polytheism."

Sa'd al-Ma'āfirī asked Malik concerning the meal that Christians prepare for their deceased and give it out as gifts on their behalf: "May a Muslim consume it?" He replied, "A Muslim should not accept it, for those foods simply serves to glorify polytheism, just like the animals they slaughter for their festivals and churches."

Ibn al-Qasim was asked, "Is it permissible for a Muslim to purchase a property of a Christian that was sold for the benefit of a church?" He replied, "It is not permissible for him because it is honoring their rites and precepts. So, it is disreputable for a Muslim to purchase it."

⁴⁸⁸ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:173.

Ibn al-Qasim further asserted that if a land belonging to a church is leased out for sale so that the proceeds can be used to improve the church, or if a land consecrated to a church for future benefit is leased out for sale, it is not permissible for a Muslim to purchase it, for two primary reasons. And they are:

- 1- Purchasing it would help the course of polytheism.
- 2- It is not permissible for the people to sell consecrated (*waqf*) material to the church. What is allowed for the Muslims regarding consecrated materials is what should be allowed for them.

Ibn al-Qasim was also asked about traveling on the ships on which Christians travel to their festival. He disliked doing so in order to avoid sharing in the divine wrath that befell Christians for their polytheism. He also forbade Muslims offering gifts to Christians in honor of their festivals, even in exchange for gifts received during his festivals. He believed that it was equivalent to honoring their festivals and contributing to their polytheism.

Then he gave the following illustration: “Do you not consider this issue from the point of view that it is forbidden for Muslims to sell to Christians any item they would use to celebrate their festivals, whether it be meat, spices, or clothing, or to lend them their riding beasts for the same purpose? And that it is imperative that Islamic leaders prevent Muslims from engaging in such conduct. This is Malik’s opinion, and I am unaware of any difference among the scholars concerning that.”

Consuming their sacrificed animals falls within the scope of these issues; and scholars unanimously agreed that it is forbidden. I, rather, consider this issue of eating from their sacrificial animals to be more serious.”

Here, ‘Abdul-Malik ibn Habīb mentioned that scholars unanimously agree that it is not permissible for Muslims to sell or lend the Christians anything they would use to celebrate their festivals, and that is Malik’s opinion. He then concluded that it was an unlawful act.

As for Ahmad’s opinion, Ishāq ibn ‘Ibrāhīm reported that Abū ‘Abdullah was asked about an estate endowed to a church, can a Muslim rent it? He replied: “No, he should not take it for a penny. He shouldn’t assist them upon what they are.”

He also reports: “I heard a mason soliciting Abū ‘Abdullah’s opinion as to whether it was all right for him to build a sarcophagus against payment for the Zoroastrians. He replied: ‘Do not build for them, and do not assist them in any way with what they are.’”

He cited Muhammad ibn al-Hakam reported that he once agreed to a Muslim in Karra digging a grave for a *dhimmi* in exchange for money. In contrast to a sarcophagus, which is a distinguishing emblem of the false Zoroastrian faith, a grave is not specifically associated with any religion and is not a sinful act in and of itself.

Selling Homes and Similar Property to Non-Muslims and Renting Them

IN HIS BOOK, Al-Khallāl includes the chapter, *A Muslim renting out his house to a dhimmi or selling it for him*. He mentioned in this chapter that al-Marwazī quoted as heard Abū ‘Abdullah when a man asked him regarding selling his house for a *dhimmi* while he used to have his place of prayers there: “Sell it to a Christian?! He shouldn’t sell to him. Would he not ring his bell or place his cross inside of it?” He added, “None of these items should be sold to the unbelievers,” emphasizing it strongly.

Abūl-Hārith in his own report says, “Abū Abdullah was asked concerning a man who was leasing out his house for sale. Then, a Christian came and expressed his interest and bid excessively. “Do you consent to selling such to an unbeliever, whether they are Jews, Christians, or Pagans?” He replied: “To sell his house to an unbeliever who would engage in acts of disbelief in Allāh in the house? I do not agree with that. I would prefer he sell to a Muslim.” This report gives an outright prohibition from his opinions.

’Ibrāhīm ibn al-Harīth reports that Abū Abdullah was asked about a Muslim renting out his house to a *dhimmi* for lodging, while he knows that the *dhimmi* will drink alcohol and perform acts of disbelief there. He replied: “Ibn ‘Awn used not to rent out his house except to

a *dhimmi*.” It was said to him (Abū ‘Abdullah), “Perhaps he intended to humiliate the *dhimmi* with that.” He replied: “No, he wished not to intimidate a Muslim by asking him for lodging fee, he argued that: ‘asking a *dhimmi* for rent is easier.’” But I felt that Abū ‘Abdullah was impressed by Ibn ‘Awn’s position. Al-Athram reported this case as well as ‘Ibrāhīm ibn al-Hārith did from Abū ‘Abdullah.

Mahnan reports: “I asked Ahmad about a man who rents his house or shop to a Zoroastrian while he knows that they are committing adultery, thus he replied, ‘Ibn ‘Awn was of the opinion that he should not rent his house to a Muslim, he argued that he might be horrible while taking his rents, and he would rather rent to an unbeliever.’”

Abū Bakr al-Kallāl asserted that ‘Abū ‘Abdullah replied everyone who sought his opinion concerning renting a property to the unbelievers with Ibn ‘Awn’s position without giving his own perspective. Though ‘Ibrāhīm mentioned that he was impressed by it, but it was reported that he strongly hated the sale of a Muslim’s house to an unbeliever; so, if he were to give his opinion about the rent, I believed that he would have considered it detestable. Since there is no difference between selling a property and renting it to unbelievers, the acts of disbelief, placing of cross, etc., are committed in both the purchased and the rented house. In my opinion, therefore, a house should neither be sold nor rented to them.

Abū ‘Abdullah was asked about a man called Husayn ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmān. He replied, “I do not know him, but Hafs reported on his authority.”

Abū Bakr al-Kallāl mentioned that he was an ascetic. However, I heard that Abū Khalid al-Ahmar said, “That Hafs is al-‘Adawiyy, he sold a house belonging to Husayn ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmān, a known devout in Kūfah, to ‘Awn al-Basārī.” Ahmad was surprised, he exclaimed, “Hafs did that?” al-Kallāl responded, “Yes”. He then remarked, “This report supports that which was supposed of Ahmad’s opinion.”

I said: “Perhaps the ‘Awn referred to in this report is one of the known people of innovation, or a lewd individual. That is why Abū Khalid al-Ahmar blamed Hafs ibn Giyāth, the Grand Judge of Kūfah, for selling the house belonging to a fervent devotee to an innovator,

and Ahmad also felt displeased.”

Al-Khallāl said: “If he disliked selling a house to a lewd, the same applies to an unbeliever. Though a *dhimmi* is allowed to indulge in those acts in the Islamic country unlike a lewd, the deeds an unbeliever perpetrates are worse.”

Also, what Abū al-Hārith reported from Abū Abdullah on the prohibition against selling a house to an unbeliever, and the preference of selling to a Muslim is identical to what Abū Bakr Abdul-Azīz reported from him. Al-Khallāl, therefore, submitted, “There is no difference between selling and renting a house to an unbeliever, if he permits it for sale, he must also permit it for rent, and vice versa.” Al-Qādī (Abū Ya’lā) and his other followers share this opinion as well.

Ishāq ibn Mansūr reported that Abū Abdullah mentioned al-Awza’ī was asked about a Muslim working as a guard over a Christians’ vineyard, and that he (al-Awza’ī) disliked that. Abū Abdullah, then, commented, “That is good, for they primarily use grapevine to brew alcohol, unless the Muslim is certain that grapevines are sold for other purposes besides alcohol brewing.”

Abū an-Nadr al-’Ijlī said: “Abū Abdullah disapproved of the portage a Muslim earns from transporting alcohol, a pig, or a dead animal for Christians, stating that he must not eat from it, though the Christian must pay for the service rendered to him. However, the transaction is strictly forbidden if both parties are Muslims.” To sum up: Regarding selling a house to an unbeliever, we have mentioned that Ahmad disapproved of it, however, his followers disagreed as to whether his disapproval was only for detestation or it was a prohibition.

Ash-Sharīf Abū Aliy ibn Abī Mūsā stated: “Ahmad disapproved the selling of a Muslim’s house to a *dhimmi* who disbelieved in Allāh and indulge in prohibited activities in the house. If a Muslim did so, he would have committed a grave error, but that would not invalidate the transaction.” Abū al-Hasan al-Āmidī came to the same conclusion; he viewed it only detestable.

However, al-Khallāl and his associate, as well as al-Qādī held that the act is prohibited. We have already discussed the opinion of al-Khallāl

and his fellow earlier. As for al-Qādī, he said, “It is not permissible for a Muslim to sell his house to someone who will turn it into a firehouse or a church, or sells alcohol therein; whether he makes not selling alcohol in it a condition for rent or not, it is sufficient to know that the person engages in alcohol transactions.”

In addition, according to Abūl-Hārith, Ahmad exclaimed, “To sell his house to an unbeliever? Who would engage in acts of disbelief in Allāh in it?! No, I do not agree with that. I would rather he sell it to a Muslim.” And Abū Bakr commented that, “There is no difference between selling and renting a house to an unbeliever, if he allows it for sale, he must also allow it for rent, and vice versa.”

Furthermore, when he (Ahmad) was asked whether a Muslim can rent an estate endowed to a church, he responded, “No, he should not take it for a penny. He shouldn’t assist them upon what they are.” He (al-Qādī) then remarked, “and such is the view of ash-Shāf’ī’s.”

Al-Qādī, prohibits renting a house to a person who is known to sell alcohol in it, citing Ahmad’s position on the impermissibility of selling a house to such person, or renting a consecrated apartment by a church. Possibly, al-Qādī holds that the factor that necessitates the impermissibility in both cases is prohibition. He then stated, “If someone argues: How could that be when Ahmad permitted selling it for a *dhimmi*?” Our reply is ‘Ahmad only reported the opinion of Ibn ‘Awn on the issue and was astounded by it. He (al-Qādī) then recounted al-Athram’s report from Ahmad, implying that he too did not accept the permissibility of selling it to a *dhimmi*.

So also Abū Bakr said, as reflected in his comment, “If he allows one, he must allow the other, and if he does not allow the first, then the other, that which is not allowed is not but forbidden.’

However, there are two possible explanations to Ahmad’s statements. For instance, his comment in Abūl Harith’s report, “I prefer that he sells to a Muslim,” may imply that he considered selling to an unbeliever as merely detestable, whereas his seriousness in al-Marwadhi’s report and his statement, “He must not sell it to an unbeliever,” along with his strong wordings, may imply prohibition.

These disciples of Ahmad regarded renting as a form of selling. They argued that Ahmad did not hold the opinion he reported from Ibn Awn and that his being impressed by it was only because of Ibn 'Awn's impartiality and sincerity. However, it may be argued that what is apparent from the reports from Ahmad is that he permitted rent, since his being impressed by it implies his satisfaction. Also, providing a response with someone's opinion without any further remarks gives the possibility that this is his perspective as well.

Furthermore, the difference between selling a house to an unbeliever and renting it to him is that the argument of supporting the unbelievers' evil course by renting a house to them is normalized by exempting Muslims from the pressure the house owner may exert on them when accepting rents, while exerting it on the unbelievers.

The situation will be similar to the permission granted to unbelievers to live in the Islamic state in exchange for poll tax payment. Although retaining them in a Muslim land may entail allowing them to continue some of their practices, there are important purposes for doing so, and peaceful co-existence with non-Muslims is generally permitted.

As for selling, the advantage of exempting Muslims from the pressure a house owner may use on Muslims when collecting rent does not apply. Ibn Abī Mūsā and some other scholars apparently argued for this position. They believed that selling a house to an unbeliever was only detestable. Consequently, there will be no objection to renting a house to unbelievers either. Such considerations are made in situations such as this one. The opinions on this issue can then be summed up into four different ones.

These differences and the hesitation of those scholars to rent it to them are detestable only when the transaction does not involve any prohibited use. If, for instance, a house is rented out as a beerhouse, church, or synagogue, there is no disagreement over its prohibition,⁴⁸⁹ and this is also ash-Shāfi'ī's opinion. Similarly, we do not permit a non-Muslim to send his slave boy or girl to engage in illicit conduct in exchange for payment.

⁴⁸⁹ That is, among the followers of Ahmad.

But as for Abū Hanīfah, he had the opinion that it was permissible to rent it to them even if they intended to use it for such purposes.⁴⁹⁰ Abū Bakr ar-Razī remarked, “Abū Hanīfah made no distinction between giving the unbelievers the condition of not turning the house into a beerhouse or not; he permitted renting it to them even if the owner of the house knew that the unbeliever in question dealt with alcohol. He considered the transaction valid.”

He argued that the agreement made with him does not assure us his engagement in prohibited acts. Therefore, if the house is rented to him with permission to engage in any of these activities, it does not render the transaction invalid. It is possible that he does not engage in any of these acts in the house, and that does not prevent the house owner from collecting rent when due. Similarly, to someone who rents a house for lodging or residence, he pays rent even if he does not benefit from it.

Therefore, if entering into such an agreement does not necessarily imply involvement in these acts, whether the condition of not engaging in the acts is mentioned or not has no effect. According to him, this issue is comparable to renting out a house to someone who is seen carrying alcohol, a dead animal, or a pig. It does not prevent us from entering into an agreement to rent a house to him, as carrying any of these things does not obligate him to sell it in the house.

So, he regarded renting out a house to unbelievers as any ordinary rental agreement, which is permissible even if the house owner is certain that the tenant commits sins or might commit sins in the house. Based

⁴⁹⁰ Summarily, the three Schools of Thought; the Maliki, the Shafi'i and the Hambali schools, agree to the prohibition of renting out a house to the unbelievers if the agreement involves known prohibited acts, or it is for an unlawful usage or engagement. The Maliki and Shafi'i Schools also agree to the impermissibility of renting it out to them even if no act of prohibition is involved or it is not for unlawful usage, because of what is known of them of the sins they normally perpetrate, but the scholars of Hanabilah differ as to the impermissibility here, some of them argue that being unbelievers merits them the permissibility of engaging in some unlawful acts in the Islamic country, and which they may do in the house. Abū Hanīfah has diverse opinion from the three schools, he permitted making agreement with them with no restriction, as making the agreement with them does not necessarily assure their involvement in those acts.

on the same reasoning, he allowed selling grapevines to someone who produces alcohol, though he forbade selling weapons during a state of unrest. He argued that weapons are only manufactured for war and that are not useful for any other purpose, unlike a house.

However, the majority of scholars differed with him on the first premise: entering into a rental agreement with non-Muslims does not guarantee that he will engage in prohibited acts. They contended that a common agreement differs from a restricted one. In a restricted agreement, the benefit enjoyed by the second party is contingent on the agreed-upon conditions, which generate the return. In this case, even if the tenant has a claim, the benefit to be enjoyed is prohibited. Assume a non-Muslim rents a house with the agreement of converting it into a mosque for Muslims. Although it is not obligatory for him to fulfill this purpose, failure to do so renders the rental agreement null and void. As the agreement was restricted to turning the house into a mosque, he has no right to violate it.

Our associates and several jurists of other Schools also argued against his second premise: renting a house to unbelievers is a common form of rent and a permissible form of rent even if the house owner knows that the tenant commits sins or may commit sins in the house.

They argued that “the correct opinion is that if a house owner perceives a high probability that his tenant will use his house for unlawful acts, it is not permissible for him to rent the house to him, because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed a person who extracts juice for a winemaker and the winemaker himself. Even though the person who extracts juice does nothing more than extract juice, he is cursed along with the winemaker since he knows that the juice will be used to make wine. This is a well-established principle that has been explained exhaustively in some other discussions.

Moreover, the sins committed by a *dhimmi* fall into two categories:

- 1- The sins he merits to commit under the agreement of the permissibility given to him to live in the Muslims land.
- 2- The sins his agreement to live in the Muslims land prevents from indulging in, or commits openly.

For the second category, our doctrine says that it is forbidden for a Muslim to rent or sell a house to a non-Muslim if there is a greater likelihood that the non-Muslim will engage in prohibited acts, as this rule also applies to Muslims as well. As for the first category, Ibn Abī Mūsā stated, “It is only detestable to sell but not forbidden, because the opportunity given to him to reside in Muslim land is an opportunity for him to engage in those acts. If it had been forbidden for him to live in a house, he would not have been permitted to reside in Muslim land. In addition, if allowing him to live in a house amounted to assisting him in his disbelief, it would not have been permissible to collect poll tax on his living expenses. However, it is considered detestable because such assistance from a Muslim is unwarranted; a Muslim may always sell his house to his Muslim brother, unlike the poll tax collected from them, which is meant for special benefits.” But according to al-Qādi, this is not permissible; it is a way of assisting disobedience to Allāh without any necessity that warrants it, in contrast to allowing them to reside in Muslim land, which has a number of benefits. These benefits are mentioned in length in books that discuss the benefits of collecting poll tax from non-Muslims.

Collecting the Jizyah on the Land of People of the Covenant

A SIMILAR CASE was reported from Ahmad on his verdict concerning the sale of “*Ardhul ‘Ushr*”⁴⁹¹ to a *dhimmi*. Two contradictory opinions were reported from him. In one of them, he prohibited the transaction because a *dhimmi* did not pay *Zakāt* and selling it to him would hinder

⁴⁹¹ *Ardhul ‘Ushr* or *al-‘Ushriyyah* is the land possessed by a people who accepted Islam on their own while they were in their country. These people have rights to their land, they only give to the Islamic state *Zakāt* of *‘Ushr*—one-tenth—of their cultivated land, or its half if the cultivation is by mechanization, and *Jazīratul-‘Arab* is considered *Ardhul ‘Ushr*. The other form of land ownership is *al-Kharājiyyah*, it is a land Muslims conquered but allowed its people to live there against the payment of the proportion known as *al-Kharājah*, being non-Muslims. This kind of land may also be referred to as *Ardhul ‘Ushr* if the people later accept Islam and the place becomes an Islamic nation. The Muslims among them will be giving *Zakāt* on their cultivated land, while those who remain on their religion will be paying *Kharājah*.

the payment of *Zakāt*, which would be damaging to the Muslim community. He said that, “for this same reason, “*Ardhul ‘Ushr* shouldn’t be rented to non-Muslims.” In other report, he said, “There is nothing wrong to sell *Ardhul ‘Ushr* to a *dhimmi*.”

With respect to the two opinions, Ahmad held divergent opinions regarding what the *dhimmi* is obligated to give to the Islamic government where he lives if he were to purchase or rent the land.

Two opinions were reported from him:

- 1- The Islamic government should not take anything from him other than poll tax, which is one-tenth of the *Zakāt* a Muslim must pay on his produce.
- 2- The government should take from him one-fifth of the value of double of the worth a Muslim pays of his produce,. According to one of his followers, Ahmad said, “They shouldn’t be allowed to purchase *Ardhul ‘Ushr*, but if they do, they should pay one-fifth.” However, it is clear from his other statements that he holds this second opinion.

However, if he had divergent opinions on whether or not it is permissible to sell *Ardhul ‘Ushr* to a non-Muslim because it will prevent them from paying *Zakāt*, then, we should consider the fact that the problems that the disbelief of an unbeliever and his indulgence in the acts of disobedience in Allāh pose to the Islamic country are graver. For this, he was skeptical, do we solve the whole problem by preventing selling the land to him at once, with the opinion that it is permissible to sell to him not for the prevention imposed? For if we sell to him, he will jeopardize the Muslims’ right, or do we sell it to him and take *Zakāt* from him? Both cases are odd. So, imposing the prevention on him is easier to come by, just as a non-Muslim is prevented from owning a Muslim slave or a piece of Qur’an, for we do not grant an enemy of Allāh the grace to sway of a servant of Allāh, or have the Words of Allāh in his possession.

In the same token, as ruled by Umar ibn al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه, our doctrine prevents them from purchasing a land captured from them, or giving back to them its ownership by leveling against them some charges, as done

in the case of any of them who transacts in the Muslims land leveling against him a proportion twice the proportion taken as *Zakāt* from a Muslim, the result of which remains that we take from him only one-tenth of the produce, for the *‘Ushriyyah* land, not *al-Kharājīyyah* land.

As for the *Kharājīyyah*, they say: it is not permissible to sell for a *dhimmi* a land we captured from them. However, if we permit him to buy it, then, we take from him the same proportion we take from the *‘Ushriyyah*, because our opinion and that of the majority of the scholars is that one-tenth of the farm produce is the proportion imperative to be taken from all kinds of the *‘Ushriyyah* land.⁴⁹²

As for *al-Mawāt*—a desolate land in the Islamic country that has no possession yet, they argued the question, is it permissible for a *dhimmi* to own any of it? Some scholars opine that it is not permissible, among whom are: ash-Shāfi’ī and Ibn Hāmid, and it is the opinion that agrees with Ahmad’s position of not selling the land belonging to the Muslims to non-Muslims, because if he does not permit selling land to them, not allowing them to possess it for free is what is most expected. Though one may make a difference between the land that is to be bought and the one to be taken for free with the fact that the one that is to be purchased is already in cultivation, so, purchasing it will have an indisputable effect, unlike a desolate land, which has no identified effect yet. However, what is textually reported from Ahmad is the permissibility, and that is what the majority of his followers bear, and it is the opinion of Abū Hanīfah, whereas diverse opinions were reported from Malik.

Therefore, the question remains: Do they pay one-tenth of the land if they are allowed to possess it?

Ibn Abī Mūsā quoted Ahmad as saying, “If a *dhimmi* is the first to cultivate a deserted plot of land, he has the right to own it, and no *Zakāt* or one-tenth of the produce is taken from him.” In another narration, he was quoted as saying, “No *Kharāj* (return) should be

⁴⁹² That is, regardless of who purchases it. Here, the author refers to the difference of opinion over this matter. Some scholars hold that one-fifth should be the proportion to be taken from them.

taken from the *dhimmis* on their land, but they should give one-fifth of their produce.” The first report is preferred.

In addition, what Ibn Abū Mūsā reported from him that they must collect one-fifth of their produce from the deserted land they cultivate is a deduction from the opinion that one-fifth is the proportion to be collected from them over the purchased land. However, Harb al-Kirmānī had another report from him in which he was asked about someone who cultivates a deserted land, and he said, “Only one-tenth should be taken.”

Conversely, Al-Qādī and a few others of his (Ahmad’s) followers concluded from this submission that one-tenth is the proportion taken from a Muslim, while one-fifth is taken from a non-Muslim. Consequently, they established two opinions from him. At the same time, Ibn Abī Mūsā also established another two different opinions concerning the obligation to pay one-tenth in twofold proportion (one-fifth), which is the case with the purchased lands according to al-Qādī’s reports.

But Ibn Abī Mūsā’s report is the most accurate because (Harb) al-Kirmānī, Muhammad ibn Abī Harb, ‘Ibrāhīm ibn Hani, and Ya’kūb ibn Baktān reported that Ahmad was asked, “What proportion does a *dhimmi* give if he cultivates a deserted land in an Islamic country?” He responded, “In my opinion, he is not required to give anything.” In Harb al-Kirmānī’s report, he said, “I asked Ahmad what proportion a *dhimmi* gives if he cultivates a deserted land in an Islamic country.” He (Ahmad) proceeded, “The people of Madinah speak well of this saying that a *dhimmi* should not be allowed to buy *al-’Ushriyyah* land, while the opinion of the people of al-Basrah is strange, they say that he should be allowed to buy, but be made to pay one-fifth.” Al-Kirmānī continued, “I asked him the second time, I said to him, ‘If *someone* cultivates a deserted land, what does he give?’” He replied, “One-tenth.” The third time I questioned him, he responded, “He shouldn’t pay anything.”

Harb al-Kirmānī reported that ‘Ubaydullah ibn al-Hasan al-’Ambaree was queried, “You people take one-fifth from the *dhimmis* over their land they possess in the Arab land, (which is regarded as a *’Ushriyyah*

land), does that have any authentic basis?” He replied: “We have no tradition concerning that from the Prophet ﷺ, we inferred it from what ‘Umar ؓ authorized: If it becomes a means of their business, then, they should be charged beyond one-tenth.”

In the above-mentioned sources, when Ahmad ؓ was asked about the proportion of the produce to be taken from the deserted piece of land cultivated by a *dhimmi*, he replied, “Nothing should be taken from him.” He then supported his view with the opinions of the scholars concerning the matter of selling land to the *dhimmis* in the Islamic country, as well as the proportion to be taken from them if they use the land they purchased for agricultural purposes. This implies that he was aware of all related issues; including whether or not a *dhimmi* should be allowed to hold land in the Islamic country by whatever means, whether by purchasing it or assuming its ownership by operating on a deserted piece of land in the Islamic country.

In a same vein, al-‘Ambarī, the Chief Justice of al-Basrah stated that, as evidence of this fairness, they used to collect one-fifth of all types of *‘Ushriyyah* land, which includes their original lands and those they possess by shift of ownership.

We can then conclude that these issues are the same with Ahmad; if he prevents selling lands to them, he will also prevent them to possess it through assumption of ownership through cultivation; similarly, if he suggests that they should give one-fifth of the land they purchase, he will do the same for that which they assume ownership through cultivation. In the same token, if he proposes taking one-tenth for one, he will do the same for the other. Therefore, it is incorrect to report that he suggested that one-tenth be taken over the land they assumed its ownership only—with no effect on that which they purchased.

The reason for that error is what al-Kirmānī reported in his other opinion, “It is *‘Arḍul ‘Ushr*—a Muslim land over which he pays one-tenth as *Zakāt*.” But because of the ambiguity in this statement, he explained what he meant by it in another statement. He also explained its source, for if someone reports a ruling concerning something without knowing its basis, he is likely to make mistakes. And that was why the scholars who held the opinion explained its basis. They made the induction by

comparing farm work to business transactions. That if a *dhimmi* does business on Muslim land, he pays twice the proportion a Muslim pay; 2(1/40), and the same should be true for farm produce. Because, in both cases, the *dhimmi* profits from the land he obtains through the transfer of ownership, and because business transactions and farming have the same income standard. Allāh equates⁴⁹³ the two when He says:

﴿أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ط﴾

Spend of the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth.⁴⁹⁴

In a report related by al-Maimūni, Ahmad said, “If a *dhimmi* engages in business transactions in an Islamic nation, twice the proportion that is taken as *Zakāt* from a Muslim is taken from him because ‘Umar gave the order concerning it thus: ‘Double the proportion you take from them.’” Some people, then, hold the same opinion for farm produce.

Al-Maimūni remarked, “What I do not doubt of Abū Abdullah’s opinions over these issues is this statement that was reported from him on several occasions: ‘No *Kharāj* should be entertained from the *dhimmis* over their land, they should only pay one-fifth on their produce.’” He (al-Maimūni) proceeded: “I once asked him, What proportion do we take if any of them buys *‘Ardhul ‘Ushr*?’ He replied, “People differ greatly over that! Some of them hold that we do not collect anything from him, they equate it with his original property, from which he pays nothing if his staying in the Islamic country is by his will; so, they say, ‘We do not take any *Zakāt* from their properties.’”

Some others say, “Some people (those who are to be given *Zakāt* legally) have rights over this land, so their rights should not be jeopardized for selling the land to a *dhimmi*.” Here, al-Hasan used to say, “If he chooses to buy it, then we should double the proportion for *Zakāt*.” He (Ahmad) explained, “He pays one-tenth over the land in place of

⁴⁹³ The author meant by this equality that Allāh commanded that *Zakāt* be taken from the money earned through business transaction and other means, so also from farm produce, not that the proportion taken from all are equal.

⁴⁹⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:267.

Zakāt, and the other one-tenth as charges for his engagement on the land.” I said to him, “Al-Hasan had that opinion! Taking one-fifth from him?” He turned to me and asserted, “Yes, we take from him twice the Zakāt’s proportion.” He added, “I, then, held a talk with him, and I said to him: ‘Malik held that nothing should be taken from them, he rather prevented them from buying the land.’”

And al-Khallāl holds that, as reported from Malik. This issue is a big one; we cannot exhaust it here. Jurists of various schools also differ greatly on it, as was mentioned from Abū Abdullah earlier.

Among those from whom the collection of one fifth was reported are ‘Umar ibn Abdul-Azīz, al-Hasan al-Basrī, and other scholars from al-Basrah. Some people reported it from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه as well, and it was the opinion of Abū Yūsuf.

Some people say that “one-tenth of what they had before the advent of Islam in their country should be taken over.” Some of our associates said that as well. It was also mentioned by ath-Thawrī and Muhammad ibn al-Hasan.

Moreover, it was mentioned from ath-Thawree, as well, that nothing should be taken from them, which is the second report of Ahmad. Malik was reported to have said that also. It was also reported that Malik said, “They should be asked to dispose of it to a Muslim.” Al-Hasan ibn Ṣāliḥ and Sharīk were reported to have said that as well. And it was the opinion held by ash-Shāfi’ī and Abū Thawr. Abū Thawr, in his own statement, said, “They should be made to dispose of it to a Muslim.”

Moreover, the opinion of those who say that one-fifth should be collected from them manifests itself from the fact that: ‘If a *Must’aman* (repository) practices farming in the Islamic country, twice the proportion that is collected from a *dhimmi* is taken from him ($-2(1/5)$). In the same vein, if he does business, one-tenth is taken from him; double the proportion is taken from a *dhimmi* ($-2(1/20)$).’⁴⁹⁵

Furthermore, there are a number of scholars who hold that non-

⁴⁹⁵ Summarily, according to this opinion, the proportions taken of the business transaction and farming from a *dhimmi* (a native non-Muslim in an Islamic state) and *Must’aman* (an insured non-Muslim to live in an Islamic state) were inferred from those of the Muslims. A Muslim gives 1/40 of his business earnings as Zakāt yearly and 1/10 of his farm produce, while a *dhimmi* pays 1/20 of his business earnings and 1/5 of his farm produce. So, a *Must’aman* pays 1/10 of his business earnings and 2/5 of his farm produce.

Muslims should not be allowed to own any landed property in an Islamic country; those properties are the sole property of the Muslims, just as we do not allow them to build new churches, synagogues, or hermitages. They argued that the security agreement we make with them only gives them the opportunity to live and practice their religion just as they were, without laying hold of any property belonging to the Muslims, whether in terms of landed properties or bondmen's possession.

The reason for this assertion is that the purpose of Da'wah (Islamic Propagation) is to teach the Oneness of Allāh until it reigns supreme on earth. So, we only allow the unbelievers to stay and practice their religion against the payment of poll tax as an incidental necessity. However, necessities are valued in proportion to their causes, which is why none of our Salafs ever made it mandatory for a Muslim to exercise *ash-Shuf'a* (right of preemption) over a non-Muslim. Ahmad and many other scholars had this opinion, because if we give a *dhimmi* right of preemption on a Muslim's property, invariably, we have obliged the Muslim to be subjected to the *dhimmi*, which is fundamentally wrong.

It was textually reported from Ahmad that if a Muslim intends to sell his share of a property that a *dhimmi* owns with him, he is not required to consider the *dhimmi* for the right of preemption. Because the right of preemption is originally a right a Muslim has over his brother, like any other compulsory rights of Muslims over one another, such as to accede to his call, pay him a visit when sick, not to price items over his brother's price, or seek the hand of a woman his brother has already sought. All of these rights, according to Ahmad, are only for Muslims among themselves, though some scholars disagree on *al-Bai'i* (business transaction) and *al-Khitbah* (marriage espousal).

Renting Land Endowed to Churches and Purchasing Items Sold to Churches

AS FOR RENTING an estate endowed to a church or purchasing something leased out for the benefit of a church, it was stated earlier that Ahmad outright prohibited it, saying that the Christians shouldn't be assisted because of who they are. Al-Āmidī and many other scholars shared this viewpoint.

The same also goes for purchasing any property endowed with or willed to a church or purchasing machines that are used for building churches.⁴⁹⁶ Rather, the prohibition is greater here because the person spends his money directly on wrong courses, such as selling juice to someone who brews alcohol, as opposed to a residential apartment sold or rented out to them, which is not a wrong act in and of itself unless they commit sins in it. Renting or selling a residential apartment to them could be compared to selling bread, meat, or clothes to them, because these things could be of assistance to them in their disbelief, though the issue of residence is more serious than that as well; owing to the fact that those materials are not forbidden on their own, though the benefit derived from the residence may be unlawful. Don't you consider the fact that a Muslim is not forbidden, by and large, to give alms to a non-Muslim or a lewd, but it is forbidden that he makes non-Muslims or lewd sit down in his house?

It was mentioned earlier in this discussion that Ibn Qasim opined that selling a house to non-Muslims is not permissible. Ash-Shāfi'ī, in his opinion, forbade absolutely assisting them in building a church or anything of the sort. In his book *al-Umm*, in the chapter on *al-Jizyah* (poll tax), he wrote, "If a *dhimmi* willed one-third or any proportion of his wealth for building a church for Christians to worship in, or to be used for hiring attendants for it, or to ameliorate it, or to supply power to it, or to buy land to be endowed to it for future use, in a way to provide financial support for the church or assist in developing it, etc., the will is considered void and has no legal implications. But if he wants to build a church on the side of the road to house strangers and passers-by, or for people to live in, that is permissible, for there is no sin in erecting a building; what makes building churches forbidden is what they do in them in acts of disbelief." He added, "I forbid that a Muslim mason or carpenter, or any Muslim of any profession, works for them in their churches."

As for Ahmad, concerning whether or not it is permissible for a

⁴⁹⁶ This could mean to buy for them a special machine they use for certain constructions or designs while building churches, or to buy such machines for rent.

Muslim to build a sarcophagus for them, al-Āmidī reported him as saying, “It is not permissible at all, because the benefit upon which the agreement is made is forbidden, so also the contract will not be permissible, whether it is a church, synagogue, or hermitage, or even transcribing their distorted book for them.”

As for his opinion concerning a Muslim carrying alcohol, a pig, or a dead animal for Christians or a fellow Muslim, it was mentioned earlier that he disapproved of the portage a Muslim earns and that he must not eat from it; but the Christian must pay for the service rendered to him. And that the transaction becomes highly prohibited if they are both Muslims. In another report, it was added, “and he disapproved of a Muslim carrying a dead for them against payment or assisting them in staging a dead animal.” However, his disciples were divided about this verdict; they had three different understandings to it:

One: That is, it is apparently as quoted from him, and it should not be twisted. According to Ibn Abī Mūsā, Ahmad forbade a Muslim to hire himself out for carrying a pig or dead animal for Christians. But if he does, he must be paid, and if he does it for a Muslim, the transaction is strictly prohibited, but he is still entitled to his portage. They then disagree about what to do with the portage, whether or not he can benefit from it. There are two opinions on it as well, one of which holds that he cannot benefit from it and should give it away as alms. Al-Āmidī said, “It is forbidden for a Muslim to hire himself out for carrying alcohol, a pig, or a dead animal, it was textually reported from him (Ahmad), because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed anyone who does that. So, according to this opinion, he should be paid; it is not wrong for him to collect it, but it is forbidden for him to benefit from it, just as it is forbidden for a copper to benefit from his earnings; he has the right to collect the portage, but cannot benefit from it, according to the authentic opinion.

Two: That the apparent meaning was not what was intended, so the verdict must be twisted. That it is not permissible for him to collect

the portage. It was the opinion of al-Qādī in his book *Al-Mujarad*, though a weak opinion. Al-Qādī himself changed his opinion in his later works, *al-Mujarad* was one of his early works.

Three: That the verdict could be understood in two ways:

- That the work is detestable, but it is not wrong for him to collect his portage; rather he has a right to it.
- That the work is detestable, so, it is wrong for him to collect portage for it, and he has no right to it. They deduced this from his opinion about alcohol: he should not collect the portage and should dispose of it.

In Abū Talib's report, he said, "If a non-Muslim accepts Islam and has some alcohol and pigs in his custody, he should dispose of the alcohol and lead the pigs away; they have both become forbidden for him. And if he kills the pigs, there is no harm. He textually stated that it is not permissible for him to keep those things in his custody. The report of Ibn Mansūr affirmed that, that he was asked about a Muslim working as a guard over a Christian vineyard, and he disapproved of it because they primarily use grapevine to brew alcohol, unless he is certain that the grapevines are sold for purposes other than alcohol making. Moreover, if he says that concerning working as a watchman over grapevine, he would definitely disapprove of one hiring himself out for carrying alcohol.

This is the way al-Qādī reacts or comments, and it is the way of many of his students as well, like Abū al-Kattāb, so it is also the way of his later disciples. They all gave in to this opinion, and it is Malik, ash-Shāfi'i, Abū Yūsuf, and Muhammad's position as well.

However, according to our associates, this opinion only applies when a Muslim is hired to deliver alcohol to residential areas or wine shops. But, if he is hired to transport it to where it will be disposed of, or if he is hired to carry a dead animal to the desert so that its rotten odour does not harm people, it is then permissible for him to collect portage, since it is now a permissible engagement. However, if he is offered a dead animal's skin in exchange for money, it is then not

permissible for him to collect it, but he can take its money equivalent; if he has already taken the skin, he should return it. That is Malik's opinion, and I guess ash-Shāfi'ī had the same opinion too.

As for Abū Hanīfah, his opinion is the same as the first understanding drawn from the third opinion of Ahmad's verdict.⁴⁹⁷ His consideration is that if we talk about carriage as a job, alcohol is not the only thing the person carries; also, carrying alcohol is not a sin on its own, for it is possible it is carried for disposal or acidification. But if it is to be carried for consumption purposes, it is not permissible, and taking portage for that is detestable.

Moreover, among the interpretations and understandings drawn, the more preferred one is that of Ibn Abī Mūsā, which is closest to Ahmad's intention, for the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed one who extracts juice for wine-making, its maker, its transport agents, and the buyer (either for selling or consumption). The extractor and transporters may take their portages for the services rendered, because their services are normally permissible, and because the prohibition enters the network through the maker and the end beneficiaries, just as someone who sells grapevine or juice to someone makes alcohol. Since the juice was converted into alcohol by the maker, the juice seller has a right to his money; his work should not go for free, but rather, he should be given his recompense. So, in the case of rent, the benefit that falls into the tenant's hand should not be given away for free, the owner should be compensated, despite the fact that the prohibition involved in rent is with respect to the tenant, not the owner.

However, we asserted that it is forbidden to benefit from the recompense taken in the two cases considering Allāh's right over His servants, not because of the buyer or the tenant, respectively. Unlike someone who intends to rent a house in order to engage in acts like adultery, sodomy, raping, killing, theft, and the like, it is absolutely forbidden for the owner to collect rent for the house because the acts are themselves forbidden and not only because of the tenant's intention.

⁴⁹⁷ That the work is detestable but it is not wrong for him to collect his wages; rather he has right to it.

The similitude of that is someone who sells dead animals or alcohol; he is not paid because the commodities are forbidden themselves.⁴⁹⁸ Such payment is neither right nor wrong in and of itself, it is right for the buyer and tenant because they should offer the payment, but it is wrong for the seller and house owner to benefit from the payment. There are several issues like this in Shari'a.

However, what was reported from Ahmad of his opinion of the impermissibility for a Muslim to work as a guard over the Christians' grapevine does not contradict this conclusion. We will forbid a Muslim to do such work, as well as to benefit from the payment. But we will allow him to collect his wages, for if we do not do that, the money will be of advantage to the Christians, and they might often seek his employment for those illicit acts; other times, if they know that they will not pay for it, unless it is a little job, he may not take it.

If an adulterer, a singer, or a mourner were paid for their work and later repented, should they give the money out as alms to attract rewards from Allāh, or must they return the money to the people who gave it to them? There are two opinions about it:

The most correct opinion of the two is that neither the money be returned to the people who paid it against unlawful enjoyments nor should the people who did the works be allowed to own them; rather,

⁴⁹⁸ As for dead animal the prohibition of taking it for business is because of its impurity, for an impurity is not sold or bought, or taken for other usage except by it is transformed completely (i.e., *istihālah*), but for alcohol, scholars differ as to whether it is impure, thereby forbidden in itself, or not, thereby the prohibition of it being taken for business transaction will ball back to the prohibition of drinking it, and not impurity, the benefit of which will be that if is not sold or bought, it could be taken for other usage and if it comes in contact with one's clothes or body, removing it is not compulsory. This explains the ambiguity in the consideration the author quoted of Abū Hanīfah: If we talk about carriage as a job, alcohol is not the only thing the person carries; also, carrying alcohol is not a sin on its own, for it is possible it is carried for disposal or for acidification, but if is to be carried for consumption purposes, it is not permissible, and taking portage for that is detestable.⁷ In other words, one can benefit from alcohol, and not for this exception, it would have been forbidden to make or compose any quantity of alcohol whether for industrial or domestic uses, not even for the intention of transforming it into another chemical compound.

they should be taken by the Islamic authority in place and put there for the benefit of all Muslims, as Ahmad textually stated in respect of the portage taken for carrying alcohol. If, on the other hand, it is argued that the money should be returned to the original owner because the transaction was based on an unlawful agreement, it is therefore compulsory that the money be returned to its owner; for example, a *riba*-based agreement. It is said that the true picture of this principle is that anything received through an unlawful agreement should be repulsed and falsified on both sides of the parties involved: the giver and the receiver parties. Each of them should return his partner's portion to him, as it is in a *riba*-based transaction, as justified by the scholars who hold that opinion—whatever benefit received through an unlawful agreement should not be held in possession, the like of ash-Shāfi'ī and Ahmad.

Moreover, those scholars also have it that, if the portion received by any of the partners got damaged or spoiled with him, he is absolutely not paid his portion, so, we say: if according to him, it is compulsory that the money be returned to its owner as inferred from the principle, it should be considered that each of these people; the adulterer, the one who enjoyed the song, and the one who is mourned for, has willingly paid for the job done for him, and that his payment was against enjoyment, though unlawful, also, the prohibition involved, for which the money is claimed to be returned to him is not his making, rather; it is Allāh's injunction. By the principle, if any of the parties returns his portion, the other must return his too; therefore, if these people could not return their enjoyments, then the money is not returned to them.

Furthermore, if we compare this case, where the transaction involves being paid for a certain enjoyment, with the case where the worker is paid with a forbidden item in lieu of money, such as alcohol or a dead animal, while it is difficult to give back the enjoyment derived from the person hired, it is very easy to substitute the forbidden item that was taken in lieu of money, though we will neither allow that the recompense is given with such an item nor allow it to be substituted for money. Like the unlawful agreements made by the unbelievers, if

they embrace Islam before the benefit is received, we will not allow them to enjoy it, but if they embrace Islam after they have received it, we will not ask them to forgo it. But for a Muslim, such recompense is forbidden because he was aware of the prohibition before making the agreement, unlike the unbeliever. So, if a Muslim asks for his recompense, we will make him realize that he has forsaken his right because he deliberately engaged in a forbidden act. In the same vein, if, after collecting his wages, the person who hired him requests that the money be returned to him, he is told: "You willingly paid the money in exchange for an unlawful benefit; therefore, if you want your money back, you must return the benefit you enjoyed."

In the same token, if the one who buys alcohol requests that his money be returned to him, it is said to him: The money should neither be returned to him nor the seller be permitted to enjoy the money; rather, the buyer is asked to burn his beerhouse, as indicated by Ahmad in his verdict as well as some other scholars. During his reign, 'Umar ibn Khattab ordered the burning of a beerhouse, and 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib commanded the burning of entire village because they were indulging in the alcohol trade. These traditions are well known, and the issue is also elaborated in some other discussions, but the bottom line is that punishment through property sanctioning is never abrogated.

Once we understand Ahmad's position on these issues, it follows that selling unbelievers merchandize to help them celebrate their despicable festivals is equivalent to, or worse than, selling them real estate for dwelling; rather, it is closer to selling them juice than real estate. Because whatever of the food, clothing, etc., they will buy, they will undoubtedly put to use in celebrating their festival, since a festival, as mentioned earlier, is a term that stands both for acts of worship and customs; such a sale will contribute towards sustaining the latter, though it may be said that mere food, drinks, and garments are not forbidden in themselves, unlike wine-drinking, which is forbidden in itself.

The matter would be different if the unbelievers purchased something for an unlawful purpose, such as the cross, Sha'anin, baptism, incense-

burning, slaughtering in the name of a being other than Allāh, pictures, so on and so forth. Certainly this is forbidden, much like selling them juice that they would use for brewing wine or building a church for them. In contrast, the sale of wares that would help them in celebrating their festivals, such as foods, drinks, clothing, is considered reprehensible by Ahmad and others. Reprehensible—in what way?: Is it of the absolutely unlawful kind as maintained by Malik's school or one that necessitates avoidance?

The former looks to be most likely the case, as is the case with other such things in his opinion; since he does not maintain that it is permissible to sell bread, meat and flowers to those people who would use them for wine-drinking. Such assistance contributes to the success of a false religion and is a factor in attracting an increasing number of individuals to the festivals of unbelievers and their success. Clearly, this is graver than rendering assistance to a specific individual.

But a person who argues that the latter kind of reprehensibility applies to this case considers this deal to be wavering between the sale of grape juice and the sale of swine to unbelievers, but unlike the sale of grape juice which they will use in brewing wine, because the only thing we are forbidden to sell them is something that is inherently unlawful, such as wine and swine. On the other hand, it is permitted to sell them items that are lawful under certain conditions but unlawful under others, such as silk. Moreover, the goods and clothing they purchase at their festivals are not unlawful in and of themselves. The underlying reason a Muslim is forbidden from participating with the unbelievers in their festival practices is because such practices are the signs and symbols of unbelievers and could therefore lead him to one form of their 'unbelief' or another. As for the unbeliever himself, these practices cannot corrupt him any farther than he already is, for his own life sustains the essence of unbelief. Now, if the sales of tokens and symbols of unbelief are permissible, it seems improbable that such a sale would result in an increase in unbelief. This can be compared to a Muslim selling *thiyab al-ghiyar* (discriminatory outfits) to unbelievers, by wearing which they are told to distinguish themselves from Muslims, as opposed to, say, selling them wine or swine, as real consumption of

wine or swine tends to increase unbelief. Obviously, if he were to sell them something that will help them create a cross or celebrate Sha'anin, then he will have undoubtedly sold something from which they will derive assistance in doing what is sinful in itself.

In contrast, one who believes that the case under review warrants the application of reprehensibility necessitating absolute prohibition will refute the above argument by stating that emblems and symbols of unbelief are permissible under two conditions. One is that we are commanded to purposely humiliate and disdain unbelievers within Islamic territory, so that the purchase by them of these items will aid us in fulfilling the divine imperative and the injunction of the Prophet ﷺ, as we oblige them to wear discriminatory garb. Second, we are forbidden all such things that lead to the furtherance and demonstration of unbelief, for instance allowing the unbelievers to recite their Scriptures aloud or to celebrate their festival of Sha'anin in a public manner, or allowing a Muslim to sell them doorknockers, flags and banners. These are among the symbols of unbelief that we are under divine injunction to eradicate and prohibit across Islamic territory. Therefore, it is not permissible to assist them in this regard.

Accepting Gifts from People of the Covenant on Their Festive Days

AS FOR ACCEPTING a gift delivered by them at their festival, we have already described how 'Alī ibn Abī Talib received and accepted⁴⁹⁹ a gift of *Nairuz*.⁵⁰⁰

In his *al-Mūsānnaḥ*, Ibn Abī Shaiba reported that a woman asked 'Ā'ishah, "Do Zoroastrian wet-nurses send us gifts during their festival?" to which 'Ā'ishah rejoined, "Don't partake of the slaughter made for

⁴⁹⁹ Weak. Aside from the fact that this tradition is weak as explained at the portion where the issue was raised, it does not reflect that 'Alī ﷺ collected the gift. It shall be further elaborated soon.

⁵⁰⁰ Persian New Year festival.

that day, but you may eat the produce of their trees (fruits).”⁵⁰¹

Ibn Abī Shaiba reports that Abū Barza had Zoroastrian tenants who sent him gifts on *Nairuz* and *Mahrajan*⁵⁰² and he would tell his family, “Eat the fruit but return what is not fruit.”⁵⁰³

All of this indicates that a festival has no influence on the prohibition against accepting gifts from non-Muslims; rather a single stipulation applies to the acceptance of gifts on a festival or any other day, as this does not constitute to assisting them in promoting the distinctive features of their disbelief.⁵⁰⁴

Now, accepting gifts from unbelievers of a country at war with Muslims or from *dhimmi*s is a question in its own right and offers a wealth of detail and divergent views, which are beyond the scope of this discussion. It is, however, permissible to consume food prepared during the festivals of the People of the Book,⁵⁰⁵ whether purchased

⁵⁰¹ Weak, it is from the report of Qābūs on the authority of his father, who reported from the woman mentioned in the chain of the transmitter. Qābūs is a weak narrator, and he used to lonely report from his father what other students of his father did not report. Also, the woman who asked the question is not known.

⁵⁰² Carnival.

⁵⁰³ Weak, there is a break off in its chain of transmitters, and Ummu al-Hasan, the narrator of the hadith from Abū Barzah is also weak.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله had this conclusion owing to these traditions, especially because they are reports from the practices of the Companions. Even though he asserted the prohibition of things that are less significant to accepting gifts from the unbelievers during their festivals; like greeting them on the occasion of their festival, showing approval of it in any way or being pleased with it at any rate, he could not but exempt this issue because it appeared from the traditions he quoted that the Companions exempted this practice. Therefore, being aware that these traditions are all weak, and consequently could not stand of help for this conclusion will assist this situation—the supposed inconsistency in the ruling concerning unbelievers’ festivals. In a nutshell, it is not permissible for Muslims to accept gifts from the unbelievers on the occasion of their festivals just as other things that amount to participating with them or promoting their disbelief are not permissible, as it has been well demonstrated by the author. It is no doubt that accepting gifts from them on the occasion of their festivals is a way of assisting act of disbelief, giving support to it, sympathizing with the people, approving of their festival, and seeking their pleasure on the occasion of their festival, which are all forbidden. This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars over this issue, as understood from the author himself. Allāh knows best.

⁵⁰⁵ It has been explained that the author expressed this permissibility based on the

or received as a gift, provided it is not prepared from the meat of an animal slaughtered especially for the occasion. The juridical status of the Zoroastrian sacrifice is well-known, namely that it is forbidden, according to the majority of jurists.

As for the sacrifices performed by the People of the Book at their festivals and ostensibly for the purpose of drawing closer to Allāh, they were identical to what a Muslim would do sincerely to draw closer to Allāh. On the sacrifices of the People of the Book, such as for Christ and Venus, Ahmad has narrated two reports. According to the more famous of the two opinions, it is not permissible to consume the food prepared from these sacrifices, even if the name of someone other than Allāh was not pronounced during the time of slaughter. The prohibition is traced back to Ā'ishah and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar by Ahmad.⁵⁰⁶

Al-Maimūni said that I asked Abū Abdullah about the sacrifices of the People of the Book, he replied, "As for that which they sacrifice for their churches, they intentionally do not mention Allāh's Name when slaughtering it, in reality, they slaughter it for Christ."

In another report, he asked about the permissibility of eating from an animal slaughtered by someone among the People of the Book who he did not utter the Name of Allāh while slaughtering it. He responded, "If it is an animal slaughtered for their churches, Ibn 'Umar used to say, 'Really, they slaughter those animals for Christ, and they deliberately do utter Allāh's

traditions mentioned, though totally contradicts the principles of dealing with the unbelievers during their festivals he highlighted and thoroughly discussed earlier in this book, and for which reason he has written the book. However, such occurrence is not strange of a great Imām like him, who would always strive to guide the Ummah upon the ways and understanding of the *Salaf*, without following anything of his whims and caprices so that the people who would come after him are guided by his ways and understanding as well. However, with the knowledge of those traditions being weak, the ruling given will seize to hold, and the issue goes back to take its ruling from the fundamental principles the author laid down.

⁵⁰⁶ The author meant that the more famous and renowned of these opinions is the prohibition of eating from the animals the People of the Book slaughtered on the occasion of their festivals and its likes, which Imām Ahmad traced back to the opinion of the Companions. And that is the correct opinion, and that is the reason why the author mentioned it first, together with the evidences in support of it, as known from his methodology of discussing issues.

Name while slaughtering it.” Ibn ‘Umar disliked such animals, although Abū Dardā’ held that, “Their slaughtered animal is permissible for us to eat.” Though, what is mostly reported from him is non-permissibility of eating from that which they slaughtered for their churches.

He said again, “I asked Abū Abdullah concerning the animal slaughtered by a woman from the People of the Book who did not utter Allāh’s Name while slaughtering it, he replied, ‘If out of forgetfulness, there is no problem, but if it is that which they slaughter for their churches, they deliberately do not utter Allāh’s Name while slaughtering it.’”

Al-Marwazi reports: ‘it was read before Abū Abdullah:

﴿وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى التُّصْبِ﴾

And that which is slaughtered on stone-altars,⁵⁰⁷ he commented: ‘that which they slaughtered on their (stone) idols, whatever is slaughtered on the idols should not be eaten.’

Hanbal reported that my uncle (Imām Ahmad) once said, “I disapproved of whatever is slaughtered for purposes other than Allāh, such as the animals slaughtered for churches, but I have no restriction to what they slaughter for consumption. I do not consume what they slaughter for purposes other than Allāh, however, I disapprove of what they slaughter on the occasion of their festivals.”

The Sacrifices of People on Their Festive Days and the Types of the Their Sacrifices

AHMAD REPORTS FROM al-Awza’ī on the authority of al-Walid ibn Muslim, “I asked Maimūn concerning the animal a Christian slaughtered for his festival or church, and he disapproved of eating it. Hanbal said, ‘I heard Abū Abdullah commented thus: *it should not be eaten, it is a sacrifice done for other than Allāh, but one can eat from their slaughtered animals besides that. Allāh permitted of their slaughtered animals those*

⁵⁰⁷ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:3.

they uttered Allāh's Name while slaughtering. Allāh says:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ﴾

And do not eat of that (meat) on which Allāh's Name has not been mentioned (while slaughtering).⁵⁰⁸

Allāh also says:

﴿وَمَا أَهْلَ لِيْغَيْرِ اللَّهِ﴾

And that which is slaughtered for as a sacrifice for others than Allāh.⁵⁰⁹

So, I do not eat of any animal that is slaughtered for other things besides Allāh.”

Hanbal reports from 'Atā' concerning the slaughtered animal by a Christian, he replied: "Upon which he mentioned Christ's name? You can eat." Abū Abdullah commented thus: 'do not eat it, for Allāh says:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ﴾

And do not eat of that (meat) on which Allāh's Name has not been mentioned (while slaughtering).⁵¹⁰

I do not see that to be an animal they slaughtered for consumption. And Allāh has said:

﴿وَمَا أَهْلَ لِيْغَيْرِ اللَّهِ﴾

And that has been slaughtered to others than Allāh (as a sacrifice).⁵¹¹

Abū Abdullah's use of these verses of the Qur'an suggests that he considers the disapproval to be an absolute prohibition. This is the opinion held by all the foremost of his disciples.

Al-Khallāl, for instance, when discussing this issue of "taking caution when consuming People of the Book's sacrificial animals (those slaughtered for their festivals and churches)," mentions: "all those who

⁵⁰⁸ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:121.

⁵⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:173.

⁵¹⁰ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:121.

⁵¹¹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3; Sūrah an-Nahl, 16:115.

reported this issue from Abū Abdullah reported his disapproval, as are going to be enumerated in this discussion.“

But what Ibn Hanbal reported from him, concerning the two issues, of his reference to these verses:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرْ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ﴾

And do not eat of that (meat) on which Allāh's Name has not been mentioned (while slaughtering).⁵¹²

And Allāh's Word:

﴿وَمَا أَهْلَ لغيرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ﴾

“And that has been slaughtered for other than Allāh as a sacrifice,”⁵¹³ is that it is only a sacrifice done for other than Allāh. As for the issue of mentioning Allāh's Name, everyone who reported it from him among his disciples reported that he said, “There is no harm in partaking of the animals they slaughtered without uttering Allāh's Name, except for those they slaughtered for their festivals and churches; these are those prohibited by the verses, according to Abū Abdullah's opinion. He asserted that the verse, ‘Eat not of the (meat) upon which Allāh's Name was not uttered while slaughtering’ refers to dead animals.”

Al-Khallāl meant that ‘Ahmad's prohibition against eating animals slaughtered by the People of the Book is not based solely on the fact that Allāh's Name was not mentioned during the slaughter. In his view, it is forbidden because it was slaughtered for other than Allāh, regardless of whether the Name of Allāh was mentioned or not, it is forbidden because it was slaughtered for other than Allāh. Ibn Abī Mūsā stated, “Anything Jews and Christians slaughter for their churches and festivals should be avoided, as well as anything they slaughter for Venus.”

However, according to the second, it is only *makrūh* (reprehensible) and not outright *ḥarām* (unlawful). This is the opinion that al-Qādī and a few others attribute to Imām Ahmad; they may have received it from his son Abdullah. He stated, “When I asked my father about the animal slaughtered

⁵¹² Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:121.

⁵¹³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3; Sūrah an-Naḥl, 16:115.

for Venus, he replied, “It does not appeal to me.” I inquired further: do you mean it is forbidden to consume? He replied, “I wouldn’t say it is forbidden, but it does appeal to me.” People might have held this opinion as a result of his demonstration of detestation rather than absolute unlawfulness.

But we can provide an answer to this ambiguity by stating: “He was only being careful to call it *ḥarām* because issues that are differed upon owing to conflicting evidences might not be referred to as such.” For instance, Do we say that the issue of combining two slave sisters in wedlock and similar situations are *ḥarām*? As with the other issue, Ahmad has two opinions on this one as well; do we refer to an issue on which scholars disagree as to whether it is *wājib* (compulsory) or not as *farḍ* (obligatory)?

There are those among our associates who left the matter ambiguous; they would simply state that it is not permissible to consume animals that the People of the Book slaughtered on the occasion of festivals or for their churches, without elaborating on whether this is a strict prohibition or not. Abū Āmidī, one of these people, stated: As for what is slaughtered for other than Allāh, such as churches, Venus, the sun, or the moon, etc., Ahmad said, “I disapprove of what is slaughtered in sacrifice for other than Allāh, such as that which is slaughtered for churches or on the occasion of the People of the Book’s festivals, but there is no problem with what is slaughtered for their consumption.

That is also Malik’s opinion: it is impermissible to consume the meat of animals Christians slaughtered for their churches, or in the name of Christ, the cross, or any of their deceased rabbis and monks. In the book *al-Mudawwanah*, it is stated: Malik disapproved of eating from animals slaughtered for churches or during festivals of the People of the Book, but he did not prohibit it. In support of his position, he cited the interpretation of the verse:

﴿أَوْ فَسَقًا أَهْلَ لَيْعٍ لِّغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ﴾

Or impure (unlawful) meat of an animal which is slaughtered for others than Allāh.⁵¹⁴

Ibn Qasim commented, “Likewise, the animal they slaughtered in

⁵¹⁴ Sūrah al-ʿAnʿām, 6:145.

the name of Christ is same to the animal slaughtered for their churches, and I do not believe it should be eaten.”

All of these reports indicate the impermissibility of eating the animal slaughtered for other than Allāh, but this is not necessarily forbidden, coupled with what I related from some companions. However, this concession is limited to situations where it is certain that the slaughterers will not mention any names other than Allāh while slaughtering it.

If they slaughter it in the name of other than Allāh, whether that which they slaughter for the festival or not, what is more renowned is that it is forbidden, and that is the opinion of the majority of the scholars, the collective opinion of the three jurists, as reported by a number of people, and the opinion of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib, and many other companions; Abū ad-Dardā’, Abū Umāmah, al-’Irbādh ibn Sāriyah, and ‘Ubādah ibn Sāmit. It is also the opinion of the majority of Syrian jurists.

The second opinion is that is not forbidden to consume their slaughtered animal if even if they utter names other than Allāh’s name while slaughtering it. This opinion was shared by ‘Atā’, Mujāhid, Makhūl, al-Awzā’ī, and al-Layth.

Ibn Mansūr reported that it was said to Abū ‘Abdullah: When Sufyān was asked if the meat of an animal slaughtered by a person who deliberately did not mention Allāh’s Name while slaughtering could be eaten? He responded, “I suppose the meat should not be eaten.” Ahmad Abū ‘Abdullah remarked, “A Muslim has the virtue of Allāh’s Name being in him, I suppose it is eaten, but he has done wrong by not uttering Allāh’s Name. Didn’t Christians used to mention names of other things besides Allāh while slaughtering?”

The point of disparity here is that the animals slaughtered by Christians in the names of other than Allāh may fall within the scope of the general verse:

﴿وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلْلٌ لَكُمْ﴾

The food (slaughtered animals) of the People of the Books is lawful for you,⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁵ Sūrah al-Mā’idah, 5:5.

While the verse:

﴿وَمَا أَهْلَ لَغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ﴾

“And prohibited also is that which is slaughtered in the name of other than Allāh (i.e., slaughtered for other things besides Allāh as a sacrifice,”⁵¹⁶

prohibits eating from animals slaughtered in the name of other than Allāh, because the word “*Uhilah*” that appears in the verse means “to say something in respect of.” Despite the fact that it is somewhat distinct from ordinary utterance of words in that it involves speaking out, raising or lowering one’s voice will have no effect on the ruling of such professions. It was merely an effect of the vocal nature of the Arab which has no bearing on this decision. Thus, the verse applies to all proclamations and utterances in which a name other than Allāh’s Name is mentioned; it intends to prohibit absolutely uttering other than Allāh’s Name while slaughtering. It is similar to the intentions made in respect of worships, although the professed intention may be evaluated, the fundamental rule is that it must be developed inwardly. Consider two individuals, each of whom intends to sacrifice an animal; one intends to do it as “*Hadya*” and the other as “*Udhhiyah*,” whether they profess this or not, their intentions will differentiate them.

To utter the Name of Allāh while slaughtering is quite different from slaughtering for the sake of Allāh. The person who intends to slaughter is required to proclaim his intentions, unlike the *Qurbān*—what is slaughtered as a sacrifice, he slaughters that to seek nearness to Allāh, and that is why the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would say while slaughtering for *Qurbān*: **Allāhumah Minka wa laka** (O Allāh! It is from You and for You) after saying **Bismillah wa Allāhu Akbar** (In the Name of Allāh, the Great), in accordance with the command of Allāh:

﴿إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

⁵¹⁶ Mentioned before.

Verily, my *Salāt* (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allāh, the Lord of the *Ālamin* (worlds).⁵¹⁷

Likewise the Muslims, the unbelievers also utter the names of their gods while slaughtering; they sometimes slaughter in sacrifice for those gods, and at other time they combine the two, all of these fall within the scope of what is slaughtered for other than Allāh, for whoever slaughters in a name other than Allāh's has indeed slaughtered for other than Allāh. The simple analogy is that 'in the name of something', means: 'in seeking the assistance or support of', while the phrase 'for the sake of' implies: 'in worship to' and that is the reason why Allāh combined the two in the verse:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help.⁵¹⁸

Animals Slaughtered on Stone Altars

MOREOVER, ALLĀH PROHIBITS slaughtering on *an-Nuṣub* (stone-altar) which refers to everything that is installed to be worshipped besides Allāh.

As for Ahmad's quotation of the verse:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ﴾

"Eat not of the (meat) upon which Allāh's Name was not uttered while slaughtering,"⁵¹⁹ in support of his view on this issue works that way if utterance of the Name of Allāh is made the condition for the permissibility of a Muslim eating the slaughtered animal. If this is the case, the question remains unanswered: what about the one slaughtered by a non-Muslim? Two opinions have been generated from Ahmad concerning that matter. The first one: Uttering the Name of Allāh by a non-Muslim

⁵¹⁷ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:162.

⁵¹⁸ Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, 1:5.

⁵¹⁹ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:121.

is a condition for eating his slaughtered animal, and the second one: It is not a condition—though what al-Khallāl reported from him is that it is not a condition. There is still no problem, it will suppose that he does not make that a condition for eating non-Muslims' slaughtered animal. However, the disparity among the scholar resulted from the difference in their understanding of the general prohibition that occurred in this verse:

﴿وَمَا أَهْلَ بِهِ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ﴾

“And that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allāh,”⁵²⁰

and the outright permissibility that occurred in this other:

﴿وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلٌّ لَكُمْ﴾

The food (slaughtered animals) of the People of the Books is lawful for you.⁵²¹

What is most correct in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah is that which is mainly the prohibition reported from Imām Ahmad, although some of his later disciples did not report that. This is the most correct opinion because the verses, “And (prohibited as well is) that which is slaughtered in the name of other than Allāh (i.e., slaughtered for other things besides Allāh as a sacrifice),”⁵²² and, “And (prohibited also is) that which is slaughtered on stone-altars (i.e., idols),”⁵²³ give a general prohibition to all forms of the manners different from the permissible ones, but as for the slaughtered animals of the People of the Book (which is made permissible), it is a necessity for eating their slaughtered animal that they slaughter it in a permissible way.

For instance, if a *Kitābi* (someone from the People of the Book) slaughters an animal at an unlawful point, it will not be permissible for a Muslim to consume it, because he must slaughter it in a same

⁵²⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:173.

⁵²¹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:5.

⁵²² Mentioned before.

⁵²³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3.

manner a Muslim in order for it to be permissible. In the same token, if a Muslim slaughter for or in the name of anything other than Allāh, the meat will not be permissible for consumption, and he will rather become an infidel. Likewise, it applies to a *dhimmi*, because the Word of Allāh, “The food (slaughtered animals) of the People of the Books is lawful for you and your food (slaughtered animal) is lawful for them,”⁵²⁴ applies equally to us and to them. If they permit such unlawful meat, we do not permit it; not everything they declared permissible for themselves is likewise permissible for us according to the verse.

Furthermore, if two verses appear contradictory, such that one verse allows something while the other prohibits it, the rule is to adhere to the verse that prohibits it. In this case, however, we know for certain that slaughtering for other than Allāh and/or in the name of other than Allāh is not part of the religion brought by all the prophets ﷺ, but rather; it is a *shirk* introduced into the religion of the prophets, which negates the reason why the slaughtered animals of the People of the Book are permissible for us.

If someone argues that: It is understandable to prohibit the meat of the animals that these people slaughtered in the names of other than Allāh, such as Christ and the likes, then how do we prohibit the meat of animal that they slaughter without professing the names of any gods or idols, but merely keep it in mind?⁵²⁵ We say: hint has been made concerning that earlier, and the fact that Allāh prohibits slaughtering on the stone-altars means that it is forbidden to consume the meat of such an animal, even if it were slaughtered by a *Kitābi*. That indicates that the prohibition against eating from the animals slaughtered on stone-altars is not based on the fact that they were slaughtered by pagans alone, since if that were the case, there would have been no difference between what a *Kitābi* slaughters on a stone-altar and what he slaughters elsewhere, despite the fact that the fundamental rule is the permissibility of eating

⁵²⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:5.

⁵²⁵ This note further explains why a Muslim shouldn't participate with a *Kitābi* during his festival or accept gifts from him, because if a Muslim does any of that with good intention, the fact the occasion is non-Muslims' festivals where they celebrate *shirk*, outrides his intention.

from his slaughtered animal. This further establishes that the meat of an animal slaughtered by a *mushrik* is *ḥarām* and that a new rule is attached to the prohibition of slaughtering on *an-Nuṣub* (stone-altar).

He also stated the prohibition of slaughtering on *an-Nuṣub*,⁵²⁶ as well as anything slaughtered for other than Allāh as a sacrifice, which includes whatsoever the People of the Book sacrifice for other than Allāh, as well as everything slaughtered on *an-Nuṣub*. Therefore, if a Christian slaughters his animal on any of the statues placed in the church, he is slaughtering on the *Nuṣub*, and it makes no difference whether the statue is an idol or not, because in both cases, the animal is slaughtered in worshiping of and honoring for the object upon which it is slaughtered. This is why it is said that *al-Ansāb*⁵²⁷ could be idols and could not be idols.

It was said that there were three hundred and sixty stones around the Ka'bah, which the people of the *Jāhiliyah* used to slaughter and slice their slaughtered meet upon. They used to honor these stones, worship and slaughter their animals on them. At their wish, they replaced them with other delighted ones to them. The tradition of the Islam of Abū Dhar alludes that:

حَتَّىٰ صِرْتُ كَالنُّصْبِ الْأَحْمَرِ

“Until I almost became like a reddish *Nuṣub*—stone-altar,”⁵²⁸ explaining how he was overwhelmed with the blood like a stone-altar they slaughtered upon.

In a nut shell, the verse:

﴿وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ﴾

“And that which is slaughtered on stone-altars,”⁵²⁹ has two interpretations:

⁵²⁶ Imām Ahmad interpreted *an-Nuṣub* as anything installed to be worshipped besides Allāh, not necessarily the stone-altars. Therefore, slaughtering on the stone-altars will be a manner of such prohibited slaughtering, which was what the Quraysh used to practice then at the Ka'bah.

⁵²⁷ The plural form of *an-Nuṣub*.

⁵²⁸ Muslim (24730). However, the text of the hadith as reported by Muslim is: كَأَنِّي نُصِبْتُ أَحْمَرَ, ‘like I was red *Nuṣub*’, expressing what became of him after he was being beaten by the Quraysh when he proclaimed his Islam.

⁵²⁹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3.

One: that the slaughtering used to occur on it, as explained shortly, and that will imply that the slaughtering used to be done to seek nearness to the idols around the stones. That meaning is according to the scholars who hold that the *Ansāb*—stone-altars are not the idols themselves; that the people only used to slaughter the animals on the stones, but for the idols, and which implies the prohibition of anything that is slaughtered for other things besides Allāh. Because the place where one slaughters his animal has no effect as to the permissibility of eating the meat or not, except in respect of that being for Allāh or not. And that is why the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ disapproved of slaughtering animal in the pagans' places of worship and places where they celebrate their festivals. So, it is detestable to slaughter animals in certain places, being places where *shirk* is encouraged, however, if the slaughtering in those places is for other things besides Allāh it becomes outright prohibition.

Two: that the meaning of “slaughtering *on* the *Nuṣub*” is “slaughtering *for* the *Nuṣub*,” which implies that the *Ansāb* are the idols themselves and that the slaughtering is actually done for them. As is it said: “*Awlāma ‘alā Zainab bi Khubzin wa Lahm*”—he arranged wedding banquet *upon* Zainab with bread and meat, which means: “he arranged wedding banquet for Zainab with bread and meat.” Also, as it is said: “*‘At’ama Fulānun ‘alā waladihi*”—so and so person provided food for people *on* the (birth of his) child, he meant: “so and so person provided food for people for the sake of his child (on the occasion of his child’s birth).” And as it is said: “*Dhabaha Fulānun ‘alā waladihi*”—so and so person slaughtered an animal *on* his child, when he intended to say: “So and so person slaughtered an animal for his child’ (on the occasion of his child’s birth),” and so on.

The equivalent of these expressions is found in the Word of Allāh:

﴿وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدٰنٰكُمْ﴾

And that you may magnify Allāh on (i.e., *for*) having guided you.⁵³⁰

These examples appear to support the scholars' view that the stone-altars are the idols themselves. There is no distinction between the stone altar being the idol and it being a platform for which the idols are slaughtered,

⁵³⁰ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:185.

in which case the slaughtering is done for other things besides Allāh.

The kind of difference that was generated from this verse is also generated from this other one:

﴿ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ﴾

And for every nation We have appointed religious ceremonies that they may mention the Name of Allāh over what He has provided for them of (sacrificial) animal.⁵³¹

Together with the Word of Allāh:

﴿ لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ﴾

That they may witness things that are of benefit for them, and mention the Name of Allāh on appointed days, over the beast of cattle He has provided for them.⁵³²

It is said that mentioning the Name of Allāh over the beast cattle is only done when it is present, and it is said that it combines both the praises done when it is present and when it is away, as it is in the Word of Allāh:

﴿ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ ﴾

And that you may magnify Allāh for having guided you.⁵³³

But the truth of the matter is that the two verses will result in the same thing, as we saw with the other verse:

﴿ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى التُّصُبِ ﴾

And that which is slaughtered on stone altars.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:34.

⁵³² Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:28.

⁵³³ Mentioned shortly.

⁵³⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:3.

There is another interpretation to the term *an-Nuṣub* as it appears in the verse, though it is weak. That is the opinion that says that *an-Nuṣub* is the name of one of the idols. This opinion is weak because the portion: “And that which is slaughtered for other than Allāh” of the same verse where slaughtering on *an-Nuṣub* is prohibited takes care of that, saying such again would be redundant. Though the context of the sentence allows for interpretation, so also does the context of a tradition of al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Salim that Ibn Umar reported from the Prophet ﷺ:

أَنَّهُ لَقِيَ زَيْدَ بْنَ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ بِأَسْقَلِ بَلَدِجٍ، وَذَلِكَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْوَحْيُ، فَقَدَّمَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَفْرَةَ فِيهَا لَحْمٌ، فَأَبَى أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا، ثُمَّ قَالَ: “إِنِّي لَا أَكُلُ مِمَّا تَذْبَحُونَ عَلَى أَنْصَابِكُمْ، وَلَا أَكُلُ إِلَّا مِمَّا ذَكَرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ”

That he ﷺ met Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufail at a place near Baldah and this had happened before Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ received the Divine Revelation. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ presented a dish of meat (that had been offered to him by the pagans) to Zayd ibn ‘Amr, but Zayd refused to eat of it and then said (to the pagans), “I do not eat of what you slaughter on your *Ansāb* (stone-altars) nor do I eat except that on which Allāh’s Name has been mentioned on slaughtering.”⁵³⁵

In another narration, he says:

وَأَنَّ زَيْدَ بْنَ عَمْرٍو كَانَ يَعْيبُ عَلَى قُرَيْشٍ ذَبَابِحَهُمْ، وَيَقُولُ: “الشَّاهُ خَلَقَهَا اللَّهُ، وَأَنْزَلَ لَهَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الْمَاءَ، وَأَنْبَتَ لَهَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، ثُمَّ تَذْبَحُونَهَا عَلَى غَيْرِ اسْمِ اللَّهِ، إِنْكَارًا لِدَلِكِ وَإِعْظَامًا لَهُ.”

Zayd ibn ‘Amr used to criticize the way Quraysh used to slaughter their animals, and used to say, “Allāh has created the sheep and

⁵³⁵ Al-Bukhārī (5499).

He has sent the water for it from the sky, and He has grown the grass for it from the earth; yet you slaughter it in other than the Name of Allāh.” He used to say so, for he rejected that practice and considered it as something abominable.”⁵³⁶

However, the Word of Allāh, the Most High: “And that which is slaughtered for other than Allāh” apparently takes care of anything that is slaughtered for other things besides Allāh. As if it were said: What is slaughtered for this and that. If that is the intent of the verse, then whether or not the names of the idols are mentioned, it has taken care of them all. And the prohibition that occurs in this way is more evident and severe than that which occurs with a specific kind of slaughtering, such as the prohibition of the animal that is slaughtered in the name of Christ or the likes. In the same vein, what we slaughter as a sacrifice to Allāh is more significant and purified to than that which we slaughter for consumption, though we do so in His Name too. For instance, to worship Allāh by offering *as-Salāt* or performing sacrifices to Him is more important than seeking His assistance at other instances. So also, to worship other things besides Allāh by offering prayers and sacrifices for them is graver than seeking their assistance in other instances too. So, if Allāh prohibits slaughtering in the name of anything other than Him, such as Christ or Venus, then prohibiting what is slaughtering for those things is more deserving.

This explanation will make it clear to you that the opinion of some of our associates and other scholars from other schools that eating from animals slaughtered in the name of something other than Allāh is prohibited but that which is slaughtered for something other than Allāh is permissible is erroneous. Rather, the reverse of this case is better off, for to worship something besides Allāh is graver than seeking its assistance.

To offer sacrifice by slaughtering for other things besides Allāh is forbidden, even if the person did that to only gain nearness to that which he slaughtered for and even uttered Allāh’s Name while slaughtering the

⁵³⁶ Al-Bukhārī (3826).

animal. Some hypocrites in this community engage in this practice in order to gain favors from the planets by offering sacrifices and burning incenses for them. These people are not really Muslims, so it is not permissible to eat from their slaughtered animals; they shear common judgment with the People of the Book in respect of proclaiming the Name of Allāh while slaughtering their animals, but they actually slaughter in worship of something other than Allāh.

Resolute Sacrifices of Jinn

AMONG SUCH PRACTICES as well was what the People of *Jāhiliyah* in Makkah and some other places used to do of slaughtering in sacrifice for Jinns, and that is why the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have forbidden consumption of the meats of the animals slaughtered for Jinns.⁵³⁷

This opinion is also supported by the prohibitions that were reported from the Prophet ﷺ of slaughtering animals in pagans places of worship and in places where they celebrate their festivals.

It corroborates it also the tradition Abū Dawūd reported from Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ on the authority of Abū Raihana that he (Ibn Abbās) said:

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ مُعَاقَرَةِ الْأَعْرَابِ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade eating from the animals slaughtered by the Bedouins for vainglory and pride.

Abū Dawūd, after reporting the hadith, commented thus: ‘Ghundar⁵³⁸ narrated this tradition as a saying of Ibn ‘Abbās (and not of the

⁵³⁷ *Matruk*—an abandoned tradition. It is reported by al-Baihaqī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* (9/527, (19352)) and by aḍ-Ḍabi in *al-Mizān* (3/228). Its chain of transmitters contains ‘Umar ibn Harun, a forsaken transmitter. Al-Imām al-Albānī, in *as-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa‘īfah* (1/413), verified the tradition though another chain from *al-Mawḍū‘āt* of Ibn Jawzī (2/302) and *al-Marjūhīn* of Ibn Hiban (2/19), this chain is worse, it contains ‘Umar ibn Adhinah, a liar.

⁵³⁸ A reporter of the tradition from Ibn Abbās in its other version.

Prophet ﷺ.⁵³⁹

In another version of the tradition reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah in his book of *Tafsīr*, Abū Raihana said:

سُئِلَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ مُعَاقَرَةِ الْأَعْرَابِ فَقَالَ "إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ تَكُونَ
مِمَّا أَهْلَ لِعَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ."

Ibn ‘Abbās was asked concerning animals slaughtered by the Bedouins for vainglory and pride, he replied: “I fear that it is of that which is slaughtered for others than Allāh as a sacrifice.”

Also Abū Ishaq, ‘Ibrāhīm ibn Abdur-Rahmān Duhaim reported in his *Tafsīr* on the authority of Abdullah ibn al-Jarūd, from al-Jarūd:

كَانَ مِنْ بَنِي رَبَاحٍ رَجُلٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ ابْنُ وَثَيْلٍ شَاعِرًا نَافِرًا بِالْفَرَزْدَقِ الشَّاعِرِ
بِمَاءٍ بَظَهْرِ الْكُوفَةِ عَلَى أَنْ يَعْقِرَ هَذَا مِائَةً مِنْ إِبِلِهِ وَهَذَا مِائَةً مِنْ إِبِلِهِ
إِذَا وَرَدَتْ الْمَاءَ ، فَلَمَّا وَرَدَتْ الْإِبِلُ الْمَاءَ قَامَا إِلَيْهَا بِأَسْيَافِهِمَا فَجَعَلَا
يَكْشِفَانِ عِرَاقِيهَا فَخَرَجَ النَّاسُ عَلَى الْحَمِيرِ وَالْبِغَالِ يُرِيدُونَ اللَّحْمَ
وَعَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِالْكُوفَةِ فَخَرَجَ عَلَى بَعْلَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ الْبَيْضَاءِ وَهُوَ
يُنَادِي: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لَا تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ لُحُومِهَا فَإِنَّهَا أَهْلٌ بِهَا لِعَيْرِ اللَّهِ.

A man from Rayāh’s clan called Wuthail, a prominent poet, called for a display of grandeur between himself and another poet, Abū al-Farazdaq, at a riverbank in Kūfah. They both decided to slaughter a hundred camels each at the riverbank. When the camels were brought, they both stood with their swords to slaughter them. People gathered in large numbers, riding on their donkeys and mules, coming for the meat (of the slaughtered animals). ‘Alī ﷺ was present in Kūfah. He appeared riding the Prophet’s white mule and shouted to the people: “O people! Do not consume their meat, for they were slaughtered for other than Allāh’s sake.”

⁵³⁹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (2820).

It appeared in these traditions that the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ understood that any slaughtering done not for the sake of Allāh as a form of slaughtering for other things besides Allāh, which implies that the Word of Allāh: “And that which is slaughtered for other than Allāh,” is not limited to whether the Name of Allāh is mentioned or not, rather; it includes all slaughtering intended to seek nearness to other than Allāh.

So also, the *Tābi’ūn* made it clear that all that is slaughtered on *an-Nuṣub* is a slaughtering for other things besides Allāh.

The Detailed Statement on What is Slaughtered on Stone Altars

Ibn Abī Najīh reported Mujahid as said concerning the Word of Allāh:

﴿وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصَبِ﴾

Prohibited also is that which is slaughtered on *an-Nuṣub* (stone-altars).⁵⁴⁰

“They are stones around the Ka’bah, which the people of the *jāhiliyah* used to slaughter upon, at their wish, they replaced them with other ones delighted to them.” Ibn Abī Shaiba on the authority of Ash’ath reported al-Hasan as said about the Word of Allāh:

﴿وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصَبِ﴾

Prohibited also is that which is slaughtered on *an-Nuṣub* (stone-altars).

Slaughtering on *an-Nuṣub* is equivalent to slaughtering for other than Allāh. In the famous *Tafsīr* of Qatādah, he was reported to have said, “As for that which is slaughtered on *an-Nuṣub*: *an-Nuṣub* is a stone the people of *Jāhiliyah* used to worship and slaughter animals upon, Allāh, then, prohibited that.” In the *Tafsīr* of ‘Alī ibn Abī Talha, Ibn ‘Abbās is reported to have said, “*An-Nuṣub* were idols that were worshipped and slaughtered for in the *Jāhiliyah*.”

⁵⁴⁰ Sūrah Mā'idah, 5:3.

As objection may be raised: If everything that has been said regarding slaughtering for other than Allāh is true, how do we explain this report of Ismail ibn Saʿīd from Ahmad, in which he said, “I asked Ahmad about an animal non-Muslims intend to sacrifice for their gods, can a Muslim help them slaughter it?” He responded, “It’s no problem.”

We say: Ahmad responded in this manner because if a Muslim slaughters it, he will utter the Name of Allāh while slaughtering it, and he will not slaughter it for any other reason than Allāh, nor will he utter names other than Allāh. Rather, he will have a contrary intention to the owner, and the intention of the owner will cease to have an effect on the animal, thereby making it permissible for eating. Similarly, if a *Kitābi* slaughters an animal for a Muslim and utters a name other than Allāh, the animal becomes impermissible for consumption.

Because offering a sacrifice by slaughtering animals is a form of worship in and of itself, ‘Alī ؑ and scholars after him, such as Ahmad in one of the two reports that came down from him about the issue, disapproved of a Muslim authorizing a *Kitābi* to slaughter his animal for him. Additionally, sacrifice is a form of worship with peculiarities in terms of places, times, and other specifications, just like *as-Salāt*. Unlike other types of sacrificial animals whose meats are to be shared for people, they regarded it as merely almsgiving, which is why scholars differ on whether or not the *Hadyah* that is slaughtered in Makkah should be eaten by the people of Makkah alone or it could be transported to other places. Whilst the correct opinion is that it should be for the people of Makkah alone, the point is that such sacrifice is different from ordinary almsgiving, and that is why relinquishing the slaughter to another person does not affect the acceptability of the owner’s worship, though this issue is contingently reported from Ahmad.

XIII

Is it Permissible to Fast During Unbelievers' Festivals? A Matter of Difference

MUSLIM SCHOLARS DIFFER about whether or not it is permissible for a Muslim to devote the days of non-Muslims' festivals for fasting, like the days of Nairūz and Mahrajan which the days Persians celebrate. The reason for this difference is that a Muslim's opposition to unbelievers on the occasion of their festivals could be achieved in two ways: by fasting on those days to mark the difference, and by not involving in any special practice on those days at all so as not to attach any importance or specialty to them.

Let us begin the discussion with the issue of Saturday fasting:

Abdullah ibn Busr as-Sulami reported from his sister, as-Somā', that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لَا تَصُومُوا يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ إِلَّا فِيمَا افْتَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ
أَحَدَكُمْ إِلَّا لِحَاءِ عَنَبٍ أَوْ عُودِ شَجَرَةٍ فَلْيَمْضُغْهُ

Do not fast on Saturday, except for what has been made compulsory upon you. If any of you cannot find anything (to eat on a Saturday) except for a grape's cortex or a tree's stick, let him chew it.⁵⁴¹

In another version:

عُودَ عِنَبٍ، أَوْ لِحَاءِ شَجَرَةٍ فَلْيُمِصَّهُ

If he does not find anything except a grape's stick or a tree's cortex, let him suck it.⁵⁴²

This tradition is reported by the four compilers of *as-Sunan*, and at-Tirmidhī (among them) verified it to be sound, while an-Nasā'ī reported it in a number of versions, on the authority of Khalid, from Abdullah ibn Busr and on the authority of as-Somā' from 'Ā'ishah.

Scholars, among our associates and scholars of other schools differ about the import of this tradition.

Abū Bakr al-Athram reports: "I heard Abū Abdullah when he was asked about fasting on Saturdays singly, he replied: 'As for fasting on Saturdays singly, as-Somā' reported a tradition on that,' he meant, the tradition Abdullah ibn Busr as-Sulami reported from his sister, as-Somā', from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

لَا تَصُومُوا يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ إِلَّا فِيمَا افْتَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

Do not fast on Saturday except for that which is made compulsory upon you⁵⁴³

Abū Abdullah continued: "Yahya ibn Sa'īd used to be skeptical about this hadith, and he had refused to inform me of it, he heard it from Thawr, but I later heard it from Abū 'Āsim."

⁵⁴¹ Its chain of transmitters is authentic. Abū Dawūd (2421), At-Tirmidhī (744), *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* of an-Nasā'ī (2776), and others.

⁵⁴² Ibn Mājah (1726), *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* of an-Nasā'ī (2772, 2775, 2777, 2789, and 2780) and others.

⁵⁴³ The same tradition.

According to Abū Abdullah, fasting on Saturday is permissible because the tradition of Abdullah ibn Busr contradicts all other traditions that allow fasting on Saturday. Among which is the hadith of Ummu Salamah where she was asked, “Which days did the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ use to fast more?” And she replied, “Saturdays and Sundays.”⁵⁴⁴

Among them is the hadith of Juwairiyah, in which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ asked her on a Friday (when he noticed her fasting and intended to explain the ruling concerning fasting on Fridays singly), “Did you fast yesterday?” She replied, “No.” He ﷺ asked further, “Do you intend to fast tomorrow?”⁵⁴⁵ And surely, the day after Friday is Saturday.⁵⁴⁶

Also, the hadith of Abū Hurairah says that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibits fasting on Fridays singly, except one fasts a day before or after it.⁵⁴⁷ Also, the day after Friday is Saturday.

And the hadith, that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to observe fasting throughout the month of Sha’ban.⁵⁴⁸ A month, without a doubt, has Saturdays.

Among them also is the fact that the Prophet ﷺ encouraged fasting in the month of Muharam,⁵⁴⁹ which contains Saturdays as well.

And the hadith: “Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan and then follows it with six days of fasting in the month of Shawwāl,”⁵⁵⁰ Saturday can fall within these days as well.

Also, he ﷺ encouraged fasting on *Ayyām al-Bidh* (Moonlit Days—the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of every Lunar Month),⁵⁵¹ Saturday could occur on these days.

⁵⁴⁴ The chain of its transmitters is sound. Sound, Ahmad (26750), *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* (2789), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaimah* (2167), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān* (3616), *Muḥjam al-Kubrāh* (616, 994, and *al-Kubrāh* of al-Baihaqī (8497).

⁵⁴⁵ Al-Bukhārī (1986).

⁵⁴⁶ He meant that the Prophet ﷺ would not have asked the question: “Do you intend to fast tomorrow” had fasting on Saturday is forbidden.

⁵⁴⁷ Al-Bukhārī (1985) and Muslim (1144).

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Bukhārī (1970) and Muslim (1156).

⁵⁴⁹ Muslim (1163).

⁵⁵⁰ Muslim (1164).

⁵⁵¹ Sound, an-Nasā’ī (2420 and 2422), Ahmad (21334) and others.

Al-Athram understood from Abū Abdullah that he was indifferent regarding the significance of the hadith, rather; that he conceded to the permissibility of fasting on Saturdays, because after mentioning the hadith that prohibits fasting on Saturdays, he stated that Imām Ahmad spoke against it and mentioned that Yahya ibn Sa'īd was skeptical about it, such that he disliked informing him of it, which are practices that are tantamount to underrating the hadith. Then, al-Athram mentioned successively the traditions that were reported about the permissibility of fasting on Saturdays.

Moreover, looking closely at the tradition in question, it is obvious that it prohibits voluntary fasting on Saturdays in absolute terms. There is no likelihood of the tradition being understood as prohibiting fasting on Saturdays singly, because the text reads: "Do not fast on Saturdays, except for that which is made compulsory upon you." The exception given in it is evidence for this assertion, for if it were to accommodate other than what was exempted, it wouldn't have exempted that alone, unlike fasting on Fridays, for which its prohibition is about taking it for fasting singly. Consequently, the hadith is either deemed abnormal; not well supported, or abrogated. This is the opinion of the most eminent students of Ahmad, such as al-Athram and Abū Dawūd, who learnt from him directly.

Abū Dawūd stated: "It is an abrogated tradition," and through his chain of transmitters, he reported that, if az-Zuhuri was queried about the prohibition of fasting on Saturdays, he would invariably respond: "The hadith that reported concerning that is the hadith of that (weak) man of Hims." He also reported that al-Awza'ī said: "I do not seize concealing the hadith, until I found it widely spread among people." He reported Malik as commented: "It is a fabricated hadith." After reviewing the reports, he concluded: "Most of the scholars held the permissibility of fasting on Saturdays."

However, the majority of the disciples of Ahmad understood that he granted the possibility of the use of the hadith; they held the prohibition in it as the prohibition of fasting on Saturdays singly. They claimed that he was once asked concerning fasting on Saturdays singly, and in response he quoted the hadith, which is precisely what they understood.

As for what he quoted from Yahya, they took it for an ambiguity on the part of Yahya, but as for Ahmad, he only reported it. So, they decided that the hadith is authentic; since its chain of transmitters is sound, there is no point abandoning it. They, then, took it for detestation of fasting on Saturdays singly, similar to their detestation of fasting on Fridays and in the month of Rajab singly.

Ahmad reported in the *Musnad* on the authority of ‘Ubaid al-A’raj, from as-Somā’:

أَنَّهَا دَخَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يَتَغَدَّى وَذَلِكَ
يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ فَقَالَ: "تَعَالَيْ فَكُلِي"، فَقَالَتْ: "إِنِّي صَائِمَةٌ"، فَقَالَ لَهَا:
"صُمْتِ أَمْسِ؟"، فَقَالَتْ: "لَا"، قَالَ: "فَكُلِي، فَإِنَّ صِيَامَ يَوْمِ السَّبْتِ
لَا لَكَ وَلَا عَلَيْكَ".

That she entered upon the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ while he was having his meal, and it was Saturday. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to her: “Come and eat,” she replied: “I’m fasting.” He asked her: “Did you fast yesterday?” She replied: “No.” He ﷺ then said: “Then eat, for fasting on Saturday is neither required nor forbidden for you. (neither would you be rewarded, nor punished, for fasting on Saturdays).”⁵⁵²

Though the chain of transmitters of this tradition is weak, other narrations support its importance. Invariably, the tradition ‘do not fast on Saturdays’ would mean: do not deliberately take Saturdays for fasting, except for compulsory fasting. That one should not fast on Saturdays singly except for compulsory fasting, such as someone who embraces Islam and there is only one Saturday left in the month of Ramadan, so he has to fast that Saturday, such is the exception given in the hadith. Also, engaging in a compulsory fast on Saturday is not detested, what is detested, according to the text of the hadith, is taking Saturdays for voluntary fasting.

⁵⁵² Weak, Ahmad (27076).

Moreover, the detestation is warded off by fasting on Saturday together with another day, either a day before or after it, or by its fasting coinciding with another fast that occurs naturally on Saturday. As for the compulsory fasting, it is not detested to perform it on Saturdays, because it is not compared to any other fasting. But for the voluntary ones, what wards off the detestation is combining another day with it, and we can say: 'the exception given in the hadith took off some of what was ordinarily permissible, while its body took care of other fasting on Saturdays.

Moreover, scholars differ about the reason for the detestation of fasting on Saturdays:

Ibn 'Aqīl opined that the reason is that Saturday is a Jewish holiday, during which Jews forsake their work and other engagements. He argued that fasting on Saturdays is prohibited for us so that we do not have the same sentiment as the People of the Book on this day, because such a feeling would be equivalent to imitating them, because fasting and being idle have relative effects on one's daily activities, whereas fasting on Sundays does not.

However, some of our associates assert that Saturday is prohibited for fasting since the People of the Book celebrate and dignify Saturdays. Therefore, fasting on it alone among other days would be tantamount to celebrating it, much as fasting on the Day of 'Āshura' is disliked to be observed singly for the same reason, and the month of Rajab is discouraged to be fasted alone among its neighboring months since pagans fast it alone. But this justification for Saturdays being celebrated by the Jews does not involve Christians because they celebrate Sundays, as stated by the Messenger of Allāh:

فَالْيَوْمَ لَنَا، وَغَدًا لِلْيَهُودِ، وَبَعْدَ غَدٍ لِلنَّصَارَى

Today (Friday) is for us, tomorrow is for the Jews, and the day after it is for the Christians.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ Al-Bukhārī (876 and 3486) and Muslim (855, 20). But the text quoted here is that of Muslim.

More so, it could be argued that if people celebrate Saturday, to oppose them, what is most appealing is that it is taken for fasting. This argument is supported by the tradition reported on the authority of Kuraib, Ibn Abbās's slave boy, he said:

أَرْسَلَنِي ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، وَنَاسٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ: "أَيُّ الْأَيَّامِ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَكْثَرَهَا صِيَامًا؟" قَالَتْ: "يَصُومُ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ وَالْأَحَدِ أَكْثَرَ مَا يَصُومُ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ،" وَيَقُولُ: "إِنَّهُمَا يَوْمَا عِيدٍ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ فَأَنَا أَحَبُّ أَنْ أُخَالِفَهُمْ."

Ibn Abbās and some other persons from the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ sent me to Ummu Salamah, to ask her of the days the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to fast more. She replied me: "He used to fast on Saturdays and Sundays more than on other days, and he used to say: "They are days of festival for the polytheists, and I like to act contrary to them." (Ahmad, An-Nasā'ī, and Abū 'Āsim reported it, and some scholars of hadith authenticated it).⁵⁵⁴

According to this hadith, it is desirable for one to mark his opposition to the People of the Book on the occasion of their festival by fasting on that day. 'Ā'ishah ﷺ also reported concerning that:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصُومُ مِنَ الشَّهْرِ السَّبْتِ، وَالْأَحَدِ، وَالْإِثْنَيْنِ، وَمِنَ الشَّهْرِ الْآخِرِ الثَّلَاثَاءِ، وَالْأَرْبَعَاءِ، وَالْحَمِيْسِ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to fast in a month on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, and in the next, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.⁵⁵⁵

At-Tirmidhī commented thus: "A sound hadith; Ibn Mahdi reported it on the authority of Sufyan but he did not attribute it to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ."

⁵⁵⁴ The chain of its transmitters is sound. Ahmad (26750), *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh* (2789), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaimah* (2167), *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hiban* (3616), *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (616 and 994), and *al-Kubrāh* of al-Baihaqī (8497).

⁵⁵⁵ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (741).

However, these two traditions are not meant to encourage fasting singly on Saturdays, because Saturday is the People of the Book's holiday, and fasting it tends to cause the idleness they observe on Saturdays, and because by combining Sunday with Saturday, the prohibition of fasting on Saturday alone is warded off, and the opposition required of a Muslim is likewise observed.

XIV

Fasting on the Day of Pagan's Festivals; Examining The Opinions of The Scholars

AS FOR *NAIRŪZ*, *Mahrajan*, and other pagans' festivals, those companions and others who did not disapprove of fasting on Saturdays may not detest fasting on the days they celebrate them, but they may encourage it in order to mark an opposition to the pagans who celebrate them. However, many of the companions dislike fasting on those days. It is reported that Ahmad, in a report that came down from him, mentioned that Anas and al-Hasan detested fasting on the days of *Nairūz* and *Mahrajan*. But there is a disagreement among his followers as to whether or not this way of report from him could be taken for his opinion.⁵⁵⁶

The latter members of the disciples of Ahmad argued that these days are celebrated and honored by the people, so, taking them for fasting would amount to participating with them in the

⁵⁵⁶ That is, quoting the opinions of other scholars while reacting to issues, without giving his personal view.

celebration. Therefore, they detested fasting on those days like they did for Saturday fasting. Following this conclusion, Imām Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisi asserted that, “all pagans’ festivals and any day they celebrate will take this same ruling.”

And it could be said that fasting on the days of *Nairūz*, *Mahrajan*, etc., which are celebrated by non-Muslims and are determined by non-Arabic manners of time reckoning, is detested, while fasting on Saturdays and Sundays which are mentioned in narrations and are reckoned with by Arabic manners of time reckoning, is not. Because fasting on days determined by non-Arab or pre-Islamic reckoning may result in displaying and reawakening the practices performed on those days, as well as re-establishing the circumstances surrounding them, whereas fasting on Saturdays and Sundays determined by Islamic time reckoning has no such effect. This might be a way of reconciling the traditions and the opinions that have come down concerning the issue.

XV

All Newfangled Religious Holidays And Festivals Are Forbidden

Characteristics of Innovated Seasons and Festivals: Their Dual Reprehensibility

ALL OF THE new holidays and festivals are *munkar* (disreputable) and *makrūh* (reprehensible), whether or not the reprehensibility reaches the extent of *tahrīm* (proscription).

The festivals of The People of the Book and those of non-Arabs are forbidden because (a) they involve imitating the unbelievers, and (b) they are innovations.

And even if they may do not involve imitating the People of the Book, all new festivals are still disreputable for two reasons:

The First Reason: Categorizing All Innovated Celebrations and Seasons as Religious Novelties

THEY COME UNDER the heading of recent innovations (*bid'u al-Mudathāt*) and are, therefore, the subject of the tradition reported by Muslim on the authority of Jābir:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَطَبَ احْمَرَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ، وَعَلَا صَوْتُهُ، وَاشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ، حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ مُنْذِرُ جَيْشٍ يَقُولُ: "صَبَّحَكُمْ وَمَسَّكُمْ"، وَيَقُولُ: "بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ كَهَاتَيْنِ"، وَيَقْرُنُ بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْهِ السَّبَابَةِ وَالْوُسْطَى، وَيَقُولُ: "أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ".

Whenever Allāh's Messenger ﷺ delivered a *khutbah* (religious talk), his eyes would turn red, his voice would rise, and his anger would intensify, as if he were warning about an approaching army, saying, "The enemy has attacked you in the morning and will attack again in the evening." He would also say: "The Last Hour and I have been sent like these two." And he would join his forefinger and middle finger and further say: "*Amma ba'du*, the best of speech is found in the Book of Allāh, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. And the most evil of affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is misguidance."⁵⁵⁷

An-Nasā'ī reported:

وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

Every error is (a cause to enter) in the Hell Fire.⁵⁵⁸

Again, on the authority of 'Ā'ishah ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

⁵⁵⁷ Muslim (867).

⁵⁵⁸ Authentic, Nasā'ī (1578).

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

Whoever does any act which we haven't commanded, will have it rejected.⁵⁵⁹

In the version reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ، فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam), that is not of it, will have it be rejected (by Allāh).⁵⁶⁰

In another tradition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* category reported by the compilers of *as-Sunan*, on the authority of al-'Irbad ibn Sariya, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ بَعْدِي فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا، فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي
وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ،
وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ، فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ

He among you who lives after me will see great disagreement. It is incumbent upon you to keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs; Cling to it stubbornly [literally: with your molar teeth]. Beware of newly innovated affairs [in the religion], for verily every innovation is error.⁵⁶¹

This principle is made clear by both the Sunnah and Consensus, as well as by references to it in the Qur'an. Allāh says:

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾

Or have they partners [i.e., other deities] who have ordained for them a religion to which Allāh has given no permission?⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ Muslim (1718).

⁵⁶⁰ Al-Bukhārī (2697) and Muslim (1718).

⁵⁶¹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4607), at-Tirmidhī (2676), Ibn Mājah (42).

⁵⁶² Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:21.

Whoever turns towards something with the intention of gaining divine proximity thereby, or who, or by word or deed, makes something obligatory without it being prescribed by Allāh, is indeed guilty of laying down as religion that for which Allāh has given no permission, and whoever follows him in such an institution is guilty of ascribing a partner to Allāh—a partner who lays down as religion that for which Allāh has given no permission.

Obviously, such a man may have his own justification for the additional stipulation. He may be forgiven for his interpretation in as much as he was exercising his independent judgment, whereby he may be excused his error and might even be rewarded for exercising independent judgment. But such a man must not be obeyed, just as all those people who speak and do certain things whose opposite is known to be true are not to be obeyed, even if they are pardoned or rewarded for saying and doing what they said and did.

With reference to the saying of Allāh:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, the son of Mary, as lords besides Allāh, even though they were commanded to worship none but One God. There is no god (worthy of worship) except Him. Glorified is He above what they associate (with Him)!⁵⁶³

‘Adī ibn Hātim said to the Prophet ﷺ: “They did not take them as lords!,” to which the Prophet ﷺ replied, “They did not, but they did make for them lawful what was unlawful and these, they obeyed them, and they made for them unlawful what was lawful and these, they obeyed them.”⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶³ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:31.

⁵⁶⁴ Sound, at-Tirmidhī (3095).

Whoever obeys someone concerning a religious matter Allāh has not prescribed as lawful, unlawful, commendable, or obligatory will be held accountable, as will the one who directs this man to do or not do something. Moreover, each of them may be excused or rewarded for their independent judgment; blame does not fall on him since there is no immediate reason to blame him or the presence of a deterrent, despite the fact that a plainly culpable situation is now occurring. But he who abandons the truth after it has been made clear to him, or exerts himself less diligently in its pursuit so that it does not become evident to him, or out of sheer whim, laziness, or something like that shuns the very desire to know it, will also be reproached.

Furthermore, Allāh has upbraided the *Mushrikūn* for two things: They associated with Allāh something for which He had sent no authority, and They declared unlawful what Allāh had not made unlawful for them.

The Prophet ﷺ further elucidated it in the report given by Muslim on the authority of ‘Iyādh ibn Himār.

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ، وَإِنَّهُمْ أَتَتْهُمُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ
عَنْ دِينِهِمْ، وَحَرَمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا أَحَلَلْتُ لَهُمْ، وَأَمَرْتُهُمْ أَنْ يُشْرِكُوا بِي
مَا لَمْ أَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا

Allāh said, “I have created My servants as *Hunafā’* (Monotheists), but the devils came and turned them away from their religion, making unlawful for them what I have declared lawful for them and ordering them to associate with Me that for which I have sent no authority.⁵⁶⁵

And Allāh says:

﴿سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا
مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾

The polytheists will say, “If Allāh had willed, we would not have associated [anything] and neither would our fathers, nor would we

⁵⁶⁵ Muslim (2865).

have prohibited anything.” (Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say, “Do you have any knowledge that you can produce for us? You follow not except assumption, and you are not but misjudging.”)⁵⁶⁶

The *Mushrikūn* (Idol Worshipers) are guilty of combining both *shirk* (associating partners with Allāh) and *tahrim* (making unlawful what Allāh has made lawful). The former includes all acts of worship which Allāh has not prescribed, though the *Mushrikūn* assert that their acts of worship are either obligatory or commendable and that performing them is better than abandoning them.

Some of them, moreover, worshipped a being other than Allāh with the purpose of gaining divine proximity through the worship of this intermediary being. Others simply invented a religion, claiming that by doing so they were worshipping Allāh, similar to the Christians who invented a variety of devotional practices.

The origins of the emergence and growth of both factors:

1. Accepting as religion anything which Allāh has not ordained,
2. Making the unlawful lawful—this is the major cause of the introduction of error among mankind.

Thus, the principle upon which Ahmad and some others of our predecessors have based their methodologies of approaching religious issues is this: Human actions are reducible to:

- They engage acts of worship, which they adopt as religion and with which they profit in the next world, or both in this world and the next;
- and customs with which they benefit in their terrestrial lives.

Thus, the foundation of acts of worship is that only those prescribed by Allāh are obligatory. And the foundation of customs is that only those prohibited by Allāh are forbidden. Indeed, the reason why these newfangled festivals should be prohibited is that they are regarded as a means of approaching Allāh, and thus as a part of faith. We shall have,

⁵⁶⁶ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:148.

Allāh willing, occasion to talk about it in this work.

Note that: This rule, *inferring that something is objectionable on the grounds of its being an innovation*, is a great general rule, so perfect that no other principle could contradict it. Some people maintain that innovations are classified into **two categories**: *hasana* (good) and *qabiha* (abominable). In support of their argument, they quote Umar's statement about the *tarawih*-prayer:

نِعْمَتِ الْبِدْعَةُ هَذِهِ

How good this innovation is!⁵⁶⁷

Or refer to some tenets and deeds that, despite appearing after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, are not seen to be reprehensible and may even be praiseworthy according to proofs furnished by the Consensus and *Qiyas* (Analogy).

To this man who is not quite well-versed in the principles of knowledge, sometimes add many customs, etc., that are invoked among the people, using these also as arguments upholding the goodness of some innovations, either by recognizing as Consensus that which he himself has become accustomed to, even though he does not know the attitude of all other Muslims regarding it, or by simply refusing to give up practicing what he has always practiced, in the manner in which such men are portrayed in the Qur'an:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا﴾

And when it is said to them, “Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger,” they say, “Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers practicing.”⁵⁶⁸

How often do some eminent men of learning and piety present arguments that contradict the foundations of knowledge upon which religious matters are based?

⁵⁶⁷ Sound, al-Bukhārī (affixation, 2010), *al-Muwatta* (378).

⁵⁶⁸ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:104.

The problem here is that these texts that denounce innovations are being opposed by some other texts that are claimed to approve of the so-called ‘good innovations’, and they extract those approvals from sound *Shar’ia* arguments or arguments of some individuals relied upon by the ignorant, or, in short, by interpreters in general.

Furthermore, these opponents demonstrate two positions:

One: if it is established that some innovations are good and others are abominable, then it is the latter that the lawgiver has prohibited; those he has merely glossed over are not abominable; and

Two: it may be said of an innovation that it is good because it serves a particular purpose.

These opponents argue that not every innovation is error.

In response to these arguments, it is possible to assert that the Prophet’s words ﷺ: “The worst of all things are innovations; and every innovation is error,” and his cautioning against newfangled things provide a convincing case against innovations. No one can reject the conclusive power of the argument against innovations; if one did, it would be only out of sheer spite.

So much for the contenders. One of the two responses can refute the contention:

1. What has been proven good cannot be an innovation; the general rule therefore remains operative without admitting of an exception.
2. What has been proven to be good has been singled out from the general category; the general category thus remains, without allowing for exceptions. Or it may be said that if the goodness of that which has been established is a special case of the general category, then the general category having been so characterized by a special case is an indication for the rest of the cases other than the special case. Now those who believe that some of the innovations can be made special cases within this general category must produce a proof justifying the special treatment, otherwise, this general comprehensiveness that encompasses both the letter and the spirit must remain a proof for general prohibition.

Moreover, it is the *shar'i* arguments from the Qur'an, Sunnah and Consensus which have the force of authority or are inferred as such and must be the ultimate reference in these matters. The local customs of one or most cities, as well as the views of many scholars and some of the most fervent worshippers, cannot justifiably contradict the Prophet's utterance ﷺ.

A person who claims that most of these customs, though consensually viewed as contradicting the Sunnah, derive their legitimacy from the fact that the community has supported them rather than rejected them, is clearly mistaken in his belief. There was always someone who categorically prohibited any innovations that were opposed to the Sunnah. The practice of one or more Muslim cities cannot be claimed as Consensus; if this is the case, then how can the practice of a minority of Muslims be claimed as Consensus? The fact is that during Malik's time, the most learned people did not rely on the practice or consensus of the scholars of Madinah, they considered the Sunnah to be their ultimate reference, just like everyone else. Despite their distinctions in knowledge and faith, this is the case. If this is the case, how can a pious scholar rely on customs that have been contracted by the rank and file, or by people who follow the masses' opinion, or by the ignorant, or by people who are not grounded in knowledge and have neither authority nor are eligible for consultation? Perhaps, these people do not have perfect belief in Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, or they have been affected by their environment. They have followed, without knowledge, people they believed to be pious or who have reached the rank of eminent scholars who are capable of making religious inductions.

The response to those who chose this method of argument is not far-fetched; such is not the method of argument used by people of knowledge. Nonetheless, because of the widespread nature of ignorance, many people may contribute to it—including those who claim to have knowledge and piety. It is not impossible that some knowledgeable people will obtain additional *Shari'a* evidences in support of the issues, but those evidences will not be as perceived. Yet, if what the people based their arguments upon turned out to be questionable, then they

have not been brought forth from the Book of Allāh and the tradition of His Prophet ﷺ, rather, they have been based upon a platform different from that of the people of knowledge and piety, and they have only claimed such evidence and ascribed it to the *Shari'a* in order to win the debate. A praiseworthy debate, however, is one that is based on one's intellectual capacity and establishes evidence from both the speeches and practices.

Furthermore, it is invalid to apply the Prophet's statement "every innovation is error" to an innovation that has been particularly forbidden. This would simply result in divesting the tradition in question of its benefit. It is because they were forbidden that we know that unbelief, inequity, and different kinds of sin are abominable and unlawful, regardless of whether or not they were innovations. If in religion there was nothing disreputable except what was specifically forbidden—regardless of whether or not it was practiced during the Prophet's age and if what was forbidden was disreputable, regardless of whether it was an innovation or not—then the character of innovation would become altogether ineffectual, its presence indicating neither abomination nor its absence goodness. The Prophet's words, "every innovation is error," would rather have the same effect as "every practice is error," or "everything practiced by Arabs and non-Arabs is error," to be understood as, only those of these practices that are specifically forbidden are errors.

This neutralization of texts is a kind of distortion and heresy and is not a permissible interpretation. Moreover, it has disadvantages, among them:

One: The tradition will fail to achieve its purpose, for only what is known to be specifically forbidden will have its ruling known, and all that is not specifically forbidden will not fall under its scope. This would result in divesting the tradition of its benefits. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ wanted it to be a general principle, so he used to proclaim it during every Friday sermon.

Two: The word 'innovation' and its consequences would become completely ineffectual, with its presence indicating neither abomination nor its absence suggesting no goodness. Hence, as a basis of law, it has

no effect.

Three: If this kind of statement is not meant to include additional items that fall into the same category as the intended statement, it will be tantamount to concealing what must be clearly stated and establishing what is unnecessary. Innovation and specific prohibition share both the general as well as the particular, since not every innovation has been particularly forbidden and not everything that has been particularly forbidden is an innovation. Using one term (say, black) and intending the other (horse) is pure deception, and only an impostor can pull it off. Obviously, it was inconceivable that the Prophet ﷺ would want to confuse the people.

Four: If the Prophet ﷺ meant by the statement "every innovation is error" and "be wary of innovated affairs," prohibiting only some specific things, he would have committed his nation, in respect of knowing those things to what hardly anyone comprehends. Only a few of them will be able to recognize those things, and that manner is not permissible in matters of religion under any circumstances.

Five: If the tradition in question is intended to convey a specific prohibition, then upon investigation, one is surprised to find that the innovations that are specifically forbidden are far outnumbered by those that are not individually forbidden. How possibly could the Prophet ﷺ have used a general word to account for fewer or uncommon cases.

These and other reasons oblige that this type of interpretation be most decisively vicious and, therefore, not justifiably applied to the tradition at hand, regardless of whether the interpreter intended to support his interpretation with a cogent proof or not. He must first indicate the possibility that the intended meanings he ascribes to the tradition are an integral part of that tradition, and then provide a compelling argument in support of that possibility. So much in response to their first stand.

Second reason: Despite the fact that innovations can be classified as abominable and good, this tradition maintains that innovations are generally abominable. But many has said that: The most that can be said is that once a particular innovation has been validated as beneficial,

it will be exempt from the general rule. If not, the principle that they are all error would at any rate remain in force. Moreover, it has been established that all the issues that have been adopted to counteract the influence of the tradition in question, under the pretense that these innovations are beneficial, have been deemed abominable. This response will, however, be valid only if the given issues are established as good. Other things that are merely presumed to be but are not good in reality, or things that may or may not be good, there is no point in contradicting them in this context. Here one would rather give a composite reply: If proved to be good, it is no longer an innovation or remains as a particular case. However, if it is not proven to be good, then it fall under the general.

Clearly, we have answered to their arguments in two different ways. Regardless, the significance of the tradition remains intact, and none of their arguments nullifies its viability. Then, It is not permissible for anyone to oppose the absoluteness of this general principle, “Every innovation is error” as proclaimed by the Prophet ﷺ. For instance, to assert that “not every innovation is error” is to oppose the Prophet ﷺ, rather than the person being given the excuse of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. This is because any given act that is established to be good among the acts that are categorized as innovation will not fall within the scope of this tradition, or it may occur within it but be exempted from the general principle due to stronger evidence that required that. Although this is an alternative way to respond to this argument, the first response is preferable because the tradition actually suggests a general principle, which is what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ intended without doubt.

As for the *Tarawih*-prayer, it is not considered as an innovation in the *Sharī'a*; rather, it is a Sunnah established by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ from both his words and practices. It is reported that he ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَرَضَ صِيَامَ رَمَضَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَسَنَنْتُ لَكُمْ قِيَامَهُ

Verily, Allāh made fasting of Ramadan compulsory on you, and I prescribed for you its night-prayer.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁹ Weak, an-Nasā'ī (2210) and Ibn Mājah (1321).

In addition, performing the *Tarawih* prayer congregationally is not an innovation, but rather an established Sunnah in the *Shari'a* as well. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ performed it in congregation two or three times at the beginning of Ramadan and several times at the end of Ramadan, and he encouraged its practice by saying:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ قَامَ مَعَ الْإِمَامِ حَتَّى يَنْصَرِفَ، كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ قِيَامَ لَيْلَةٍ

Indeed, whoever prays along with his Imām (at the first part of night) until he completes his prayer, will have it written for him as if he prayed the whole night.⁵⁷⁰

As reported by the compilers of *as-Sunan*, on one occasion he prayed with them until they nearly missed their dawn meal. From this tradition, Ahmad and some other scholars concluded that performing the *Tarawih* congregationally is better than performing it individually. This tradition also encourages performing the *Tarawih*-prayer with the Imām, and that makes the practice absolutely Sunnah. During the Prophet's time, people in other mosques used to perform it in congregation in their places, and he ﷺ never stopped them, and anything that is established through such acknowledgment is also Sunnah.

As for 'Umar's statement, "How good this innovation is", most of those who use it as evidence for classifying innovation as good or abominable will not give up on establishing any rule whatsoever with the opinion of any companion, even Umar himself; in matters where he does not supposedly contradict the Prophet ﷺ in them, rather their slogan is: 'the deposition of a companion is not an evidence.' How do they hold to such when it supposedly contradicts the statement of Prophet ﷺ?

The truth is that scholars who hold that the opinion of a companion is sufficient to establish rulings only hold that for issues where such an opinion does not contradict any authentic tradition of the Prophet ﷺ in respect of the issues. So, whichever way, a companion's opinion is never staged to oppose an authentic tradition of the Prophet ﷺ. What

⁵⁷⁰ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1375), at-Tirmidhī (806), an-Nasā'ī (1605), and Ibn Mājah (1327).

is possible, according to a report that came down from Ahmad, is that the general ruling contained in a tradition can be reduced to being specific by the statement of a companion. However, such a reduction will only affect the present issue and will not affect others.

Moreover, ‘Umar’s definition of the practice as a good innovation is a lexical and not a *Shar’i* one. Innovation in the lexical sense applies to anything that is done for the first time and without precedent, while in the *Shar’i* sense, it stands for any act that cannot be supported with a *Shar’i* argument.

If there was a text of the Prophet ﷺ indicating the commendability or obligatoriness of a given act, or simply indicating his approval of the given act, and the act was carried out after his death, such as the register of pension instituted by Abū Bakr, then such an act would be quite appropriate to call an innovation in the lexical sense. It is because it was done for the first time, as it would be to refer to the religion brought by the Prophet ﷺ as an innovation, a novelty, which indeed it was to the messengers, sent by the Quraysh to Najashi, who spoke to him about the Companions who had migrated to Abyssinia in the following terms: “These—they have departed from the faith of their ancestors and have not entered that of the King; instead they have come with a wholly new (innovated) and unknown religion.” On the other hand, an act that has been indicated by the Qur’an and Sunnah is not an innovation in the *Shar’i* sense, even though the lexicon calls it that. Thus, the word *innovation* acquires a wider meaning in its lexical sense than it does in the *Shar’i* sense.

Clearly, the Prophet ﷺ did not intend by his words that “every innovation is error,” every act that was to be done for the first time, because even Islam, or rather, every *Shar’i* brought by the prophets is a wholly new act. He was referring to the new acts that he had not laid down himself.

Going back to the matter of *Tarawih* prayer, in the time of the Prophet, Muslims used to perform *Tarawih* individually as well as collectively during Ramadan. The Prophet ﷺ himself led them in prayer about three or four times; subsequently, at the last time he absented himself while the

companions gathered in the mosque expecting him, he later said to them:

إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَمْنَعْنِي أَنْ أَخْرُجَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا كَرَاهَةً أَنْ تُفْرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ، فَصَلُّوا أَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ، فَإِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الصَّلَاةِ صَلَاةُ الْمَرْءِ فِي بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةَ.

Nothing prevented me from coming to you, except that I feared that if I offer it regularly it might become obligatory, observe prayers in your houses, for one's best prayer is that which he observes in his house, except the obligatory prayers.⁵⁷¹

The prophet ﷺ explained that his absence was because of his fear that if he offered it regularly, it might have become obligatory. But for his apprehension, we know, he would have made himself present. The need, therefore, remains intact.

During his caliphate, 'Umar had the people gather behind a single recitation and the mosque was illuminated with lamps. In time this became the vogue. However, gathering people behind a single leader and lighting lamps was an entirely unprecedented act in their lives. So he termed it an innovation, for in the language it could have been termed only that, though it did not constitute an innovation in the *Shari'a* sense.

The Sunnah conceived of it as a pious work, and the fear that it would become an obligation disappeared with the death of the Prophet ﷺ, removing what had previously been a hindrance.

The same is also true of the manner of collecting the Qur'an together. Because it was still being revealed to the Prophet, it could not be compiled during his lifetime, and Allāh could change or keep whatever parts He wished. Had it then been put together in a single volume, it would have been difficult or impossible to register an alteration every time it was introduced. However, with the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the Qur'an and *Shari'a* were permanently fixed, and Muslims were spared further alteration by an increase or decrease in the number of Qur'anic verses, as well as a further increase in both positive and negative obligations.

⁵⁷¹ Al-Bukhārī (731), with close wordings. The proof intended is also found in al-Bukhārī (2012, 924, 761).

The provision for it was already in the Sunnah and the Muslims acted likewise. Though an innovation in the language, the act is nevertheless a Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

The same is true of ‘Umar’s expulsion of the Jews of Khaibar and the Christians of Najran from the Arabian Peninsula, and Abū Bakr was hindered by his military action against Muslims who refused to pay *Zakāt*. Both actions, though lexically innovations, are perfectly *Shari’a* in the sense that the Prophet ﷺ would have resorted to them, and, at least in the case of the former, we know he instructed himself before his death:

أَخْرِجُوا الْيَهُودَ، وَالتَّصَارِي مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ

Drive the Jews and Christians out of Arabia!⁵⁷²

This action is referred to as innovation only lexically, and that is why the Jews confronted ‘Umar, saying: “How could you expel us while Abūl Qasim (i.e., the Prophet ﷺ) had retained us?” They later approached ‘Alī ﷺ during his reign, pleading him to send them back to al-Khaibar. They said to him: “Grant us,” but he denied their request since it was the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ who legislated that, though he had not done it himself. So also, his statement ﷺ:

حُدُوا الْعَطَاءَ مَا كَانَ عَطَاءً، فَإِذَا كَانَ عَوِضاً عَنْ دِينِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا تَأْخُذُوهُ

Accept gift so far it is granted as a present, but when it becomes a hush money given against your religious deposition, do not accept it.⁵⁷³

At a time, the Islamic leaders began to grant people hush money to help them in their evil practices, so who refused those presents at the time has indeed followed the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Though rejecting gifts offered by the authority was a practice of recent origin,

⁵⁷² Muslim (1767), but with the text: “لأُخْرِجَنَّ الْيَهُودَ، وَالتَّصَارِي مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ—I shall drive the Jews and the Christians from Arabia.” This tradition is also reported in several portions in *Shāḥihayn* with the text: “Drive the polytheists from the Arabia.”

⁵⁷³ Weak, Abū Dawūd (2958), with only a close text.

when the authorities introduced such practices, the people reverted to the manner that was authorized by the Prophet ﷺ.

Among the practices carried out after the death of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and classified as his Sunnah was what Uhban ibn Saify did in obedience to the command of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, the order he gave him when he offered him a sword. He ﷺ said to him:

قَاتِلْ بِهِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَاكْسِرْهُ

Fight with it the polytheists, but when you notice that Muslims begin to wage wars against one another, then, break it.⁵⁷⁴

Breaking one's sword was not a practice known among the Muslims, but when it was an order given by the Prophet ﷺ, Uhban did that after his death. Among the practices was the war Abū Bakr waged against those who refused to pay *Zakāt*. Although the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ never fought anyone on the basis of payment of *Zakāt*, he did say:

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا، عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ، وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا، وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

I'm commanded to fight against the people until they proclaim the Oneness of Allāh—there is no deity worthy of worship except

⁵⁷⁴ Sound, at-Tirmidhī (2203), Ahmad (20671 and 27200), and others, but at-Tirmidhī's report does not have the order of breaking his sword.

Note: All the narrations in respect of Uhban ibn Saify concerning the order of the Prophet ﷺ for him not partake in the fighting that would occur among the Muslims after him neither have it that the Prophet ﷺ gave him his sword, nor that he should fight the polytheists, or to take it to Mount Uhud to break it. The narrations only have it that the Prophet ﷺ commanded him to break his sword and take one made of wood, which he did. However, the tradition the author quoted resembles that of Muhammad ibn Maslamah: "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ gave me a sword, and then said to him: fight with it the polytheists so far wars are waged against them, but when you see my followers fighting one another, take to it (mount) Uhud; beat it with the mountain until it gets broken." *Al-Fitan* of Nu'aim ibn Hammad (397), *Mūsānaf* of Ibn Abī Shaibah (37149), and others.

Allāh and that Muhammad is His Messenger, if they do that, then they will have gained protection from me for their blood and property, unless [they commit acts that are punishable],⁵⁷⁵ and their reckoning will be with Allāh.⁵⁷⁶

As it is known that the payment of *Zakāt* is one of the conditions for accepting one's proclamation of the Oneness of Allāh, that is the reason why acknowledging the Oneness of Allāh did not secure the people from being fought. Another version of the tradition explains that further:

...حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ.

Until they proclaim the Oneness of Allāh—there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, and that Muhammad is His Messenger, and perform *as-Salāt* and give *Zakāt*.⁵⁷⁷

There are lots of those instances.

The rule that guided these acts is: The people would not institute anything except if they considered it beneficial; and if they believed it harmful, they would not have established it, for neither reasoning nor faith support doing so. As a result, whatever people consider positive should be investigated to determine the necessity that justifies it. If the need for it arose after the Prophet's death and without that being a thing of immoderation, excessiveness, or extravagance on the part of the Muslims, then it might be permissible to institute such. The same rule applies to the need to establish something that the Prophet ﷺ abandoned for a reason. If the impediment to its institution by the Prophet ﷺ has been lifted by his death, then that could be done.

Innovation is never permissible if it is made without a need that warrants it or if the need for it is caused by human transgressions. Any matter that might have been necessary during the Prophet's lifetime

⁵⁷⁵ The right of *Kalimatu ash-Shahādah*—proclaiming the Oneness of Allāh.

⁵⁷⁶ Muslim (21, and 2407).

⁵⁷⁷ Al-Bukhārī (25) and Muslim (22).

but was never practiced by him is simply not a positive one. But a need that itself arose after the Prophet's death and which, moreover, does not involve insubordination to Allāh may be considered beneficial.

In this respect, the Islamic jurists take two positions: (a) that which is not forbidden may be undertaken, this is the method of those who support establishing stipulations on the basis of *'Masālih al-Mursalah'* (free or unconditional benefits); and (b) that which is not commanded should not be done, this is the opinion of the scholars who are against establishing stipulations on the basis of free or unconditional benefits. The latter shows two varieties: some maintain that a stipulation simply cannot be affirmed unless it is substantiated by a proof derived either from the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, his actual practice, or his admission. These people deny the application of analogical reasoning (*qiyas*). The other believes in analogical reasoning and, thus, thinks that a principle can be established if it can be traced back to the Prophet ﷺ either in actual word or in spirit.

As for something whose need was altogether present in the Prophet's lifetime but was never instituted, instituting it simply amounts to altering the religion of Allāh. Only such kings, evils scholars, and people intent on altering Allāh's religion include it in the religion, or those of them who lapse into error by recourse to *ijtihad*. The prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

إِنَّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ زَلَّةَ عَالِمٍ، وَجِدَالَ الْمُتَنَافِقِ بِالْقُرْآنِ
وَأُيُومَةِ الْمُضِلِّينَ.

What I fear most about you is the scholar's unintended mistake (in respect of the religious verdicts), and the deceptive arguments of the hypocrites about the Qur'an, and the evil authorities.⁵⁷⁸ (It is also reported from the statements of a number of the companions)

The example of this last category is the *adhān* (call to prayer) which was introduced on both 'īds by some Islamic authorities. When it was instituted, the Muslims at the time detested it for being an innovation. So, were it not enough to detest something on the basis of it being

⁵⁷⁸ Authentic, I only found it from the statement of 'Umar. *Sunan ad-Darimī*(220).

an innovation, the people would not have been right to disapprove of the act, and it would have been said to them: calling people to the *'id* prayer is an act of remembrance and a call to the way of Allāh, which falls within the scope of the general principle of acting for Allāh's course, as Allāh commanded:

﴿ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴾

Remember Allāh with much remembrance.⁵⁷⁹

And could be understood from Allāh's saying:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ ﴾

And who is better in speech than one who calls to the path of Allāh.⁵⁸⁰

Alternatively, the detestation could have been supported through analogical deductions drawn from the *adhān* of the Jum'ah prayer—a seasonal congregational prayer akin to the *'id*. Although inferring the permissibility of saying the *adhān* to the *'ids* on this basis would hold more strength than the introduction of certain innovations based on claims of courtesy, however, the fact that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ did not institute a call to prayer for the *'ids*, the presence of the need for which undertaking would have been necessary at the time, and the absence of no impediment thereof, would be enough for it being innovation. So, abstaining from instituting this practice aligns with the Sunnah. Given the fact that the Prophet ﷺ commanded that the *adhān* be said for the *Jum'a* prayer and conducted *'id* prayers without the *adhān* or *iqāmah*, it can be inferred that refraining from establishing the *adhān* for *'id* prayers aligns with his Sunnah. Therefore, it is not for anyone to establish it, such an act would be analogous to increasing the number of daily prayers, or the units of a particular prayer, or the number of the month/days for performing fast or *Hajj*.

For instance, if a man wishes to say the Dhur prayer as a five-unit

⁵⁷⁹ Sūrah al-'Aḥzāb, 33:41.

⁵⁸⁰ Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:33.

prayer, claiming that each increment of one unit is a good deed, such an increment is clearly outright unwarranted and unjustifiable. Or suppose he wishes to designate a special place for the remembering of Allāh, that will also be forbidden, and all these do not come under good innovations, but rather, “every innovation is error.”

Hence, without knowing any specific prohibition concerning this issue—*adhān*, or its evil implication, one will not doubt it is being heresy. This was an example of something that arose in response to a need, the deterrent having disappeared with the Prophet’s death, which may have been good. But what a man begins with an interest in or argues for on the strength of arguments such as: though the incentive was present during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, he did not respond to it, is first and foremost an act of abandonment of a specific Sunnah, before it can be considered an item of general validity or a case in which analogical reasoning may be applied.

Thus, the newfangled practice by an Islamic leadership—and due, no doubt, to neglect—of making the sermon precede the *ʿid* prayers, the plea being the fact that people do not wait long enough to hear it, is a characteristic example of the case. Because whereas the Prophet ﷺ delivered a sermon that was profitable for men, this authority says only those things in his sermons that seek to establish and promote his own dominion and authority. So, these insubordinations could not necessitate instituting another insurgence by this authority, but rather, he should relieve himself of these burdens by repenting to Allāh and adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, only then can the situation be normalized. However, if after putting in those efforts things do not get better, he shall not be held responsible for anything afterward; he shall only be responsible for his own indulgences and will not be answerable for other people’s deeds.

Furthermore, there are two main points surrounding this issue that, if one can understand them, he will be able to offer solutions to the ambiguities surrounding most of these recent innovations invented into the religion.

1. The Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

مَا أَحَدَتْ قَوْمٌ بِدْعَةً إِلَّا نَزَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ مِثْلَهَا

Whenever a community resorted to innovation, Allāh diminishes from them a corresponding measure of Sunnah.⁵⁸¹

We mentioned this tradition earlier on. There and then, it was explained that the *Shari'a* provided for every mind what it needs to imbibe the truth, and that if the mind is otherwise allowed to absorb innovations, there will remain no space for the Sunnah to reside, just like someone who nourishes himself with harmful food.

Some Islamic authorities in the past made up several abominable practices and transgressions, among them unlawful seizure of property and unjust application of penalties to crimes, because they failed to uphold this true course, which is all about commanding good and forbidding evil. If those authorities were just and took from the people only what was permissible under the *Shari'a* provision and placed it appropriately between them, with the aim of establishing the law of Allāh, not with the intention of establishing or promoting their domination and authority, and they administered the legal penalty upon both the highborn and the inferior, and upon the near and the far, equally, and exercised their utmost strength towards encouraging the people to give in to the truth which Allāh has commanded, and discouraged them of evil practices, they would have had no need to institute those unlawful stipulations or the unjust application of penalties on crimes or any other despotic measures, like it was during the reign of Rightly-Guided Caliphs, 'Umar ibn Abdul-Azīz, and other just leaders of the past.

In the case of the so-called scholars, if they had established the Book of Allāh, understood what it says about "*al-Bayyināt*" (the proofs Allāh stipulated in His Book), acted upon "*al-Hudāh*" (the beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds therein), and instituted the "*Hikmah*" (Wisdom) that Allāh sent with His Prophet ﷺ, which is the Sunnah of

⁵⁸¹ Weak, Ahmad (16970).

the Prophet ﷺ, they would definitely have been able to acquire several kinds of beneficial ideas they required to deal with the general people. Consequently, they would have been able to differentiate between the good and the bad amongst them. More so, Allāh has defined this nation as just. He says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾

Thus, We have you a just nation, that you be witnesses over mankind.⁵⁸²

And if they did all that, they wouldn't have needed to indulge, for establishing the religious fundamentals, in the false proofs invented by the theologians or the deceptive concepts created by people who are doomed in analogical reasoning,⁵⁸³ claiming to be implementing such concepts to justify the correctness of some religious branches.

All of these concepts they invented are not recognized by the *Shari'a*, so whatever might be found correct or useful has its basis in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, known to those who are endowed with its knowledge, though it might be hidden from others.

As for the zealous worshippers, if they worshiped Allāh in accordance with His ordinances in respect to their sayings and practices, the apparent and the hidden, they would have enjoyed the pleasure of *al-Kalm at-Tayyib* (the good speech) and *al-'Amal as-Sālih* (the righteous practices) that Allāh sent with His Prophet ﷺ. They would have achieved through that righteousness, high dignity, and virtuous placement, which would have prevented them from involving themselves in the different kinds of engagements of recent origin, such as *at-Taghbīr* (sweet-sounding) and the like; among chanting and melodies recently invented, which are capable of diverting one away from listening to the Qur'an and other kinds of Allāh's remembrance, or things of the same nature. And also like the several acts of worship that were introduced into the religion,

⁵⁸² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:143.

⁵⁸³ The people who do qiyas without necessity, they result to analogical reasoning when there are clear cut evidences on issues.

caused by their inappropriate adherence to the religion, though many scholars, the zealous worshippers, and even the authorities could be excused for doing all that out of *Ijtihād*.

The aim of this discussion, however, is to emphasize that these people should not be imitated unless one knows the evidence for which they acted, because if they are pardoned for their *Ijtihād*, the one who imitated them will be punished; those authorities, scholars, and worshippers may be honest in their dispositions, but made mistakes in their times. It is not a condition for being honest that one is always correct in his utterances or that his deeds are always in accordance with the Sunnah. If we do that, we would have expected him to be in the realm of the Prophet ﷺ. And this is a major concern.

So, we cannot exhaust the discussion about the kinds of innovations, their descriptions, and the rulings concerning them in the work; however, we only intend to clear up the ambiguities that were raised against the authentic traditions that have come in respect of the issue and to establish the imperativeness of working with the traditions that censure innovations.

The Second Reason: Recognizing their Detrimental Impact on Matters of Faith

THE SECOND REASON why festivals and holidays with recent origin should be reproachable: they corrupt faith.

It should be known that not everyone, and probably not even most people, can perceive the danger inherent in this type of innovation, especially when it comes from the same kind as prescribed acts of worship. Only people who are graced with intelligence can grasp part of the corruption that lies within them. It is incumbent upon Muslims to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah. If, in spite of that, they cannot comprehend the positive as well as the negative aspects of such innovations, we take it upon ourselves to lay bare some of their harm:

The observance of a novel act on a specific day with the concomitant

observance of certain dietary and social customs must unavoidably grow from a prior inner belief in this day's excellence over all other days. Thus, when one fasts on the first Thursday of Rajab or prays during the night of the Friday that follows it, which is called *Salāt ar-Ragha'ib*, he naturally believes in the commendability of fasting on that Thursday as greater than fasting on the Thursday that precedes or follows it, and in the superiority of this Friday night over all other Friday nights, or all other nights in general. Simply stated, this amounts to particularizing a day with a certain devotional exercise that the *Shari'a* has not elected to particularize. So, the basis of these innovations is an inner belief in the excellence and commendability of these acts, and nothing is established without basis.

More so, in respect of this issue, the *Shari'a* has given consideration to this implication, and there are stipulations from the *Shari'a* regarding its effect, or rather, it has appropriate influences on the ruling. That is because if the effect of an occurrence is felt at a more appropriate time, the cause is adequately determined, as is maintained by the scholars who believe in the concept of "cause and effect", many scholars of the Hanbali school and some scholars from other schools. However, scholars who do not believe in the concept of "cause and effect" are not satisfied with this position; rather, they always require reasons from the *Shari'a* that will allow such a ruling to be influenced by the cause. Some scholars of the Hanbali school and others from other schools believe that. These people will only justify a given issue with a reason the *Shari'a* specified for another, provided that reason is common to them, not only the cause.

However, there is another opinion on this issue, which is considered the third. Many scholars of the Hanbali school and others maintained it. This opinion subjects the ruling to the description established by the *Shari'a* on issues. According to the scholars who have this opinion, it is not enough to justify a given issue with the cause or reason present in another; rather, the issues must have the same descriptions.

The summary of the difference between these three opinions is that if the *Shar'i* stated the reason for a ruling, as it is in this tradition concerning the purity of a cat, though it is a predator:

إِنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ بِنَجَسٍ، إِنَّهَا مِنَ الطَّوَافِينِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَالطَّوَافَاتِ

It is not impure; verily, it is one of those walking animals who go around among you.⁵⁸⁴

Here, the reason for the cat's purity is stated or signified, so whether the effect of the reason is known or not, the reason is acceptable, as agreed by the three opinions, though they disagree as to whether or not the cause is regarded as *qiyas* (analogical reasoning) if the ruling is applied to another animal for the same reason.

The example of this ruling in people's day-to-day affairs is like when a master says to his maid, "Do not allow so and so person to enter my house for he is a heretic, or for he is a black fellow, etc." The man is understood to mean that he does not want any innovators or black people to enter his house. So, it is as well as saying, "Do not allow any innovator or a black fellow to enter my house." This way of understanding is commonly applicable to the concept of an oath. For instance, if someone vows, "I won't wear this garment because the person who gave it to me used to remind me of his grace," he is guilty of perjury of the oath if he wears another garment given to him by another fellow who as well reminds him of the offer, etc.

However, if the *Shar'i* gives a ruling for a particular issue but does not mention the reason for it, if, however, the reason for that ruling is stated in respect of another issue of a like nature, this reason is adopted for the issue at hand. For example, if a father is allowed to marry off his little maiden without her consent, by the same token, it could be concluded that he is justified in taking total control over her property for the same reason of her age. So, we say: It was the same capacity he had to give her hand in marriage as he has to control her property, or we say: It was the same capacity he had to take control over her property as he has to marry her out without her consent, which was the fact that she was little and could not take the decision herself. Such a reason is considered one that influences its rule; in some instances, the *Shar'i*

⁵⁸⁴ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (75, 76), at-Tirmidhī (92), an-Nasā'ī (340), Ibn Mājah (376).

may state that it affects the rules, and at other times it may be silent on it or even in the effect. The first two groups consider this effect. They infer it through analogical deduction, whose mode of operation is the following: if a given rule is affected by a certain description at a given time, the effect is felt with the same influence at another.

But the third group does not believe this; they require separate evidence that mentions the reason for the rule to be adopted in a new instance. They argue that it is possible for two separate issues to have the same ruling for different reasons, so the reason for which a ruling is given to one issue might not be the same as the other, even though they have the same ruling. For example, the Prophet ﷺ in a tradition prohibits a man from going for a commodity his brother has gone for, competing with his brother in purchasing a commodity he has offered for, or seeking the hand of a woman his brother has already sought because of the havoc those practices could cause in the people's interrelationships with one another. Nevertheless, this reason is otherwise stated in a different tradition concerning another issue:

لَا تُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى عَمَّتَيْهَا، وَلَا عَلَى خَالَئَتَيْهَا، فَإِنَّا نَكْمُ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمْ ذَلِكَ
فَقَطَعْتُمْ أَرْحَامَكُمْ.

Do not marry a woman together with her paternal or maternal aunt; for if you do that, you will spoil the kinship amongst you.⁵⁸⁵

In this tradition, the reason for the prohibition is mentioned and its effect is apparent, unlike in other cases. However, the reason for the prohibitions in other cases could not be analogized except for the reason stated here. So, exploring the root cause of a rule is a way of getting down to its reason. An example of such an exploration in people's interactions is when someone says to his friend, "Do not offer that poor man alms, for he is a heretic." Then another poor heretic came to ask his friend for alms, and he advised, "Do not give him." If there is enmity between this other man and the adviser, do we say that the reason the adviser prevented

⁵⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī (5108, 5109, 5110) and Muslim (1408)

his friend from giving this man alms is the same as the first, or is there a possibility that it is because of the enmity between them?

Therefore, if the *Shar'i* gave a rule over an issue considering a certain description but didn't specify any reason, and the reason has also not been mentioned in respect of a similar issue elsewhere, such a description is considered suitable but strange because we have no reason for such a rule before and because there is no indication from the *Shar'i* either. The first group would permit such induction, but the two others would not. This way of induction is done without considering the available proofs that might indicate it from the *Shar'i'a*. While the former is a rational deduction made from the available evidence, this one is a situation where the reason for the rule given is present in the evidence. Being that as it may, we can also seek a reason for which a rule is given in certain situations by exploring evidence outside the issue.

Considering these classes as established, the issue at hand⁵⁸⁶ falls within the category of issues whose reasons for their prohibitions are mentioned right in the evidence available for them and whose effects have influence on similar issues. That is because the Prophet ﷺ prohibited adopting special times for either prayers or fasting and permitted them if no specification was ascribed to them. Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَخْتَصُّوا لَيْلَةَ الْجُمُعَةِ بِقِيَامٍ مِنْ بَيْنِ اللَّيَالِي، وَلَا تَخْصُّوا يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ بِصِيَامٍ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَيَّامِ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ فِي صَوْمٍ يَصُومُهُ أَحَدُكُمْ.

Do not specifically designate the night (preceding) Friday among the nights for prayer and do not specifically designate Friday among days for fasting, except when anyone among you is accustomed to fast which coincide with this day (Friday).⁵⁸⁷

Also in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* Abū Hurairah was reported to mention that the

⁵⁸⁶ Fasting on the first Thursday of Rajab and praying during the night of the following Friday, called *Salāt ar-Raghā'ib*, which are both believed to be commendable and superior to any other Thursday and Friday night.

⁵⁸⁷ Muslim (1144).

Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا يَصُومَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ، إِلَّا يَوْمًا قَبْلَهُ أَوْ بَعْدَهُ.

None of you should fast on Friday, unless he fasts a day before or after it.⁵⁸⁸ (That is the text of Bukhārī's report).

Al-Bukhārī reported on the authority of Juwairiyah bint al-Harith that:

"أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَهِيَ صَائِمَةٌ، فَقَالَ: "أَصُمْتِ أَمْسِ؟"، قَالَتْ: لَا، قَالَ: "تُرِيدِينَ أَنْ تَصُومِي عَدَا؟" قَالَتْ: لَا، قَالَ: "فَأُفْطِرِي"

The Prophet ﷺ entered her apartment and found her fasting, and he said to her, "Did you fast yesterday?" She replied, "No," he asked again, "Do you intend to fast tomorrow?" She replied, "No," he then said to told her, "Break your fast."⁵⁸⁹

In *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Muhammad ibn 'Abād ibn Ja'far was reported to have said:

سَأَلْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، وَهُوَ يَطُوفُ بِالْبَيْتِ "أَنْهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ صِيَامِ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ؟ فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ، وَرَبِّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ"

I asked Jābir ibn Abdullah ﷺ while he was circumambulating the house (Ka'bah), did the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibit fasting on Friday singly? He replied, "Yes! I swear by the Lord of this House."⁵⁹⁰ (And that is the text of Muslim's report).

And on the authority of Ibn Abbās ﷺ the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

⁵⁸⁸ Al-Bukhārī (1985) and Muslim (1144).

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Bukhārī (1986).

⁵⁹⁰ Al-Bukhārī (1984) and Muslim (1143).

لَا تَصُومُوا يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَحَدَّهُ.

Do not fast on Friday singly.⁵⁹¹ (Ahmad reported that).

A hadith like the above is also reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*; on the authority of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا يَتَقَدَّمَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ رَمَضَانَ بِصَوْمِ يَوْمٍ أَوْ يَوْمَيْنِ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ رَجُلٌ
كَانَ يَصُومُ صَوْمَهُ، فَلْيَصُمْ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ.

None of you should fast one day or two days just before Ramadan, unless he has the habit of fasting (*Nawāfil*-voluntary), then he can fast that day.⁵⁹²

That is the text of Bukhārī, and he رضي الله عنه meant that he should fast his usual days of voluntary fasting. The *Sharī'a* has classified days into three categories with regard to fasting:

1. Days particularized for fasting either as obligatory, for instance, Ramadan, or as commendable, such as the Day of 'Arafah and the Day of 'Āshura';
2. Days in which fasting is absolutely forbidden, such as on both *īds*; and;
3. Days in which it is prohibited to especially single out a day for fasting, such as Friday and the last night of Sha'ban (*sirar*).

In this last category, fasting is not viewed as detestable if coupled with another day; however, it becomes forbidden if marked with an act, regardless of whether the fasting person intended to mark it or not or whether he believed it to be commendable or not. It is realized, however, that there is harm embedded in particularizing those days for fasting; if not, fasting therein would not have been considered absolutely prohibited, like the days of festival, or fasting would have been considered permissible therein, like the day of 'Arafah and 'Āshura. More so, this harm is not present on any other days; if it were, there would not have been any meaning to that particular prohibition.

⁵⁹¹ Sound, Ahmad (2615).

⁵⁹² Al-Bukhārī (1914) and Muslim (1082).

Evidently, therefore, harm proceeds from particularizing that which has no particularity, so we are told by the Prophet ﷺ for the very act which is prohibited or commanded has its own reason for either the prohibition or sanction, as in the Prophet's words, "Be different from the polytheists."

So, prohibiting particularizing certain times for fasting or prayer would imply that there is harm from such particularization. If Friday is an excellent day, and in comparison to other days, prayer, supplication, *dhikr*, recitation of the Qur'an, purity, perfume, and decorative clothes are considered more commendable during it, it might lead one to assume that fasting on it is superior to fasting on any other day, and that spending Friday night in devotion for prayers is like fasting during the day, superior to devotion on other nights. However, the Prophet ﷺ forbade particularizing it in any way. This was to counter the harm that is produced only through particularization.

Likewise, though the *Shar'i* does not consider it to bear any excellence and the Prophet ﷺ therefore forbade it, it is sometimes believed that adding a few days to Ramadan is an excellent practice since this may preserve the fast.

This sense is present in the issue that occupies us here. People mark these festivals and holidays by virtue of their belief in their excellence. Whenever these times are marked for fasting or praying, a belief in their excellence may be seen to lie very close to such marking, although they have no excellence and marking them in any way is forbidden. There is, therefore, doubt that particularizing it will be possible except by believing in its excellence.

A man who says that although he believes that prayer on Friday night or fasting on its day is the same as on any other night or day, he still marks it is inevitably led to this attitude by his blind loyalty to another man, his slavish adherence to some custom, or his fear of censure, etc., or else he is a liar. What invites him to such an act can never remain void of corrupt belief or some other non-religious motive. Such a belief is incorrect.

We know for sure that neither the Prophet ﷺ nor his Companions, nor yet any of the religious leaders, ever mentioned anything about the

excellence of this day, of observing a fast on it in particular, or, again in particular, of engaging in devotion during its night. The traditions on the subject are fabrications, which may be added the fact that they gained currency in Islam after the fourth century.

The situation being what it is, it is impossible to conceive of these days as possessing any excellence. For if the Prophet ﷺ himself, his Companions, the *Tābi'ūn* and, finally, all other religious leaders did not recognize excellence in them, we are all the more restricted in our ability to recognize it as part of a faith seeking to draw man closer to Allāh.

Moreover, if these people recognize this excellence, it is quite impossible not to pass it on to at least one person, or that none of them will find it fit to put it into practice, given that they have more reasons to engage in good deeds as well as pass the message of Islam on.

More so, the assumption of the excellence of these practices would imply that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and all the Muslims in the Three Favorite Centuries are ignorant of some acts of the religion or conceal them, or they left parts of the acts that both the *Shari'a* and their pristine customs necessarily call for their exhibition. All these are impossible in their respect, either on a religious or customary basis, which apparently nullifies their claim to the excellence of those acts.

This newfangled act is inextricably linked to an erroneous belief or the observance of a religion devoted to something other than Allāh, while neither corrupt beliefs nor devotion to something other than Allāh are permissible.

Such innovations stem from behaviors that are either absolutely or evidently impermissible. This belief, moreover, is closely related to vain and un-Islamic inner states – e.g., glorification, exaltation, and so on and so forth.

Though a man may claim that he does not believe in these states, he simply cannot eliminate them because they emanate from the consciousness of what he believes, even if he is wrong and believes that the act is unavoidable. For if one's mind becomes unoccupied with the feeling for the excellence of a thing, he gives up praising it, and the best he can do at that state is generate opposing thoughts. As far as he

believes, he would seize on praising the act, but his mind is attached to it because of what has been related about it, or how people in general do it, or how a certain person actually did it, or, finally, what appears to be its benefit.

Acting on these innovations, however, is incompatible with obligatory beliefs and also contradicts the divine message brought by the prophets. Such conduct, however mild, results in hypocrisy.

The similarity of these acts is the practice of some people who used to honor Abū Jahl or Abdullah ibn Ubay because of his status, wealth, and good relationship with them, or because of his authority. If the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ spoke against him or ordered that he should be debased or killed, whosoever among the people did not obey his order would be considered to have a conflict of belief in his mind; conflict between the obedience to the Prophet ﷺ, borne out of good belief, and followership to his whims and caprices, borne out of his delusive thoughts.

Whoever ponders over this fact realizes how powerful the effect of *bid'a* is to the true faith, as it is said, "*Bid'a* (Innovation) took its source from *Kufr* (Disbelief)."

The objection is not only to prayer and fasting but also to all forms of devotional exercises—among them prayer at tombs and animal sacrifice at idols—which, though one might suspect them of having no merit whatsoever according to the *Shari'a*, are considered meritorious. As establishing a *Shari'a*-assessed virtue is called for, so is eliminating an unrecognized virtue. One might object by saying that some of the learned, the distinguished, and the sincere, not to mention those who are not so learned and distinguished, have themselves celebrated these festivals. There are benefits in it that a believer perceives in his innermost, such as purity and gentleness of heart, the elimination of the traces of sin, a positive response to his supplication (*du'a*), and the like, in addition to general references about the excellence of prayer and fasting found in the Qur'an. For instance, the Word of Allāh:

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى ﴿١﴾ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى ﴿٢﴾﴾

Have you seen the one who prevents (*) a servant when he prays?⁵⁹³

And the tradition:

الصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ

The prayer is illumination.⁵⁹⁴

We shall say: Anyone who celebrates these festivals based on his own independent judgment or because of blind conformity may merit reward for his good intention and for the part of his actions that are within the sphere of the prescribed, but he may be excused for that part that comes in the orbit of innovation. This is because he is quite pardonable for his independent judgment or blind conformity. The same holds true for all those benefits that are mentioned in this connection. They can also be realized only when they appertain to a lawful category, such as the exercise of fasting, remembrance of Allāh, recitation, kneeling and prostrating in prayers, obedience to Allāh, and supplication to Him. In the same vein, what is connected to the acts of sin is also pardoned with the excuse melted on him by his independent judgment or blind conformity. And that is the case with what is said in connection to some benefits derived from some disapproved innovations.

And yet this much does not prevent festivals from being detestable and forbidden and from exchanging these for the lawful ones in which there is no innovation. Similar is the case of people who added *adhān* to the prayer offered on both *īds*. Even Jews and Christians benefit from their acts of worship because their devotional acts must invariably include some lawful act, just as their tenets must invariably contain some truth handed down from the prophets. Yet, it is unnecessary to perform their acts of worship or circulate their words. This is because all innovated things inevitably include evil that far outweighs the good that they may have; otherwise, if their good outweighed their evil, the *Shari'a* would not have ignored them. We infer it as innovation simply for the reason that its evil is greater than its benefit, which is why it should be forbidden.

⁵⁹³ Sūrah al-'Alaq, 96:9-10.

⁵⁹⁴ Occur in lengthy tradition in Muslim (223).

In addition, the people are excused of the sins connected to these acts for their independent judgment or the like, such as sins in respect of *nabīdh* (wine) and a type of usury that some scholars among our *Salaf* disagreed about. Even with that, it is mandatory that these issues be explained to the public nowadays and that people be prevented from following the scholars who permitted them, as the truth about them must not be left unexplained in the course of teaching the Islamic knowledge. This further explains that those innovations contain harms, both in matters of belief and in mundane affairs, that contradict the truth brought by the Prophet ﷺ, and any benefit that associated with them is incapable of opposing to that truth.

Furthermore, if some eminent men had recourse to innovation, there were also those among their contemporaries who did not, firmly believing that innovations were detestable in their character, while others rejected them outright. If those who rejected and abandoned innovations were not more distinguished than those who resorted to them, they were not inferior to them. And because the people were more distinguished than those who abandoned and rejected innovations, the issue becomes one the people of authority differed about, which is then returned to Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, and the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ are in support of those who detested the innovations and not those who practiced them, and the whole of the Muslims of the past generations, who were far better than those of the later generations, were as well upon what they were.

Also, with respect to the acclaimed benefits, the predominant harms present in these innovations nullify any benefit that might be connected to them; amongst these harms are:

- The harms present in these innovations in terms of both belief and mundane affairs are that minds are preoccupied with them, thereby preventing people from imbibing many of the tenets of the Prophet ﷺ to the extent that people do not strive to preserve the five daily prayers or the *Tarawih* prayer but diligently preserve those heretic prayers.

- What these innovations caused was a nonchalant attitude towards the legitimate, obligatory, and supererogatory acts. A man would be seen performing those acts of innovation fervently with all sincerity of mind, but will not perform the legitimate acts of worship; among the obligatory acts and the supererogatory ones, with the least of the seriousness with which he observed those innovative acts. He performs the legitimate acts only as customary duties or routines, thereby losing what is embedded in them: Allāh's forgiveness of his sins, Allāh's blessing, being granted purification, submissiveness to and acceptance of his prayers by Allāh, and attaining sweetness in worship, etc. Certainly he loses an amount of these benefits, if he does not lose them all.
- What is known about the effect of these innovations in turning the good bad and the bad good, as well as in causing people to be ignorant of the true religion of the messengers and thus instituting their religion on ignorance.
- What they cause into the religion are several detestable practices, such as delaying the breaking of fasts, performing the 'Isha'i prayer in a non-submissive state of mind or speeding it up earlier than its prescribed time, prostrating at the completion of the prayers for no reason other than the prostration of *sahw* (forgetfulness), engaging in sorts of eccentric remembrances, and a lot of other undesirable practices, which only the people who are endowed with good religious insight and innermost discernment can realize.
- And among the evil effects of these innovations is what they cause in people's deviation from maintaining the straight path, due to the innovations developed in the minds of pride and arrogance, leading to deserting the worship of Allāh and obedience to the Prophet ﷺ in the best way possible. Abū Uthman an-Naisabūrī rahimahullāh was quoted as having commented concerning the fact that, "no one will desert a Sunnah (the practice of the Prophet ﷺ) except that he has developed arrogance in his mind," which is a step to developing other evils in the mind, thereby resulting in a total loss of obedience to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. One remains in that

state until he completely or overwhelmingly degenerates in his religious devotion, while he still thinks himself to be dutiful.

- Among these effects is also what we discussed of the evils present in each of the two types of innovations that the People of the Book festivals resulted from: those that which are connected to imitation and those that are not.

As we have exhaustively discussed the censure of innovation elsewhere, we shall not detain ourselves on that point. However, we will move on to a discussion of some of the main festivals themselves.

XVI

Innovations in Festivals with Regards to Times and Practices

Types of Innovated Temporal Festivals

AS PRESENTED EARLIER, the term “*īd* (festival)” represents location, time, and congregation. These three elements have spawned certain practices. There are three types of time, which comprise a number of innovations of festivals pertaining to the components of place and actions.

The first: A day has never been venerated in *Shari’a*, was unknown throughout the time of the *Salaf*, and has no cause to be venerated. For instance, the first Thursday and subsequent Friday night of Rajab (*ar-Raghā’ib*). In Islam, veneration of this day and night began after the fourth century. According to the learned, fabricated traditions were reported in this connection, professing to glorify the observation of a fast on that Thursday and the execution of this prayer, which the ignorant call *Salāt ar-Raghā’ib*.

The correct opinion of true scholars is that it is forbidden of single out this day for fast and to perform this newfangled prayer. Forbidden also is everything that aims at venerating this day, such as preparing foods, display of finery, etc., so that this day is treated as any other day and has no significance. The same holds true for another day mid-Rajab on which the prayer known as the prayer of Umm Dawūd is offered.

The second: A day on which an event takes place, just as it may take place on any other day, without it being necessary to turn that day into a festival, which the *Salaf* were not in the habit of celebrating. Thus, on the 18th of Dhu'l-Hijja, the Prophet ﷺ delivered a sermon at Ghadir Khumm while returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage. On that day, as reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the Prophet ﷺ commanded adherence to the Qur'an and respect for his family.

But certain heretics added to it, eventually claiming that the Prophet ﷺ had designated 'Alī as his successor by a clear public statement and by placing him prominently on a rug. They thus mention false words and an obviously nonexistent actions. They claim that the Companions, with the exception of a very small number, conspired to conceal this *nass* (designation) and deprived the heir of his rights, so acting against Islam.

Human nature, what we know about the integrity and piety of the people in question, and their religious obligation to uphold the truth – all of these indicate that such a matter could not have been concealed.

The purpose of this article is not to discuss *imāma* (leadership). Instead, we seek to demonstrate that turning such a day into a festival is a recent development with no basis. Neither among the *Salaf* nor yet among the Prophet's family who observed this day as a festival by doing a particular act. Festivals are a part of *Shari'a*, and *ittiba'* (compliance), rather than *ibtidā'* (innovation) should be the rule within. Numerous sermons, covenants, and events that took place on different days in the life of the Prophet ﷺ, among them the days of the battle of Badr, Hunain, Khandaq, conquest of Makkah, the day he migrated from Makkah, and the day of his arrival into Madinah. Numerous also are his sermons that recapitulate the principles of faith. Despite this, it was not deemed necessary to turn these days into festivals. It is rather

the who turn the eventful days in the lives of prophets into festivals, in particular the former who commemorate events in the life of 'Isā (Jesus). Festival is a *Shari'a* stipulation; whatsoever Allāh has decreed must be obeyed, and non-original religious practices must not be introduced.

This category also includes the practices of some Muslims who commemorate the *Mawlid* (Prophet's birthday) as a festival, either in imitation of the Christian celebration of Christmas or out of love and reverence for the Prophet ﷺ of Islam. Allāh may reward them for this *ijtihād* (devotion and effort), but not for their innovation, as the exact date of his birth is uncertain. The *Salaf* would have none of that, despite the fact that it may have been anticipated and there could have been no objection. If such a practice had been good, entirely or preponderantly, it would have been natural to expect the *Salaf* to have instituted such a celebration, what with their greater love and reverence for the Prophet ﷺ and their eagerness for the good. Indeed, the most complete expression of one's love and reverence for him lies in following and obeying him, in carrying out his command, in upholding his Sunnah both in inner and external life, and in advancing the cause of Islam with heart, hand, and tongue. Such was indeed the way of the earliest Muslims, whether *Muhājirūn* or *Anṣār*, and of those who followed them in piety.

These people who are eager for these innovations may have good intentions and put forth good effort, but their compliance with the Prophet's clear command is generally lukewarm. They are comparable to someone who only adorns the Qur'an but does not care to recite it, and if he does, he does not adhere to what it teaches; or to someone who adorns a mosque but does not pray in it or prays very little; or to someone who takes ornamental rosaries and prayer rugs. Such external adornment is not prescribed and, when accompanied with hypocrisy, smugness, and deviation from the ordained, destroys the people it affects, as the tradition has it:

مَا سَاءَ عَمَلُ قَوْمٍ قَطُّ، إِلَّا زَخَرَفُوا مَسَاجِدَهُمْ

No people's deed ever became evil deeds but they started to adorn their places of worship.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁵ Very weak, Ibn Mājah(741).

Know that a certain act may have an element of good inasmuch as it contains an element of the ordained. However, it may also be evil, such as innovation, etc. Then this evilness of the action will be proportional to the degree of hatred to the faith, as in the case with hypocrites and evildoers. In recent times, most Muslims have been guilty of this. There are two possible responses in such a scenario:

One: Eagerness in adherence to the Sunnah, inwardly and outwardly, commanding the reputable and rejecting the disreputable in yourself as well as among those under your control.

Two: One should, as far as possible, call people to adhere to the Sunnah. But if you see someone committing a disreputable act and he would abandon it only for a more disreputable act, then do not exhort him to give up his present evil deed for a greater evil deed, nor do you call upon someone to abandon mandatory or commendable act if abandoning it would lead him to engaging in a more harmful act. Calling him out in this respect is even more damaging than his actually performing that disreputable act. On the other hand, if an innovation includes a type of good, while abandoning that innovation, then do your best to convince him to substitute this good for an ordained one, because it is in man's nature to give up something in exchange for another. It does not behoove anyone to abandon good for a similar or greater good. Those who engage in this innovation are censured for committing something disreputable, and so are those who abandon the Sunnah, for among the Sunnah are obligatory in general and some, conditionally. Supererogatory prayer, for example, is not obligatory, but whoever intends to perform it becomes obliged to fulfill all its pillars; or he who commits a sin incurs the obligation to offer acts of atonement, re-payments, penitence and good deeds as may obliterate his sin, and similarly, it is incumbent upon whoever is an *imām* or a judge or a *mufti* or a *wali* (guardian) to fulfill the rights and obligations that devolve on him by virtue of his office, which is true also of seekers of knowledge and worshippers. Besides these, there are additional *Sunan* whose continued neglect and abandonment is regarded as extremely detestable; still other *Sunan* concern specifically the *a'imma* (leaders), to the exclusion of other people, in that it would be reprehensible if the

leaders abandoned them or in that only the leaders are under obligation to practice them, whereas the generality of the *Sunan* must be taught, and people must be encouraged to observe them.

Now, most of those who argue in support of devotional innovations neither successfully practice the Sunnah nor urge others to do so. In a sense, the state of such people is worse than that of those who actually engage in those practices containing an element of reprehensibility. While the true religion consists of commanding the reputable and forbidding the disreputable, neither of which can be effectively achieved without the other, so that no *munkar* (disreputable) be prohibited unless there is the exhortation for the *ma'ruf* (reputable); for when one is commanded to worship Allāh, he must also be forbidden to worship anything apart from Allāh. Because the fundamental and primary issue is to testify that: "There is none worthy of being worshipped except Allāh." Man had been created to uphold practices, not to be idle, and idleness is a nature created with others than him. Therefore, if he does not perform good deeds, he is not free of bad or abated activities, and since certain evil deeds are capable of destroying any type of good ones, bad deeds are prohibited.

A man may honor the Prophet's Birthday and celebrate it. He may be amply rewarded for his good intention and devotion to the Prophet ﷺ; since, as I have mentioned somewhere above, in some people this will be regarded as good, yet in a true believer it may be considered as bad.

Thus, when Imām Ahmad was informed about a certain prince who had spent almost one thousand *dinars* embellishing a copy of the Qur'an, he remarked: "So what? This is the very best way to spend money." This is despite the fact that Ahmad disapproved of adorning the Qur'an. One of Ahmad's disciples explained that the prince had spent the money on choice paper and calligraphy. However, Ahmad's intention was not such. Rather, he meant that such an act carried a positive element just as much as it did a negative one, for which it may be deemed unacceptable. These people may behave in such a manner without any compensation for unredeemed evil, for example, by spending this amount on immoral books such as entertainment and poetry or those containing Persian and Greek philosophies.

One must understand the nature of faith and distinguish the various elements of good and evil in human activities to discern their positive

and negative degrees and to select the most significant ones when they present themselves in an undifferentiated conglomeration. Such is the true nature of the knowledge brought by the Prophets. Differentiating between the category of the positive and that of the negative is often easy. Regarding the degrees of the positive and the negative in their undifferentiated conglomeration, recognize the various degrees of good and give preference to the best, while rejecting the worst of evils. This is the primary preoccupation of religious scholars. As for the degrees, there are three:

First: A prescribed positive deed and contains no negative element;

Second: A deed that is positive in one or more respects, either by virtue of good intention or, in addition, because it incorporates elements of the ordained; and

Third: A deed that has nothing positive about it, either because it avoids doing good actions or because it is pure evil.

The first category comprises generally adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ both in inner and outward life, both by word and deed in intellectual and practical matters. This is what should be learned, imparted, commanded, and acted upon in accordance with the requirements of the *Shari'a*, which may be, for instance, obligatory and/or commendable. The conduct of the early Muslims, whether *Muhājirūn* or *Anṣār*, and those who followed them in good works comes predominantly under this category.

The second grade, however, has remained predominantly the domain of so-called latter-day scholars and devout, as well as the rank and file. They are better than he who, to begin with, does not perform a positive act, whether prescribed by the *Shari'a* or not, or he who performs an act of an unlawful kind, such as unbelief, falsehood, treachery, and ignorance. This grade encompasses numerous kinds of acts.

But if a man engages in some of these negative devotional practices—such as *al-Wisāl*—persistent fasting without breaks, categorical renunciation of passion, etc. or keeping vigil during religiously insignificant nights, such as the first night of Rajab, etc. – his condition

is at least better than that of an idler who is entirely devoid of any desire for worshipping Allāh. Rather, most of these people who oppose such devotional practices also oppose worship as such, which is useful knowledge and righteous deeds, or one of them. They are neither fond of nor enthusiastic about worship, but because they are unable to express their attitude towards the obligatory precepts, they willy-nilly comply with them. Thus, whereas their actual behavior testifies to their rejection of both what is prescribed and what is not, their words compel their rejection of only what is not prescribed.

It any case, the true believer acknowledges the reputable and rejects the disreputable, and finally, in doing so, he is not prevented from agreeing with the hypocrites who are apparently one with him in commanding a given reputable act and in prohibiting a certain disreputable act, nor is he prevented from differing in opinion, as may be necessary, with some Muslim scholars in this matter. These and other similar matters must be known properly and acted upon.

The third grade is about days which are considered venerable in the Shari'a, for instance the Day of 'Āshura', the Day of 'Arafa, the Days of both 'īds, the last ten nights of Ramadan, the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijja, the night and day of Friday, the first decade of Muharram, and other similar days of excellence. Sometimes, this category may include activities that are believed to possess excellence but whose complements become objectionable and, therefore, forbidden. For example, thirsting, displaying of sorrow, congregating, and other novelties introduced by capricious people on the Day of 'Āshura' were neither prescribed by Allāh and His Messenger nor yet conceded by anyone among the early pious of Islam, nor by anyone within the Prophet's family or outside it. But inasmuch as Allāh honored the Prophet's grandson—one of the two leaders of the youths among the people of Paradise—and a number of his family on that day by martyrdom at the hands of the lewd, who were, moreover, humiliated by Allāh, this became a calamity which should be met with, as others have, in the spirit of lawful *istirja'*. However, some of the innovators introduced novelties on this day that are diametrically opposed to the divine command about how a man

should bear himself in the face of calamities. Moreover, they added falsehood and slandered the innocent Companions in connection with the tragedy of Husain ؓ and even other affairs that are hated by Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ. Fatimah bint Husain reported on the authority of her father, Husain ibn ‘Alī ؓ that the Messenger ﷺ said:

مَنْ أُصِيبَ بِمُصِيبَةٍ، فَذَكَرَ مُصِيبَتَهُ، فَأَخَذَتْ اسْتِرْجَاءًا، وَإِنْ تَقَادَمَ
عَهْدُهَا، كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلَهُ يَوْمَ أُصِيبَ

Whosoever is afflicted with a calamity and when he remembers it he say *istirja'* (*Inna lillahi wainna ilayhi raji'un*), even though the calamity happened a long time ago, Allāh will record for him a reward like that of the day it befell him.⁵⁹⁶ (Ahmad and Ibn Mājah reported it).

Reflect on this report, Husain received it from the Prophet ﷺ, then his daughter received it from him, and she acted on it at the time of the tragedy of her father. Such commemoration of calamities is not part of the faith of Islam; it is more akin to paganism. Therefore, they lost the benefit of fasting on that day.

On this day, some people engage in certain innovated things based on fabricated and groundless traditions, such as the traditions on the virtues of taking bath, coloring eyelids, shaking hand, so on and so forth. All of these practices are novelties, and they are all objectionable, although fasting on that day is commendable.

Various traditions are reported commending liberal spending on one's dependents, the most prominent being that of is 'Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammad al-Muntashar. He quotes his father, "We are told that he who spends liberally on his family on the occasion of 'Āshura, Allāh will enlarge His provision on him throughout the year."

For one thing, this report is discontinuous; for another, its narrator is unknown. This tradition was most likely created during the emergence of strong rivalry between the *Nasibah* and the *Rāfidhah*, for while the latter considered 'Āshura' to be a day of mourning, the former simply

⁵⁹⁶ Very weak, Ibn Mājah(1600) and Ahmad (1760)

forged traditions requiring that the day be celebrated as a festival with liberal spending. Both are, however, false.

In Muslim's collection, the Prophet ﷺ is quoted:

سَيَكُونُ فِي ثَقِيفٍ كَذَّابٌ وَمُيِيرٌ

There will be in Thaḳif a great liar and destroyer.

The arch-liar was al-Mukhtar ibn Abī 'Ubaid, who sided with and supported Husain. Subsequently, he showed himself to be a liar and a calumniator of Allāh. Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf, too, was a Thaḳafite, a man who was ill-disposed towards 'Alī and his party and who was a destroyer.

Whether the Nasibah or the *Rāfidhab*, both are guilty of innovation and error, though the latter lie the most and are generally the wickedest lot.

It is not permissible, however, to modify any aspect of the *Shari'a* for the sake of others or to demonstrate happiness and delight on the Day of 'Āshura by expending significant costs. These are innovations undertaken in response to the *Rāfidhab*. Traditions have been forged in this connection to stress the excellence of certain practices carried out on that day, such as bath taking, coloring eyelids, and so on and so forth. Some men authenticated these traditions, like Ibn Nasir and some others, but none of them are authentic. These traditions were then passed down to those who believed in their authenticity and put them into practice, unaware that they were false. It is also plausible that the severe houring of the day is a result of opposition to *Rāfidhab*, as it is the intention of Satan to deflect mankind from the Straight Path; he would not care which of the two parties they would eventually join. It is imperative that men avoid these innovations. The month of Rajab falls under this category because it is one of the sacred months.

According to tradition, when it came, the Prophet ﷺ would say:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي رَجَبٍ وَشَعْبَانَ وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ

O Allāh, bless us in Rajab and Sha'ban and bring us to Ramadan.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁷ Weak, Musnad (2346), *ad-Du'ā* of at-Ṭabarānī (911), *Amal al-Yawm wa Lailah*

There is no other established tradition about the excellence of Rajab, and those allegedly coming down on the subject from the Prophet ﷺ are generally false. Unless a tradition is proven to be false, the claim that it applies to acts of excellence may be credible. If otherwise, it must not be transmitted without first indicating its unreliability. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

مَنْ حَدَّثَ عَنِّي حَدِيثًا وَهُوَ يَرَى أَنَّهُ كَذِبٌ فَهُوَ أَحَدُ الْكَاذِبِينَ

Whoever narrates a Hadith from me thinking it to be false, then he is one of the two liars.⁵⁹⁸

Surely the traditions underlining the excellence of the first decade of Rajab, etc., have come down from the *Salaf*. But its adoption as a holiday, whereby it is singled out for fasting, is an act that Imām Ahmad considers reprehensible, as do others, on the basis of reports from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, Abū Bakrah and other Companions ﷺ. Ibn Mājah, through his chain of transmitters, reports: “The Prophet ﷺ forbade the fast of Rajab.”⁵⁹⁹ This, however, is not a strong report.

Whether this “reprehensible singling out” is the result of fasting throughout the month of Rajab or of failing to connect it to another month is a point on which Ahmad’s followers take two positions. Had this not been the place where we are occupied primarily with major problems, we would have surely talked at length about those positions.⁶⁰⁰

The night of mid-Sha’ban also comes under this heading. Again, many traditions, traceable directly to the Prophet ﷺ in ascending order (*marfu*), have been transmitted, besides numerous reports, all of which require that it be treated as a distinguished night and project some of the *Salaf* as actually marking it for prayér. Traditions of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*

of an-Nasā’ī (659), *Shu’ab al-Iman* of al-Bayhaqi (3534) and others.

⁵⁹⁸ Authentic, Muslim in the preface to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *at-Tirmidh* (2662), Ibn Mājah (38, 39, 40, and 41), and others.

⁵⁹⁹ Weak, Ibn Mājah (1743).

⁶⁰⁰ The summary of the discussion about fasting in the month of Rajab is that no authentic tradition has come down from the Prophet ﷺ to support it, and no Companion was authentically reported to have fasted it, not even its first decade. So also *as-Salāt*, there is no any authentic report to support its recommendation as well. Allāh knows best. See *Lataif al-Ma’arif* of Ibn Rajab (p. 118).

category have also been transmitted about fasting during the month of Sha'ban. Nonetheless, some scholars of Madinah among the *Salaf* as well as those among the *khalaf*, reject any excellence for the night in question and challenge the authenticity of traditions in this regard, among them the tradition:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) يَنْزِلُ لَيْلَةَ النَّصْفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا،
فَيَغْفِرُ لِأَكْثَرِ مِنْ عَدَدِ شَعْرِ غَنَمِ كَلْبٍ.

Verily, Allāh (the Great and Almighty descends) to the lowest Heavens during the night of the middle of Sha'ban, to grant forgiveness to more than the number of hairs on the sheep of (Banū) Kalb.⁶⁰¹

These scholars maintain that there is absolutely no difference between this and other nights. But the considered view of many or most scholars of our own school is that the night does enjoy excellence. This is textually adduced from Ahmad whose opinion is based on the fact that numerous traditions occur on the subject, and the lore of the *Salaf* also confirms that. Some of the virtues of this night have been mentioned in *Sunan* and *Musnad* works, though many other things have been fabricated in this regard.

The practice of observing fasting to mark mid-Sha'ban is without basis, thus, it is discouraged. Similarly, its celebration by preparing different foods and displaying finery falls under the category of innovated, newfangled festivals that have no basis in Islam. The same holds true for some activities that happen during the night of mid-Sha'ban, such as congregation for *Alfiya*⁶⁰² prayer in congregational mosques, neighborhood mosques, homes and markets. Gathering for supererogatory prayer that is confided to a particular time and fixed by a number and extent of recitation is both forbidden and unprescribed. Indeed, the tradition about the *Alfiya* prayer is unanimously held by the learned

⁶⁰¹ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (739) and Ibn Mājah (1389).

⁶⁰² This prayer is named *Alfiyah* from Alf—one thousand, because they recite Sūrah al-'Ikhlāṣ one thousand times while observing it. But the report concerning it is a fabricated one.

traditionists as fabricated. Therefore, it is improper to commend a prayer based on this tradition, and since it cannot be commendable, the act of commending it should be objectionable.

If we admit that every night deserves to be distinguished by a newly-introduced prayer performed *en masse*, then there would be many more such occasions, such as the nights of both 'īds, and the night of 'Arafah. Some people perform a similar prayer on the first night of Rajab, or, as I have been told, some villagers perform after sunset a prayer similar to the Magrib prayer, which they call the name of the prayer of *Birru al-Wālidain* (Dutifulness to Parents), or as some people who perform in congregation every night a funeral prayer for all Muslims who have died on earth, and other such unsanctioned congregational prayers.

It should be kept in mind, however, that even if absolute voluntariness at a particular time had been commendable and its manifestation in congregation had been permissible, it would not necessarily follow that non-prescribed fixed congregational prayer would be justified. Rather, one must differentiate between the two situations, because congregational gatherings for prayer, recitation of Qur'an, remembrance of Allāh, and the like are not always undesirable if they are performed seldom. It is established that the Prophet ﷺ performed congregational voluntary prayer, and that he met some of his companions in a gathering where they were listening to the Qur'an being recited by one of them, and he sat with them; typically, if the companions met, one of them would be asked to recite the Qur'an while the others listened. Many traditions have been passed down regarding this kind of gathering.

The like of the tradition that came regarding the people sitting altogether teaching and reciting the Qur'an:

وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ، يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ
بَيْنَهُمْ، إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ، وَعَشِيَّتُهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ،
وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ، وَمَنْ بَطَأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ، لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ

No people gather in one of the houses of Allāh (i.e., a mosque), reciting the Book of Allāh, and learn and teach it among themselves,

except the angels will surround them, tranquility will descend upon them, mercy will envelop them and Allāh will mention them to those who are with Him.⁶⁰³

And it was also mentioned that angels search for gatherings where Allāh is remembered, and if they locate those who remember Allāh, they call upon one another: “come around and comply with your wishes.”⁶⁰⁴

To institute a standing congregational prayer, periodically recurring by week, month, or year, besides the prescribed congregational prayer, would entail competing with the five daily prayers, the Friday service, and the prayers on the occasion of both *ʿids* and during the pilgrimage. This would be an act of innovation and novelty.

Ahmad and other scholars remarked that there is a difference between these institutional standing practices that are taken as prescribed Sunnah or custom and those permissible ones, these ones constitute rivalry to the prescribed practices by the *Shariʿa*.

Abū Bakr al-Khallāl in the *Book of Adab*, reported that Ishaq ibn Masūr al-Kawzaj said to Abū Abdullah: “Do you consider it reprehensible that some people come together for prayers, raising their hands in supplications?” He replied: “I do not consider that reprehensible for brothers among themselves if it is unplanned for, except if it is made a common act.” And that is also the opinion of Ishaq ibn Rahuyah. And the meaning of not making it a common practice is not making it a custom.

Al-Marwazī remarked: “I asked Abū Abdullah about some people who perform night vigil; one of them reciting the Qurʿan and supplicating altogether.” He replied: “I suppose that is not wrong.”

Abū as-Sirriy al-Harbi also reported that Abū Abdullah said: “Nothing is more appealing than to gather for prayers, the occasion when people recall the favors of Allāh on them,” as expressed by the *Anṣār*.

This refers to what Ahmad reported on the authority of Ayyub, that Muhammad ibn Sirīn said: “I was told that prior to the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ to Madinah, the *Anṣār* gathered and said: ‘Let us choose a day

⁶⁰³ Muslim (2699).

⁶⁰⁴ Al-Bukhārī (6408) and Muslim (2689).

for congregation for discussing the matters of this favor Allāh bestowed upon us.’ They mentioned Saturday, but remarked: ‘That is the day of the Jews’ gathering; we shouldn’t imitate them.’ Then they mentioned Sunday, saying: ‘That is the day Christians gather, we shouldn’t follow them as well.’ So, they mentioned the day of ‘Urūbah’, and Friday used to be called the day of ‘Urūbah. As a result, they gathered in the house of Abū Umamah, As’ad ibn Zurārah, and he prepared a meal for them with the she-goat he had slaughtered.”⁶⁰⁵

Abū Umayyah at-Tursūsi said: “I asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal about a people gathering together while a reciter among them recites the Qur’an in a sorrowful manner, causing them all to weep, and all of that occurring in total darkness. He said, ‘If the recitation is similar to that of Abū Mūsā, then there is no issue.’” Al-Khallāl reported that al-Awza’ī was asked about people gathering to listen to tales, to which he responded that if it is done infrequently, it is not bad.

Note: Ahmad conditioned the permissibility of such gatherings on its not becoming a custom, just as he did for visiting the places where remnants of the prophets were buried. Sinee al-Khuwātimī reported: “We asked Abū Abdullah concerning visiting *mashāhid* (sceneries), is it permissible?” He said: ‘Considering the narration of Ibn Ummi Maktūm where he requested the Prophet ﷺ to pray in his house for him to mark the point as his place of worship, and Ibn Umar’s practices of following the places and points where the Prophet ﷺ dwelled or prayed, then it is not bad to visit sceneries, except that, these days, the issue has gone much out of hand; people visit the places more often.’”

Ahmad ibn Qasim also reported this from Abū Abdullah, who said: “He was asked about a man going around to visit the *mashāhid* (sceneries) in Madinah and some other places, is that allowed?” He replied: ‘Considering the narration of Ibn Ummi Maktūm in which he requested the Prophet ﷺ to pray in his house for him to mark the point as his place of worship, and Ibn Umar’s practices of following the places and points the Prophet ﷺ treaded—he used to do that until he

⁶⁰⁵ Reported with a sound chain of transmitters from Ibn Sirīn, *Mūsānnaḥ Abdur-Razaq* (5144), but it is not found in the *Musnad*. Allāh knows best.

was seen pouring water in a place, and when he was asked concerning it, he said: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ pouring water there,' then it is not bad.' He then remarked: 'But people have gone to the extreme in the matter nowadays, they visit those places more often,'" he then cited Husain's grave and what people do there."⁶⁰⁶

The detestation reported from Ahmad and some of people among the *Salaf* in respect of the people's habituation to this practice was reported from Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ when some people in his time adopted a particular place for congregational remembrance, he addressed them: "O people! You are either more rightly guided than the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ or who are offshoot."⁶⁰⁷

The basis of this detestation is that Allāh has prescribed for man a sufficient number of periodic acts of worship. Now if a fresh congregation is added to these regular ones, it would be tantamount to rivaling the Allāh-given acts of worship, which in turn amounts to the evils earlier stated. Not so with the occasional actions of an individual or a particular group. It was for this reason that the Companions disapproved of marking Rajab by fasting, as it would be a mere imitation of Ramadan. For a similar reason, 'Umar ordered the tree to be cut when he observed people returning periodically to and praying near the tree believed to have been the one under which the Companions swore allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ (i.e., *Bai'at ar-Riḍwān*) as if it were the Sacred Mosque or the mosque of Madinah. Similarly, when he observed that people were generally retreating to a place that had served the Prophet ﷺ as a retreat, he forbade them to do that, saying, "You don't wish to turn the relics of your Prophet into sanctuaries, do you?"

Just as voluntariness in prayer, offered individually or collectively,

⁶⁰⁶ Majority of the *Salaf* prohibited this kind of visitation, as such visitation was not known with the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, rather; they strongly kicked against it and prevented any way that could be instrumental to performing such act. The practice of Ibn 'Umar ؓ was not followed, because other Companions unanimously disagreed with it and condemned it in strongest terms, among whom was his father, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab during his reign. Allāh knows best.

The author has this conclusion later in this work, as he does in other works of his and other scholars as well. May Allāh be pleased with them all.

⁶⁰⁷ Authentic, *Musnad ad-Darimī* (1/68).

is lawful—provided it is not offered by the congregation periodically, lest it resemble such as Friday, both *ʿids* and the five daily prayers—so is the voluntariness shown in *Qirāʾa* (Qurʾanic recitation), *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh), and *duʿāʾ* (supplication), whether singly or jointly, so also voluntariness in pilgrimage to a certain *mashāhid*. All of these belong to the same kind. One must differentiate between the frequent outward element and the rarer inward element, as well as between that which is customary and that which is not; similarly, all acts of particular kinds are prescribed, performing them periodically is tantamount to innovation, until it might later be seen obligatory. So their permissibility or detestability is contingent on whether they are performed as votive offerings, or passed on as legacies or entailments, etc., for votive offerings are not permissible unless they are prescribed acts, so also the deeds passed on as legacies, they are only allowed on charity and kindness basis, according to our school and the opinion of the majority the scholars, as will be demonstrated. This matter demands a more elaborate discussion, but this avenue will not allow such. The objective is, therefore, to point out those novel seasons.

As for forbidden practices during these seasons, they need not be mentioned because they do not even fall under the present heading, for instance raising one's voice inside mosques, intermingling of male and female, excessively kindling lamps, more than is necessary, and verbally or physically offending men who may be praying. Every Muslim understands how shameful such acts are and that they fall into the category of words that are forbidden to use in mosques (though they are equally forbidden outside of mosques), such as obscene and foul language, or things that should be avoided in mosques, such as buying and selling, appealing for *inshad ad-dalla* (lost objects), administering prescribed punishments, and so on.

Some late scholars from our school and others opined on the permissibility of *Alfiya* prayer, which is performed on the night of mid-Shaʿban. They asserted that its permissibility stemmed from the virtues of the Chapter of *Iklās*, that the prayer involves the recitation of this chapter one thousand times. Probably, these people may also believe

that fasting during the day is permissible. They support their claim with the traditions that were reported regarding this prayer, the general texts that encourage prayers, the traditions that were reported regarding the virtues of the night in question, as well as the traditions that mentioned the permissibility of habitual devotion to this night for worship, owing to the merits and benefits for which its kinds might be allowed.

As for the traditions, all traditions that were reported as being traceable directly to the Prophet ﷺ on this prayer are fabricated and unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of hadith.

Regarding the general texts encouraging the performance of prayers, this is true. Nevertheless, the permissibility of any specific act of worship requires proof separate from a general text, or it is considered permissible since it falls into the same category as some other acts of worship. However, just because an act is specified because it belongs to the same category as another acts, it does not make it permissible on its own, which is why scholars who support that opinion confine themselves to special supererogatory prayers such as the *Ḍuḥā* and *Tarawih* prayers.

In actuality, this opinion is wrong. It is not known to any of our reputable Islamic authorities—*imāms*, neither the early ones nor the later ones. Rather, they detest that specifications are attached to acts of worship, especially when people began to give unnecessary specialty to various acts, whether those related to tenets, or ones connected to economy.

The Prophet ﷺ forbade singling out fasting on Friday and surur of Sha'ban, as well as praying on Friday night. So be it if a special prayer is initiated for the ten nights of Muharram or between Maghrib and Isha' prayers every night, etc. Summarily, acts of worship are of three kinds:

- 1- That which is especially desirable,⁶⁰⁸ such as restricted supererogatory prayer, e.g., the two voluntary units before Fajr, the *Tarawih* prayer, etc. Some are restricted to times, such as night prayers, while others restricted to incidence, like *Salāt Istisqā'* and *Salāt of signs*⁶⁰⁹, and

⁶⁰⁸ This is divided into two: *al-Muqayyad* (restricted) and *al-Mutlaq* (unrestricted). The restricted is sub-divided into three; the restricted to time, reason, and amount.

⁶⁰⁹ *Salāt al-Khusūf* of the Moon and *Kusūf* of the Sun.

others may be restricted by *Shari'a* into amount such as Witr prayer. Also, there are unrestricted desirable practices, some of which are connected to the virtues of their time, e.g., the voluntary prayers before the Friday prayer on Fridays. In all, we have four kinds of special desirable practices.

- 2- Practices that are desirable because of their general implication or classes, such as unrestricted voluntary prayers; these are allowed from sunrise until the time of 'Asr prayer.
- 3- Those that are specifically detestable/forbidden; not in conjunction with others,⁶¹⁰ such as Friday night prayers; and they may be restricted to some instances, such as prayers at prohibited times. This is the reason why scholars differed as to the prohibition of prayers after the Fajr and 'Asr prayers; is it to prevent carelessness in offering prayers at those times, such that one does not pray at the main prohibited times – at sunrise, sunset, and mid-day, which invariably implies that prayers on the account of incidence are allowed, or is it an absolute prohibition, which is only restricted to necessity? These are the two opinions that came down from Ahmad; some other scholars have other ideas.

⁶¹⁰ This is also divided into two: unrestricted and restricted to only some cases.

XVII

Innovations in Festivals with Regards to Places and the Practices Involved

THE LOCATION OF a festival may coincides with practices that constitute absolute innovations, so exacerbating its evil thereof leading to a deviation from the *Shari'a*.

A practice about whose forbiddenness, I do not think there is disagreement among Muslims regarding visiting the tomb of a respected individuals, thronging around the tomb on the Day of 'Arafah, as is customary in certain lands of the east and west, and *t'arīf*— waiting there, as one does in 'Arafah. This kind of pilgrimage, is an innovation, and is not authorized by the Divine Law and is performed in imitation of the prescribed *hajj* (pilgrimage). This also involves turning grave sites into festival sites.

Similarly, traveling to Jerusalem for *t'arīf* is an enormous error. As one of the three mosques that may lawfully attract visitors, it is both commendable and permissible to visit Jerusalem for prayer and

devotional retreat. However, it would be wrong to conduct such visits during the pilgrimage to Makkah. It would be like to establishing a specific time to visit Jerusalem when there is no reason to choose this particular time.

Moreover, this resembles a trip to the Sacred Mosque, equating the local sanctuary with the Ka'bah. This leads to behavior that any Muslim will clearly recognize as non-Islamic.

Some stray people *tawaf* (circumambulate) the rock, shave their heads, and undertake other rites of the pilgrimage there. Others do a circumambulation of the Dome on the Jabal ar-Rahma in 'Arafah as if it were the Ka'bah.

During this season, congregating in the Aqsa Mosque for singing and playing the tambourine, etc., constitutes the most heinous practices. Such things are forbidden even outside of mosques, how much more so within the Aqsa Mosque. It also involves transforming a false actions into a religious act and, finally, enacting it during the pilgrimage season.

The visit of a believer to the local mosque on the Day of 'Arafah for personal *du'ā'* and *dhikr* constitutes a local *t'arif* about which scholars differ. Ibn 'Abbās and 'Amr ibn Huraith, among the Companions, did this, and did some people of Basra and Madinah. Ahmad, though he did not commend it, was nevertheless permissive about the practice, as is well known. Some scholars of Kūfah and Madinah, including 'Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'i, Abū Hanifa and Malik disapproved of it. Those who disapproved of it said that it is an innovation; thus, it is classified under the generality both of word and spirit. Conversely, those who advocate permissiveness believe that Ibn 'Abbās did that in Basra where he was appointed by 'Alī. He was not criticized for that. Therefore, what is enacted during the age of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs without objection cannot be called innovation.

Beyond that, for instance, offering *du'ā'* loudly in mosques or delivering all kinds of sermons and reciting verses—these are objectionable on that day as on any other.

Said al-Marwazi: 'I heard Abū 'Abd Allāh say, "One must supplicate under one's breath in deference to the Qur'anic injunction,

﴿وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُتُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا﴾

And offer your prayer neither aloud nor in a low voice, but seek between that an [intermediate] way.⁶¹¹ This, however, applies to supplication.”

Al-Khallāl reported from Saʿīd ibn al-Mūsāyab with an authentic chain of transmitters that he said: “People introduced a hushed voice into supplications.” And on the authority of Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿUrubah, when Jumalid ibn Saʿīd heard a people raise their voice aloud while supplicating, he walked towards them and said: “O people, if you have acquired a virtue that no people before you have attained, then you have really strayed.” The people then left the gathering one by one until they had all left the course. Abū at-Tiyāh said: “I told al-Hasan, ‘When our prayer leader sermonizes, men and women gather and raise their voices in offering *duʿāʾ*,’ to which al-Hasan replied, ‘Raising the voice in *duʿāʾ* is truly an innovation, as is stretching of hands for *duʿāʾ*, and so is the congregation of men and women.’”

Regarding of “raising of hands,” however, opinions vary and traditions have come down regarding it; however, this is not the place to discuss them. The difference between this local *ʿarīf*, on which opinions differ, and the other, on which opinions are unanimous, is as follows: In the latter example, the visit is to a particular area for the purpose of *ʿarīf*, for instance the tomb of a saint or the Aqsa Mosque; in this case, the place is equated with ʿArafah. This is not the case, however, for a pilgrimage to a local city mosque, for the aim is to visit a mosque and not any particular mosque. The category “mosque” is for things that can be lawfully visited. A person who visits a mosque does not intend to visit a specific location whose name or the rules governing its *hukm* (status) remain fixed. Rather, he intends one of the houses of Allāh, in the sense that if he moves from that mosque to another, the provision will likewise alter accordingly. What matters most is the category “mosque,” not a specific mosque. The same difference obtains between traveling to a location for *ʿarīf*, as one

⁶¹¹ Sūrah al-ʿIsrāʾ, 17:110.

does during the pilgrimage, and visiting the local mosque for the same purpose. Don't you see what the Prophet ﷺ has said:

لَا تُشَدُّ الرَّحَالَ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: مَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى،
وَمَسْجِدِي هَذَا

No one should prepare a mount (travel) to visit any mosque except three: the Sacred Mosque, al-Aqsa (Jerusalem Mosque), and this mosque of mine.⁶¹²

I believe there is no disagreement on this matter. The Prophet ﷺ forbade “journeying” to a mosque other than these three, despite the fact that a man is required to go to his local mosque, either because it is obligatory, as on Friday for congregational prayer, or because it is commendable, as for pious retreat. Such *t'arīf* at graves as is turned into a festival is truly prohibited, regardless whether one sets out for it or if it was performed on the Day of 'Arafah. This is then one of those festivals in which the element of location is combined with that of time.

Innovations such as blowing trumpets and drums are unacceptable on festival days just as they are on any other day, so is wearing silk or doing anything else that the *Shar'i* has forbidden us to do. Abandoning the Sunnah is considered as a *bid'a* (innovation). It is therefore necessary that festivals be observed in quite the same way as the early Muslims observed them, namely by offering prayer, a customary sermon, *takbirs*, *sadaqa* on *Fitr*, and sacrifice on *'Adhḥā*. Some people reduce the number of prescribed *takbirs*. Some prayer leaders ignore delivering their sermons to men first and then to women, as was the Prophet's custom, while others do not mention in their sermons what needs to be mentioned, instead deviating to less important topics. Some other prayer leaders simply refuse to slaughter a sacrificial animal after the prayer. All of these actions and more are tantamount to abandoning the Sunnah, whereas true faith lies in practicing and exhorting others to practice the reputable, as well as abandoning the disreputable personally and urging others to abandon the disreputable.

⁶¹² Al-Bukhārī (1189, 1197, 1864, 1990) and Muslim (1397).

XVIII

Innovations in Festivals with Regards to Places are of Three Categories

The First Type: Places Devoid of Legal Foundation

LOCAL FESTIVALS, LIKE those in the past, are classified into three types:

1. Insignificant to *Shari'a*;
2. Significant to *Shari'a* but does not entail worship therein; and
3. Those where worship is prescribed but should not be considered festivals.

Traditions exist for each of the three types. The like of the tradition where the Prophet ﷺ said to the man who took a vow to slaughter a camel at Buwānah:

"هَلْ كَانَ فِيهَا وَثْنٌ مِنْ أَوْثَانِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَوْ عِيدٌ مِنْ أَعْيَادِهِمْ؟"، قَالَ:

"لَا،" قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَوْفِ بِبَنْدِكَ"

"Did the place contain any idol worshipped by the idol worshippers, or any pre-Islamic festival they observed?" He replied: "No." The Prophet ﷺ then said: "Fulfil your vow."⁶¹³

Or the tradition:

لَا تَتَّخِذُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا

Do not turn my grave into a place of *'id* (festival).⁶¹⁴

Or, as we will see, the tradition in which Umar forbade people from turning relics of the Prophets into sanctuaries.

The first of the three is a location that does have any excellence in the *Shari'a*. There is nothing in it that merit excellence; it is the same as all other places, if not less valuable. Thus, pilgrimage to a given area or the intent to hold a congregation there ostensibly for prayer, *du'a*, *dhikr*, and the like is clearly incorrect. Worse, if the area contains certain relics of such unbelievers as Christians and Jews. This case and the one mentioned before would entail the imitation of the unbelievers. These varieties of local festivals defy formulation. Not so with those of time, for they can be enumerated. Consequently, this kind is far worse than the preceding one.

For this resembles idol worship, or is a form of it, or represents a form of it. So, because idol worshippers primarily seek the area, with or without image, that they believe will bring them closer to Allāh, the three major idols toward which people undertook journeys were al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat. As Allāh mentions in the Qur'an:

﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَكُمُ الذَّكْرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴾

⁶¹³ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3312).

⁶¹⁴ Sound, it has supportive narrations which prove it sound. *Musnad Abi Ya'la al-Mūsāli* (469). But it occurs with sound chain of transmitters with the text "وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا" in the *Sunan* of Abū Dawūd (2042) and *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad (8804).

﴿ ٢٢ ﴾ تَلِكْ إِذَا قَسَمَهُ صَبْرِي ﴿ ٢١ ﴾

So, have you considered (the idols of) al-Lât and al-'Uzza () And Manât, the third - the other one? (*) Is the male for you and for Him the female? (*) That, then, is an unjust division.⁶¹⁵

Each of these three idols was once located in a different Arabian towns. Their cults revolved around Makkah, Madinah, and Ta'if.

Al-Lat became the idol of the people of Ta'if. It is said that al-Lat was originally a righteous man who used to knead a kind of mash made of wheat and barley for the pilgrims. For a long time after his death, people would retreat to his grave. Subsequently, they created an image of him and then built a structure over it. This structure was known as the House of Rabbah. The story of al-Lat is well known. When the Prophet ﷺ captured Ta'if after the conquest of Makkah in the 9th year of *hijra*, he commissioned al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba to hew it down.

Al-'Uzza, on the other hand, was the idol of the people of Makkah and was housed near 'Arafat. There was once a tree there that the pagans slaughtered and offered *du'â* to. Following the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet dispatched Khalid ibn al-Walid, who destroyed the idol. The Prophet divided its possessions. A she-devil emerged from it, her hair disheveled. As a result, al-'Uzza lost its worshippers.

Manat belonged to the people of Madinah. They used to offer it animals, thus associating a partner with Allâh. It was lodged opposite the Qudaid Mountain that stood between Makkah and Madinah as one approached from the shore.

Anyone who wants to understand the state of the idol-worshippers in their worship of their idols, understand the reality of the *shirk* Allâh condemned and its kinds, comprehend the significance of the Qur'an, and what Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ forbade of these matters should read the biography of the Prophet ﷺ. And also to do research on the conditions of the Arab at the time. He can read the treatise prepared by al-Azraquee on the history of Makkah or any other scholar's work.

⁶¹⁵ Sūrah an-Najm, 53:19-22.

Another example of a location-based celebration is the practice of the idol-worshippers of hanging their ornaments down the Dhat-Anwāt tree during *Jāhiliyyah*. Some Muslims requested the Prophet ﷺ to grant them one; they said, “O Messenger of Allāh! Grant us Dhat-Anwāt, similar to what the people have. He responded:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ! قُلْتُمْ كَمَا قَالَ قَوْمُ مُوسَى: ﴿أَجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ﴾
إِنَّهَا السُّنَنُ، لَتَرْكَبَنَّ سُنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ.

Allāh is Great! Your request is just as that of the people of Mūsā did: “Accord a god to us just as the people have gods.” It is a tradition; you shall follow the way of the people before you.⁶¹⁶

In this instance, the Prophet ﷺ denied the people’s request to simply imitate the unbelievers by having a tree where they could retreat and hang their ornaments. Then, what about imitating them in a more serious manner or in *shirk*?

It is disreputable to visit an area, hoping that such visitation would entail some good, while the *Shari’a* does not commend it. Some of these actions are more disreputable than others, but nevertheless disreputable, regardless of whether the location is marked by a tree, rivulet, mountain, or cave, and whether one visited it for prayer, recitation, *du’ā*, *dhikr*, or any other ceremony. This is so because in this way the location is identified with a kind of worship that is not specifically prescribed for this location, either particularly or generically.

It is even worse when one vows to illuminate the place with oil, believing, as indeed many erroneously believe, that the location accepts votive offerings. Scholars unanimously regard such a vow as sinful and say that it is not permissible to keep to it. One must rather atone for the vow, according to the opinion of a large number of people of knowledge, among whom is Ahmad, in a popular report that came down from him. His other opinion corresponds with that of Abū Hanīfah, Shafi’ī, and others, who believe that he should only seek

⁶¹⁶ Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (2180) and Ahamd (21897, 21899, and 21900).

Allāh's forgiveness for making the vow and he does not need to make any atonement because he has committed no sin that necessitates atonement. The issue is a known one.

This also applies to vows to dedicate food, such as bread, to fish in a given spring or well, as well as offerings of possessions, such as ready money, etc., made to the *sadana* (custodians) of that area, or the devotees who may be retiring there (i.e., *al-Mujawirun al-'Akifun*), because these custodians closely resemble the keepers of al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat who devoured men's possessions by false pretense and led others aside from the path of Allāh, the cleavers, the retiring parallel those *'akifun* who were addressed by 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), the leader of the faithful, as follows:

﴿ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ ﴾

What are these statues to which you are devoted?⁶¹⁷

﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَامُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾

Then do you see what you have been worshipping (*) You and your ancestors? (*) Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds.⁶¹⁸

Or those Mūsā ﷺ and his people passed by, as Allāh mentioned in His Book:

﴿ وَجَازَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ ﴾

And We took the Children of Israel across the sea; then they came upon a people devoted to idols.⁶¹⁹

Thus, making vows for offerings of possessions to the *sadana* of these places, which have no merit in the *Shar'a*, or their neighborhood

⁶¹⁷ Sūrah al-'Anbiyā', 21:52.

⁶¹⁸ Sūrah ash-Shu'arā', 26:75-77.

⁶¹⁹ Sūrah al-'A'rāf, 7:138.

is a sinful act. It resembles the votive offerings made to the custodian of al-Salban at cross and its neighborhood, or to the custodian of al-Abdad at India and its neighborhood as well. Moreover, it would have been preferable to spend these consecrated possessions on meritorious acts prescribed by the *Shari'a*, such as building mosques and assisting the needy among the pious Muslims, who would have made do with it in their worship of Allāh.

Certain Sites and Tombs Fabricated by Individuals

SOME OF THESE places may be mistakenly identified as the tomb or station (*maqam*) of a prophet or saint, when in fact they are not, but the locations that contain those tombs and stations will come under the second category.

These places are many; I will only mention a few. There are a number of such places in Damascus, for instance the *mashhad* of Ubaiy ibn Ka'b outside the Eastern Gate. There is consensus among scholars that he died in Madinah and not in Damascus. Allāh knows whose grave that is in Damascus, and it is emphatically not that of Ubaiy ibn Ka'b, a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ. Similarly, the location on the southern wall of Damascus Mosque. As rumor has it, it encloses the grave of the Prophet Hūd ؑ. I do not recall any learned man ever mentioning that Prophet Hūd passed away in Damascus; rather, it is said he passed away in Yemen or possibly in Makkah. After the perdition of his people, he migrated to Makkah from Yemen, where he had received prophethood. Damascus was neither his native place nor a place to which he migrated. His death in Damascus is extremely improbable.

Or, consider the *mashhad* outside the Western Gate in Damascus. People say that it is the grave of Uwais al-Qarani. I am unaware of anyone mentioning that he passed away in Damascus or was even headed in that direction. Rather, he had travelled from Yemen to Iraq. It is sometimes said that he was killed at Siffin or died in the

environs of Persia. Sometimes a completely different story is told. Nobody, however, ever mentioned that he visited Syria, let alone that he passed away there.

There is a particular grave said to be that of Umm Salama—a wife of the Prophet ﷺ. Everyone is aware that she passed away in Madinah and not Syria. She, too, has never visited Syria. She scarcely ever undertook a journey after the Prophet's death. Perhaps, it is the grave of Umm Salma Asma', daughter of Yazid ibn as-Sakan. She was an *Anṣārī* woman. Syrians such as Shahr ibn Haushab and others who transmitted on her authority simply referred to her as Umm Salma, who was the daughter of the uncle of Mu'adh ibn Jabal. She was one of the notable female Companions, endowed with religious knowledge and piety. Or possibly Umm Salma, the wife of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, although this is a distant possibility, as she was neither renowned for her knowledge nor her piety. How often do errors occur in these matters due to similar names.

There is a rumour that a *mashhad* in Cairo, Egypt contains the head of al-Hussain ibn 'Alī. This is preposterous. It was claimed that there was a *mashhad* at 'Asqalan that contained al-Hussain's head. It was from 'Asqalan, as the story goes, that it was carried to Cairo. Scholars concur that this is complete nonsense. No scholar has ever asserted that al-Hussain's head was in 'Asqalan. There are various reports about it, but none mention that town. His head presented to 'Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad in Kūfah. The Prophet's words were recited to Ziyad, who became enraged upon hearing them. Others, however, assert that the scene took place before Yazid ibn Mu'awiya entered Syria. However, it is implausible because all of the Companions mentioned in the report all happened in Iraq. Similarly, it is well known that many tombs are falsely associated with the names of famous personalities. In any case, these places lack all excellence, despite the fact that the ignorant believe they do. Such a tomb may be the grave of a Muslim, like any other Muslim, to whom the ignorant attach no special significance. If they are actual graves, they should not be turned into festival grounds or the site of rituals performed at false altars. If the grave is that of a pious man, but not the same man for whom it is claimed, then it falls into the second category.

This category also includes places said to contain a relic of the Prophet ﷺ, primarily to compete with 'Ibrāhīm's *maqam* (station) in Makkah. For instance, the ignorant claim that the footprint of the Prophet's foot is imprinted on the rock, which is at Jerusalem, and I am even told that some ignorant even assert that the footprint is that of Allāh's own foot. A certain story is told about the mosque south of Damascus, known as the Mosque of the Footprint. The footprint on it is claimed to be that of Moses; a preposterous lie. Moses had never visited Damascus or in its environs.

The same applies to *mashhad* attached to the graves of certain prophets or righteous men because they were seen in a vision there. It is a consensus among Muslims that seeing a prophet or a righteous man in a vision at a certain spot does not necessitate the spot becoming the site of pilgrimage and prayer. This is how the People of the Book are. Perhaps that is why, in imitation of the People of the Book, Muslims were led to draw a picture of the Prophet ﷺ or a pious man, or simply a part of their bodies, inside *mashhad*, just as it was in certain mosques at Damascus, for instance the Mosque of the Palm, which contains a palm-image said to be of 'Alī ibn Abī Talib. This relic was later destroyed by Allāh's Grace.

There are many such places in the world. Hijaz has quite a few of them. For example, the cave on the right side of the road as one travels from Badr to Makkah, which is said to be the cave where the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr sought refuge, and which is mentioned in the Qur'an. The truth is, however, that the cave mentioned in the Qur'an is the one found in Mount Thaur in the vicinity of Makkah and is well known to the people of Makkah to this day.

It is wholly un-Islamic to venerate in any way these places which popular belief has invested with a specialty, whatever it be, because hallowing a location which the *Shar'i* does not venerate is even worse than hallowing a time which the *Shar'i* does not keep holy, and because the unlawful worship of mortal beings by religious acts, more than an act of venerating a certain time, comes closer to idol-worship, one must really avoid praying at such places, even if one does not intend to venerate them, so that it does not lead to attaching importance to

praying in those places. By the same token, people must be forbidden from praying in places that truly contain graves, even if one does not intend to pray in those places because of the significance attached to them, just as we forbid them from fasting on Fridays and surur Sha'ban, even if the fasting person does not intend to attach any significance to fasting on these days, because it is forbidden to attach significance to something to which the *Shari'a* has not attached any significance.

These places are similar to Masjid adh-Dhirār, whose foundation was built on the brink of an undetermined precipice, ready to collapse, so that it collapsed with him into the Fire of Hell, because it was built for the purpose of harm and disbelief, and to disunite the believers, and as an outpost for those who fought against Allāh and His Messenger in the past. Allāh prevented His Prophet ﷺ from praying there and commanded him to destroy it.

These false *mashāhid* have certainly been established to compete with the houses of Allāh, to sanctify what Allāh has not sanctified, to perform a retreat that is neither beneficial nor harmful, and finally, to divert mankind from the path of Allāh. The path of Allāh is to worship Allāh alone, without associating any partner with Him, only with what He has ordained through His Messenger ﷺ and to give total submission to Him. While celebrating *mashāhid* as festivals means gathering at them and making frequent visits to them; celebrating a festival means observing its reoccurrence.

Close to this category are places for which certain positive features are claimed but which remain mostly unsubstantiated, such as a significant number of graves where it is alleged that a prophet or saint was buried, or places regarded as the station of a prophet or a saint, etc. Now, sometimes this is true and sometimes it is not. The vast majority of *mashāhid* found on the face of the earth fall into this category; true graves and stations are extremely rare.

Many learned men maintain that only the grave of our Prophet ﷺ can be identified among all the prophets' graves. Some others maintain that the graves of other prophets, too, can be ascertained, e.g., the grave of 'Ibrāhīm. In some cases, it is known in which vicinity the grave is to

be found, but it is doubtful whether or not it is the one it is claimed to be, as is the case with the graves of the Companions located in the Small Gate at Damascus. The ground has changed dramatically here. Thus, unless a special technique is employed, it is very impossible to determine a certain burial is that of Bilal, or someone else. And even if one were able to verify this, there is no *shar'i* provision to justify what has been implemented at graves.

The purpose of this section is to explain the first kind, which is to venerate insignificant places in the *Shari'a*, regardless of whether their insignificance is certain or not, because, just as worship or deed performed without knowledge are forbidden, so too are worships and deeds that contradict knowledge. There would have been no room for such oversights in this perfect religion if these issues had been perfectly resolved.

Mostly, stories connected with shrines and tombs are cooked up and circulated by their keepers and cleavers, who help themselves unduly to other people's possessions and deflect them from the path of Allāh. Stories are told about the effects that holy places are said to have had, such as how a man asked Allāh for some of his needs at a certain shrine or tomb and his wish was granted, how he took a vow to consecrate something to it if Allāh would fulfill his need and Allāh did, and so on and so forth. Idols had been worshipped for such purposes. Idols used to speak to men on occasion. During pilgrimage to the idols, their needs were sometimes met. Similar things happen with the worshippers of Buddha-images among the Indians and with others. Sometimes such a practice was instituted by analogy with the reverence Allāh has prescribed for His House, the site of the pilgrimage, and the Black Stone which must be saluted and kissed according to the *Shari'a*, for it is the 'right hand of Allāh,' while mosques are His abodes. It was analogy that induced people to feel victim to Sun and Moon worship, and indeed, polytheism owed its origin in the world to similar illusions. According to a *Ṣaḥīḥ* tradition, the Prophet ﷺ forbade taking vows, saying:

إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِي بِخَيْرٍ، وَإِنَّمَا يُسْتَخْرَجُ بِهِ مِنَ الْبَحِيلِ

They do not bring any good; they are just a means of taking wealth from the miserly.⁶²⁰

If meritorious vows tied to a condition do not bring any good, what should one think about vows made to something that can neither harm nor benefit? Concerning the acceptance of one's prayer in these places, the cause may be the dire need of the caller, the absolute sincerity of his supplication, Allāh's favor towards him, a matter Allāh has previously decreed apart from prayer, or any other reason, however it may be a test for the caller. Certainly, we are aware that unbelievers' wishes too are occasionally granted, and despite their prayers and entreaties to their idols, they, too, are given water and sustenance, are assisted, and are supported. Allāh has said:

﴿كَلَّا نُمَدُّ هَتُوْلَاءِ وَهَتُوْلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَائِكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا﴾

To each (category) We extend—to these and to those—from the bounty of your Lord. And never has the bounty of your Lord been restricted.

He also said:

﴿وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالِ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا﴾

And there were men from mankind who sought refuge in men from the jinn, so they (only) increased them in burden.⁶²¹

There are several explanations for these 'effects'; however, this is not the place to go into details about them.

However, it is incumbent upon mankind to follow what Allāh has sent into the world with His Messengers ﷺ and to believe that it benefits mankind in both this world and the Hereafter. Regarding the causes of these 'effects', I shall reveal some of them elsewhere.

⁶²⁰ Al-Bukhārī (6608, 6609, 6692, 6693 and 6694) and Muslim (1639 and 1640), but this text is that of Muslim (1639)

⁶²¹ Sūrah al-Jinn, 72:6.

XIX

The Three Celebrated Locations: Significant in Shari'a, Yet not Sites of Worship

The Second Category: What Does Not Require Being Designated as a Celebration

THE SECOND CATEGORY of sites are those that have something special about them but do not necessitate turning them into places of festivals, prayer, or other acts of worship. Among these places were the graves of prophets and the righteous. The Prophet ﷺ and the *Salaf* (predecessors) forbade turning the graves into places of festivity, in general as well as in particular, and they explained the meaning and significance of the term *'id* (festival).

Concerning the general prohibition, there is a tradition that the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قُبُورًا، وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا، وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ تَبْلُغُنِي حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ

Do not turn your houses into graves and do not make my grave a place of festivity. Seek *as-Salāt*—Allāh’s benediction—for me, indeed the *salāt* you seek will reach me from wherever you may are.⁶²²

Another example is this tradition reported by Abū Ya’la al-Mausalī through his chain of transmitters reaching all the way up to ‘Alī ibn al-Husayn:

Who saw a man going to an opening in the Prophet’s grave and enter it in order to pray. So he asked the man not to do so, saying, ‘Come, I shall relate to you a tradition which I heard from my father who heard it from my grand-father, who heard the Prophet ﷺ say, “Do not turn my grave into a place of *‘id* or your houses into graves; for your salutation—invocation of *salām* (Allāh’s peace)—will reach me no matter where you are.”’⁶²³

Sa’id ibn Mansūr reports through his chain of transmitters from Abū Sa’id (al-Mahrī’s patron), who said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Do not turn my house into a place of *‘id* or your houses into graves; seek *as-Salāt* for me wherever you are, indeed you *salāt* will reach me.”⁶²⁴

He also reports from Suhail ibn Abī Suhail, who said, “Seeing me at the grave, al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Talib called out my name as he sat eating his evening meal in Fatima’s house. ‘Come here,’ he said, ‘Have dinner.’ I replied, ‘I don’t want any.’ He then asked, ‘What is the matter, I see you at the grave?’ I said, ‘I was giving salutation to

⁶²² Sound, Abū Dawūd (2042) and Ahmad (8804). The author verified the hadith in some few lines afterwards.

⁶²³ Sound, supported. *Musnad Abi Ya’la al-Mūsālī* (469).

⁶²⁴ This report among others is weak. It cannot be supported by others; it reports the matter of salutation, while others report the matter of *Salāt*.

the Prophet ﷺ.’ Thereupon he said, ‘Well, you can do that when you enter the mosque.’ He subsequently added, ‘The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Do not turn my grave into an *‘īd*, or your houses into graves. Allāh cursed the Jews who turned the graves of their Prophets into sanctuaries. Seek *as-Salāt* for me, indeed your *salāt* will reach me no matter where you are.’ You, here, and someone in Spain are the same.’”⁶²⁵

The point here is that: Inasmuch as the Prophet’s grave is the most distinguished grave on the face of the earth and yet he forbade turning it into a festival, this injunction, applies more aptly to the grave of anybody else, whoever that may be. Further to this injunction, he added, “Do not turn your houses into graves,” i.e., do not suspend prayer, supplication, and recitation in them, if not; they should be reduced to the status of graves. Thus he enjoined that devotional acts be pursued at home and not at graves; this is the very opposite of the practice of such polytheists as Christians and those like them. In *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Ibn ‘Umar ؓ was narrated to have reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

اجْعَلُوا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ مِنْ صَلَاتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوهَا قُبُورًا

Perform some of your prayers (*nawāfil*) in your houses,⁶²⁶ and do not take your houses as graves.⁶²⁷

Muslim reports on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ مَقَابِرَ، إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْفِرُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي تُقْرَأُ فِيهِ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

Do not make your houses as graveyards, verily Satan runs away from the house in which Sūrah al-Baqarah is recited.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵ Sound, supported by the hadith of Abū Ya’la, Imām Ismail ibn Ja’far, Abū Ishaq, also reported it (436). The author also points to its soundness in a few note.

⁶²⁶ This refers to the voluntary prayers—in respect of men.

⁶²⁷ Al-Bukhārī (432 and 1187) and Muslim (777).

⁶²⁸ Muslim (780).

The Prophet ﷺ at the end of the tradition where he forbade turning his grave into a place of festival said, “Seek *as-Salāt* for me: indeed, the *salāt* you seek will reach me from wherever you may be,” and in the other tradition he said, “for your salutation will reach me no matter where you are.” This implies that the *salāt* and *salām* will always reach him, whatever the distance; the distant and close places are the same. There is no point, therefore, in making his grave a place of festival.

The traditions that have been reported concerning the presentation of our *salāt* and *salām* to him are many, amongst which is the report of Abū Dawūd on the authority of Yazeed ibn Abdullah ibn Qusait, from Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيَّ إِلَّا رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ رُوحِي حَتَّى أَرُدَّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامَ

No one sends greetings (or prayer of peace) upon me but Allāh returns my soul to me so that I may return his greetings,⁶²⁹ (the hadith meets the conditions for authentication of Muslim).

He also reports on the authority of Aws ibn Aws ؓ that the Messenger of Allāh said:

"فَأَكْثَرُوا عَلَيَّ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ فِيهِ (الْجُمُعَةِ)، فَإِنَّ صَلَاتِكُمْ مَعْرُوضَةٌ عَلَيَّ" قَالَ: قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ تُعْرَضُ صَلَاتُنَا عَلَيْكَ وَقَدْ أَرَمْتَ - يَقُولُونَ: بَلِيَّتْ -؟ فَقَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَرَّمَ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ أَجْسَادَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ"

Invoke more *salāt* (blessings) on me that day (Friday), because your *salāt* will always be presented to me, the people asked, “O Messenger of Allāh! How would our *salāt* be presented to you when your body is decayed?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Indeed, Allāh has prohibited the earth from consuming the bodies of the Prophets.”⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2041).

⁶³⁰ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1047, 1531), an-Nasā’ī (1274), Ibn Mājah (1085, 1636).

Ibn Abī Shaiba⁶³¹ reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ عِنْدَ قَبْرِي سَمِعْتُهُ، وَمَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ نَائِيًا أُبْلِغْتُهُ

Whoever seeks *as-salāt* (invoke a blessing) on me at my grave, I shall hear him, and if anyone invokes a blessing on me at a distance, I shall have it conveyed to me.⁶³²

An-Nasā'ī and others also reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً سَيَّاحِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُبَلِّغُونِي مِنْ أُمَّتِي السَّلَامَ

Indeed, Allāh has angels who roam the earth and they convey to me the greetings (or prayers of peace) of my nation.⁶³³ (There are many more narrations on this issue).

Gathering from the hadith he reported from his grandfather on the authority of his father, Husain, which he was in the best position to understand. 'Alī ibn Husain, being the narrator and the best man from the household of the Prophet ﷺ among the *Tābi'ūn*, asserted the prohibition of coming to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ for prayers, which further corroborates that visiting a grave for the purpose of prayers or any other kind of worship is tantamount to turning it into a place of festival. Also, his cousin, Hasan ibn Hasan, the most knowledgeable of his household, hated that one came to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ to salute him, or headed it to it on entering the mosque; he counted that as a way of making it a place of festival as well. Consider this understanding as generated by the people of Madinah, and the household of the Prophet ﷺ in particular, the people who have close relation and affiliation to the Prophet ﷺ, for they most needed to perfect their practice as far as this issue is concerned; they understood it far better than any other person.

⁶³¹ The hadith is not found in *Musnad* of Ibn Abī Shaibah, but *Shu'abul Imān* of al-Baihaqī. Allāh knows best.

⁶³² Weak, *Shu'abul Imān* of al-Baihaqī (1481). Allāh knows best.

⁶³³ Authentic, an-Nasā'ī (1282), Ahmad (3666, 4211, 4320) and others.

Applying the Term “Celebration” to a Location Gathered for Meetings

INASMUCH AS IT stands for the place of celebration, “festival” means an area intended for congregation and pilgrimage for devotional or other purposes, for instance the Sacred Mosque, Mina, Muzdalifa, and ‘Arafah. Allāh has set up these places as sites for periodic festivals where people congregate and come for supplication, invocation, and rites. The polytheists, too, had certain places where they congregated periodically, but these were wiped out following the advent of Islam.

Tombs of prophets and the righteous, and tombs that are reputed to be their tombs, and indeed any grave—all come under this heading. The Sunnah says that a Muslim’s grave should be treated with respect because it is where a Muslim lives after he has died. Thus, it is agreed that filth should not be left on it, nor should it be trampled underfoot or trodden on. In our opinion as well as that of the majority of the scholars, nothing that may offend the dead, including dirty words and deeds, may be done in their vicinity. It is commendable to bless and pray for the inmate of the grave should one pass by it. The more distinguished the dead are, the more entitled they are to blessing and prayer. Buraidah ibn al-Husaib رضي الله عنه said, the Prophet ﷺ used to teach them to say when they went out to the cemeteries:

"السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ، - وَفِي لَفْظٍ -: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا، إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَلْحَقُّونَ، نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا
وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ

Peace be upon you, inmates of the abodes, the *Mu'minūn*—more distinguished believers, and *Muslimūn*—less distinguished believers, among you. By Allāh’s permission, we shall join you. We ask Allāh to grant us and you well-being.⁶³⁴

⁶³⁴ Muslim (975).

He also reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ went out to the cemetery and said:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ

Peace be upon you, the abode of the believing people, and Allāh willing we shall join you. ⁶³⁵

He as well reported on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah from the Prophet ﷺ in a lengthy tradition, that the Prophet ﷺ told her that Jibril came to him and said:

"إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَا مُرَّكَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَ أَهْلَ الْبَقِيعِ فَتَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ"، قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: كَيْفَ أَقُولُ لَهُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ "قُولِي: السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ"

Your Lord has commanded you to go to the inhabitants of Baqī’ (graveyard) and beg pardon for them. I (‘Ā’ishah) said, “O Messenger of Allāh, how should I pray for them (if visit them)?” He said, “Say, Peace be upon the inhabitants of this dwelling (graveyard) from among the *Mu’minūn* (Believers) and the Muslims, and may Allāh have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and those who come later on, and we shall, Allāh willing, join you.” ⁶³⁶

Ibn Mājah reported another version from ‘Ā’ishah, she said, “I came upon the Prophet ﷺ while he was in Baqī’, and I heard him said:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ، أَنْتُمْ لَنَا فَرَطٌ، وَإِنَّا بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ،
اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُمْ، وَلَا تَفْتِنَّا بَعْدَهُمْ

Peace be upon you, o abode of believing people. You have gone ahead of us and verily we will join you soon. O Allāh, do not deprive us of their reward and do not put us to trial after them. ⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Muslim (249).

⁶³⁶ Muslim (974).

⁶³⁷ Ibn Mājah (1546).

And on the authority of ibn Abbās رضي الله عنه, he reported:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ، أَنْتُمْ سَلَفُنَا،
وَنَحْنُ بِالْأَثَرِ

Peace be upon you, O inhabitants of the graves! May Allāh forgive us and you; you preceded us and we are to come after you.⁶³⁸ (At-Tirmidhī and Ahmad reported it, and at-Tirmidhī commented: “sound but strange”).

Furthermore, it is established that eight years after the battle of Uhud, the Prophet ﷺ set out for the cemetery of the martyrs of the battle of Uhud and he prayed for them the same way he used to pray for the dead. Also, Abū Dawūd reported on the authority of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān رضي الله عنه that when the Prophet ﷺ finished burying the dead, he would stand by it and say:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ، وَسَلُّوا لَهُ بِالتَّثْبِيتِ، فَإِنَّهُ الآنَ يُسْأَلُ

Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for him to be steadfast, because he is being questioned now.⁶³⁹

Another hadith concerning this issue, authenticated by Ibn Abdul-Barr, states that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَمُرُّ بِقَبْرِ رَجُلٍ كَانَ يَعْرِفُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَيُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
عَرَفَهُ وَرَدَّ عَلَيْهِ

No man will pass by the grave of a man he used to know while he was alive and salute him, except that the dead recognizes him and responds to the greeting.⁶⁴⁰

A controversial hadith was reported on the matter of *Talqīn* (instructing a dying person to profess “*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*”). However, some men from the earlier Syrian period reported and acted on it, which is why many of our associates and other scholars encouraged doing it.

⁶³⁸ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (1053)

⁶³⁹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3221).

⁶⁴⁰ Weak, *Kanzul ‘Ummāl* (42556), *Fawā'id Tamām*.

These are some of the prayers that the Prophet ﷺ used to say and advise his community to say when visiting Muslim graves or passing by them, exactly as a living person is saluted, both before and after burial. The prayer for the dead comprises a prayer for oneself and other Muslims, whereas the funeral prayer contains a prayer for the one praying, other Muslims and, most importantly, the deceased.

Thus, these practices and others like them from the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and the practices of the foremost predecessors are the prescribed acts for Muslims on this issue; they are what the early Muslims used to do at the graves of the Prophet and other Muslims.

Matters Associated with Graves, Such as Visiting, Praying Near Them, Converting Them into Places of Worship, and Constructing on Them

Ibn Batta reported in his book *al-Ibānah*, with an authentic chain of transmitters, on the authority of Ibn ‘Awn that a man asked Naf’i, “Did Ibn Umar use to make salutation at the grave of the Prophet ﷺ?” He replied, “Yes, I saw him more than a hundred times; he would go to the grave, wait before it, and say: ‘May Allāh’s blessing be upon the Prophet, may Allāh’s blessing be upon Abū Bakr, may Allāh’s blessing be upon my father.’” In another narration, while Imām Ahmad figured it out in a discussion, he quoted it with the addition, “He would then leave.” Malik also reported it in *al-Muwatta’*.

Visiting graves, even those of the unbelievers is permissible in general. Muslim reports Abū Hurairah as quoting the Prophet ﷺ:

اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لِأُمَّيِّ فَلَمْ يَأْذَنْ لِي، وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ أَنْ أُرْوَرَ قَبْرَهَا
فَأْذَنْ لِي

I asked my Lord’s permission to seek forgiveness for my mother, but He didn’t give me permission. Then I asked His permission to visit her grave and He granted it (permission) to me. ⁶⁴¹

⁶⁴¹ Muslim (976).

In another tradition, “The Prophet ﷺ visited his mother’s grave and wept and caused those around him to weep. He then said:

اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهَا فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي، وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أُرْوَرَ قَبْرَهَا فَأُذِنَ لِي، فَزُورُوا الْقُبُورَ فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُ الْمَوْتَ

I sought permission from my Lord to beg forgiveness for her, but it was not granted to me. I then sought His permission to visit her grave and it was granted to me; so visit graves, for that makes you mindful of death.⁶⁴²

In Muslim, Buraidah quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا

I once forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them.⁶⁴³

In the version reported by Ahmad and an-Nasā’ī:

فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَزُورَ فَلْيَزُرْ، وَلَا تَقُولُوا هُجْرًا

Whoever wishes to visit it, let him do so, but do not utter anything which is not suitable.⁶⁴⁴

In another report of Ahmad on the authority of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

إِنِّي كُنْتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُكُمْ الْآخِرَةَ

Indeed, I used to forbid you to visit the graves, but you may now visit them, for they remind you of the hereafter.⁶⁴⁵

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ gave permission to visit graves, even though he had told people not to do so before. He did that on the ground that such visitation makes one mindful of death and the hereafter.

⁶⁴² Muslim (967).

⁶⁴³ Muslim (977).

⁶⁴⁴ Authentic, an-Nasā’ī (2033) and Ahmad (23052).

⁶⁴⁵ Authentic, Ahmad (1236).

His permission is of general validity to us, applying to Muslim and non-Muslim graves. The reason that warrants this statement is that it permits non-Muslims' graves to be inclusive, and it is the fact that such visitation makes one mindful of death and the hereafter. It was the practice of the Prophet ﷺ to visit the grave at *Baqī'*, and that of the martyrs (of Uhud) to pray and seek Allāh's forgiveness for them. This way of visitation is for the Muslims alone; it involves a visitation, keeping one mindful of death, and praying for the dead, as presented from the Sunnah. Divergent views exist among our own associates and other scholars as well as the permissibility of undertaking a journey for the purpose of visiting graves. Two opinions follow:

1. **It is not permissible:** Journeying for visitation amounts to sinning, and abbreviating prayer in the course of such a journey is not permissible either. Ibn Batta and Ibn 'Aqil hold this view. This type of journeying is an act of heretical innovation. The age of the *Salaf* did not know it. Its forbidden character also emerges from this tradition, said the Prophet:

لَا تُشَدُّ الرَّحَالَ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: مَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى،
وَمَسْجِدِي هَذَا

No one should prepare a mount (travel) to visit any mosque except three: the Sacred Mosque, al-Aqsa (Jerusalem Mosque), and this mosque of mine!⁶⁴⁶

This prohibition includes journeying to mosques, *mashāhid*, and any other places to which one may set out for the purpose of the pious exercise. The reason being that when Basra ibn Abī Basra al-Ghifari⁶⁴⁷ saw Abū Hurairah as the latter was returning from Mount Tur (the mount upon which Allāh spoke to Mūsā), he said to him, "Had I seen you before you went there (i.e. Mount Tur), you would not have gone there, for the Prophet ﷺ said, 'You must not set on a journey

⁶⁴⁶ Al-Bukhārī (1189, 1197, 1864, 1990) and Muslim (1397).

⁶⁴⁷ A companion of the Prophet ﷺ.

to visit any place except three mosques.” Now this Companion, the transmitter of this tradition, understood that Mount Tur and similar locations associated with prophets all fell under the general prohibition; hence, travel to them is not permissible, just as journeying to all other mosques, except the three, is not permissible. Furthermore, even though visitation to their local mosque is sometimes obligatory and sometimes commendable for the inhabitants of a city and the superabundance of material that has come down on the excellence of such visitation, setting out for one of the houses of Allāh, except the three, is not permissible, a journey undertaken to the house of one of His worshippers who is dead should be first and foremost impermissible.

2. **Journeying towards them is permissible:** This view is held by some latter-day authorities, among them Abū Hamid al-Ghazali, ‘Alī ibn al-Hassan ibn ‘Abdus al-Harrani, and Shaikh Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisi. However, I do not know of a similar opinion coming down from any of the early scholars⁶⁴⁸, whereby the present tradition may be construed as not prohibiting such a visit, just as it does not prohibit undertaking a journey to places where one’s parents, scholars, teachers, and brothers may be buried, or where one may have some perfectly legitimate worldly matters to attend.

⁶⁴⁸ That this practice is not known with the *Salaf* implies that they understood the prohibition given in the hadith as including this kind of journey—journeys made to visit graves with the intention of worshipping Allāh. The journeys prohibited by the hadith are all kinds of journeys made purposely to worship Allāh, that which the traveller made seeking rewards for engaging in it. The kinds of the journeys cited by the author to support this journey have other purposes; the people do not embark on them primarily to worship Allāh. Allāh knows best. Later in this book I found further explanation of the author on this issue ﷺ, he remarked: In the same way, people will proceed to some city at a scheduled or unscheduled time with the intention of *du‘ā* and religious exercise, just as one may go to the Sacred House of Allāh. I do not know of any disagreement among Muslims about the unlawfulness and forbiddenness of such a travel, unless it be some recent disagreement. I only presented such traveling as two kinds earlier for it is possible one makes an ordinary journey exclusively to pay visit to certain graves, but for traveling purposely for religious exercise at the graves, such as *du‘ā* or prayer, or for celebration of festival, or some such purpose, need hardly be doubted. Alhamdulillah for Allāh’s favor.

However, other things that are done at the graves are innovations, among which are praying at graves, turning graves into sanctuaries, or erecting mosques over them, all of which have been condemned in the strongest terms by the Prophet ﷺ and expressly prohibited by him.

As for erecting mosques on top of them, many scholars from all the different schools of thought forbade it, following the prohibitions in the traditions. Some of our associates and some other scholars from the Malik and Shafi'i schools maintained its prohibition, but some scholars only condemned it; I do not know whether they meant by the condemnation prohibition or detestation. There is no doubt that it is prohibited because of the tradition that Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Jundub ibn Abdullah al-Bajalī, he said:

سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِحَمْسٍ، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ:
 "إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي مِنْكُمْ خَلِيلٌ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدِ اتَّخَذَنِي
 خَلِيلًا، كَمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي خَلِيلًا
 لَاتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيلًا، أَلَا وَإِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ
 قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، أَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ،
 إِنِّي أَنهَاكُمُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ."

I heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ five days before his death saying, "I stand acquitted before Allāh that I took any one of you as friend, for Allāh has taken me as His friend, as he took 'Ibrāhīm as His friend. Had I taken any one of my *Ummah* as a friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a friend. Beware of those who preceded you and used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you must not take graves as mosques; I forbid you to do that."⁶⁴⁹

And on the authority of 'Ā'ishah and Ibn Abbās, they both said:

⁶⁴⁹ Muslim (532).

لَمَّا نَزَلَ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَفِقَ يَظْرَحُ حَمِيصَةً لَهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، فَإِذَا اغْتَمَّ بِهَا كَشَفَهَا عَنْ وَجْهِهِ، فَقَالَ وَهُوَ كَذَلِكَ: “لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ” يُحَدِّثُ مَا صَنَعُوا

When Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ became ill seriously, he started covering his face with his woolen sheet, and when he felt short of breath, he removed it from his face and said, “That is so! May Allāh curse the Jews and Christians, as they took the graves of their prophets as (places of worship).” He intended to warn (his nation) of what the people used to do.”⁶⁵⁰ (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim reported it).

They both reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah ؓ as well that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

قَاتَلَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.⁶⁵¹

In another version of Muslim, he has it:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.⁶⁵²

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited turning graves into sanctuaries at the end of his life, in a report, he even cursed those who did it from the People of the Book, so that his nation can refrain from it.

‘Ā’ishah in a report said, “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ never recovered from his sickness and said:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

⁶⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī (435, 3453, 4443, 5815), and Muslim (531)

⁶⁵¹ Al-Bukhārī (437) and Muslim (530).

⁶⁵² Muslim (530).

‘May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship,’ not for that they would make it manifested, he feared that the people took it as a place of worship.⁶⁵³

Imām Ahmad, in his *Musnad* reported with a good chain of transmission on the authority of Ibn Mas’ūd that the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّ مِنْ شِرَارِ النَّاسِ مَنْ تُدْرِكُهُ السَّاعَةُ وَهُمْ أَحْيَاءُ، وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذُ
الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ

Indeed, from the worst kinds of men are: the people who the end of time would come to meet alive, and those who take cemeteries places of worship.⁶⁵⁴ (Abū Hatim reported it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*).

And on the authority of Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه, he reported that the Messenger of Allāh said:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.⁶⁵⁵ (Ahmad reported it).

And on the authority of Ibn Abbās رضي الله عنه, he said:

لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَائِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ وَالْمُتَّخِذِينَ عَلَيْهَا
الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ cursed the women who visit the graves, and the men who take it for mosques and packsaddle.⁶⁵⁶ (Ahmad, Abū Dawūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasā’ī reported it).

There are very many traditions over this issue, which cannot be exhausted here.

⁶⁵³ Al-Bukhārī (1390 and 4441) and Muslim (529).

⁶⁵⁴ Sound, Ahmad (3844, 4143, and 4332).

⁶⁵⁵ Authentic, Ahmad (21604 and 21625).

⁶⁵⁶ Weak, Abū Dawūd (3236), at-Tirmidhī (320), an-Nasā’ī (2043) and Ibn Mājah (1575).

Various Forms of Prohibitions Related to Graves

Such mosques as are erected over the graves of prophets, the righteous, kings, etc., must be earmarked for removal either by demolition or in some other way. As far as I know, there is no disagreement among well-known scholars on this, nor about the reprehensibility of praying there. Our own school, too, does not consider the practice legitimate in view of the curse and prohibition to which it is subjected, as well as in view of other traditions that occur in this regard. Inasmuch as a single person lies interred therein, there is no disagreement about this issue. Disagreement, however, obtains among our associates about a burial place independent of a mosque structure: Is it defined as a place of three graves? Is prayer before a solitary grave forbidden, even if there is no other grave near it?

The prohibition is even stricter if it refers to a piece of land usurped, for instance if one builds a mosque, school, hospice, or *mashhad*, with or without a lavatory, over the tomb of a certain scholar or a righteous person interred in the burial place on endowed land. Such a practice includes a number of forbidden things, among them:

1. It is agreed that using a grave site, dedicated charitably, for a purpose other than burial is not permissible if done without compensation. Thus, constructing a mosque, school, or hospice over it is equivalent to burying the dead in a mosque, constructing caravansaries, etc., in a cemetery, or constructing a mosque on a much-needed and trodden public thoroughfare.
2. Frequently, this results in the desecration of Muslim graves and the exposure of their bones, as is known to have happened at many such places.
3. Muslims narrates on the authority of Jābir that the Prophet ﷺ forbade erecting buildings over graves.⁶⁵⁷
4. Building lavatories (repositories of filth) in the midst of Muslim tombs, well, these are the worst things to put next to graves, more so if the lavatory occupies the place of a Muslim's grave.

⁶⁵⁷ Muslim (970)

5. This amounts to turning graves into mosques. Some of the texts forbidding the practice have already been cited.
6. Kindling lamps on graves, while the Prophet ﷺ cursed him who did that.
7. The practice becomes instrumental in imitating the People of the Book in many of their tenets and practices, as is the case nowadays, etc.

The structure on 'Ibrāhīm's grave once used to be a closed one, and nobody entered it. This lasted till about the fourth century. Subsequently, it is said some women related to caliphs saw a dream about it, and thereupon it was entered. When the Christians arrived to occupy this area, according to another story, they entered it. Later, following subsequent conquests, it was left as a place of worship.

Among our teachers, the more eminent ones used not to pray throughout that structure, exhorting their associates to do likewise, in pursuance of the Prophet's injunction and in an effort to guard themselves against the insubordination that the practice involved. Similarly, kindling lamps in these *mashāhid* is altogether forbidden, as is the vow to dedicate oil, etc., there, rather, such a vow has the same consequence as the one to commit an act of insubordination.

The same is true of praying at graves, even if a mosque was not built there, for praying there amounts to turning it into a mosque, just as 'Ā'ishah said, "Were it not for that, they would have exposed his (i.e., the Prophet's) grave; he feared that it may be turned into a mosque (a place of worship)."⁶⁵⁸

'Ā'ishah ﷺ, of course, did not mean building a mosque alone, for the Companions could have hardly built a mosque over his grave. She rather meant that they were afraid that people should pray at it. Any place intended for prayer becomes a mosque; rather, any place where prayer is offered is called a mosque, though there may not be a structure there, as said by the Prophet ﷺ:

جُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَطَهْرًا

The earth is made for me a mosque (place of worship) and a means of purification.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Bukhārī (1390 and 4441) and Muslim (529).

⁶⁵⁹ Al-Bukhārī (335 and 438) and Muslim (521 and 523).

In a tradition reported by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, he said: The Prophet ﷺ said:

الأَرْضُ كُلُّهَا مَسْجِدٌ إِلَّا الْحَمَّامَ وَالْمَقْبَرَةَ

The earth is all mosques (places of worship) except lavatories and cemeteries.⁶⁶⁰ (Ahmad, Abū Dawūd, at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, al-Bazār and others reported it. Those who spoke against the authenticity of this hadith did that because they had no opportunity to examine all its available chains of transmitters; it is rather authentic).

Some scholars believe that the only reason why praying at a tomb is disapproved of is that the place is considered impure since the soil there is mixed with decaying flesh. They then differentiate between a recent and an old cemetery based on this belief, and a distinction is drawn as to whether there is or is not an interstice between the corpse and the soil. Pollution of the earth as a factor in preventing prayer over it applies indiscriminately to all of it, tomb or no tomb. But the main motive underlying the prohibition of prayer at graves is certainly not this. For the Prophet ﷺ clearly stated that “when a righteous man died among the Jews and Christians they erected a sanctuary over his grave.” So, he caused them, saying:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.⁶⁶¹ And by that he meant to caution against a similar practice.

The Prophet ﷺ is also reported as saying:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَتَنَاءُ يُعْبَدُ. اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

⁶⁶⁰ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (492), at-Tirmidhī (317), and Ahmad (74).

⁶⁶¹ Authentic, mentioned shortly.

O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship, Allāh is severely angry with the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.⁶⁶²

And ‘Ā’ishah said, “Were it not for that, they would have exposed his grave; he feared that it may be turned into a mosque (a place of worship).”⁶⁶³

The Prophet ﷺ was also reported to have said:

إِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، أَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ، إِيَّيْ أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ.

Those who preceded you used to take the graves of their prophets as places of worship, so, do not take graves as mosques; I forbid you to do that.⁶⁶⁴

All of this will have clearly shown you that the reason is not an apprehension of pollution but rather the apprehension of its being used as an idol for worship, as ash-Shāfi‘ī رحمه الله said, “I detest that someone is venerated, such that his grave is turned into a place of worship, fearing for him and the people who may come after him temptations.”

Abū Bakr al-Athram, in his book *Nāsikhul-ḥadīth*, and other than him from the students of Ahmad, and all other scholars mentioned this reason as well, for the Prophet’s grave, or the grave of a righteous man, is safe from exhumation, and soil pollution cannot result simply from a single grave. The Prophet ﷺ apparently stated this reason when he said, “Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship,” and from his saying, “Those who preceded you used to take the graves of their prophets as places of worship.” The truth of the matter is that those people used to worship at non-impurity polluted graves. This hadith

⁶⁶² Sound with the text: “اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا، لَعَنَ اللَّهُ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ” Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol, Allāh cursed the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.” Reported by Imām Ahmad in his Musnad (7358). The text the author quoted is reported by Imām Malik in *al-Muwatta*, with a *mursal isnad*.

⁶⁶³ Authentic, mentioned shortly.

⁶⁶⁴ Authentic, mentioned shortly.

of Abū Marthad al-Ganawī further states the aim of the prohibition. Muslim reported him to have narrated the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

لَا تُصَلُّوا إِلَى الْقُبُورِ، وَلَا تَجْلِسُوا عَلَيْهَا

Do not pray towards the graves, nor should you sit on them.⁶⁶⁵

And he ﷺ also said:

كَانُوا إِذَا مَاتَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ بَنَوْا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا، وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ الصُّورَ، أُولَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

They are people that when a pious person amongst them dies they build a place of worship on his grave, and then decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allāh.⁶⁶⁶ (They combined the worship of both the graves and statues).

It was the veneration of a pious man's grave that eventually gave rise to the worship of al-Lat. It has been said that "Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr were names of some pious men who had flourished during the spell between Adam and Noah."

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ (وَيَعُوقُ وَنَسْرًا) قَالَ: كَانُوا قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ، وَكَانَ لَهُمْ أَتْبَاعٌ يَقْتَدُونَ بِهِمْ، فَلَمَّا مَاتُوا قَالَ أَصْحَابُهُمُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَقْتَدُونَ بِهِمْ: لَوْ صَوَّرْنَا هُمْ كَانَتْ أَشْوَقُ لَنَا إِلَى الْعِبَادَةِ إِذَا ذَكَرْنَا هُمْ، فَصَوَّرُوهُمْ، فَلَمَّا مَاتُوا، وَجَاءَ آخَرُونَ دَبَّ إِلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَهُمْ، وَبِهِمْ يُسْقَوْنَ الْمَطْرَ فَعَبَدُوهُمْ.

Thus Muhammad ibn Jarir (at-Tabari) reports through his chain of transmitters to Muhammad ibn Qays, about Ya'uq and Nasr: "They were righteous people who lived between Adam and Noah, and they had followers. When they died, their follower-associates said, "If we

⁶⁶⁵ Muslim (972).

⁶⁶⁶ Al-Bukhārī (427, 434, 1341, 3873) and Muslim (528).

draw their pictures, then these pictures would, upon remembrance, draw us more ardently toward worship.” Consequently, they drew their pictures. When these associates in turn died, there came others; Iblis stole his way into the hearts of these latter ones and said, “They (your predecessors) used to worship them (the pictures) and to them they prayed for rain; so, you, too, worship them.”⁶⁶⁷

Qatāda and others say, “Noah’s people used to worship these idols, subsequently, the Arabs adopted them.”⁶⁶⁸

This very reason which prompted the *Shari’a* to prohibit worship of graves has undoubtedly been the cause of plunging many a nation into *Kufr al-Akbar* (Major Polytheism), or a major variety thereof. For people have been guilty of ascribing images of the righteous, or images they claimed were symbols for the planets, etc., as partners to Allāh. *Shirk* through the grave of someone in whose prophethood or piety one believes is at any rate a greater *shirk* than the one perpetrated through a wooden or stone image. Thus, you find a great many people imploring more soulfully at graves than they would in a mosque or even at dawn. Some even have the temerity of prostrating before them, while most of them expect in return for their prayer and supplication before them such benediction as they do not expect even in the mosques toward which journeying is recommended.

It was indeed this corruption i.e., *shirk*—whether great or small—that the Prophet ﷺ wanted to nip in the bud, to the extent that he forbade praying in a tomb altogether, even though one who prays there may not intend the beatitude of the area by his prayer, unlike his prayer in the three mosques, where he does intend their beatitude – just as he also forbade praying at exact sunrise, noon, and sunset, because they are times when the polytheists seek their prayer to the sun to bring them beatitude. Even though a Muslim does not intend all that, the Prophet ﷺ nevertheless forbade prayer at these times to root out the practice thereby. If, however, one intends to pray at a prophet’s grave or at the grave of a pious man, hoping that prayer offered in such an area would bring him beatitude, this is, then, exactly departing from and opposing the religion of Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ. It, moreover, amounts

⁶⁶⁷ Tafsīr at-Tabari (23/639).

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

to originating a religion without divine sanction. The Muslims consensually uphold, on the basis of what we know of its necessity as the true religion brought by the Prophet ﷺ that there is no merit in praying at a grave, no matter whose grave it be. Likewise, prayer in the vicinity of graves carries absolutely no excellence; it is, if anything, evil.

This is true even though angels and God's mercy come to such a place. Be warned: the true faith falls between two extremes. The Christians revered their prophets enough to worship them and their images. The Jews, on the other hand, made slight of them, enough to kill them. The middle community of Islam knows the true value of the prophets and, therefore, goes neither into their adoration, like the Christians, nor into slighting them, as the Jews do. Hence the Prophet's remark ﷺ:

"لَا تُظَرُونِي، كَمَا أَظَرَتِ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا
عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، وَرَسُولُهُ"

Do not exalt me the way Christians did the son of Mary ('Isā i.e., Jesus). I am only a servitor of Allāh and His Messenger.⁶⁶⁹

If it is assumed that a greater measure of divine mercy is caused to descend by prayer at the graves of the prophets than by the same elsewhere, then the harm emanating from prayer at graves would hold sway over this benefit, to the extent that it would completely overshadow or outweigh it. Thus, such a prayer would have neutralized that benefit and established instead something occasioning divine curse and punishment. It suffices for a man—who is not graced with the insight to perceive for himself the corruption inherent in such a prayer – to follow the Prophet ﷺ unconditionally. Had not the harm of praying at graves far outweighed the benefit accruing from such prayers, certainly the Prophet ﷺ would have been loath to forbid it. Again, the reason why he also forbade prayer at the three times, fasting on the Day of Greater 'īd, and on the Day of Minor 'īd, and, indeed, wine, even a drop of it, is that the evil they are liable to work predominates over whatever element of good they might have, or else he would not have interdicted these things.

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Bukhārī (3445).

It is neither incumbent upon, nor yet fitting for a Muslim to demand of prophet's reasons for the harm inherent in certain things; rather, he is obliged to follow them. As a result, Allāh says:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﴾

And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allāh.⁶⁷⁰

And He said:

﴿ مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ﴾

He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh.⁶⁷¹

The rights of the prophets over mankind are dominated by: rendering assistance to them in the course of their propagations; venerating them; showing them love; much greater than the love one may have for himself, his family, or his properties, and preferring their followership and obedience to any worldly gains, among other rights they merit, which do not amount to worshipping them or taking them as associates besides Allāh. Conversely, the people who take them as associates besides Allāh, whether in a major or minor shirk, abandon these compulsory obligations towards them as much as they partake in that shirk. In addition, the *Siddiqūn* have the right to love and honor them, among other rights that have come from the Qur'an and Sunnah, which *Salaf* embraced.

Supplicating at Tombs

SCHOLARS HAVE DIVERGENT views about whether supplicating at a cemetery is wrong or not. If forbidden, is the prayer acceptable or not, though forbidden to be observed there? The view favoring prayer by our school is that it is both forbidden and inadmissible. That it is undoubtedly so would become apparent to anyone who would care to reflect upon the aforementioned textual materials.

⁶⁷⁰ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:64.

⁶⁷¹ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:80.

Here we do not, however, mean to settle already well-known issues; instead, we wish to alert you about those other issues that are likely to remain hidden. The present problem includes going to graves to do *du'ā'* (supplication) at or to them. The supplication at graves and similar places is reducible to two kinds:

1. One may offer *du'ā'* in a location unintentionally and not consciously, such as when one calls on Allāh on his way while passing by a graveyard, or when one who visits graves to seek Allāh's benediction for the dead, then requests Allāh to grant him and the dead well-being, as recommended by the Sunnah. These and similar practices are harmless.
2. One may make *du'ā'* at them, fully aware that a *du'ā'* is more likely to be answered here than anywhere else. This kind is prohibited. But does the prohibition require that it be considered outright forbidden or disapproved of? It appears to be closer to becoming forbidden. The distinction between the two circumstances, though, is quite clear.

There is no harm if a man, while calling Allāh, accidentally runs into an idol, a cross, or a church on his way, or invokes Allāh's Names in an area where there happens to be a cross, but he is quite unmindful of that, or enters a church to spend the night there lawfully and calls on Allāh during the night, or stays at night in the house of one of his friends and goes into supplication there. If, on the other hand, he consciously seeks *du'ā'* at an idol, cross, or church, rather than a house, a shop in the market or one of these columns along the way, in the hope that his *du'ā'* will be answered in that location, this would be a major transgression. These things are objectionable and forbidden because prayer to them has no merit.

Visiting graves for *du'ā'* falls into this category, or is even graver than some of the forms mentioned above, because the Prophet ﷺ specifically prohibited turning graves into places of worship, taking them as places of festivals, or praying there, which is different from some of the other places mentioned. The scholars unanimously agree that the report given by some people in which the Prophet ﷺ is quoted as saying, "If you are at a loss about matters, seek assistance

from the inhabitants of graves,” and similar accounts are fabricated and false. Many factors clarify as much, among them:

1. It has already been elaborated that the reason for the Prophet ﷺ forbidding prayer at graves was to ensure that pilgrimage to and retreat to them did not become instrumental in promoting one kind of *shirk* or another, and that the heart did not become attached to them either with fond hopes or fear.

It is evident that in strained circumstances, such as the face of a calamity, a man feels compelled to pray, either in order to attract good, such as rain, or to repel evil, in which case he seeks assistance. Under these circumstances, he might feel greatly tempted to pray at graves in the hope that his prayers may be answered there. In being thus seduced by graves, his condition is liable to be worse than that of a man who carries out the mandatory devotional exercise at graves in normal circumstances.

The temptation and the consequent corruption to moral life may be assumed to be less for most of those who pray at graves in times of ease and well-being. Not so for those who are compelled to do so under duress; their seduction would be immense. Now that the evil and temptation—factors responsible for the prohibition of prayer at graves—have been established for these latter, it is logical to assume that they are the ones who should be most emphatically barred from lapsing into the practice. This is crystal clear to him who understands Allāh’s religion, clear-cut comprehension of the pristine religion; of which is giving total perfection of worship for Allāh alone, and realizing the integrity of the Sunnah of the leader of the pious; the course of establishing the true Oneness of Allāh and banishing doubts from the religion in all ramifications.

2. Visiting graves in the hope that calling on Allāh at the graves will be heard more than it would be elsewhere is a practice that neither Allāh nor His Prophet ﷺ has prescribed, nor is anyone among the Companions, the *Tābi’ūn* or Muslim leaders known to have

done, nor is anyone among the early scholars or the righteous known to have mentioned it. Indeed, most of what is related in this connection comes rather from some of the late scholars who flourished after the second century of *hijra*. Several times the Companions suffered from drought. Many calamities surprised them; why did they not visit the Prophet's grave, seeking rain and help? 'Umar rather set out together with al-'Abbās and sought rain through his intercession. He did not do so at the Prophet's grave. Rather, it is reported that 'Ā'ishah exposed the Prophet's grave up in the sky so that rain would fall on it when it rained, because rain is a mercy from Allāh', but she never prayed at it for rain nor sought succor thereat.

That is the reason why, when the room where the Prophet's grave was situated was built during the age of the *Tābi'ūn*, a small skylight was left in its uppermost part, where it remains till now, with candles held by a stone around it. The ceiling was open at the top. This was built after the Mosque and pulpit were destroyed by fire in the 650s, during the emergence of fire in Hijaz; the fire that lit up *A'nāq al-Ibl* (the necks of the camels) at Busra,⁶⁷² following which the Turks infringed on Baghdad. Subsequently, the mosque and the ceiling were restored with the addition of a wooden fence drawn around the room. Many years later, a dome was built above the ceiling, but some people were against it.

However, we are told in Muhammad ibn Ishaq's *Maghāzi*—with additions by Yūnus ibn Bukair—on the authority of Abū Khaldā Khalid ibn Dinar from Abū'l-'Aliya, “When we conquered Tustar, we found in the treasury of Hurmuzan a cot on which lay a dead man with his scripture lying near his head. We picked up the scripture and carried it to 'Umar. He sent for Ka'b. Ka'b copied it out in Arabic. I was the first

⁶⁷² That is, the fire was so huge that it reached Busra, a place in Syria, right from Madinah, and lightened up the necks of the camels over there. This incidence has been prophesized by the Prophet ﷺ in tradition reported by al-Bukhārī (7118) and Muslim (2902). “The Hour will not be established till a fire will come out of the land of Hijaz, and it will throw light on the necks of the camels at Busra.”

Arab to recite it as one would recite the Qur'an. I (Khalid ibn Dinar) asked Abū'l-'Aliya, 'What was in it?' He replied, 'Your history, your affairs, and your solecisms (?) and whatever else there was to come later.'

'And the man,' I inquired, 'What did you do with him?'

'Next day we dug thirteen graves and when night came we buried him and leveled the graves, all of them, in order to obscure his identity from people, that they should not exhume him.'

'What did people expect from him?'

'Whenever it did not rain, they would expose him with his cot and it would start to rain.'

'Who did you think the man was?'

'A man called Daniel.'

'When did he die?'

'Three hundred years ago.'

'And no part of his body had changed?'

'Not really – a few hairs at the nape. The flesh of the prophets does not decay in the earth nor is it devoured by beasts.'"

This story shows how the *Anṣār* and *Muhājirūn* obscured the man's grave, such that it should not turn people's heads. This means they rejected the practice.

It is told that the people of Constantinople treated the grave of Abū Ayyub Anṣārī in a similar manner. This example should not be followed. The garrison towns had a number of graves of the Prophet's Companions and the *Tābi'ūn* and, after them the *ā'imma* lived close by. Yet they never sought divine assistance at a Companion's grave, nor did they pray at or through it for rain and assistance. It is evident that zealotry and allegations go a long way in transmitting such stories, or even those that are comparatively inferior.

Anyone who contemplates the books of *athār* (reports) and acquaints himself with the conduct of the *Salaf* would know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they absolutely never sought assistance or prayed for anything at graves; and if one of their own number was ignorant enough to do that, they rather tried to prevent him. *Du'ā'* at such a location cannot remain without being either superior or inferior to its

counterpart offered elsewhere. If superior, it could not have possibly remained unknown to the Companions, the *Tābi'ūn* and the generation succeeding the latter. How come the golden age of Islam, its first three generations, were unaware of it while those coming after it were well aware of it? That they knew of its excellence and yet abstained from it simply cannot be maintained in view of their zeal for everything good, especially the *du'ā'*. A man in need will cling to whatever means are available, even if they are reprehensible. How is it that, despite the fact that they were frequently in need of *du'ā'* and were aware of its effectiveness at graves, they still did not resort to it? An impossibility—no matter how one looks at it, from the point of view of human nature or the perspective of the *Sharī'a*.

If it is inferior, the intention to pursue it at graves is both erroneous and sinful, as it is also true of all other places where *du'ā'* carries no excellence, such as river banks, groves, market shops, wayside, and countless other similar places. The Qur'an clearly and variously stipulates against *du'ā'* at such places.

﴿ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ ﴾

Or do they have partners who have instituted for them as religion that for which Allāh has given no permission?⁶⁷³

If Allāh neither prescribed the desirability of making *du'ā'* at the grave nor ordained its obligation, then whoever brought it forth has indeed succeeded in making legislation in the religion, which Allāh did not permit. And Allāh warned against that through His Prophet, saying:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

Say, "My Lord has indeed forbidden immoralities—what is apparent of them and what is concealed - and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allāh that which you do not know."⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷³ Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:21.

⁶⁷⁴ Sūrah al-'A'rāf, 7:33.

The worships done at the graves are a way of associating with Allāh which He has given no authority to because Allāh did not give any authority to the desirability of making *du'ā'* at the graves or the excellence of praying there over any other places. So, whoever integrates such acts into the religion of Allāh has indeed said things about Allāh of which he has no knowledge.

Consider the part of the verse, “that which Allāh has not given authority” which abolishes any kinds of criteria or allegories anyone may put up in justification of his act. Such is also found in the word of Allāh, reporting His *Khalil*—’Ibrāhīm:

﴿ وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحِبُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِي وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾

And his people argued with him. He said, “Do you argue with me concerning Allāh while He has guided me? And I fear not what you associate with Him (and will not be harmed) unless my Lord should will something. My Lord encompasses all things in knowledge; then will you not remember? (*) And how should I fear what you associate while you do not fear that you have associated with Allāh that for which He has not sent down to you any authority? So which of the two parties has more right to security, if you should know? (*) It is those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—they will have security, and they are (rightly) guided. (*) And that was Our (conclusive) argument which We gave ’Ibrāhīm—Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁵ Sūrah al-’An’ām, 6:80-83.

For those *mushrikūn* (who are perpetrators of major and minor shirk) intimidate the well-meaning and sincere with their intercession of such things and saints. It is said to them: We are not terrified of these intercessors who are yours, for they are like any other creature of Allāh. They can neither benefit those whom Allāh wishes to harm nor harm those whom He wishes to bless. How possibly can we fear these creatures, whom you have turned into intercessors, when you yourselves do not fear Allāh? You originated in His religion, shirk, which remains unauthorized by the Qur'anic revelation. Which party is consequently more eligible to remain in bliss: The one who fears no one but Allāh and is not guilty of introducing shirk into His religion, or the one who has committed unwarranted shirk? The guided are those who believe in Allāh and have never incorporated shirk into their faith.

This is a perfect proof against those practices, by which Allāh exalted the people of knowledge over their antagonists. If, as a counter-argument, someone is reported as saying, “Ma'ruf's⁶⁷⁶ grave is a tested antidote!” and Ma'ruf himself is reported to have advised his nephew to make *du'ā'* at his grave. Moreover, Abū 'Alī al-Khirqī describes in his stories about Ahmad's survivors how one of them would visit Ahmad's grave with the intention of doing *du'ā'* at it. I suppose al-Marwazi mentions this. It is also reported that groups of men made *du'ā'* at the graves of prophets and the righteous among the Prophet's family, and that their prayers were answered. Indeed, many people do that.

Later authors include a visit to the Prophet's grave for *du'ā'* among the rites of the pilgrimage. Others mention that whomever sends his blessings upon the Prophet seventy times at his grave and then offers *du'ā'* would have his *du'ā'* answered. Those scholars who support him who considers recitation permissible at the grave of the Prophet ﷺ, argue that because it is a location where invoking *salam* (peace), performing *dhikr* and offering *du'ā'* are permissible, so *qir'ā'a* (recitation) must also be permissible here, as it is elsewhere. Several people saw dreams about *du'ā'* at the graves of particular saints, and many others have experienced that a *du'ā'* offered at the grave of an eminent man, such as that of Shaikh Abū'l-Faraj ash-Shirazi al-Maqdisi, etc., was answered.

⁶⁷⁶ It is said that, that M'arūf is Ma'rūf ibn Fairūz al-Kirkhi.

Refutation of the False Claim Regarding Supplicating at Tombs

IN OUR OWN time, we have seen those respected in public esteem for their distinction in both knowledge and deeds who would use graves for offering *du'ā'* and pious retreat. One of these men would be exceptionally knowledgeable, while the other, according to public belief, possesses miraculous powers. How can one stand up to these people?

Although this is far from being the true position of people of knowledge and piety, it is the extreme form that the grave-cult belief takes, and it is for this reason that I mention this matter. In this regard, I say the following: Nothing about the commendability of what we have mentioned as objectionable can be convincingly traced back to the behavior of the first three generations that were extolled by the Prophet ﷺ. Whom the Prophet ﷺ spoke about:

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ

The best people are those of my century, then those of the next, then those after the next.⁶⁷⁷

This is despite their dire need for it, should it be assumed to possess any merit at all. The fact that it is conspicuously absent from their command and practice, despite the fact that they may have felt a pressing need for it and that it may have had some merit, forces one to the inescapable conclusion that it has no specific merit at all.

Turning now to later generations, the most that can be supposed is that the community thenceforward came to hold divergent views, with the result that many a learned and sincere person gave in to the practice, whilst some still chose to forbid it.

That the community as a whole considered it was *istabsana* (preferable/good) simply cannot be maintained. This is for two reasons: One, *a'imma* (leaders), as a matter of fact, disapproved of it and rejected it in times both old and new. Two, it is impossible that the community should have

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Bukhārī (2652, 3652, 6429) and Muslim (2533).

come to a general agreement in considering an act good, which, had it really been good, must have most certainly been performed by the early Muslims, but which they *did not*. This makes for mutual incompatibility and contradiction, while *ijmāʿat* (consensuses) do not admit of that. If, however, Muslims in later times came to hold divergent views on the subject, then, for the viability of their views, they must be subjected to the test of the Qurʿan, Sunnah, and Consensus of early authorities, either enshrined in explicit texts or implicitly inferred.

But how can that be? Thanks be to Allāh, such is not quoted from a distinguished *imām*, nor yet from an *ʿAlīm* (Learned Man), whose views were followed and respected. Indeed, what is transmitted in this regard is either a false statement attributed to a person—for instance, ash-Shāfiʿī’s alleged saying, “Whenever I am afflicted with misfortune, I go and pray at the grave of Abū Hanifa, and he, may Allāh have mercy upon him, responds to me,”—or something similar. This is a gross canard whose falsehood is self-evident. Anyone who has the least bit of knowledge of the historical *naql* (record) knows, of necessity, that it is fiction.

For when ash-Shāfiʿī arrived in Baghdad, there was definitely no such grave frequented for *duʿāʿ*; rather, the practice was not even known during ash-Shāfiʿī’s period. He had seen the graves of the Prophet’s Companions and the *Tābiʿūn* in Hijaz, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. The inmates of these graves were to ash-Shāfiʿī, as to other Muslims, more distinguished than Abū Hanifa and other learned of his rank. Why is it that ash-Shāfiʿī offered *duʿāʿ* only at Abū Hanifa’s grave?

Add to that the fact that Abū Hanifa’s students such as Abū Yūsuf, Muhammad, Zufar, al-Hasan ibn Ziyad, and their circle who succeeded Abū Hanīfah never offered *duʿāʿ* at either Abū Hanifa’s or anyone else’s grave. This is compounded by the fact that, out of fear of corruption, ash-Shāfiʿī himself disapproved of the veneration accorded to the graves of the righteous. This is established in his book, as we mentioned.

Stories such as the above are fabricated by people who lack both knowledge and true faith or else emanate from a person of obscure identity. We who, when confronted with such anonymous stories, do not allow adhere to them—not until they are corroborated and

proven—even when we know they come from a person who does not speak out of sectarian passion, how possibly can we accept them from someone whose motives we do not know?

Some of these things may have been said or done on the person's own initiative, in which case he may or may not be wrong; or he may have qualified his statement with numerous provisos and specifications to make it safe, but in the process of passing it on, these provisos get left out, which changes the statement a lot. The example of that is the argument of some liars in respect of the permission given by the Prophet ﷺ for visiting graves after it had earlier been forbidden; the people falsely asserted that the permission was proof of the visitation they do to the graves and their practices therein, such as making pilgrimage there for prayers and seeking help. Then, again, all these arguments revolve around either a report, which cannot possibly be taken to confirm what is *Shar'*, or an analogy, on the likes of which one cannot rest the commendability of acts of worship—no, not with the knowledge that the Prophet ﷺ never prescribed them.

As it happens, it is these unauthoritative stories and analogies emanating from Christians who claim the status of devotional acts for grave-worship. According to Muslim scholars, the *only* authorities to be followed in establishing rulings are the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the practices of the early believers, which are taken from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. *Shar'ia* rulings cannot be established on any other basis than these three, whether textually explicit or inferred. A reply to the question may be attempted in two ways, one general, the other concrete.

The general problem is incompatibility. Such stories and analogies abound among the Jews and Christians. Polytheists, to whom Allāh commissioned the Prophet ﷺ used to call on their idols, and their calls were occasionally answered, just as the *maqābiriyūn's* call is sometimes answered. There is still a sect of Christians who favours the cult of the graves. If this was the only argument why one must be satisfied with it and desire it, then the argument should be dismissed because this is unbelief and contradicts itself. You moreover see that each of these people who invoke divine succor at graves or elsewhere has set up an idol for himself. Only his

own does he hold in high regard, while other idols he scorns. Each one of them claims that his idol alone responds to petitions. It is impossible for all idols to be equally effective. Agreement with some to the exclusion of others is mere arbitrariness and unjustifiable preference, while professing faith in all of them would combine the opposites.

So, according to them, the affections most of these people have are as much devoted as they may be to their individual idols and as much relinquished as they may be of those of others; they have accordance only for that which they have in common—not what they differ about—caused by a lack of their mutual affections. If anyone of them develops a good hope of the fulfillment of his needs towards this or that idol, he is not as passive as those whose hopes lie in a single one; apparently, that is the attribute of idol worshippers in general. Further, the call of Bal'am ibn Ba'ura', one of Moses' people, too, had been granted. Yet Allāh dispossessed him of his faith. The polytheists, too, sometimes pray for rain and help and may be granted their request.

Turning now to a concrete reply: This mistaken notion stems from two sources: *manqul*, viz., what is reported about such a *du'ā'* as coming down from certain notables; and *ma'qul*, by which is meant the belief, based on experience and analogy, about the benefit accruing from such a *du'ā'*.

The *naql* in this matter is either outright false or incorrect, thus having no demonstrative power. We already provided an authoritative statement against this practice above. About the *ma'qul*, we say this: The benefits generally mentioned in this connection are false. A call made by these people at graves is rarely answered. Of course, one such man makes all kinds of wishes, but it is only a single wish that is actually granted, or a multitudinous number do the same and are heard one by one. What a difference between these and those who offer *du'ā'* in the early morning hours, calling on Allāh in prostration and after prayer, and in the houses of Allāh! The latter, when they call on Allāh humbly and wholeheartedly in the manner the *maqābiriyūn* would have done, are almost never disappointed, and unless there is an impediment, their wishes almost always come true. The truth is

that if sincere believers supplicate in the manner of the *maqābiriyūn*, their prayers are only rarely turned down, whereas the *maqābiriyūn*'s prayers are only rarely granted. The prayers of the sincere believers are as said by the Prophet ﷺ:

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو بِدَعْوَةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا إِثْمٌ، وَلَا قَطِيعَةٌ رَحِمٍ، إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا إِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ: إِمَّا أَنْ تُعْجَلَ لَهُ دَعْوَتُهُ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَدَّخِرَهَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ مِنَ السُّوءِ مِثْلَهَا " قَالُوا: إِذَا نُكِّرُ، قَالَ: "اللَّهُ أَكْثَرُ"

No Muslim will make a supplication containing nothing which is sinful or which involves breaking ties of relationship, except that Allāh gives him for it one of the three: 'He either answers his prayers right in this world, or stores it (the reward) up for him in the next, or waves away for him an equivalent amount of evil. The people said, "We should, then, be more in supplications." He ﷺ remarked, "Allāh is more ready to answer than you can ask."⁶⁷⁸

They even cherish and pursue good in their prayers. As for the *maqābiriyūn*, if perchance one of their calls is heard, it is followed by a weakening of monotheism in them, a diminishing of their share to be granted by the Lord. Such a man, unlike the early believers, does not find in his heart a taste for the flavor and sweetness of faith. Perhaps such fulfillment will not be followed with Allāh's blessing unless he is forgiven for being ignorant that what they are doing is heretical innovation; because when a man exercises independent judgment but makes a mistake, Allāh rewards him for his initiative and while pardoning him for his error.

All things suspected of having an influence on the phenomenal world but nevertheless prohibited by the *Shari'a* – for example, astrological action, psychological measures such as the eye, *du'ā'* of the interdicted kind, forbidden incantation, natural magic, etc. – their harm is far greater than their benefit, even in terms of the desired object. For the most part, these things are used to achieve worldly goals, and rarely does a man attain a worldly goal through them that does not result in

⁶⁷⁸ Good, Ahmad (11133).

his end in this world, let alone the next. Far more people lose through these practices than gain through them. Moreover, only Allāh knows how much misfortune and harm they contain. These methods are harmful in and of themselves, only rarely meeting a need and, when they do, causing more harm than good.

On the other hand, the approved methods for attaining lawful and commendable goals—whether physical, such as commerce and cultivation, or religious, such as trust in and dependence on Allāh, calling Him in a lawful manner in places and times distinguished by Him and His Prophet—result in the attainment of the absolute, or mostly good. And if some harm may proceed from following the lawful and abandoning the unlawful—which is, moreover, forbidden—then this harm is augmented by the good that will accrue from it. Not only do the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Consensus indicate that it is true, but the matter can also be comprehended from common experience and sound analogies. Take, for instance, prayer and almsgiving; they both bring happiness in this world and the next; they both attract all that is good and repel all that is evil.

These remarks are meant to explain that these proscribed measures yield neither absolute nor preponderant good. A man who has experience and knowledge of the world and its circumstances believes with absolute certainty that such is indeed the case.

Once that is established, it is not for us to explain why occasionally a *du'ā'* may be granted. The means by which Allāh causes events to happen in the world and in heaven can in reality be accounted for by Him alone. This is certainly true of the more important events. Similarly, the many different kinds of them also cannot be comprehended by mankind in view of the vastness of His dominion. Thus, the method of the prophets was to enjoin mankind to perform acts that were beneficial and did not harm them. However, they avoided distracting people, as the philosophers do, with talk about the reasons underlying the creation of the universe. Such discussions are vexing, of little benefit, or entail harm.

The Prophet ﷺ can be compared to a physician who examines a patient, sees his malady, diagnoses his condition, and then advises the patient on what he should take and what he should avoid. The patient acts as advised and recovers, which is his objective.

A philosopher would now engage in a lengthy debate about the causes and nature of that malady, denouncing the malady as much as the causes. If the patient asked, “How do I get cured of it?” he would be found to be completely ignorant of the subject. However, when it comes to the efficacy of some of these measures, it may contain a veritable tribulation for a man of weak mind and faith, befuddling his reason and coming to possess it, especially if he is not graced with the knowledge and faith leading him to true guidance and certainty.

It suffices for an intelligent man to know that anything other than the lawful can in no way produce an effect. Thus it is without benefit altogether. But if it did, then the harm ensuing therefrom would be greater than the resulting benefit. The reason why the need of a certain man who offers a forbidden *du'ā'* is fulfilled may be his sense of utter helplessness, a helplessness with which even if a *mushrik* (polytheist) were to call on Allāh before an idol, the call would undoubtedly be heard by virtue of the caller's undivided attention to Allāh, despite the fact that the *du'ā'* before an idol was at any rate an act of *shirk*. Unless Allāh chooses to forgive, a man whose prayer is answered through an intermediary, the inhabitant of a grave or someone else whose assistance he sought will be punished and cast into hell. It is like asking for one's own ruination, in much the same way as when Tha'laba asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray that he may be granted an excess of wealth and time after time the Prophet ﷺ forbade him that but he persisted, so that the Prophet ﷺ had to pray for him, which became his undoing in this world and the next.⁶⁷⁹ The Prophet ﷺ stated:

⁶⁷⁹ Tha'laba's story is reported in a number of books of *Tafsīr*: Ibn Jarīr, at-Ṭabarī (13/370), Ibn Kathīr (4/183-184) and others. However, the narration that reported it is weak, as mentioned by Ibn Hazm in *al-Mahala* (11/207-208) and Ibn Hajar in *al-Iṣābah* (1/517). Ibn Hajar refuted the story in *al-Iṣābah* (1/516-517), and the fact that it occurred in respect of Tha'laba ibn Hatib, a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ who attended the battles of Badr and Uhd, and was martyred at Uhd.

"إِنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ لَيَسْأَلُنِي الْمَسْأَلَةَ، فَأُعْطِيهَا إِيَّاهُ، فَيَخْرُجُ بِهَا مُتَابِّطُهَا، وَمَا هِيَ لَهُمْ إِلَّا نَارٌ"، قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلِمَ تُعْطِيهِمْ؟ قَالَ: "إِنَّهُمْ يَأْبُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْأَلُونِي، وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ لِي الْبُخْلَ"

“One of you will make a request from me, and which I will grant, he would then go out carrying it under his arm, but really he has not acquired but hell. The people asked: “O Allāh’s Messenger! Why, then, did you grant him?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “The people refused but to ask, and Allāh refused that I should appear a miser.”⁶⁸⁰

How many a worshipper called on Allāh with an unlawful call, and yet it was answered, even though it brought on his perdition in this world and the next, either because he asked what was improper to ask, as did Bal’am and Tha’laba, or many people who prayed for things that caused their ruin, or asked in a manner that was displeasing to Allāh.

Allāh commanded:

﴿ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors.⁶⁸¹

Allāh, the Glorified, does not like the transgressors in manners of invocation, and in request making, though the people’s needs might be granted; like the people who invoked Allāh with all their audacity and transgressions of His bounds, yet He granted their needs in order to test them. So, whatever Allāh wishes, He does; even in worse cases, He may answer. Don’t you see that magic, talismans, the evil eye, and other influences exist in the world by Allāh’s leave, by means of which He gratifies the desires of many evil people? Even so, Allāh says in the Qur’an:

﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ وَلَيْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ

⁶⁸⁰ Authentic, Ahmad (11123)

⁶⁸¹ Sūrah al-’A’rāf, 7:55.

عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّوْكَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

Indeed, they know that whoever carries on in it (i.e., sorcery) shall have no portion in the next world; and surely it was evil for which they sold themselves, if only they knew. And had they believed, and being Allāh-fearing, a recompense from Allāh would be better, if only they knew.⁶⁸²

Magic is known to be of no benefit in the hereafter, so the magician is also doomed to hell; they only seek worldly gain, as Allāh says:

﴿وَيَعْلَمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ﴾

They learn that which harms them and never benefits them.⁶⁸³

By the same token, people among the invocators and supplicants may call on Allāh with a call of the forbidden kind and yet be answered, which becomes a cause for great perdition for him, or may call with a detestable kind and be answered as well. This caller may be aware that such supplications are forbidden or detestable, but he or she may not. He may be blamed with or without knowledge if he is negligent in searching for the truth or withhold from following the truth known to him, and he may be excused with or without knowledge for being a *mujtahid*—one who is capable of making an independent judgment or *muqalid*—a blind follower to an authority, as are treated in all facets of religion. Also, one who is not pardoned on the basis of excuse might be forgiven of such kinds of prayers for his enormous good deeds, sincerity of his intention, Allāh's wished favours, or any other possible means.

In summary, any supplication that contains unlawful elements is considered as any other kinds of worship. It is understood that an act of worship that includes detestable attributes may be forgiven for its owner due to his independent judgment (*ijtihad*), blind conformity (*taqlid*), good works, and the likes. However, this does not negate the fact that such an act of worship remains both reprehensible and forbidden, even if this particular person performing it is exempted from blame.

⁶⁸² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:102-103.

⁶⁸³ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:102.

The Impact of Worship and Supplication at Tombs is Not a Justification for Approval

IT IS AT this point that many things go wrong. When told how certain individuals among the righteous performed an act of worship or *du'ā'* and found it to be effective, these people use it as an argument in favor of the commendability of that act of worship or *du'ā'*, eventually considering this behavior perfectly orthodox as though the Prophet ﷺ himself had adopted it. This is wrong, especially considering that the influence that the act produced was due only to the sincerity which occupied the heart of him who did it at the time he did it. Now, the followers enact it in form only, bereft of sincerity. Therefore, they are punished for it, as the act remains an unprescribed one. Therefore, they do not deserve the reward of true followers, nor do they accomplish the sincerity of a doer whose genuine need and purity of intent may atone for his transgressions.

The present category also includes of “effects” that are said to have befallen certain venerable gentlemen in respect of innovative audio sessions. Those “effects” had doubtless resulted from certain “*ahwāl* (states)” arising in their hearts in the presence of a stimulant. In giving ear to this stimulant they were acting purely on their own initiative or were guilty of a shortcoming which may have been washed away on account of the purity of their intent. Now their followers take to participating in musical concerts only outwardly. The former’s participation in musical sessions is not, at any rate, a Sunnah to be followed, while the blind followers have neither purity nor good intent on account of which their own masters had been either excused or pardoned; so they are doomed to perish.

It is related about a certain *shaykh* that he was seen in a dream after he had passed away. He was asked, “How did Allāh treat you?” He replied, “Allāh made me stand before Him and said, ‘You evil *shaykh*, weren’t you in the habit of reciting (the charms of) Su’da and Lubna? Were it not that I knew your sincerity, I would have doubtless punished you.’”

Whenever you hear of a hymn or *du'ā* fulfilling the need of the person who engaged therein, even though in these remain deplorable from the perspective of the *Shari'a*, you must be aware that most of such instances fall into this category.

For this reason, *imāms* who were well-versed in the *Shari'a* used to detest this practice among their followers, even if its effect was perceivable. For instance, Samnun al-Muhibb reportedly remarked, “Impressed by some of these stories, I came to the Tigris and cried out, ‘By Thy might, I shall not budge until you send out a whale for me.’ And behold! There emerged a huge whale.” When al-Junaid learned of this, he exclaimed, “I wish a snake had come out and killed him instead.” Similarly, we are told that a certain devotee in Madinah came to the Prophet’s grave and expressed his desire for a certain kind of food there, at which point a Hāshimite approached him and said, “The Prophet ﷺ sends you this and tells you to leave us, for we have no such desires.”

Still other people had their needs fulfilled without being reprimanded, either due to their *ijtihād*, *taqlid*, or lack of knowledge, for an ignorant is forgiven what another person is not forgiven, as is recounted about Barkh the pious, who prayed for rain on behalf of the Israelites. Therefore, what is commonly stated in this context originates from people with inadequate understanding. If it really were an integral part of the Islamic law and faith, the people of perception would have been first to assert it.

It cannot be claimed that these people were allowed to indulge in these practices due to their inadequate perception. Although Allāh does not allow it, divine forgiveness and pardon can still be hoped for in the case of impaired perception. As for the approval of abominable things or making lawful that which is unlawful—definitely no. Thus, there is a distinction between forgiving the doer or wishing him pardon and considering his deed lawful or extending him a feeling of amity, whether this applies to the deed itself or some of its attributes.

I am aware of people whose requests to deceased saints or prophets for help were granted. Such a person is not outside of what I have mentioned. But this is not of Law, nor of the Sunnah to be followed,

rather; establishing the desirability of deeds or holding thereto as part of religion should be from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, as well as what the early predecessors were upon, and whatever is not of these among the innovations incorporated into the religion, is never desirable, even though it may seem beneficial sometimes, for we know that the evil they cause are far more enormous than their benefits.

Moreover, the prohibition and undesirability of such unprescribed *ad'iyā* (supplications) stem either from the object of *maṭlūb* (request) or from *nafs at-ṭalab* (the request itself), which is also true of seeking divine help and refuge for an unlawful or reprehensible act. Here, the detestable character is either attributable to the object from which refuge is sought or to the act of seeking refuge itself. People may be saved from one evil just to plunge into a worse one. A prohibited object of request is, for instance, asking Allāh to grant anything that is detrimental to one's interests in this world or the next, and then having that request granted this request without his being aware that it may be harmful to him. Like the man the Prophet ﷺ visited during his sickness and found him as deformed as a chicken, the prophet ﷺ asked him:

هَلْ كُنْتَ تَدْعُو بِشَيْءٍ أَوْ تَسْأَلُهُ إِيَّاهُ؟

Do you have certain prayer you say, or you used to ask Allāh for something?

قَالَ: "نَعَمْ، كُنْتُ أَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ مَا كُنْتُ مُعَاقِبِي بِهِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، فَعَجَّلْهُ لِي فِي الدُّنْيَا"

He replied: "Yes. I used to say: 'O Allāh! If I'm due for any punishment in the hereafter, melt it on me here in the world,'"

فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ لَا تُطِيقُهُ - أَوْ لَا تَسْتَطِيعُهُ - أَفْلا قُلْتَ: اللَّهُمَّ آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ"

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then exclaimed: “Glorified be Allāh! You can withstand that, why don’t you say: ‘O Allāh, grant us good in the world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of Fire.’”⁶⁸⁴

Or the like of the event of the death of Jābir ibn ‘Atīq, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَدْعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ، فَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يُؤْمِنُونَ عَلَيَّ مَا تَقُولُونَ

Do not wish for yourselves except good, for the angels are, right now, saying: Amin –may Allāh grant it, over your prayers.⁶⁸⁵

Also, Allāh reproached the one who seeks for worldly benefits alone:

﴿فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آئِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ﴾

And among the people is he who says, “Our Lord, give us in this world,” and he will have in the Hereafter no share.”⁶⁸⁶

Allāh reminded us that whoever seeks only the worldly benefits has no share in the hereafter.

Or he may unlawfully invoke divine wrath against a person, as Bal’am ibn Ba’ura did against the people of Moses ﷺ. This has been committed by numerous saint-worshipping people. At times, one of them may be overwhelmed by his own love or hatred of people, thereby unjustifiably invoking divine blessing or curse upon, them. His prayer may be granted, but he may still deserve punishment for this invocation, just as he does for his other sins, unless he is pardoned on the strength of repentance, good works, intercession, or anything else that could help to free him of the consequences of his transgression. If not, he is likely to be punished by being dispossessed either of his taste

⁶⁸⁴ Muslim (2688).

⁶⁸⁵ Muslim (920). I do not know how the author connected this event with Jābir ibn ‘Atīq, it is known of Abū Salamah and reported in Muslim. Perhaps there is another narration. Allāh knows best.

⁶⁸⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:200.

for faith and its sweetness, resulting in a spiritual *fall*; or of action in conformity with faith, resulting in immorality; or, finally, of the very source of faith, in which case he would become an infidel or both an infidel and a *munāfiq* (hypocrite).

As a result from their inadequate definition of their states of mind and ignorance of the Divine Law of Allāh with regard to the actions of their hearts, there are a great number of these types of people among the people of the later generation and those with specific mental dispositions. One of them might become so overwhelmed with his state of mind that he is unable of rescinding a resolution he has made, causing him to behave like an arrow launched from a bow. This overwhelming occurs in most cases due to a lack of indulgence in prescribed lawful deeds; those that protect the mind against such evils. Occasionally, it occurs as a result of an independent judgment in which the person erred, but then, forgiven.

Such people erroneously believe that the answer to such a prayer signifies divine favor and blessing bestowed upon the petitioner. In reality, it is not at all a blessing. It resembles a blessing only in the sense that the prayer was efficacious and Allāh Almighty answered the prayer. True blessing is felicity in the hereafter or in this world, but without reprobation in the afterlife. This situation is comparable to the leadership and wealth that Allāh bestows upon some infidels and immoral people in this world; if these material possessions did not harm their possessors in the Hereafter, they would be a true blessing. That is the reason why scholars of our school, as well as those apart from it, dispute as to whether Allāh's gift to infidels may be compared with true blessing, even if their disagreement is purely rhetorical.

Allāh, about that, says:

﴿ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children (*) Is (because) We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁷ Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23:55-56.

And He says:

﴿ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمَ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾

So when they became oblivious to warnings, We opened to them the doors of every (good) thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were (then) in despair.⁶⁸⁸

In a hadith, the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

إِذَا رَأَيْتَ اللَّهَ يُعْطِي الْعَبْدَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَىٰ مَعْاصِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ، فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ اسْتِدْرَاجٌ

If Allāh provides for a man his worldly desires, though he is a perpetual sinner, it is indeed an allurement.⁶⁸⁹

As for *al-Isti'ādha* (seeking refuge with Allāh), we have the saying of the lady to whom the Prophet ﷺ went to ask for her hand in marriage, and she said, "I seek refuge with Allāh from you." The Prophet ﷺ responded, "Indeed you have sought refuge with the Almighty," he then departed from her. The lady was then informed, "That is the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ," to which she remarked, "It is so unfortunate for me."⁶⁹⁰

As for the prohibition due to the quest itself, this is sometimes the result of a prayer addressed to a force other than Allāh, a prevalent practice among sorcerers who pray to the stars and worship them. This is followed by a variety of punitive events unless they are counter affected by the prayer and worship of the believers. Accordingly, these things appear during the interregnum between two prophets, in lands of *kufṛ* (infidelity) and *nifaq* (hypocrisy), but not in Muslim countries and Islamic periods.

I know men who, when confronted with hardships, seek relief from some living people to be delivered from their hardships and are relieved. They may even witness certain things while the living person whose help

⁶⁸⁸ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:44.

⁶⁸⁹ Sound, Ahmad (17311).

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Bukhārī (5254 and 5637).

is being sought is unaware and has no knowledge of them. Others, again, invoke curses against people or intend to cause them harm, imagining a living or deceased person standing in the way of causing the people harm. Sometimes, such person may even see this living or dead person smiting him with his sword, even though the people are unaware of this. In fact, it is a deed of Allāh for a certain reason that could exist between the person who is the object of evil intention and his savior, due to the former's compliance with the latter's exhortation to be obedient to Allāh, etc. this is more likely.

Something of this forbidden nature may happen to idol-worshippers which, despite being trials from Allāh, is nevertheless the devil's work in favor of his followers. Now if the efficacy may follow from invoking one who believes that he has not even heard the call for help, how can he imagine that it is he who has caused it or even had a part to play in it? If it is said that Allāh brings that about through that means, then this cannot be true if the means is forbidden, such as maladies that Allāh causes to result from consumption of poisons. Frequently, a forbidden prayer itself is a prayer offered to one other than Allāh, even though Allāh is called upon through intercession of another, as the Christians are wont to do. "O Mother of God," they plead, "intercede for us with God!" Other times, even though the prayer is addressed to Allāh, it is made through an agent that He abhors. This comparable to the conduct of polytheists who worship Allāh through their idols. Still other times, one invokes Allāh with words that are least desirable for supplication or prayer due to their inherently outrageous nature.

Even though they may occasionally succeed in having a man's call answered, these calls are at any rate forbidden because their harm outweighs their benefit. Thus, they are nothing short of a temptation for a person whom Allāh does not provide guidance or understanding in discerning the difference between matters of *takwīn* (universal composition) and religious *tashrī'* (legislation), and between matters of *qadar* (preordination) and *shar'i* (doctrine), and, finally, in understanding that all affairs fall into three categories:

- Things that Allāh has ordained, but which He neither likes nor is pleased with them and that which cause these phenomena are

forbidden and liable to punishment.

- Then there are those things that Allāh has prescribed and which He likes and is pleased to see men perform, though He Himself does not assist man to their attainment, these are laudable, pleasing, even if they are not practiced by men.
- And, finally, such act as Allāh likes and helps man to perform.

In the first case, we have divine assistance. In the second, divine worship. And in the third, a blending of first and second, as Allāh says:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

You (alone) we worship and You (alone) we ask for help.⁶⁹¹

A *du'ā'* that is unlawful but efficacious falls under the category of divine assistance but not divine worship, as is also the case with the *du'ā'* offered by all unbelievers, hypocrites and evildoers. This is the reason why Allāh said of Maryam (Mary), (who prayed a lawful prayer) says :

﴿وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ. وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِنِينَ﴾

And she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.⁶⁹²

And the Prophet ﷺ used to seek Allāh's refuge with the saying:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ الَّتِي لَا يُجَاوِزُهُنَّ بَرٌّ، وَلَا فَاجِرٌ

I seek Allāh's refuge with His Perfect Words, that which no pious or dissolute can surpass.⁶⁹³

It is a sign of divine beatitude that the aim of a caller whose *du'ā'* contains *shirk*—because he entreats a force apart from Allāh to fulfill his need or to have Allāh fulfill it—remains unattained; such a *du'ā'* leads not even to a semblance of fulfillment of goal but in very trifling matters, while

⁶⁹¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 1:5.

⁶⁹² Sūrah at-Tahrim, 66:12.

⁶⁹³ Authentic, *Jāmi' Māmar ibn Rashid* (19831), *Shu'abul Imān* of Bayhaqī (4385) and others.

in matters of greater importance, rains during famines and deliverance from calamities for instance, it is, as it contains *shirk*, of no avail.

Allāh in these passages says:

﴿ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ ﴾

“Say, “Have you considered: if there came to you the punishment of Allāh or there came to you the Hour - is it other than Allāh you would invoke, if you should be truthful?” (*) No, it is Him (alone) you would invoke, and He would remove that for which you invoked Him if He willed, and you would forget what you associate (with Him).”⁶⁹⁴

﴿ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَكُمُ الْبَرَّ آعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ﴾

When you are touched with hardship at sea, you totally forget all the gods you ‘normally’ invoke, except Him. But when He delivers you ‘safely’ to shore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful.⁶⁹⁵

﴿ أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ﴾

Is He not Who responds to the distressed when he cries to Him, relieving affliction, and makes you successors in the earth?⁶⁹⁶

﴿ قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

“Say, ‘Invoke those you have claimed (as gods) besides Him, for

⁶⁹⁴ Sūrah al-‘An‘ām, 6:40-41.

⁶⁹⁵ Sūrah al-‘Isrā’, 17:67.

⁶⁹⁶ Sūrah an-Naml, 27:62.

they do not possess the (ability for) removal of adversity from you or (for its) transfer (to someone else). (*)Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, (striving as to) which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.”⁶⁹⁷

﴿ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوْلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا ﴾

Or have they taken other than Allāh as intercessors? Say, “Even though they (the idols) neither possess any authority over anything nor have reasoning. (*) Say, “All intercession belongs to Allāh (alone).”⁶⁹⁸

The fact that Allāh alone responds to or grants these matters of greater importance is a sufficient indicator of His Oneness and Omnipotence; it also definitively dispels any doubts about the authority attributed to one ascribed to Allāh as a partner. This yields the knowledge that the fulfillment of other matters, besides these significant ones, comes also from Allāh, the One, even though it may follow from causes that are forbidden or lawful. Just as His creating the heavens, earth, wind, clouds, and other similar massive bodies is an indication of His Oneness—and He is, of course, the Creator of everything—it is only reasonable that He should be the Creator also of everything besides these, since these result from His greater creations. Thus, the creator of the “complete cause” is unavoidably the creator of the “causative factor.”

Types of Associating Partners with Allāh

IN SHORT, THERE are two types of *shirk*:

Shirk fi Rububiyatihi (assigning a share to others in the “Lordship” of Allāh), whereby governance (of the universe) is ascribed to others alongside of Allāh, as is indicated by the Qur’anic verse:

⁶⁹⁷ Sūrah al-‘Isrā’, 17:56-57.

⁶⁹⁸ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:43-44.

﴿ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ شَرِكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ ظَاهِرٍ ﴾

Say, (O Muḥammad), “Invoke those you claim (as deities) besides Allāh.” They do not possess an atom’s weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership (with Him), nor is there for Him from among them any assistant.”⁶⁹⁹

This verse clearly emphasizes that these (individuals) hold no significance whatsoever, not even the weight of a particle. They do not share in any aspect with Allāh, nor do they assist Him in governing His dominion. Therefore, anyone who is not the lord, a partner, or an assistant, their relationship lacks any validity (for the supplicant).

The second type of *shirk* is *Shirk fi Ulūhiyatihī* (making others share in the “right of worship of Allāh”) by praying to others as in worship or for a need, as said by Allāh:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help.⁷⁰⁰

And just as the presence of (diverse) creatures does not detract from the Oneness of Allāh’s “Lordship,” or prevent Allāh from being the sole Creator of everything, or necessitate that man should pray to a created being either for worship or intercession, similarly, the existence of certain unlawful acts, such as the crime of “*shirk* (association),” does not infringe upon the Oneness of Allāh’s in the ‘right of worship’, nor does it restrain Him from demanding pure devotion from mankind, or require the use of words and deeds embodying the spirit of *shirk*, as Allāh resents and punishes such actions. The harm that emanates from these acts is greater than any potential benefit, as Allāh has made our worship of Him alone and our seeking assistance solely from Him the source of all good. The majority of Qur’anic verses consistently establish this important principle, to the extent that Allāh decisively

⁶⁹⁹ Sūrah Saba’, 34:22.

⁷⁰⁰ Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, 1:5.

reject the impact of intercession, except for the one that occurs with His permission. He says:

﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ﴾

Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission?⁷⁰¹

He says also:

﴿وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ﴾

Warn with this (Qur'an) those who are awed by the prospect of being gathered before their Lord—when they will have no protector or intercessor besides Him—so perhaps they will be mindful (of Him).⁷⁰²

And He says:

﴿وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ﴾

But remind with it (the Qur'an), lest a soul be given up to destruction for what it earned; it will have other than Allāh no protector and no intercessor.⁷⁰³

And this next verse:

﴿قُلْ أَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا﴾

Say, “Shall we invoke instead of Allāh that which neither benefits us nor harms us.”⁷⁰⁴

And this other verse:

﴿وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءَ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ﴾

⁷⁰¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:255.

⁷⁰² Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:51.

⁷⁰³ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:70.

⁷⁰⁴ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:71.

وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

(It will be said to them), “And you have certainly come to Us alone [i.e., individually] as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you. And We do not see with you your ‘intercessors’ which you claimed that they were among you associates (of Allāh). It has (all) been severed between you, and lost from you is what you used to claim.”⁷⁰⁵

This Chapter is a great one; it contains very enormous fundamentals of faith. Allāh also says:

﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ﴾

Then He established Himself above the Throne. You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor.⁷⁰⁶

And He says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ﴾

As for those who take other lords besides Him, (saying), “We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allāh.”⁷⁰⁷

And His Word:

﴿أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا﴾

Or have they taken other than Allāh as intercessors? Say, “Even though they (the idols) neither possess any authority over anything nor have reasoning. (*) Say, “All intercession belongs to Allāh (alone).”⁷⁰⁸

This Chapter (Sūrah az-Zumar) contains fundamental basis in

⁷⁰⁵ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:94.

⁷⁰⁶ Sūrah as-Sajdah, 32:4.

⁷⁰⁷ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:3.

⁷⁰⁸ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:43-44.

respect of this issue.

There are these other verses:

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١١﴾ يَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا لَا نَفْعَ لَهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَدْعُوا لِمَن ضَرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِن نَّفْعِهِ لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾

And there are some who worship Allāh on the verge (of faith): if they are blessed with something good, they are content with it; but if they are afflicted with a trial, they relapse (into disbelief), losing this world and the Hereafter. That is (truly) the manifest loss. (*) They call besides Allāh what can neither harm nor benefit them. That is (truly) the farthest one can stray. (*) He invokes one whose harm is closer than his benefit - how wretched the protector and how wretched the associate.⁷⁰⁹

And this:

﴿ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بِتَأْوِيلٍ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبِئْسَ الْعَكْبُوتُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

The parable of those who take protectors other than Allāh is that of a spider spinning a shelter. And the flimsiest of all shelters is certainly that of a spider, if only they knew.⁷¹⁰

The Qur'an consistently establishes this fundamental principle, which forms the basis of the religion. The previous discussion pertains to the prohibition of such *du'ā'*, even if it may appear effective – assuming that this *du'ā'* was the cause or part of the cause for the attainment of a need.

There have been different opinions regarding the type of *du'ā'* that leads to the realization of a need. Some individuals, who deny praying and claim to be philosophers and mystics, argue that prayer has no merit

⁷⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:11-13.

⁷¹⁰ Sūrah al-Ankabūt, 29:41.

because the fulfilment of the petition is determined solely by divine will and heavenly causes. If former, prayer is needless, if latter – of no avail.

On the other hand, some scholastic theologians assert that prayer is indeed a sign and indication of the attainment of the petition. They establish the prayer with the petition as the proof is connected with the proved but not as the cause with the effect just as in the case of the revealed truth and the prior-knowledge.

The correct view, held by the majority of scholars, is that prayer is a cause, similar to other ordained and lawful causes, for the realization of one's desires. It does not matter whether it is referred to as a cause, condition, or partial cause, as the intent remains the same. Whenever Allāh intends good for someone, He inspires him to pray and seek assistance from Him, making prayer and seeking assistance a means to the good that Allāh has ordained for the man. As 'Umar said, "I am not concerned about the fulfilment itself, but rather about the prayer, for whenever I was inspired to pray, its fulfilment came along with it." The concept is similar to when Allāh intends to satisfy a person's hunger or quench his thirst, He prompts him to eat and drink. When He intends to forgive his sins, He encourages him to seek forgiveness, and then He forgives him, and when He intends to bless him and grant him Paradise, He makes it easy for him to perform the deeds of the people of Paradise. Therefore, Allāh's divine will necessitates the presence of these provisions with their respective divine causes. Just as entering Paradise requires performing good deeds, having a child requires the union of a man and woman, and acquiring knowledge requires the act of learning.

The beginning of all things is from Allāh, and their ends determined by Him as well. It is not within man's power to influence Allāh and His Omnipotence; rather, it is Allāh Himself Who holds authority over His kingdom, using the prayer of His worshipers as a means to manifest what He Himself has decreed. A man said to the Prophet ﷺ:

"أَرَأَيْتَ أَدْوِيَةَ نَتَدَاوَى بِهَا، وَرُقِي نَسْتَرِي بِهَا، وَنُقَى نَتَقِيهَا، هَلْ تَرُدُّ"

مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا؟ قَالَ: "هِيَ مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ"

“Is it that the medicines with which we treat ourselves, the Ruqyah by which we seek healing, and the means of protection that we seek, change the decree of Allāh in any way?’ He said: ‘They are part of the decree of Allāh.’”⁷¹¹

And he ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ لِيَلْقَى الْبَلَاءَ فَيَعْتَلِجَانِ إِلَيَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Indeed, prayers and misfortune would encounter each other (at the space), and then combat each other till the Day of Resurrection.”⁷¹²

So much for the prayer that serves as a means to fulfill desires.

What is truly revered is what has been revealed in the Qur’an and Sunnah, where Allāh expresses His pleasure, happiness, and smiles upon the good deeds of His servant, while detesting and being furious at others. We have extensively discussed this matter, mentioning the advantages and disadvantages, as well as addressing prohibited supplications.

Regarding unprescribed prayers, most of them do not serve as means, either wholly or partially, to achieve one’s petition. It is not known, and indeed cannot be imagined, that they have any effect, except for false imagining, similar to the belief that a vow produces effect. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* reports Ibn ‘Umar as quoting the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِي بِخَيْرٍ، وَإِنَّمَا يُسْتَخْرَجُ بِهِ مِنَ الْبَخِيلِ

⁷¹¹ Weak, at-Tirmidhī (2065 and 2148) and Ibn Mājah (3437).

⁷¹² Weak, at-Ṭabarānī reported it in *al-Awsat* (2498) and *ad-Du‘ā’* (33), al-Baihaqī in *al-Qaḍā wa al-Qadar* (246), and al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (1813). The chain of its transmitters contains Zakariyah ibn Mandhur who is weak. This is from the narration of ‘Ā’ishah. However, Imām al-Albānī verified it as a very weak hadith in *as-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa‘īfah* (6714), because he verified it from the report of Abū Hurairah which contains a rejected narrator as reported in the *Musnad* of al-Bazār (8149), and verified as a sound one in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jamī‘u* (7739), perhaps this middle course is most suitable, considering the available chains of its transmitters. Allāh knows best.

It does not bring forth any good; it only forces a miser to give out some of his possessions.⁷¹³

Also, on the authority of Abū Hurairah, the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

إِنَّ النَّذْرَ لَا يُقَرِّبُ مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ شَيْئًا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ قَدَرَهُ لَهُ، وَلَكِنْ
النَّذْرُ يُوَافِقُ الْقَدَرَ، فَيُخْرِجُ بِذَلِكَ مِنَ الْبَخِيلِ مَا لَمْ يَكُنِ الْبَخِيلُ
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَ

The vow does not bring anything forth to the son of Adam that which Allāh has not ordained for him, but the vow may coincide with the Destiny, and then used to extract from a miser that which the miser was not willing to give.⁷¹⁴

The Prophet mentions that a vow does not bring any inherent goodness, nor is it a means to attract good or repel evil. It functions in accordance with divine decree, similar to other means, and may compel a miserly person to give away some of his possessions which he otherwise would not have done. However, it is worth noting that the number of individuals who recount tales of great hardships and resort to making vows for relief is almost as numerous as those who claim that their requests were granted upon praying at graves. This phenomenon is due to the delusion of the misled, who have turned forbidden vows into a source of sustenance for keepers and cleavers of graves, as well as those who retreat to such places. Consequently, substantial funds are amassed through this practice. Each individual who makes a vow may claim, “I was sick, so I made a vow,” the other will say, “I was attacked by foes, so I made a vow,” a third may mention, “I embarked on the sea, so I made a vow,” a fourth may say, “While imprisoned, I made a vow,” and a fifth, “I was indigent, so I made a vow.”

Consequently, they firmly believed that it was their vows that caused their requests to be fulfilled and their fears to be dispelled. However, the

⁷¹³ Al-Bukhārī (6608, 6609, 6692, 6693, and 6694) and Muslim (1639, 1640), but this text is that of Muslim (1639)

⁷¹⁴ Muslim (1640)

authentic teachings of the True Prophet ﷺ clearly indicate that not even a vow to perform an act of obedience, let alone one that involves disobedience to Allāh, can be a means of attaining goodness. The Prophet emphasized that any apparent good that may result for the individual making the vow simply coincides with the divine decree, similar to other means. It is important to note that the number of unprescribed prayers is not as significant as the number of individuals who claim that their requests were granted upon making vows.

The practice of making votive offerings at graves or *mashāhid* with the intention of achieving desired goals is equally prohibited, just like prayers made at these locations for the same purpose. The belief in the effectiveness of votive offerings is as strong among the public as it is in the efficacy of prayers at these places. It is not beyond those who attribute the fulfillment of their needs especially to sinful vows – despite the fact that vows in their very category possess no influence over realization—to ascribe the fulfillment of their needs especially to prayer at a place which is of no particular merit in the estimation of the *Shari'a*—though prayer, generically, at such a place can exert an influence and it is possible to attribute fulfillment of need to it, unlike vows which, generically, are entirely inconsequential.

The underlying intent here is that if Satan can mislead people into attributing merit to something that is inherently ineffective and lacks any basis for its effectiveness, then it is more enticing for them to attribute merit to something that has the proven effectiveness in its nature. However, it is important to note that their belief in either case is incorrect, as both practices go against the principles of *Shari'a*.

What clarifies this better is the understanding that the belief attributing prayers or vows as the cause or contributing factors in fulfilling one's needs must be supported by signs that establish such a connection. However, in most cases, the only evidence presented is mere coincidence, occasional occurrence of the desired effect with either of the two. What is commonly observed is the detachment of the effect from these means. Thus, as unanimously agreed upon by the “wise folk,” these few instances are not sufficient proof, as what is consistently observed is the separation between these means and the desired effect. When

the effect consistently fails to manifest in the presence of a supposed suitable cause, it is not considered an appropriate cause.

If someone argues that the delay of the “effect” from the “cause” could be due to an unfulfilled condition or the presence of a deterrent, and not necessarily due to unsuitability. It is said to him: On the contrary, the coincidence of such causes and the effect occurs due to another reason, not suitability. This is the truth, as we perceive that Allāh grants needs and relieves misfortunes through numerous causes, so many that only He knows their number. However, we have rarely witnessed these heretical supplications being granted by Him as effects. Therefore, when we observe an ‘effect’ and find any of these heretic causes present, it is more appropriate to connect that occurrence to any of those numerous established causes rather than connecting it to something that is not originally established as a cause. It is also argued that if coincidence is considered a factor, then the delay of the effect from the cause is also a factor.

In this regard, people can be categorized into three groups: those who displease Allāh, those who have gone astray, and those upon whom Allāh has conferred His bounty. The group of people who displease Allāh generally reject the effectiveness of all means, whether lawful or unlawful. They argue that a lawful prayer may or may not have any effect. As a result, they disbelieve in all the signs that demonstrate the truthfulness of the messages conveyed by the prophets.

The group of people who have gone astray, on the other hand, believe in anything that can be perceived as a means, even if it originates from the Jewish, Christian, or Magian faith. The more intellectually inclined among them, known as so-called philosophers, attribute it to celestial matters, psychological forces and natural causes. They continuously revolve around these ideas without deviating from them.

On the contrary, the divinely-guided individuals do not reject the forces and predispositions that Allāh has created in all bodies and souls, for they believe that everything is the creation of Allāh. However, they also firmly believe in Allāh’s Omnipotence and recognize that every action is ultimately a result of His will. They understand that when Allāh grants a person’s request, it is not due to the person’s own effort or the workings

of his body and soul. Furthermore, they believe that Allāh, in order to manifest the truth of His prophets and to reward them, causes extraordinary favours to occur for them. These favours are also bestowed upon His true friends, the pious believers, at times to strengthen His religion, at times to expedite a part of their reward in their earthly lives, and sometimes as a display of His bounty. The divinely-guided individuals firmly believe that through righteous deeds and lawful prayers, as commanded by Allāh, they can counteract the effect of the forces that He has created in certain bodies and spirits. They are not deceived by delusions that have been exposed as false through rational and *shar'i* demonstrations. They are cautious and reluctant to engage in anything that is forbidden by the *Sharī'a*, even if there are suspicious of its influence.

It is possible identify instances when a particular means, by its extraordinary force, brings about the realization of a desired outcome. In both the realm of *Shar'ia* and the natural world, there are reasons for such occurrences, one of them being *idhtirār* (intense need). Even though these phenomena cannot be explained through ordinary process, we can be certain that on numerous occasions, when Muslims faced extreme thirst and hunger, a mere touch of the Prophet's noble fingers caused water to gush forth from them in abundance or multiplied a small amount of food beyond imaginable proportions, after being blessed by the Prophet ﷺ.

To fully comprehend this occurrence, it is crucial to understand that the abundance of food and water was directly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. Just as we know that when a person is struck down vehemently with a sword and dies, the cause of his death is the impact of the blow, we can emphatically realize that the abundance of food and water resulting from the Prophet's touch was not through a commonly known cause. The undeniable effect produced in these instances solidifies this understanding.

Similarly, when the Prophet ﷺ prayed for Anas ibn Mālik to be blessed with increased wealth and children, and Anas' date-palm tree started bearing fruit twice a year, and he lived long enough to witness the birth of more than a hundred sons and grandsons, we can absolutely certain that such extraordinary blessings were made possible solely due to the Prophet's prayer. That can be compared to the case of a crying baby who immediately stops

crying when brought close to his mother and nursed. It is evident that the baby's comfort and cessation of crying are a direct result of the mother's care.

Although probabilities can be considered in such matters, however, there are some events that defy probability for specific individuals and circumstances. One example is the power of prayer, where a believer may pray for something and witness its immediate manifestation without any apparent means of realization. This was exemplified by al-'Alā' ibn al-Hadrami ؓ who prayed for rain saying: "*Yā 'Alīm, Yā Halīm, Yā 'Alīyy, Yā 'Adhīm; Isqinā*—give us rain," and rain poured down on an extremely hot day, specifically over his army's camp. Another instance is when he prayed to be carried across a massive river and miraculously walked across it with his company, completely dry. Similarly, Ayyub as-Sakhtayani struck a hill, and water gushed forth for him, ceasing after he drank from it.

Indeed, both divine revelations and sound reasoning provide evidence for the effectiveness and benefits of supplications made to Allāh alone, He has no partner. Additionally, numerous personal experiences further validate the power of prayers to Allāh. You find most believers, who pray to Allāh for things they otherwise do not have the means to achieve, being granted those things in a way they had asked for. Now sometimes one knows for sure that in a given case the prayer was effective; in another case, however, one can, at best, conjecture that the fulfillment was due to prayer. And this is an established fact, as you doubtless know, among people of knowledge and insight—people who are versed in the category "demonstration," together with 'conditions' and the principle of "logical consistency" governing them.

On the other hand, the firm belief in the efficacy of unlawful prayers is limited to the ignorant individuals who cannot distinguish between what constitutes a valid "demonstration" and what does not. They lack the understanding that a demonstration must adhere to "logical consistency." This misguided belief is found among people of iniquity, such as disbelievers and hypocrites, or those who persist in major sins, to the extent that their hearts are darkened and they become unable to differentiate between truth and falsehood.

In summary, the understanding of certain things as causes, or

conditions for their effectiveness, can sometimes be based on reality, assumptions, or delusions arising from feeble-mindedness. It is essential to recognize that anything suspected of being a means to the attainment of goals but, in reality, is an unlawful means, such as a forbidden prayer, falls into two categories. Either it is incorrect cause or means, like praying to someone who is unable to hear or see or benefit you, or the harm it carries outweighs its benefits. On the other hand, if something is both a valid means and offers more benefits than harm, then the *Shar'i* prohibits it under no circumstances. All unprescribed devotional practices are considered 'forbidden', as mentioned earlier, even though there may be a genuine need for performing them without any deterrent.

Supplication After Greeting the Prophet at His Tomb

REGARDING THE RITES (of pilgrimage), it is mentioned that after greeting and blessing the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions, a person may commence a personal *du'ā'* (prayer). Imām Ahmad and others are of the opinion that such a person should face the *qibla*, with the Prophet's chamber on his left, so as not to turn his back on the Prophet ﷺ, and then pray for himself. Imām Ahmad also mentions that when a Muslim seeks to greet and invoke Allāh's blessing upon the Prophet, he should face the direction of the grave. However, if he wants to make a *du'ā'*, he should let the Prophet's chamber be on his left and instead face the *qibla*. This, of course, was out of their regard for that. It should be noted that praying at a grave is not objectionable in itself, in fact, it is encouraged to pray for the dead. However, this should be done silently, as indicated by the Sunnah mentioned earlier. What is objectionable, however, is to specifically come to a grave for the purpose of praying at it.

Similarly, Malik's disciples mention that a Muslim should approach the Prophet's grave, seek divine mercy upon him, and then pray. They suggest

facing the *qibla* with his back turned towards the grave. However, there is a dispute among them whether one should turn his back on the grave, as this would imply turning away from the Prophet ﷺ. But if he were to make the chamber stay on his left, the objectionable aspect disappears, and he would be standing either in the vicinity or in front of the *Rawdha*.

It is possible that the aforementioned positions of the *a'imma* are based on the disapproval associated with praying at graves. It is a well-established fact that the Prophet ﷺ prohibited praying at graves. Since the Prophet ﷺ prohibited using graves as places of worship and as *qibla*, it follows that just as prayer cannot be performed there, the same applies to *du'ā'*.

In the book *al-Mabsūt*, it is reported that Malik said: "I do not opine that a person should stop at the Prophet's grave to pray, rather; he should invoke Allāh's mercy upon him and continue his way." This may explain why the Prophet's chamber was modified and transformed into a triangular structure. Its northern wall was not aligned with the *qibla*, nor was it made quadrangular. The same purpose can be seen in incorporating the chamber within the Mosque.

Ibn Batta, through his known chain of transmitters, reports from 'Urwa: "People used to pray towards the direction of the grave, but this practice was discontinued by the command of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz."

During the demolition of the grave, a foot with a leg and knee became visible, which frightened 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. 'Urwa approached him and said, "This is the leg and knee of 'Umar," thereby alleviating 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz's concerns. This practice continues because it is not permissible for a person making supplications to face anything except what is permissible during performing *Salāt*. Don't you see that when someone is prohibited from facing the East or elsewhere while performing *Salāt*, he is also forbidden from seeking a specific direction while supplicating? Conversely, there are people who attempt to face the direction of a pious person while supplicating, regardless of whether that person is buried in the East or elsewhere. This is a clear error and a plain *shirk*. It is a custom for some people to avoid backing the directions of certain pious individuals while still facing the House of Allāh (the

Ka'bah) and the prophet's grave. All of these practices are innovations that resemble Christian practices. To further emphasize this point, when seeking *Salām* (peace) for the Prophet ﷺ, our *Salaf* used to observe Sunnah. This was done to ensure this act does not lead to the detested practice of the Christians, in adherence to the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا

Do not turn my grave into a festival,⁷¹⁵ (and his saying):

لَا تُظْرُونِي، كَمَا أَظْرَتْ النَّصَارَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ، فَقُولُوا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، وَرَسُولُهُ

Do not exalt me the way Christians did the son of Mary ('Isā – Jesus). I am only a servitor of Allāh and His Messenger.⁷¹⁶

Some individuals even questioned whether it is permissible to send *Salām* to the Prophet ﷺ at his grave, fearing that it might resemble a Christian practice. However, he was informed that 'Umar used to do that.

Malik and other scholars disapproved of the custom among the people of Madinah, where upon entering the Prophet's mosque, they would invoke divine mercy upon the Prophet's grave and his two Companions. They asserted that this should be done by a person returning from a journey or intending to embark on one.

However, some of the scholars permit the act of invoking divine mercy upon the Prophet ﷺ upon entering the Mosque for prayer, etc. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, none of them allow frequenting the grave for purpose of *Salāt*—seeking blessing and *Salam*—seeking peace. This would turn the Mosque into a celebratory gathering, which is not appropriate. Although we are commanded to say: *‘As-Salām alayka Ayuha an-Nabiyy wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu’* (may the peace and blessing of Allāh be upon you, O you Prophet) when entering any mosque, the same is commanded to be said towards the end of our prayer. It

⁷¹⁵ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2042) and Ahmad (8804).

⁷¹⁶ Al-Bukhārī (3445).

is recommended to greet anyone who enters a place where there may not be anyone present because greetings, regardless of where they are offered, ultimately reaches the Prophet ﷺ, as mentioned earlier. Thus, Malik and others shared the concern that such continuous practices at the Prophet's grave could lead to a festival-like atmosphere at the grave.

Moreover, such a practice is an innovation. During the caliphates of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī ؑ, the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* used to come to the Mosque five times a day for prayer, yet they would not go to the Prophet's grave to pay their respects. They understood how much the Prophet ﷺ disliked such actions and had explicitly commanded them not to engage in them. Instead, they were content with greeting him upon entering and leaving the Mosque, as well as during the *tashabbud*, just as they used to do when the Prophet ﷺ was alive. This is supported by the report about Ibn 'Umar's behavior.

In his *Sunan*, Sa'īd ibn Mansūr reports that 'Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Zayd narrated from his father about Ibn 'Umar: "Whenever Ibn 'Umar returned from a journey, he would visit the Prophet's grave, invoked divine mercy upon him, and say, 'Greetings, O Abū Bakr! And greetings, O my father!'"

Although 'Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Zayd's narration can be considered weak, this should not cause us a great concern. On the other hand, a tradition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* category, transmitted from Nafi' indicates that Ibn 'Umar did not always or frequently engage in such practices. How well Malik observed: "Later Islam can only approve what early Islam has approved."

However, whenever nations have become lax in adhering to the covenants of their prophets and have weakened in their faith, they have often replaced these teachings with their own innovations, heretical innovation, *shirk*, and the like. This is precisely why the leaders objected to the touching and kissing of the Prophet's grave. They erected a structure around it in an attempt to prevent people from praying at the grave.

'Ā'ishah's chamber, where the Prophet ﷺ was buried, was located adjacent to his mosque, with his grave situated between his pulpit and his home; known as the *Rawdah*. It remained in this state during the

age of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and thereafter. Over time, additions were made to the Mosque, this chamber and others surrounding the Mosque on its eastern and southern sides were renovated. At one point, al-Walid ibn ‘Abd al-Malik purchased these chambers, demolished them, and extended the Mosque in their direction. It was during the governorship of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz over Madinah when this occurred. Some scholars, such as Sa‘īd ibn al-Mūsāyib, disapproved of these actions, while others did not. Abū Bakr al-Athram said: “I asked Abū ‘Abdullah (Ahmad ibn Hanbal) ‘Is it all right to touch the Prophet’s grave and rub with it?’”

“I do not know that,” he replied.

“And the pulpit?”

“Pulpit – yes. There is a tradition about it. They mention something on the authority of Ibn Abī Fudaik that Ibn ‘Umar used to rub against the pulpit. They also mention about Sa‘īd ibn al-Mūsāyib with regard to the pommel.”

“It is mentioned that when Yahya ibn Sa‘īd intended to set out for Iraq, he went to the pulpit, rubbed it and offered a *du‘ā*, I said and found Ahmad approved of it, subsequently adding, “Maybe when it is necessary.” ‘

‘Abū ‘Abd Allāh had been told how people pressed their stomachs against the wall of the grave, and I (al-Athram) mentioned to him that I had not seen the learned men of Madinah touch it, they stood aside as they sent their greetings, to which Ahmad replied, “Yes – that is how Ibn ‘Umar used to do.” He then added, “May my father and mother be a ransom to the Prophet ﷺ.”

Ahmad and some other scholars permitted the ‘touching’ of the pulpit and the pommel, which respectively represent the seat of the Prophet ﷺ and his hand-rest. However, they strictly prohibited the ‘touching’ of the grave. Certain Hanbalite associates transmit a report regarding ‘touching’ the Prophet’s grave. This is because Ahmad, who was present at a funeral, touched the grave of the deceased to offer prayer for him. Nevertheless, the difference between these two positions is self-evident.

Malik objected to “touching” of the pulpit, just as others did regarding the “touching” of the grave. Today, however, the pulpit has

long since burnt, and the pommel is gone. What remains of the pulpit is only a small wooden piece. The very thing that had sparked the question of permissibility has vanished. In fact, it is only the ‘touching’ of the Prophet’s seat that is discussed in the report concerning the behavior of Ibn ‘Umar and others.

Al-Athram reports from ‘Abdullāh ibn Dinar, who said: “I witnessed Ibn ‘Umar standing at the Prophet’s grave, invoking Allāh’s blessing upon him, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar.”

3. Now is the discussion on the third reason for the disapproval of visiting graves for *du‘ā*.⁷¹⁷ The *Salaf* expressed their disapproval and provided an explanation based on the Prophet’s statement, “Do not turn my grave into a festival.”⁷¹⁸ We previously mentioned the disapproval of ‘Alī ibn al-Hasan and al-Husain ibn al-Hasan (his cousin), who were esteemed members of the Prophet’s household among the *Tābi‘ūn*. They held significant positions with regards to the Prophet ﷺ both in terms of lineage and status.

It has been mentioned that Ahmad and other scholars used to instruct individuals who, after seeking peace for the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions at their graves, intended to pray, to leave the portion, the person would face in the direction of the *qibla*. This practice was also followed by many of the early scholars, such as Malik and others, as well as some later scholars like Abū al-Wafā’ Ibn ‘Aqīl and Abū-al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī. In fact, I cannot recall any Companion, *Tābi‘ī*, or a renowned *imām* who ever recommended visiting any graves specifically for the purpose of making *du‘ā*. Furthermore, none of them have reported any related matter, whether it be from the Prophet ﷺ, the Companions, or from any well-known *imāms*. Many books have been written about *du‘ā*, including its times and recommended locations, and they have documented numerous traditions related to *du‘ā*. However, to

⁷¹⁷ The first is the following: Not to be an instrument for promoting one kind of *shirk* or another, and for the heart not to become attached to the graves either with fond hopes or fear, while the second is: Visiting graves for calling on Allāh, in the hope that this call will be heard here more than it would be elsewhere is a matter which neither Allāh nor His Prophet ﷺ have prescribed, nor anyone among the Companions, the *Tābi‘ūn* or Muslim leaders have practiced.

⁷¹⁸ Mentioned much earlier.

the best of my knowledge, none of these sources mention a single tradition specifically regarding *du'ā'* at graves. In such a situation, how can one claim that making *du'ā'* at graves is meritorious and will lead to quick acceptance? On the contrary, our *Salaf* hated and never practiced this act. In fact, they used to prohibit it rather than encourage or command it.

Refuting the Notion of the Merit of Supplicating at Tombs

DURING THE THIRD century, there were some unsubstantiated claims circulating, such as prayers being granted at certain graves or people making *du'ā'* at specific graves. However, it is mandatory to disapprove such statements, regardless of who propagates them. The best-case scenario is that individuals critically evaluate these claims independently or blindly follow an authority, who may be forgiven for their error. However, holding onto such beliefs should never occur. Instead, these claims fall into the category of baseless notions. Similar fallacies include attributing religious significance to specific locations like rivers, wells, trees, caves, and stones, among other objects of idols worship. Just as these conclusions do not find their basis in religion, neither do the claims about prayer and *du'ā'* at graves.

Until this day, we have not come across any evidence suggesting that any of the *Salaf* expressed permissiveness regarding this matter, except for an account mentioned by Ibn Abī'd-Dunya in his book, *Kitab al-Qubur*. This account, conveyed through the chain of transmitters from Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn Abī Fudaik, reports Anas ibn Mālik quoting the Prophet ﷺ as saying: "He who visits me in Madinah, seeking reward, I shall be his intercessor and witness on the Day of Resurrection."⁷¹⁹

Said Ibn Abī Fudaik, "I was informed by 'Umar ibn Hafṣ that Ibn Abī Mulaika used to say, 'Whoever wants to stand face to face with the Prophet ﷺ, should position the lamp, which is placed in the direction

⁷¹⁹ Weak, *Jam'ī aṣ-Ṣagīr* (8716), see *Ḍa'īf al-Jam'ī* (5608) also.

of the *qibla*, above his head at the head of the grave.” Ibn Abī Fudaik further stated, “I heard someone from the earlier generation say, ‘We were told that whoever stands at the Prophet’s grave, recites this verse, ‘Allāh and His angels bless the Prophet,’ and then utters ‘Allāh bless you, O Muhammad’ seventy times, an angel will address him as, ‘Allāh bless you so-and-so.’ Such a person will not be disappointed in his wish.”⁷²⁰

This account by Ibn Abī Fudaik could be seen as expressing approval of the intention to make *duʿā* at graves. However, it does not provide a definitive argument in favor of this practice for several reasons, among them:

Firstly, he quotes this story from an unknown person, and that unknown individual also reported the tradition from another unknown source. Such a tradition cannot establish anything at all. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Ibn Abī Fudaik himself, who reported this account, was a later authority around second century. He does not belong to the category of *Ṭābiʿi* nor even among their famous successors. Consequently, it cannot be claimed that the matter was well-established within the first three generations of Islam. Moreover, reliable scholars from Madinah do not mention anything of this nature. This establish tradition further weakens the argument:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا

He who says blessing upon me—the Prophet ﷺ once, is blessed by Allāh tenfold.⁷²¹

How is it possible that the reward for the one who blesses the Prophet ﷺ seventy times is solely a blessing from an angel alone? Additionally, the tradition mentioned much earlier clearly indicates that blessing and peace will reach the Prophet ﷺ from both far and near?

Secondly, this would imply that the commendation of *duʿā* within the context of visitation during Hajj is what was intended, as some scholars have mentioned in their discussions on the rites of Hajj. However, strictly speaking, this is not our main concern. We have

⁷²⁰ See the author’s remarks as followed.

⁷²¹ Muslim (384 and 408).

previously mentioned that if someone were to engage in a permissible visitation and then visit the Prophet's grave, offering *du'a*' within the framework of this visit, it would not be disapproved of, as some scholars have opined, although there is disagreement on this matter. It is transmitted that the *Salaf* disliked lingering at the grave for *du'a*', which is the most correct opinion.

What is disapproved of is the intention to specifically visit the grave for the purpose of making *du'a*'. The issue is analogous to someone entering a mosque, offering the greeting prayer for the mosque, and then engaging in *du'a*', or someone performing ablution in his designated place, praying and then making *du'a*' afterwards. These actions are not disapproved of. However, if someone were to actively seek out that particular mosque or location solely for the purpose of making *du'a*', then he would be prevented from doing so.

Thirdly, the response to one's *du'a*' there at the Prophet's grave may be attributed to the increased frequency of invoking divine blessing upon the Prophet ﷺ. Blessing the Prophet before, during, and after *du'a*' is considered one of the most powerful means through which a response to the entire *du'a*' can be expected. This is supported by many traditions, such as the one reported directly from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and also through his authority from the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ مَوْفُوفٌ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَصْعَدُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ، حَتَّى تُصَلِّيَ
عَلَى نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Verily, prayers are suspended between the heavens and the earth. Nothing of it is raised up until you send *Salāt* upon your Prophet.⁷²² (At-Tirmidhī reported it).

In his book, *Kitāb Akhbār al-Madīna*, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Zabbala quotes 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muhammad ad-Darawardi as follows: "After the Friday afternoon prayer, while we were sitting with Rabi'a ibn Abī 'Abd ar-Rahmān, I would observe a certain individual from

⁷²² Sound, at-Tirmidhī (486). It has supports from other traditions.

Madinah named Muhammad ibn Kaisan. He would come, stand at the grave, greet the Prophet ﷺ and engage in personal *du'a*' (prayer) until evening. Rabi'a's companions would comment, 'Just look at what he is doing!' To this, Rabi'a would respond, 'Let him be! A person gets the reward based on his (good) intention.'" This Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, the transmitter of these traditions, is regarded as a weak transmitter by scholars of hadith, including those who hold the same view about like al-Waqidi and his group. Despite his weak status as a transmitter, his reports have been recorded and given some level of consideration.

This particular story can be interpreted both in favor and against the practice. It suggests that the actions of the individual were perceived as an act of innovation by the people, rather than a practice followed by the Companions or learned individuals in Madinah. If this custom had been widespread among the people of Madinah, the Rabi'a's associates would not have reacted with surprise, shock, and disapproval. The fact that it was mentioned by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan in his book, along with the reports of Zubair ibn al-Bakkar, indicates that it occurred during the time of Malik and his disciples, and it was not a customary practice during that period. If it had been well-known, it would not have been highlighted in such a remarkable manner in *Mūsānnaḥ*.

Furthermore, it is evident that Rabi'a's companions, a knowledgeable group with religious understanding, clearly disapproved of the practice, while Rabi'a himself appeared to affirm it. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are differing views on this matter. Rabi'a's justification of the practice based on the premise that 'a person is rewarded for his (good) intention!' does not necessarily imply approval of something that is generally disapproved of. In fact, if the man had intended to offer the *salāt* (prayer) at the grave instead, Rabi'a would have forbidden him from doing so, just as he would have if the man had intended to perform the *salāt* (prayer) at an unprescribed time.

It is possible that Rabi'a—though Allāh knows best—intended to convey that a person may be rewarded for his good intention, even if their actions are not in accordance with the prescribed laws, as long as they do not consciously intend to go against the teachings of the religion.

In the case of the personal *du'ā'* (prayer) at the grave, even though it was not prescribed or recommended, it was performed by the man with good intention. As a result, he may be potentially receiving some reward for his intention. Therefore, it can be concluded that they (Rabi'a's associates) were in consensus regarding the disapproval of performing *du'ā'* at the grave. They believed that the act held no merit or desirability. If any positive outcome were to occur, it would be solely due to the pure intention of the person making the supplication. Furthermore, Rabi'a cannot be blamed for not following his associates in the matter. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, it's possible that he had not received the Prophet's prohibition against "turning his grave into a festival" and "prayer thereat." According to Ahmad, Rabi'a was "a man of insufficient knowledge about the Prophetic tradition." Secondly, even if he had heard of the prohibition, he might not have considered the present case to fall under it. Or perhaps, he might have viewed it as not necessarily unlawful but merely reprehensible. In such a case, one is not obliged to explicitly disapprove of something that is merely reprehensible. Lastly, it's also possible that Rabi'a perceived the man's greetings and *du'ā'* as a secondary (to his visit and had not come there primarily with these in mind).

The matter requires further investigation. It is undeniable that scholars sometimes have different views on cases similar to the present one, just as they do regarding the permissibility of *salāt* (praying) at graves. If someone does not deem it invalid, they cannot prohibit others from engaging in the action. The Qur'an, Sunnah, and the practices of the early Muslims provide the strongest support (in these matters). However, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan has also transmitted reports about the *Salaf* that contribute to our basic contention. He says: "Umar ibn Harun informed me, on the authority of Salma ibn Wardan, who said, 'I witnessed Anas ibn Mālik greeting the Prophet ﷺ, then leaning against the wall of the grave, and thereafter engaging in a *du'ā'*.'"

Even though Anas is known to have exhibited this behavior, it nevertheless supports our earlier point mentioned. This is because Anas was not a resident of Madinah; he would visit from Basra along with other pilgrims or visitors. During his visit (in Madinah,) he would

greet the Prophet ﷺ. If he wished to engage in *du'ā'*, as is befitting for a person of his stature, he would do so within the context of his visit. At that time, his back would be turned towards the grave.

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan narrates, based on the authority of Muhammad ibn Hilal, etc.: “The house of the Prophet, which eventually became the site of his grave, originally was the apartment of ‘Ā'ishah. She resided in it. It was a cube-shaped structure made of black gypsum stones. One side of the house, the side adjacent to the *qibla*, was the longest, while the eastern and western sides were equal in length. The northern side of the house was the shortest. The entrance to the house was located in the north and was sealed with black gypsum stones.” Subsequently, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz constructed the present structure over the Prophet’s grave. He also restructured it into a triangular shape to prevent people from designating it as a *qibla* for *salāt* (prayer) within the Prophet’s mosque. This precautionary measure was taken because the Prophet ﷺ had stated:

قَاتَلَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.⁷²³

And he said:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا يُعْبَدُ. اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship, Allāh is severely angry with the people who took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.⁷²⁴

⁷²³ Al-Bukhārī (437) and Muslim (530).

⁷²⁴ Sound with the text: “اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا، لَعَنَ اللَّهُ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ”—Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol, Allāh cursed the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.” Reported by Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad* (7358). The text the author quoted is reported by Imām Malik in *al-Muwatta*, with a *mursal isnad*.

These reports, along with the ones previously mentioned, succeeded in demonstrating the actions of the *Salaf* concerning the matter at hand. It is evident from their perspective that the practices of many contemporary Muslims are completely unlawful. However, the current discussion does not include such reports regarding phenomena, for instance, the hearing the return of *salām* coming from the Prophet's grave or the graves of the other righteous, or instances like Sa'īd ibn al-Mūsāyib hearing the *adhān* coming out from the Prophet's grave during nights of *Hirab*,⁷²⁵ and so on. While these reports may be true, they are not directly relevant to our current subject.

Likewise, the report about a man visiting the Prophet's grave and seeking relief from drought during *ar-Ramāda* (the Year of Perdition), where he claimed to have seen the Prophet ﷺ who commanded him to go to 'Umar and request him to come out in the open, leading the people in prayer for rain, does not directly fall within the scope of our discussion. Such occurrences are frequently happening to individuals of lesser status than the Prophet ﷺ. Personally, I am aware of many similar incidents.

The same principle applies to instances where an individual makes a petition of need to the Prophet ﷺ himself or to anyone of his (the Prophet's) nation, and their request is subsequently granted. Such occurrences have commonly taken place and are not directly relevant to our discussion.

It is important to keep in mind that if the Prophet ﷺ or somebody else for that matter, responds to such petitioners, it does not necessarily imply that such petitioning is commendable. The Prophet ﷺ himself had said:

"إِنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ لَيَسْأَلُنِي الْمَسْأَلَةَ، فَأُعْطِيهَا إِيَّاهُ، فَيَخْرُجُ بِهَا مُتَأَبِّطَهَا، وَمَا هِيَ لَهُمْ إِلَّا نَارٌ"، قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلِمَ تُعْطِيهِمْ؟
قَالَ: "إِنَّهُمْ يَأْبُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْأَلُونِي، وَيَأْتِي اللَّهُ لِي الْبُخْلَ"

One of you will make a request of me, which I will grant, and (the gift will be so much that) he could only set out leisurely; but really

⁷²⁵ The fight between the army of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and the people of Madinah.

he has only acquired hell. The people asked: “O Allāh’s Messenger! Why, then, did you grant him?” He replied: They refused but to ask, and Allāh refused that I should appear a miser.⁷²⁶

If most of these persistent petitioners had been denied the fulfillment of their needs during moments of misery, it would undoubtedly have shaken their faith. This also applies to those who petitioned the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime. Some of these individuals obtained what they wanted, only to be later instructed to leave Madinah.

If any grant is bestowed, it should be attributed to the merit and virtue of the occupant of the grave. However, inferring from such grants that it signifies the virtue of the supplicant would equate one supplicant with another, without any distinction.

The prohibition of *salāt* (prayer) at graves or transforming graves into places of worship⁷²⁷ is not intended to demean or diminish the importance of the individuals buried there. Rather, it is motivated by the concern of preventing *fitna* (temptation). Invariably, *fitna* happens when the circumstances that can lead to it are allowed to thrive. If there were no apprehension of corruption or temptation arising from such practices at graves, they would not have been prohibited.

Likewise, the miracles attributed to prophets and saints, such as the descent of lights and angels at their graves, the fact that these places are avoided by evil spirits and animals, the immunity from fire of these places and their neighboring places, the intercession of some saints for those buried near them, the commendability of being buried near some such saints, attainment of grace in their neighborhood and visitation of chastisement upon those who make light of them—these things are all true but do not belong to our discussion. Nor is this place meant for discussing the mercy and favor which Allāh shows to the graves of prophets and the righteous, or the deference and regard, beyond all conceivable proportions, in which He holds them.

⁷²⁶ Authentic, Ahmad (11123)

⁷²⁷ This remark only applies to the graves of the pious, otherwise, some people, today, worship graves of lewd, who themselves require that Allāh’s forgiveness is sought for them, rather than seeking favours from them. Allāh al-Musta’ān.

Innovations Related to Tombs

All that, however, do not provide a strong argument in favor of the commendability of *salāt* (prayer), or even intending to carry out prayer and rites and ceremonies (properly associated with the pilgrimage), at those graves. The reason is that engaging in devotional acts at graves is accompanied by harms, which the *Shari'* has warned us. The purpose of mentioning these aspects is to address any potential thoughts that they might contradict our earlier statements. They are not. The belief that *du'ā'* made at graves are more likely to be fulfilled has led to the practice of regular visitation and pilgrimage to these sites. At times, the *maqābiriyūn* congregate at graves during specific times, which is exactly what the Prophet ﷺ intended to prohibit when he said:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا

Do not turn my grave into a festiva,⁷²⁸ (and his saying):

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ

May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.⁷²⁹

Moreover, certain graves attract large crowds on a certain day of the year. People travel to these sites to partake in festive gatherings, either in Muharram, or Rajab, Sha'ban, Dhul-Hijja, or any other month. Some gatherings take place in the middle of Sha'ban, others on the Day of 'Arafah, some on the Day of 'Āshura', and others on different occasions. These gatherings establish a designated days for congregation and visitation, similar to how 'Arafah, Muzdalifah and Mina are visited on specific days of the year, or how the city mosque is frequented during both *'ids* celebrations. Sometimes, the concentration of crowds, both in secular and religious matters, can be even stronger and more intense.

⁷²⁸ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2042) and Ahmad (8804).

⁷²⁹ Muslim (530).

Similarly, people undertake journeys to certain cities, whether planned or unplanned, with the intention of making *du'ā'* and religious practices, much like one would travel to the Sacred House of Allāh. I do not know of any disagreement among Muslims about the unlawfulness and prohibition of such travels, unless there is a recent disagreement of which I am unaware. Earlier, I mentioned two types of travels, as it is possible for someone to embark on an ordinary journey solely to visit graves. However, there is little doubt about the purposeful travel for religious exercises at graves, such as *du'ā'* or prayer, or for celebrating festivals or similar purposes. Some individuals even go to the extent of call it as a pilgrimage, saying, "We intend to embark on a pilgrimage to the grave of so-and-so." Others intend to hold congregational gatherings at specific days of the week at the grave of a particular individual.

In short, this practice near graves goes against the prohibition of the Prophet ﷺ when he said, "Do not turn my grave into a festival."

That is because the act of regularly visiting a particular place during specific times of the year, month, or week, resembles a festival. Therefore, whether the visits are few or many, they should be discouraged. This aligns with the statement attributed to Imām Ahmad where he mentioned: "People have gone to the extreme on the issue presently," he then cited the case of what people do at Husain's grave.

I have mentioned earlier that engaging in acts of worship at specific times are not recommended by the *Shari'a*. Therefore, it follows the making a habit of returning to a specific location at a fixed time would also be objectionable.

This practices extends to various locations, in Egypt at the grave of Nafisah and others; in Iraq at the grave claimed to be of 'Alī and at those of al-Husain, Hudhaifa ibn Yaman, Salman al-Farisi, and Mūsā ibn Ja'far; in Baghdad at Muhammad ibn 'Alī Jawad's grave and at the graves of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ma'ruf al-Kirkhi, and others. Similar practices are observed at Abū Yazid al-Bistami's grave and countless other saintly graves across Muslim lands. Many of these graves, such as those of Abū Hanīfah and ash-Shāfi'i, have mosques erected upon them, and some lands have been unlawfully claimed.

Indeed, it is incumbent to have love and follow these eminent personages of Islam, to keep alive their pious works and to invoke divine pardon, mercy, pleasure, etc., from Allāh for them. However, to turn their graves into festivals, as forbidden by Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, celebrating their graves by visiting them at particular times or converging there at certain other times, is what is regarded as turning them into festivals, as explained earlier. As far as I know, there is no disagreement among Islamic scholars regarding this matter. It is important not to be misled by the prevalence of misguided practices. It is a piece of that imitation of People of the Book by Muslims of which the Prophet ﷺ has forewarned us. At the heart of this practice lies the belief in the excellence of *du'ā'* at graves. If it were not for this deeply ingrained belief that has taken hold of people's mind, all of these practices would have been eradicated. Moreover, if seeking *du'ā'* at those places is forbidden, then it follows that performing prayers there is even more forbidden. Engaging in such act of worship would not only cause corruption among the servants of Allāh, pave the way for *shirk*, and hinder the development of a sound belief in Allāh.

XX

Establishing The Prohibition of All Other Innovations Done at Graveyards

IT WAS MENTIONED in the previous discussions that the Prophet ﷺ prohibited converting graves into places of worship, praying at the graves, and turning graves into festivals. We also mentioned that he ﷺ prayed that Allāh should not allow his grave to be taken as an idol held for worship.

Furthermore, it was explained that frequent visits to different locations for worship, etc., make the location a celebrated one. Consequently, the specific prohibition on praying at the grave, praying towards the grave, and the *Shari'a* provision for invoking Allāh's blessing and seeking His blessing for the dead at the graves were discussed. Also, we dove into the difference between the *du'ā'* one makes for oneself at the grave and visiting the graves purposely for making *du'ā'*, as well as the difference between the invocations included in the recommended *du'ā'* for the dead and those that follow it.

However, these discussions can only be properly concluded by mentioning the status of all other acts of worship at graves. Their status as a whole is the same as that of *du'ā'*, thus, remembering Allāh, recitation, fasting, or sacrifice enjoy no more privilege at graves than they do elsewhere, nor is visitation to graves for these purposes commendable. No Muslim scholar I know believes otherwise. None of the renowned scholars agrees with the view that the dead gain if the Qur'an is recited over the grave rather than elsewhere; that is to say, the reward for the recitation redounds on the dead when recitation is made at the grave in particular. However, scholars disagree on whether or not the dead receive any reward if the Qur'an is read specifically for him to receive it. The scholars have two positions in that:

One, the reward of *al-'Ibādāt al-Badaniya* (bodily acts of worship)—prayer, recitation, etc.—goes to the deceased man, just as the reward for *al-'Ibādāt al-Māliya* (monetary provisions) provided after his death goes to him by consensus. This is the viewpoint of Abū Hanīfah, Ahmad, and some disciples of ash-Shāfi'i and Malik. And it is the correct opinion, and elsewhere we have mentioned numerous proofs for its soundness.

Two, the reward for bodily acts of worship does not flow to the dead. This view is popular among the disciples of ash-Shāfi'i and Malik. Despite this, none of them specify a specific place in relation to the efficacy or non-efficacy of the prayer.

There is little doubt that the dead hear sounds, such as those of recitation and the like. However, a dead man is no longer rewarded for an act that he does after his death, such as listening. Indeed, he is blessed and chastised for his acts during his life, for what others do after him under his influence, and for the kind of treatment he receives. Opinions differ on the retribution the dead could receive for mourning him. He would also benefit from gift offerings and prayers for him, as well as monetary dispensations in his memory, according to consensus. Also, according to some Hanbalite scholars and others say that the tradition has it: "The dead person suffers from acts of disobedience to Allāh performed at his grave." By that token, one might conclude that he benefits from the Qur'an recitation and *dhikr* that he hears.

Even if this is correct, it does not necessarily imply that recitation is commendable at his grave. Were it truly lawful, the Prophet ﷺ would have clearly stated so for his community. To be true, recitation at graves does have a kind of benefit, but at the same time it also yields a greater measure of harm. The same may be said about graveside prayer (*salāt*). Prayer for him, asking Allāh's forgiveness for him, offering alms for his sake, and such other devotional acts, on the other hand, produce relatively more positive outcomes for the departed, and are both lawful and free of harm. That is why none of the learned has ever defended the commendability of constantly visiting graves for recitation at them, because of necessity, it is known that this is not what the Prophet had prescribed for his community. They do, however, hold divergent views about the status of recitation at graves. Should it be considered reprehensible or shouldn't it be? The problem is well known; three reports have come from Ahmad alone regarding it.

According to the **first**, it is permissible to do that. It was adopted by Al-Khallāl and his student, as well as the later generation of Ahmad's disciples. They argued that the opinion was the last to come from him. It is also the opinion of the majority of the disciples of Abū Hanīfah. These people base their argument upon a tradition that came down from Ibn 'Umar ؓ who requested that the beginning and the last parts of Sūrah al-Baqarah should be recited over his grave during burial, and it was reported from some of the *Muhājirūn* as well.

The **second** says it is reprehensible to do that. People who share this opinion disagree on whether it is permitted to recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in the funeral prayer offered over the dead who have already been buried. There are two reports from Ahmad on this issue: the one most commonly reported by his disciples, particularly his foremost students, such as 'Abdul-Wahāb al-Warāq, Abū Bakr al-Marwazī, and others, and the opinion of the majority of the *Salaf* including Abū Hanīfah, Malik, Haitham ibn Basheer, and others. But nothing was reported from ash-Shāfi'ī about it, because he regarded the act as an innovation, ordinarily. Coming back to the main issue, Malik remarked: "I am not aware of anyone who did that," which implies that the companions and the *Tābi'ūn* did not do this.

The **third** opinion: it is permissible to recite the Qur'an at the grave, but only at the time of burial, as it has come down from Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما and some of the *Muhājirūn*. However, for the recitation thereafter, such as the behavior of those who repeatedly go to recite at graves, is reprehensible. That is not reported by any of the *Salaf* absolutely. This report is stronger than others since it considers all available evidence.⁷³⁰

However, some of the scholars who despise recitation of the Qur'an at graves extend their contempt to any recitation done at the grave, including that which occurs accidentally, just like the way prayer is detested there at any rate. Ahmad prohibits reciting the Qur'an in the funeral prayer performed at the grave, even though this is not intended. Surely recitation during prayer is not the same as recitation at graves. Though the difference between what is done within the framework of another thing, in its course, what follows it in deeds, and what is done specifically for it is obvious. Concerning the claim that the endowments provided for recitation at graves do bring some benefit, it is worth nothing that it encourages memorizing the Qur'an, serves as a source of sustenance for the *huffāz* (reciters), and provides incentives for memorizing, studying, and adhering to the Qur'an, and that even if the reciter does not merit any reward for his recitation, the act at least works to preserve the religion. We say: All that is mentioned is similar to the recitation and *jihād* of an immoral person. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُؤَيِّدُ هَذَا الدِّينَ بِالرَّجُلِ الْفَاجِرِ

Verily, Allāh may strengthen this religion through an immoral person.⁷³¹

More specifically, endowments and their requirements have been

⁷³⁰ The second opinion should be the stronger opinion being the opinion of the majority of the scholars as asserted by the author; it was such that some scholars considered otherwise innovation, and above all the practice of reciting the Qur'an at the grave could be authentically traced back to the Prophet ﷺ, and the Companions never agreed upon its permissibility. Rather, majority of them did not practice that, those who did it among them only did it out of *Ijtihād*. Perhaps the author رحمته الله supported the third because some of the people who had the second opinion disapproved of reciting the Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in the funeral prayer done at the grave. Allāh knows best.

⁷³¹ Al-Bukhārī (3062 and 6606) and Muslim (111).

discussed elsewhere; this section is not intended to cover that. As for *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh), it is not reprehensive; but the place, is. In other words, considering the place, the *dhikr* is objectionable. Because marking out a certain locality for *dhikr* is an abominable innovation. For this implies turning the grave into a festival once more. This also goes for fasting at the place. To summarize, neither the scholars who permit recitation of the Qur'an at the grave nor those who permit *dhikr* and supplications at the grave allow turning the grave into a festival; the former never permitted making frequent schedule for recitation of the Qur'an at the grave or converging there for the purpose of recitation of the Qur'an, nor the latter, as clearly elaborated. As for slaughtering at the graves, this is completely prohibited, as scholars from the Hanabilah School and others mentioned that. Their proof is a tradition related by Anas from the Prophet ﷺ:

لَا عَقْرَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

There is no slaughtering (at the graves) in Islam.⁷³²

It was reported by Ahmad and Abū Dawūd. According to Abū Dawūd, in his report: “The people used to slaughter cows or rams at the graves (so it was prohibited). According to al-Marwazī, Ahmad documented: The Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا عَقْرَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

There is no slaughtering (at the graves) in Islam.

On reporting the hadith, he (al-Marwazī) remarked: “The people used to slaughter camels at the graves of their dead men, so the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade it, and Abū Abdullah despised eating the meat of such an animal.” Some of our associates said: “This practice is the same as what many people do now; they give bread and other materials as alms at graves.” There is no doubt that this practice is a kind of bodily act of worship, or monetary, or both.

⁷³² *Sunan Imām Ahmad* (13032), *Sunan Abū Dawūd* (3224), al-Bayhaqī in *as-Sunan al-Kubrāh*, and *Sunan Ibn Hibbān* (3146)

XXI

Acts at Graves: I'tikāf (Seclusion), Devotion, Custodianship, and Display of Tapestries

WE INTEND TO give special emphasis to other forbidden rituals performed at the graves, such as *'ukūf* (pious retreat), *mujāwara* (cleaving), *sadana* (custodianship), and hanging of tapestries at the graves as if they were the real Ka'bah—the House of Allāh.

As previously elucidated, the act of building a mosque over a grave is forbidden by unanimous agreement of the Community, being unlawful according to the indication of the Sunnah; how much more so if cleaving and pious retreat were added to that mosque as if it were the Sacred Mosque? And Indeed, according to some of them, pious retreat at it is even more desirable than at the Sacred Mosque. But that is strange, since there are people who take others besides Allāh as rivals to Him, loving them as they love Allāh, but the true believers love Allāh more than anything else.

Indeed, to the *maqābiriyūn*, the sanctity of a mosque built over a grave, which is forbidden by Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ is greater than the sanctity of Allāh's houses, which He has permitted man to erect and make mention of His Name therein—those that are founded on fear of Allāh and pursuance of His pleasure. By these innovations, Satan has led a large number of people to major *shirk*, to the point where one of them believes that a visit to a *mashhad* built over the grave of a prophet, saint or member of the Prophet's family has more merit than a pilgrimage to the Sacred House, and he refers to this visit as the Greater Pilgrimage. Another believes trip to the Prophet's grave to be more worthy than pilgrimage to the House, while a third, having reached Madinah, returns without performing Hajj, believing that his goal has been met. This is because they believe that the only purpose behind visiting graves lies in *du'ā'* and entreaty at them, as well as to beseech the dead.

There is no doubt that the Prophet ﷺ is more exalted than the Ka'bah. If they realized that the real aim is to worship Allāh alone and to direct one's request and prayer to Him alone, and that the fundamental purpose of visiting graves is to offer *du'ā'* for the dead. Undoubtedly, this *shirk* would have vanished from their hearts. But as it is, we find many of those people turn his entreaties to the deceased for his needs in much the same way as one turns to Allāh, saying: "Pardon me, have mercy on me, forgive me, and so on."

Many people claim that they had visions in which they saw the saint whose help they asked for, but it was actually the devil talking to them, as devils sometimes do with people who worship idols. What is even worse is that people go on pilgrimage to offer *du'ā'* at a tomb and make vows to the local saint or those in charge of his sanctuary from among his relatives or admirers. Grievous is also the belief that making such a vow will result in the fulfillment of one's needs and deliverance from tribulation. We have clearly explained from the True Prophet's tradition ﷺ that not even a vow to do an act of obedience can be a means of attaining good, and that Allāh has decreed perfect means for all effects, and that He made prayers means of attaining provisions, let alone a vow that is directed towards being disobedient to Allāh, which is not even permissible to be fulfilled.

Know that the buried ones, whether prophets or saints, despise what is done near them, just as Christ despises what Christians do to him as the Israelite prophets despise what their followers do at their sanctuaries.

A Muslim does not consider the prohibition of turning graves into festivals and idols for worship as diminishing the worth of their inmates. Far from it, that is the very act of honoring them. A heart occupied with innovations has little room for *sunan* (authorized practices). Most of the time, these men retreating at graves are found to reject the very practices and ways favored by those buried in these graves, obsessed with the grave of the man rather than what he commanded and was called upon to do. Venerating prophets and the righteous means pursuing their righteous deeds, to which they summoned man, so that their own reward may be augmented by the sheer magnitude or recompense redounding on their followers, as said by the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى، كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ، لَا يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ
مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا

He who called (people) to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect.⁷³³

In reality, the problem is that some people's minds have been directed, either entirely or partially, towards acts of innovations, whether they are related to matters of *du'ā'*, poetry, songs, etc., for the simple reason that these people have turned away from the true prescribed worships; they only appear to be practicing the religion. Otherwise, anyone who performs the five daily prayers correctly as prescribed; following them with his mind and body, engaging his senses in all the utterances and actions therein, and performing them with all seriousness, will derive greater satisfaction from them, than could be found in any of their kind innovated into the religion.

Thus, anyone who carefully listens to Allāh's Words and those of His Prophet ﷺ and reflect on them will undoubtedly gain perfect

⁷³³ Muslim (2674).

understanding, sweetness, and blessings, among other great benefits, that he could never gain from ordinary speeches, whether poetry or prose. Furthermore, whoever is cognizant of making invocations with prescribed prayers and at prescribed times (at dawn, towards the end of the daily prayers, during prostration, etc.) finds relief and succor in them, that which he could not find in any prayer that involves innovation, either in essence or description. Therefore, it is up to a wise to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ in all of this and substitute any benefit he may claim to be deriving from his involvement in the innovation with its kind of the *Sunnah*, for he who seeks good is given, and he who is wary of evil is saved.

XXII

About Visiting the Stations of the Prophets and Saints and Relating with them in Matters of Du'ā'

The Correct Opinion and its Evidence

CONCERNING THE MAQĀMĀT (stations) of prophets and saints: These are the places where they were born, resided, or worshipped Allāh, the Most Glorified—these places were not turned into sanctuaries. I discovered that renowned scholars have two views on the matter.

First view: The first view finds the turning of these into sanctuaries unfavorably. It is not commendable to visit a location for worship unless that location is favored by the *Shar'i* for such purpose, e.g., a place which the Prophet ﷺ had visited for worship—such as *Maqām 'Ibrāhīm* (the Station of 'Ibrāhīm) or *Istiwānah* (the column near which he always strove to offer prayer), or simply mosques where

one may go for prayer, or the first row within mosques which one may especially seek to be in, etc.

Second view: The second view finds it unobjectionable to some extent. It is reported that Ibn ‘Umar used to visit places where the Prophet ﷺ had walked, even if the Prophet ﷺ had done so unintentionally.

Sindī al-Khuwātimī reported: “We asked Abū Abdullah concerning visiting *mashāhid*—sceneries, is it permissible?” He said: “Considering the narration of Ibn Ummi Maktūm, in which he requested the Prophet ﷺ to pray in his house for him to mark the point as his place of worship, and Ibn Umar’s practices of visiting the places and points where the Prophet ﷺ dwelled or prayed, then it is not bad to visit sceneries, except that, these days, the issue had gone much out of hand, people visit the places more often.”

This was also narration through Ahmad ibn Qasim: “He (Imām Ahmad) was asked concerning a man going around to visit the *mashāhid* (sceneries) in Madinah and some other places; is that allowed?” He replied: “Considering the narration of Ibn Ummi Maktūm in which he requested the Prophet ﷺ to pray in his house for him to mark the point as his place of worship, and Ibn Umar’s practices of following the places and points the Prophet ﷺ treaded, he used to do that until he was seen pouring water in a place, and when he was asked concerning it, he said: “I saw the Prophet ﷺ pouring water there, then it is not bad.” He then remarked: “However, people have taken the matter to an extreme lately, since they visit these places more frequently,” and he then cited Husain’s grave and what people do there.

Al-Khallāl reported both traditions in the *Book of Adab*.

Abū Abdullah defined *mashāhid* as places where the relics of prophets and saints are being kept, not necessarily their places of worship, such as places in Madinah where, as previously described, many people turned it into a festival site. This interpretation of Ahmad is derived from an examination of the transmitted traditions and the practices of the Companions about this matter. Among these is the report of al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Mūsā ibn ‘Uqbah, who said:

رَأَيْتُ سَالِمَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَتَحَرَّى أَمَاكِنَ مِنَ الصَّرِيقِ فَيُصَلِّي فِيهَا،
وَيُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِيهَا "وَأَنَّهُ رَأَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يُصَلِّي فِي تِلْكَ الْأَمْكِنَةِ". قَالَ مُوسَى: "وَحَدَّثَنِي نَافِعٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّهُ
كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِي تِلْكَ الْأَمْكِنَةِ"

I saw Salim ibn `Abdullah searching for some places on the way, and prayed there. He narrated that his father used to pray there, and he (his father) reported that he had seen the Prophet ﷺ praying at those places." Mūsā narrated Nafi` has reported (also) that Ibn `Umar used to pray at those places."⁷³⁴ For this, Ahmad granted concession for visiting those places.

About that which he detested, there is this tradition reported by Sa`id ibn Mansūr, through his chain of transmitters, on the authority of M`arār ibn Suwaid from `Umar ibn al-Khattab ؓ, he said: "We went out with him in one of the Hajjs he made, and in a Fajr prayer he led us, he recited *Alam tara kaifa fa'la Rabbuka bi Ashābil fil* in the first rak`āh, while in the second he recited *Lilāfi Quraysh*."

On his way back from the Hajj, he noticed that a people were rushing to offer prayers in a mosque.

He asked: "What is the matter?"

The people replied: "A mosque where the Prophet ﷺ offered prayer therein,"

He then remarked: "That is how the People of the Book before you were perished; they turned the relics of their Prophets into sanctuaries. Whoever wishes to offer prayers amongst you could do so, and those who never intended to do so should move away."⁷³⁴

Here, `Umar ؓ expressed his displeasure that the people had turned a place where the Prophet ﷺ offered prayer into a festival, explaining that they were perished for doing that.

⁷³⁴ Al-Bukhārī (483).

In another version, it was reported that he saw a people withdrawing periodically towards a place, and then he asked: "Where are they heading to?" He was replied: "O the leader of the Muslims! To a place where the Prophet ﷺ prayed." He then said: "Indeed, the people before you were perished for such a practice, they used to visit relics of their prophets, and take them as sanctuaries. Whoever wishes to pray among you in any of these portions may do so, and whoever never desired to may move on; he should not do so purposely."

Muhammad ibn Wadhāh and others also reported that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ordered that the tree under which the Companions swore allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ be cut down, because people were returning to it periodically, fearing that they might be ruined for it.

Scholars were divided on whether or not it is permissible to visit *mashāhid*. Muhammad ibn Wadhāh said that scholars of Madinah such as Malik and others, despised people visiting those mosques and relics at Madinah, except for the Quba Mosque and Mount Uhud.

Among these scholars is Sufyan ath-Thawrī, he visited Jerusalem and prayed there, but he did not visit the relics or pray at the locations there. They despised visiting those places. They supported their view by citing the tradition of 'Umar ﷺ and the fact that the practice is similar to performing prayers at graves, which might lead to turning the places into festivals. They also argued that it involves imitating the People of the Book. As for the practice of Ibn 'Umar, they argued that none of the Companions supported this practice, and that neither the Rightly Guided Caliphs nor any other *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* had been recorded to do so.

The correct attitude is adhere to the practices that were prevalent among the Companions. Following the Prophet ﷺ means obeying his commands and doing just what he has done in the manner he has done it. If he ﷺ purposely performed an act of worship at a certain place, e.g., mosques and the *masha'ir*, then worshipping there implies following him. But if he had just accidentally alighted at a place at a particular time, such that we know, practically, that he did not intend that particular place or time, we would be far from following him if we went for the place or haunt for the time, for deeds are judged by the intentions behind them.

In any case, some later-day scholars commended visiting even such places. Concerning the rites of the pilgrimage, some of our own Hanbalite authors, as well as those besides them, particularly praise a visit to these mosques, of which they even enumerated some and indicated their names.

Ahmad granted concession only to those of such places about which he could find a *athar* (Prophetic report); with the concession being withdrawn if the visit meant to give the spot the essential features of a festival, such as consecutive return to it and congregating at it at definite times, such as the way women are granted opportunity to attend congregational prayers at the mosque, even though their houses are better, except when they attend mosques with adornments. He formed that judgment after considering all available traditions, and he also supported his view with the tradition of Ummu Makthūm.

Another good example of the case at hand is the tradition adduced by both Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of ‘Itban ibn Mālik:

كُنْتُ أَصَلِّي لِقَوْمِي بِنِي سَالِمٍ وَكَانَ يَحُولُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ وَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
الْأَمْطَارُ، فَيَشُقُّ عَلَيَّ اجْتِيَازُهُ قَبْلَ مَسْجِدِهِمْ، فَجِئْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: إِنِّي أَنْكَرْتُ بَصْرِي، وَإِنَّ الْوَادِي الَّذِي
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِي يَسِيلُ إِذَا جَاءَتِ الْأَمْطَارُ، فَيَشُقُّ عَلَيَّ اجْتِيَازُهُ،
فَوَدِدْتُ أَنَّكَ تَأْتِي فَتَصَلِّيَ مِنْ بَيْتِي مَكَانًا، أَتَّخِذُهُ مُصَلًّى، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "سَأَفْعَلُ" فَعَدَا عَلَيَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بَعْدَ مَا اشْتَدَّ النَّهَارُ، فَاسْتَأْذَنَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَذْنَتْ لَهُ فَلَمْ يَجْلِسْ حَتَّى قَالَ:
"أَيْنَ نُحِبُّ أَنْ أَصَلِّيَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ؟" فَأَشْرْتُ لَهُ إِلَى الْمَكَانِ الَّذِي أُحِبُّ
أَنْ أَصَلِّيَ فِيهِ، فَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَكَبَّرَ، وَصَفَّفْنَا
وَرَاءَهُ، فَصَلَّى رُكْعَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ سَلَّمَ وَسَلَّمْنَا حِينَ سَلَّمَ"

I used to lead my people, the Bani Salim, in the prayer. Whenever it rained, it used to be difficult for me to cross it to go to their mosque. So, I went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "I have weak eyesight and the valley between me and my people flows during the rainy season and it becomes difficult for me to cross it. I wish you would come to my house and pray at a place so that I could take that place as a praying place." He said, "Allāh willing, I will do so." So the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr came to my house in the (next) morning after the sun had risen high. The Prophet ﷺ asked my permission to let him in and I admitted him. He did not sit before asking, "Where do you want us to pray inside your house?" I pointed to the place where I wanted him to pray. The Prophet ﷺ stood up and proclaimed, "*Allāhu Akbar!*" We aligned in rows behind him. He offered two *rak'as*, and finished them with *taslim* (salutation of ending the prayer), and we also performed *taslim* with him.⁷³⁵

Locations Where the Prophet ﷺ Would Pray or Supplicate.

THAT TRADITION INDICATES that there is no objection to one's intention of erecting a mosque or praying at a spot where the Prophet ﷺ had prayed. But here, however, the very basis of the man's (ʿItban ibn Malik's) intention was building a mosque. He, therefore, liked that it should be at a place where the Prophet ﷺ had prayed for him, so that the Prophet ﷺ should be the one who had marked the mosque, contrary to the place where he may have prayed accidentally, and the spot then adopted as a mosque, owing not to a genuine need for building a mosque but simply to the fact that he had chanced upon to pray there.

By contrast, visiting places that the Prophet ﷺ visited for prayer and *du'ā'*, our visiting them for the same purpose is a Sunnah for copying and following him ﷺ. The same holds true for prayer timing. If he desired to pray at a particular time, then prayer at that time is Sunnah, as are

⁷³⁵ Al-Bukhārī (425, 840, 1186, and 5401) and Muslim (33).

all of his devotional practices. An example of that is what is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of Yazid ibn Abī ‘Ubaid, he said:

"كُنْتُ آتِي مَعَ سَلَمَةَ بْنِ الْأَكْوَعِ فَيُصَلِّي عِنْدَ الْأُسْطُوَانَةِ الَّتِي عِنْدَ الْمُصْحَفِ، فَقُلْتُ: "يَا أَبَا مُسْلِمٍ، أَرَأَيْكَ تَتَحَرَّى الصَّلَاةَ عِنْدَ هَذِهِ الْأُسْطُوَانَةِ،" قَالَ: "فَإِنِّي رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَحَرَّى الصَّلَاةَ عِنْدَهَا"

I used to accompany Salama ibn al-Akwa’, and he used to pray behind the pillar which was near the place where *mushaf* (Qur’an) were kept. So, I asked him, “O Abū Muslim, I always see you seeking to pray behind this column.” He replied, “It is because I saw the Prophet ﷺ always seeking to pray near it.”⁷³⁶

In another version of Muslim: Yazid ibn Abi ‘Ubaid on the authority Salama ibn al-Akwa reported:

"أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَتَحَرَّى مَوْضِعَ مَكَانِ الْمُصْحَفِ يُسَبِّحُ فِيهِ، وَذَكَرَ: "أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَتَحَرَّى ذَلِكَ الْمَكَانَ، وَكَانَ بَيْنَ الْمِنْبَرِ وَالْقِبْلَةِ قَدْرُ مَمَرِ الشَّاةِ"

That he (Salama ibn al-Akwa’) always sought to pray at the place close to the place where the *mushaf* were kept, and he mentioned that, “The Prophet ﷺ always sought to pray there, and it was between the pulpit and the *qibla*, a space proportion to which could be enough for a sheep to pass.”⁷³⁷

A certain author claims that this type of practice is also disputable; he thus compares the present case with the first category. But this is insufficient. Here, we are told that the Prophet ﷺ “used to strive to pray behind a certain column.” How then, can the intention to do the same not be commendable? True, the Sunnah prohibits reserving a section

⁷³⁶ Al-Bukhārī (502) and Muslim (509) (264).

⁷³⁷ Muslim (509) (263).

of a mosque for one's exclusive use, so that he would not pray except in that section. However, desiring to always pray in a certain section does not equate to proclaiming that section as a designated prayer area.

It is imperative to differentiate between following the Prophet ﷺ in practice and imitating him in his Sunnah, and engaging in a practice that is a piece of innovation only because it has a connection with the Prophet ﷺ in a way or another, but that he ﷺ never instituted. To elucidate this issue further, we should consider the difference among scholars on a certain recommended act performed by the prophet ﷺ but for reasons that necessitated it, if the causes are no longer exist, is it beneficial for us to perform the act? There are two main opinions; One, it is desirable while the other, it is not.

This difference clarifies the position of Ibn 'Umar's practices in that the Prophet ﷺ only prayed in those stations along the way because he had a stopover there while on journey; he never sought or intended to pray there. If there is any consideration for such actions, the issue that should be asked is: Is it Sunnah for a traveler to pray at his stopovers?

Ibn 'Umar is the only Companion known to have commended the practice of praying at locations where the Prophet ﷺ had prayed by accident. Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī, as well as all other Companions, whether *Muhājirūn* or *Anṣār*, would go from Madinah to Makkah for the *Hajj* (Greater Pilgrimage), the *'Umra* (Minor Pilgrimage), or as travelers. None of them prayed at any locations where the Prophet ﷺ had prayed along his way. Of course, if they had deemed this practice commendable in their opinion, they would have been the first to follow this practice; as they were the most knowledgeable ones about Sunnah and its most ardent followers. The Prophet ﷺ had said:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ الرَّاشِدِينَ، تَمَسَّكُوا بِهَا
وَعَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالتَّوَاجِدِ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ، فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ
بِدْعَةٍ، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ

Hold fast to my Sunnah and the examples of the Rightly- Guided

Caliphs who will come after me. Adhere to them and hold to it fast. Beware of new things (in Dīn) because every *bid'ah* (innovation) is an error.⁷³⁸

Nor is this effort of such a practice attributed to the Rightly-Guided Caliphs; rather it is an act of innovation. The word and deed of a single Companion, if it is contradicted by his peer, cannot be used as an argument, and the more so if it is a single Companion against the rest. In addition, seeking to pray in these locations would result to turning them into sanctuaries, and we are forbidden to imitate the People of the Book. All of this results in *shirk*. The Prophet ﷺ was decisively opposed to anything that could facilitate *shirk*; he forbade praying at sunrise and sunset and turning graves into sanctuaries. Even the prescribed prayer should not be performed in such places and at such times, if it were, it would be conducive to transgression. How then, can it be commendable for prayer and *du'ā'* to be sought in a place where the Prophet ﷺ and his companions happened to stay or pray without any particular intent. If this were true, then it would be commendable to pray at Mount Hira' and Mount Thaur, as well as other points where prophets are said to have arisen, such as the two points in Mount Qasiyun at Damascus that are said to have served 'Ibrāhīm and 'Isā, as well as the Cavern of Abel's Blood and other such locations throughout Hijaz, Syria, and elsewhere. Moreover, this results in the same evils as the cult of graves. Because it is commonly said that it is the station of a prophet, or the grave of a prophet or saint—the claim being substantiated by a report whose narrator's identity is unknown or a vision whose true nature is unknown. The next step is to turn such spot into a mosque. Thus, it becomes a distinct idol which is worshipped besides Allāh: *shirk* grounded in *ifk* (lie). Allāh, the most Glorified, juxtaposed *shirk* with falsehood in His Book, just as He did with *Sidq* (Truthfulness) and *Ikhlas* (Sincerity); the Prophet ﷺ affirmed this in an authentic tradition:

⁷³⁸ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4607), at-Tirmidhi (2676), Ibn Mājah (42), Ahmad (1742, 17144 and 17450).

عُدَلْتُ شَهَادَةَ الزُّورِ بِالْإِشْرَاقِ بِاللَّهِ ”ثَلَاثًا، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ ﴿فَاجْتَنِبُوا
الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُقَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ عَيْرَ
مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ﴾

Bearing false witness is equivalent to associating others with Allāh, after saying it three times, he then recited this verse: “And shun lying speech (false statements), *Hunafā Lillāh* (i.e., worshiping none but Allāh), not associating partners (in worship) to Him.”⁷³⁹ ⁷⁴⁰

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا
مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾

And (warn of) the Day He will call them and say, “Where are My ‘partners’ which you used to claim? (*) And We will take out from every nation a witness and say, “Produce your proof,” and they will know that the truth belongs to Allāh, and lost from them is that which they used to invent.⁷⁴¹

And Allāh says about *al-Khalīl*—Ibrāhīm ﷺ:

﴿إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أَيْفَا ءِالِهَةٍ دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾﴾

(And) when he said to his father and his people, “What do you worship? (*) Is it falsehood [as] gods other than Allāh you desire?”⁷⁴²

Allāh also says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ
وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءَ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ

⁷³⁹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:30-31.

⁷⁴⁰ Weak, Abū Dawūd (3599), at-Tirmidhī (2299 and 2300) and Ibn Mājah (2372)

⁷⁴¹ Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:74-75.

⁷⁴² Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt, 37:85-86.

وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

(It will be said to them), “And you have certainly come to Us alone [i.e., individually] as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you. And We do not see with you your ‘intercessors’ which you claimed that they were among you associates (of Allāh). It has (all) been severed between you, and lost from you is what you used to claim.”⁷⁴³

And He says:

﴿تَنْزِيلَ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿٢﴾ أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣﴾﴾

The revelation of the Book [i.e., the Qur’an] is from Allāh—the Almighty, All-Wise (*) Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you [O Prophet] in truth, so worship Allāh [alone], being sincerely devoted to Him (*) Indeed, sincere devotion is due only to Allāh. As for those who take other lords besides Him, (saying,) “We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allāh,” surely Allāh will judge between all1 regarding what they differed about. Allāh certainly does not guide who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever.⁷⁴⁴

He says as well:

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَلَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَقَالَ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِتَانَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ هُنَالِكَ تَبْلَأُونَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا أَسْلَفَتْ ۗ وَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾

⁷⁴³ Sūrah al-‘An‘ām, 6:94.

⁷⁴⁴ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:1-3.

“And [mention, O Muḥammad], the Day We will gather them all together - then We will say to those who associated others with Allāh, “[Remain in] your place, you and your ‘partners’.” Then We will separate them, and their ‘partners’ will say, “You did not used to worship us” (*) And sufficient is Allāh as a witness between us and you that we were unaware of your worship (*) Then and there every soul will face (the consequences of) what it had done. They all will be returned to Allāh—their True Master. And whatever (gods) they fabricated will fail them.”⁷⁴⁵

﴿ أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴾

Certainly, to Allāh belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever all those on the earth. And those who invoke other than Allāh do not [actually] follow [His] “partners.” They follow nothing but assumptions and do nothing but lie.⁷⁴⁶

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَاهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴾

Indeed, those who took the calf [for worship] will obtain Allāh’s wrath and humiliation in the life of this world. This is how We recompense the inventors [of falsehood].⁷⁴⁷

Abū Qilabah concerning this verse says: “It is true of all innovators of this nation.” This is accurate because those who are engrossed in falsehood and calumny are always subject to Allāh’s anger and humiliation, as promised by Allāh.

Shirk and all other innovations are based on falsehood and calumny.

⁷⁴⁵ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:28-30.

⁷⁴⁶ Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 66.

⁷⁴⁷ Sūrah al-’A’rāf, 7:152.

Therefore, the further one is from *Tawhīd* (Monotheism) and Sunnah, the closer he is to *shirk* (polytheism), *ibtidā'* (innovation), and *iftira'* (calumny). This is what the *Rāfīdah* are. They are the greatest liars and, of all *ahl al-ahwā'* (sectarians), most guilty of *shirk*. The sectarians do not contain a group that is more deceptive than the *Rāfīdah* and further from monotheism. They even demolished mosques where the name of Allāh was mentioned, thereby preventing people from observing daily and Friday prayers. Instead they promote *mashāhid* over tombs, which Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ warned us against. Allāh urges us in the Qur'an to build and maintain mosques, not tomb-sanctuaries. Allāh says:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا ﴾

And who are more unjust than those who prevent Allāh's Name from being mentioned in His places of worship—mosques, and strive toward their destruction.⁷⁴⁸

Allāh did not say: "Allāh's *mashāhid*." Allāh says also:

﴿ قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ ﴾

Say, (O Prophet), "My Lord has commanded justice, and turn your faces (to Him alone facing the Qiblah) in every place of worship."⁷⁴⁹

And He says:

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
بِالْكَفْرِ أُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّمَا
يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَرَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ
الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

⁷⁴⁸ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:114.

⁷⁴⁹ Sūrah al-'A'raf, 7:29.

It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allāh [while] witnessing against themselves with disbelief. [For] those, their deeds have become worthless, and in the Fire they will abide eternally(*) The mosques of Allāh are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and establish prayer and give Zakāh and do not fear except Allāh, for it is expected that those will be of the (rightly) guided.⁷⁵⁰

Allāh did not say: 'Allāh's *mashāhid*, rather; *mashāhid* are maintained by those who fear and seek assistance from other than Allāh; those who are associated with a form of *shirk*. He says in another verse:

﴿وَمَسْجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا﴾

And mosques in which Allāh's Name is much mentioned.⁷⁵¹

He says as well:

﴿فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ، يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْعُدْوِ وَالْأَصَالِ
 رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِمُهُمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ
 يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ﴾^{٣٧} لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُمُ
 مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾^{٣٨}

(Such niches are] in houses (i.e., mosques) which Allāh has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned (i.e., praised) therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings (*) By men whom are not distracted—either by buying or selling—from Allāh's remembrance, or performing prayer, or paying Zakāt. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will tremble (*) That Allāh may reward them [according to] the best of their deeds, and increase them out of His grace. And Allāh provides for whoever He wills without limit.⁷⁵²

⁷⁵⁰ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:17-18.

⁷⁵¹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:40.

⁷⁵² Sūrah an-Nūr, 24:36-38.

In another one He says:

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

And [He revealed] that the mosques are for Allāh, so do not invoke with Allāh anyone.⁷⁵³

And He did not say: “And the *mashāhid* are for Allāh.”

The Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ also supports this fact, the like of this authentic tradition:

مَنْ بَنَى لِلَّهِ مَسْجِدًا، بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allāh, Allāh will build a house for him in Paradise.⁷⁵⁴

The Prophet ﷺ did not say: “whoever builds a *mashhad*.” He also says:

صَلَاةُ الْجَمِيعِ تَزِيدُ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِ فِي بَيْتِهِ، وَصَلَاتِهِ فِي سُوقِهِ، خَمْسًا وَعِشْرِينَ دَرَجَةً

The prayer offered in congregation is twenty-five times more superior (in reward) to the prayer offered alone in one’s house or in a business center.⁷⁵⁵

In another authentic tradition he was reported to have said:

صَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ تُضَعَّفُ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِ فِي بَيْتِهِ، وَفِي سُوقِهِ، خَمْسًا وَعِشْرِينَ ضِعْفًا، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّهُ: إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ، فَأَحْسَنَ الْوُضُوءَ، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ، لَا يُخْرِجُهُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةُ، لَمْ يَخْطُ خَطْوَةً، إِلَّا رُفِعَتْ لَهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةٌ، وَحُطَّ عَنْهُ بِهَا خَطِيئَةٌ، فَإِذَا صَلَّى، لَمْ تَزَلِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تُصَلِّي عَلَيْهِ، مَا دَامَ فِي مُصَلَاةٍ: اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ، اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُ، وَلَا يَزَالُ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي صَلَاةٍ مَا انْتَهَرَ الصَّلَاةَ.

⁷⁵³ Sūrah al-Jinn, 72:18.

⁷⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī (450), Muslim (533), and others.

⁷⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī 9477 and Muslim (649).

A man's prayer in congregation is twenty-five times as valuable as his prayer in his house and his market, for when he performs ablution, does it well, then goes out to the mosque, having no other reason than prayer for going out, he does not take a step without being raised a degree for it and having a sin removed for it, and when he prays the angels continue to invoke blessings on him as long as he is in his place of prayer, saying, 'May Allāh bless him; May Allāh show mercy to him.' And each of you continues to be engaged in prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer.⁷⁵⁶

This necessarily is a part of the religion brought by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as well as through the transmission of unbroken knowledge. He commanded to build mosques and observe prayers within them. He absolutely never in any way exhorted us to construct a *mashhad* on the grave or *maqam* of a prophet or non-prophet. In all Islamic countries, including Hijaz, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Khurasan, Egypt, and the Maghreb, during the age of the Companions, the *Tābi'ūn*, and their successors, there was never a mosque constructed over a grave or a *mashhad* designed for pilgrimage. . Even none of the *Salaf* came to offer *du'ā'* at the graves of prophets or anyone else. The Companions did not pray at the Prophet's or any other prophet's grave, though they did pray for and bless the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions.

Religious leaders unanimously agree that one must not face the Prophet's grave when offering a personal *du'ā'* (prayer) in the Prophet's mosque. However, they disagree about the status of *salam* (greeting). Malik, Ahmad, and others hold that one can face the direction of the Prophet's grave and give his salutation, with the same view attributed—I believe textually—to ash-Shāfi'ī by his followers, whereas Abū Hanifa holds that one should rather face the *qibla* and salute him (at least, this is how it appears in the books of Abū Hanifa's followers).

Malik, as reported by Isma'il ibn Ishaq in his *al-Mabsūt*, al-Qāḍi 'Iyad and others, stated, "I do not deem it appropriate for a man to stand at the Prophet's grave and lapse into a personal *du'ā'* (prayer),

⁷⁵⁶ Al-Bukhārī (647) and Muslim (232).

rather, he should welcome and go on his journey.” In *al-Mabsūt*, again, he reportedly said, “It is not objectionable for a man to stop at the Prophet’s grave, salute him, invoke blessing upon him, and pray for Abū Bakr and ‘Umar upon returning from, or setting out on, a journey.”

But, he was told, there were some people of Madinah who were neither returning from nor setting off on a journey, yet they did that once or several times a day: greeting and praying just about every hour—how about that?

“Well,” he responded, “I haven’t heard that about anyone among the knowledgeable people of our city. Proper for the latter ones of this community can be only that which was proper for its earlier ones! And it hasn’t reached me that the earlier Muslims, so also those who came after them, committed such an act. The practice is reprehensible, except for a man returning from a trip or intending to undertake one.”

Reports demonstrating a similar conduct on the part of the *Salaf* and religious leaders—thus, supporting the aforementioned—have preceded, such as, they commended pursuit only of what is of the category of *du‘ā* and *tahīya* (greeting), such as seeking Allāh’s *salāt* (blessing) and *salām* (peace), and condemned a visit to the grave specifically for stopping and making *du‘ā* there. If anything of the latter sort has even been permitted by any of the religious leaders, it is only that a man who has first greeted and then decided to make a (*du‘ā*), should do so facing the *qibla* with his back either turned toward the grave or simply oriented away from it. Thus, he should pray facing the *qibla* and not the grave. This is exactly what has been transmitted by all religious leaders, and none of them have ever considered it commendable for a passerby to offer *du‘ā* while facing the Prophet’s grave. This report we mentioned of Malik and the *Salaf* clarifies the truth of the other report that has come down from Malik concerning this issue—namely, the report of al-Qādi ‘Iyad on the authority of Muhammad ibn Humaid, in which he said:

Abū Ja’far, the leader of the Muslims, engaged Malik in a debate at the Mosque of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, Malik approached him and said, “O the leader of the Muslims! Do not raise your voice in

this Mosque, for Allāh reproach a people for doing that, He said:

﴿لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ﴾

Do not raise your voices over the Prophet's voice,⁷⁵⁷ and He commended some others while He said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغْضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ
لِلنَّقْوَىٰ﴾

“Verily, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allāh's Messenger, they are the ones whose hearts Allāh has tested for piety,”⁷⁵⁸ and He censured others ones, He said to them:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“Verily, those who call you [O Muhammad] from behind the chambers, most of them have no sense”⁷⁵⁹, and his sacredness dead is just like when he was alive. Abū Ja'far succumbed, and asked: “O Abū Abdullah! Do I face the *qibla* when making *du'a*' or should I face the Messenger of Allāh (i.e. face the grave) ﷺ?” He replied, “Why should you keep away your face from him, when he will be the intercessor between you and Allāh, and between your father, Adam, and Allāh on the Day of Resurrection? You would rather face him (the grave) and ask for his intercession, so that Allāh will accept his intercession on your behalf; Allāh has said:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ
لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا﴾

If they, when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you and begged Allāh's forgiveness, and the Messenger of Allāh had sought forgiveness for them, indeed, they would have found Allāh All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁷ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:2.

⁷⁵⁸ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:3.

⁷⁵⁹ Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49:4.

⁷⁶⁰ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:64.

This report is either weak, or substantially distorted, or should be interpreted subtly in a manner consistent with the position of Imām Malik, for another opinion different from what his reliable students reported from him could be understood from this. His position, which is generally agreed upon, is that one should neither face the grave during making *du'ā'* nor even stop at it. However, according to number of his student, he opined that one might approach the grave, say greetings to the Prophet ﷺ and then make *du'ā'* while facing the *qibla* and turning his back to the grave. Some reported that, one should not back the grave. In general, they all agree with Malik's opinion that one should face the *qibla* while making *du'ā'*, although they disagree on whether or not one should turn his back towards the grave while making *du'ā'*.

Furthermore, the question Imām Malik was asked in the report, "Do I face the *qibla* while making *du'ā'* or can I face (i.e., face the grave of) the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?" Could be about facing the grave while invoking Allāh's peace (giving salutation of *salām*) on the Prophet ﷺ because seeking peace for the Prophet ﷺ is also known as *du'ā'*. Some Iraqi scholars have mentioned that one should face the grave when making salutation for the Prophet ﷺ which is also (Imām) Malik's position, as previously cited, and as Ibn Wahb recounted from him:

"If one intends to say salutation to the Prophet ﷺ, he should do while facing the Prophet's grave; not the *qibla*. He may walk closer to the grave, say the salutation and make *du'ā'* (for him), but he should not touch the grave."

His statement: "He should seek Allāh's benediction (*salāt*) and make prayers (*du'ā'*) for him as well" that was mentioned earlier clarifies the ambiguity in this report. It is a known fact that if one seeks Allāh's benediction for the Prophet ﷺ and as well prays for him, he is eligible for his intercession on the Day of Resurrection. An authentic tradition has it that:

إِذَا سَمِعْتُمُ الْمُؤَذِّنَ، فَقُولُوا مِثْلَ مَا يَقُولُ ثُمَّ صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِهَا عَشْرًا، ثُمَّ سَلُوا اللَّهَ لِي الْوَسِيلَةَ، فَإِنَّهَا مَنْزِلَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، لَا تَنْبَغِي إِلَّا لِعَبْدٍ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ، وَأَرْجُو أَنْ أَكُونَ أَنَا هُوَ، فَمَنْ سَأَلَ لِي الْوَسِيلَةَ حَلَّتْ لَهُ الشَّفَاعَةُ

When you hear the Mu'adhdhin, repeat what he says. Then invoke a blessing on me, for everyone who invoke one blessing on me will receive then blessings from Allāh. Then ask that Allāh grants me *Al-Wasilah*, because it is a place in Paradise which is not for anyone except a servant of Allāh, and I hope that I may be the one. If anyone asks that I be given *Al-Wasilah*, then (my) intercession will be made lawful for him.⁷⁶¹

Therefore Malik's response in the report, "Why should you turn away your face from him, when he will be the intercessor between you and Allāh, and between your father, Adam, and Allāh, on the Day of Resurrection? You rather face him (the grave), and seek his intercession, that Allāh may accept his intercession on your behalf," if authentic, it would mean: if you face him (the grave), seek Allāh's benediction and peace for him, and seek *al-Wasilah* for him, you will be eligible for his intercession on the Day of Resurrection. The entire human race will seek his intercession on the Day of Resurrection. However, in order to be eligible for his intercession, right here in this world he must have engaged in the acts that would fetch him that, viz. seeking *al-Wasilah* for him, etc.

Ibn Wahb's report is clarified further in another version: "If one intends to say salutation to the Prophet ﷺ, he should do so while waiting, and facing the grave; not the *qibla*; he could move closer to the grave, say the salutation and make *du'ā'* for him and his two companions." The *du'ā'* referred to in the previous report is clarified better here, it is the *du'ā'* one recites when visiting the grave, and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is more deserving of *du'ā'* and salutation. Consequently, this explanation unifies the reports from Malik, and with it, one can distinguish between the beloved and the detested *du'ā'* to him; the detested *du'ā'* is that which Malik categorized as acts of innovation. According to the report, Malik recited this verse while responding to the question:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَأَسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا﴾

"If they, when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you

⁷⁶¹ Muslim (384)

and begged Allāh's forgiveness, and the Messenger of Allāh had sought forgiveness for them, indeed, they would have found Allāh All-Forgiving, Most Merciful⁷⁶²—Allāh knows best—is not true. According to the reports available to us, none of the reputable scholars had mentioned that it is permissible to ask the Prophet ﷺ for assistance after his death; not asking him to plead for forgiveness for one or any other benefit. The authentic reports that have come down from Malik and other scholars refute that. Such tradition is known of the tales narrated by some later jurists on the authority of a Bedouin Arab who claimed to have visited the Prophet's grave, recited this verse and composed two stripes of poem, after which his request was granted.⁷⁶³

Based on this narration, some later followers of ash-Shāfi'ī and Ahmad saw it permissible for one to practice that. However, Islamic law cannot be established using such tales, particularly the ruling pertaining to the act which the Prophet's Companions and the *Tābi'ūn* were in the best position to know and practice if it were permissible and desirable in the religion.

As for the granting of his requests or those of others of his kind, this will not be an issue, as there are several possibilities other than the legitimacy of the act for such occurrence to occur. Not all the prayers that are granted necessarily have come through permissible means of offering prayers. The Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime was accustomed to granting requests that, from the part of the people, were unauthorized. It was such that the Prophet ﷺ said to them:

إِنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ لَيَسْأَلُنِي الْمَسْأَلَةَ، فَأُعْطِيهَا إِيَّاهُ، فَيَخْرُجُ بِهَا مُتَابِطُهَا، وَمَا هِيَ لَهُمْ إِلَّا نَارٌ، قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلِمَ تُعْطِيهِمْ؟
قَالَ: "إِنَّهُمْ يَأْبُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْأَلُونِي، وَيَأْتِي اللَّهُ لِي الْبُخْلَ"

“Amongst you, someone will present a request to me, and which I shall grant. Subsequently, he will then go out carrying it under his arm, but really, he has not acquired but hell.” The people asked, “O Allāh's Messenger! Then why do you fulfill their request?” He

⁷⁶² Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:64.

⁷⁶³ The author mentioned the poem.

replied, "The people refused but to ask, and Allāh refused that I should appear a miser."⁷⁶⁴

Furthermore, someone engages in an act believing it to be veracious without being aware that it is forbidden will be rewarded for his good intentions and pardoned for his ignorance. This discussion has a wide scope. Similarly, it is possible that certain individuals to engage in forbidden and heretical acts of worship and derive some benefit from them. However, this does not indicate that such acts are permissible. The *Shar'i* would not have forbidden such practices if the evil present in them had not been greater than the benefits. In additions, those who engaged in the acts may have done so due to certain wrong interpretation, or mistake, or independent *ijtihad* (judgment), or blind conformity to an *taqlid* (authority), and they will be forgiven and even be rewarded for some good deeds associated with the practice, just as a *mujtahid* (one who is capable of making an independent judgment) is rewarded for his judgment. We have extensively explained this elsewhere.

It is a well-known fact that Malik was the most knowledgeable man on these matters. He lived in Madinah, closely observing the behavior of the *Tābi'ūn* and their successors, and listening to what they reported concerning the Companions and eminent *Tābi'ūn*. He used to prohibit stopping at graves for personal *du'ā'* (prayer), noting that the *Salaf* did not practice that. During the reign of 'Umar رضي الله عنه when there was a severe drought, he sought rain through the *du'ā'* of 'Abbās, as reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Anas:

أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ، كَانَ إِذَا قَحْطُوا اسْتَسْقَى بِالْعَبَّاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ
فَقَالَ: "اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّنَا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَسْقِينَا،
وَإِنَّا نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكَ بِعَمِّ نَبِيِّنَا فَاسْقِنَا" قَالَ: "فَيُسْقَوْنَ."

Whenever drought threatened them, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to ask Al-Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muttalib to invoke Allāh for rain. He used to say, "O Allāh! We used to ask our Prophet ﷺ to invoke You for

⁷⁶⁴ Authentic, Ahmad (11123).

rain, and You would bless us with rain, and now we ask his uncle to invoke You for rain. O Allāh! Bless us with rain.” And so it would rain.⁷⁶⁵

They sought for rain with his invocation as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to do for them during his life, and the meaning of seeking rain with the Prophet’s invocation is that he ﷺ would beseech Allāh to give them rain by his *du’ā* and intercession; he would lead them in the *du’ā*, just as an Imām does while leading prayers, while they followed him, without keeping any of His creatures as an intermediary between them and Him, just as they would not swear by any of His creatures. But after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ al-’Abbās did that for them; he would invoke Allāh to give them rain and there would be rain. Consequently, scholars permit seeking rain with the invocations of the righteous and pious, however, its preferable that the person be from the household of the Prophet ﷺ. During the reign of Mu’awiyah ﷺ, he requested Yazid ibn al-Aswad al-Jurashi invoke Allāh for them, he said, “O Allāh! We beseech You for rain through the invocation of Yazid ibn al-Aswad, O Yazid, raise your hands and pray for us.” Yazid then raised his hands and prayed, and the people joined him in prayer and it began to rain. None of the Companions went to the Prophet’s or any other person’s grave to seek for rain or sought his invocation. As for the desirability of invoking *salām* (Allāh’s peace) upon him, this is because the permission for that has come from the Prophet ﷺ. On the authority of Abū Hurairah, Abū Dawūd reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيَّ إِلَّا رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ رُوحِي حَتَّى أَرُدَّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامَ

No one sends greetings (or prayers of peace) upon me except that Allāh returns my soul to me so that I may return the greeting.⁷⁶⁶

And an-Nasā’ī and some others collectors reported that he said:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً سَيَّاحِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُبَلِّغُونِي مِنْ أُمَّتِي السَّلَامَ

⁷⁶⁵ Al-Bukhārī (1010, and 3710).

⁷⁶⁶ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2041).

Indeed, Allāh has angels who roam the earth and they convey to me the greetings (or prayers of peace) of my nation.⁷⁶⁷

Abū Dawūd and others also reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

"فَأَكْثِرُوا عَلَيَّ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ فِيهِ، فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ مَعْرُوضَةٌ عَلَيَّ" قَالَ: قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ تُعْرَضُ صَلَاتُنَا عَلَيْكَ وَقَدْ أَرِمْتَ - يَقُولُونَ: بَلِيَّتْ - فَقَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَرَّمَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ أَجْسَادَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ"

Invoke more blessings (*salāt*) on me that day (Friday), because your *salāt* will always be presented to me. The people asked, "O Messenger of Allāh! How can it be that our *salāt* be presented to you when your body is decayed?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Indeed, Allāh has prohibited the earth from consuming the bodies of the Prophets."⁷⁶⁸

So, to invoke Allāh's peace and benediction upon him is of the command of Allāh, and of his ﷺ. It is even reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that he said:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِهَا عَشْرًا

He who says blessing upon me—the Prophet ﷺ—once, is blessed by Allāh tenfold.⁷⁶⁹

For us, the lawful code of behavior regarding the visitation of the graves of prophets, the righteous, as well as all other Muslims, is virtually the same as the plan of behavior prescribed for us to follow during their funerals. Just as the intent behind the funeral *salāt* (prayer) for the dead is nothing other than *du'ā'*, so is the intent behind visitation. It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Sunan*, and *Musnad* that the Prophet ﷺ used to teach his companions to say when they visited the graves:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ، - وَفِي لَفْظٍ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ

⁷⁶⁷ Authentic, an-Nasā'ī (1282), Ahmad (3666, 4211, 4320) and others.

⁷⁶⁸ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1047, 1531), an-Nasā'ī (1274), Ibn Mājah (1085, 1636).

⁷⁶⁹ Muslim (384 and 408).

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا، إِنِ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَلْآحِقُونَ، نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا
وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ

Peace be upon you, inmates of the abodes, the *Mu'minūn*—more distinguished believers, and *Muslimūn*—less distinguished believers, among you. By Allāh's permission, we shall join you. We ask Allāh to grant us and you well-being.⁷⁷⁰

And this prayer:

وَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِنِ شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ
لَلْآحِقُونَ

And may Allāh have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and those who come later on, and we shall, Allāh willing, join you.⁷⁷¹

And this other one:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ، أَنْتُمْ لَنَا فَرَطٌ، وَإِنَّا بِكُمْ لَآحِقُونَ،
اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُمْ، وَلَا تَفْتِنَّا بَعْدَهُمْ

Peace be upon you, o abode of believing people. You have gone ahead of us and verily we will join you soon. O Allāh, do not deprive us of their reward and do not put us to trial after them.⁷⁷²

These prayers are for the dead at visitations, as for the funeral prayer we have this prayer, among others:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا، وَشَاهِدِنَا وَعَائِبِنَا، وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا، وَذَكَرِنَا
وَأُنثَانَا

O Allāh forgive our living and our dead, those who are with us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our menfolk and our womenfolk.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷⁰ Muslim (975).

⁷⁷¹ Muslim (974).

⁷⁷² Ibn Mājah (1546).

⁷⁷³ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3201), at-Tirmidhī (320), an-Nasā'ī (1986) and Ibn

Then the praying person will make special *du'ā'* for the dead.
However, for the hypocrites Allāh says:

﴿ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ ﴾

And never (O Muhammad) pray (funeral) for any of them (hypocrites) who dies, nor stand at his grave (at burial). Certainly, they disbelieved in Allāh and His Messenger.⁷⁷⁴

From these prohibitions against conducting funeral prayers for hypocrites and standing at their graves—due to their disbelief—it is established that we must conduct funeral prayer for a Muslim and stand at his grave. That is the reason why the Prophet ﷺ, as reported in *Sunan*, when he buried any of his Companions he would stand at his grave and said:

سَلُوا لَهُ بِالثَّيِّبِ، فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ يُسْأَلُ

(Ask Allāh to forgive your brother and) supplicate for him for steadfastness because he is being questioned (about his deeds) now.⁷⁷⁵

No one from the *Salaf*—the Companions, the *Tābi'ūn*, or their successors—has ever declared that it is permissible to visit the grave in order to seek help from the dead, to use the dead as an intermediary between oneself and Allāh, or to believe that it is desirable to make *du'ā'* at the tomb. The practice developed long after their time. In contrast, Malik and a number of other scholars reportedly detested: “*zurna*” (we visited) the Prophet’s grave.

Al-Qāḍi ‘Iyad states: “Malik hated the use of the phrase “*zurna*” (we visited) the Prophet’s grave.’ It has been mentioned that he detested this expression because the Prophet ﷺ cursed “*zawwārāt*”—the frequent visitors of the graves. However, this explanation cannot be true because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used a similar expression in a statement when he said: “I once forbade you to visit graves, but now you may visit them

Mājah (1498). The part “إن تعلم متقبلنا ومثوانا” “the author quoted with this tradition is not found with it. Allāh Knows best.

⁷⁷⁴ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:84.

⁷⁷⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3221).

(*fa Zūru ha*).⁷⁷⁶ Additionally, some people believed that Malik hated the expression because it implies that “*az-Zāi’r* (the visitor)” is better than “*al-Mazūr* (the visited)” . However, this assertion is also incorrect because it is reported that the people of Paradise will visit their Lord.⁷⁷⁷

However, we may say that Malik’s dislike for the expression stems from its association with visiting the Prophet’s grave. This is because the Prophet ﷺ has said:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا يُعْبَدُ. اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship, Allāh is severely angry with the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.⁷⁷⁸

It is possible that Imām Malik did not detest saying, “we visited the Prophet ﷺ,” which would imply that he disliked the first expression in order to prevent any connection in reference to the visitation to the prophet’s grave, so that one does not imitate the forbidden practice in the tradition, and to cut-off anything that could instrument the practice or shut-off the door to it completely. In popular usage the expression *zurna* (we visited), with reference to the graves of prophets and saints, typically means a visit full with innovation and *shirk*, as opposed to a lawful pilgrimage. There is no single tradition that indicates the Prophet ﷺ ever visited a particular grave. There is not a single report of this

⁷⁷⁶ Muslim (977).

⁷⁷⁷ Perhaps the meaning of the superiority, here, as applied to human beings is with respect to the visitation, the one who takes pains to visit another person is better rewarded, though the visited might be better than visitor in the sight of Allāh. The Companions used to pay visit to the Prophet ﷺ at his sickness, they would have the reward for the visitation which the Prophet ﷺ would not have at the time, even though he is the Prophet ﷺ. Allāh knows best.

⁷⁷⁸ Sound with the text: “اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا، لَعَنَ اللَّهُ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ” —“O Allāh! Do not let my grave become an idol, Allāh cursed the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.” Reported by Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad* (7358). The text the author quoted is reported by Imām Malik in *al-Muwatta*, with a *Mursal isnad*, as earlier mentioned.

nature from any of the compilers of *Ṣaḥīḥ* or *Sunan* books, nor from any of the *imāms* who compiled *Musnad* works, including Imām Ahmad.

The clearest tradition in this matter is the one reported by ad-Daraqutni. But the learned agree that it is weak. In fact, all traditions reported on the subject of visitation to the prophet's grave are all, without exception, false and fabricated. For example the tradition: "On behalf of Allāh I guarantee him Paradise who visits me and my ancestor 'Ibrāhīm during a single year," or: "One who visits me after my death is counted as one who visited me in my lifetime," or: "Whoso performs the pilgrimage but does not visit me treats me harshly," etc. Even so, the Prophet ﷺ had generally given permission to visit graves, despite his previous prohibition, as established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

إِنِّي كُنْتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُكُمْ الْآخِرَةَ

Indeed, I once forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them, for they remind you of the hereafter.⁷⁷⁹

Also in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهَا فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي، وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أَزُورَ قَبْرَهَا فَأَذِنَ لِي، فَزُورُوا الْقُبُورَ فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُ الْمَوْتَ

I asked my Lord's permission to pray for forgiveness for my mother, He didn't allow me that. I then asked His permission to visit her grave and He granted me that; so visit graves, for they make one mindful of death.⁷⁸⁰

But this visitation was purely for the purpose of reminding oneself of the hereafter. Thus, for this purpose, one can even visit the grave of an unbeliever. However, the Prophet ﷺ used to go *al-Baqī'* to pay greetings to his Companions who were buried there and to pray for them a well. Similar to the funeral prayer, this type of visitation is intended just for Muslims.

⁷⁷⁹ Authentic, Ahmad (1236).

⁷⁸⁰ Muslim (967).

As recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is popularly reported that he ﷺ said:

لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْيَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ” يُحَدِّثُ مَا صَنَعُوا

Allāh’s curse is on the Jews and the Christians, as they took the graves of their prophets as (places of worship).” He intended to warn (his nation) of what the people used to do.”⁷⁸¹

قَالَتْ: وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ لَأَبْرَزُوا قَبْرَهُ عَيْرَ أَيِّ أَحْشَى أَنْ يُتَّخَذَ مَسْجِدًا”

She (Ā’ishah) said, “Were it not for that, they would have exposed his (i.e., the Prophet’s) grave; he feared that it may be turned into a mosque (a place of worship).”⁷⁸²

Also, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, a church in Abyssinia was described for the Prophet ﷺ; they mentioned how beautiful it was and how it was decorated with pictures; he ﷺ then commented:

أُولَئِكَ إِذَا مَاتَ مِنْهُمْ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ بَنَوْا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا، ثُمَّ صَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ الصُّورَةَ أُولَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

They are people that when a pious person amongst them dies they build a place of worship on his grave, and then decorate it with such pictures. They would be the worst of creatures on the Day of Judgment in the sight of Allāh.”⁷⁸³

Muslim also reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Jundub ibn Abdullah, he said:

سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِحَمْسٍ، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: "إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي مِنْكُمْ خَلِيلٌ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدْ اتَّخَذَنِي خَلِيلًا، كَمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي خَلِيلًا

⁷⁸¹ Al-Bukhārī (435, 3453, 4443, 5815) and Muslim (531)

⁷⁸² Al-Bukhārī (1330, 1390 and 4441) and Muslim (529).

⁷⁸³ Al-Bukhārī (427, 434, 1341, 3873) and Muslim (528).

لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَ بَكْرٍ خَلِيلًا، وَلَا وَإِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، وَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ، إِنِّي أَنهَاكُمُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ."

I heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ five days before his death saying, "I stand acquitted before Allāh that I took any one of you as friend, for Allāh has taken me as His friend, as he took 'Ibrāhīm as His friend. Had I taken any one of my Ummah as a friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a friend. Beware of those who preceded you and used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you must not take graves as mosques; I forbid you to do that."⁷⁸⁴

Also, in the *Sunan*, the Prophet ﷺ is also reported to have said:

لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قُبُورًا، وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِي عِيدًا، وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ تَبْلُغُنِي حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ

Do not turn your houses into graves and do not make my grave a place of festivity. Seek *as-Salāt*—Allāh's Benediction—for me, indeed the *salāt* you seek will reach me from wherever you may are.⁷⁸⁵

And in *al-Muwatta'*, the Prophet ﷺ was reported as said:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَتَنَاءً يُعْبَدُ. اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship, Allāh is severely angry with the people who took the graves of their prophets places of worship.⁷⁸⁶

In the *Musnad* (of Imām Ahmad) and *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū Hatim, it is reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ مِنْ شِرَارِ النَّاسِ مَنْ نُذِرْكَهُ السَّاعَةَ وَهُمْ أَحْيَاءُ، وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذُ الْقُبُورَ

⁷⁸⁴ Muslim (532).

⁷⁸⁵ Sound, Abū Dawūd (2042) and Ahmad (8804).

⁷⁸⁶ Weak with this text, Imām Malik reported it in *al-Muwatta'*, with a *mursal isnad*.

مَسَاجِدَ

Indeed, from the worst kinds of men are: the people who the end of time would come to meet alive, and those who take cemeteries places of worship.⁷⁸⁷

These traditions are uninterruptedly reported from him ﷺ and from his companions as well. The Prophet's prohibition against turning graves into sanctuaries must be differentiated from what he positively commended and prescribed, namely the invocation of *salām* (Allāh's peace) upon the dead and *du'ā'* for them. Thus, the prescribed visitation falls into the second category, whereas the innovated visitation falls into the first. His command not to turn graves into sanctuaries includes the construction of sanctuaries over graves, as well as purposely going to graves to offer prayers. All authorities unanimously agree that both of these actions are forbidden. They not only prohibit the construction of sanctuaries over graves but also unequivocally indicate an absolute prohibition, supported by available evidence. Additionally, they unanimously maintain that going with the purpose of offering prayer or *du'ā'* at graves is not prescribed. None of the Muslim *imāms* have ever stated that a prayer and *du'ā'* at graves are more meritorious than in mosques without graves. Instead, the *Imāms* have agreed that prayer and *du'ā'* in mosques not built over graves are superior to those in mosques built over graves. Prayer and *du'ā'* in the latter are unanimously considered by them as forbidden and objectionable. Some of them have clearly indicated the absolute prohibition, and some even argue for the invalidity of the prayer performed therein, although this is disputed. The only point we wish to make is that Muslim scholars are unanimous in their view that it is neither mandatory nor commendable, but, on the contrary, objectionable. The jurists provide two reasons for this:

The *najasa* (impurity) of the soil caused by its contact with the decaying flesh of the dead. But this motive (*'illa*: reason) serves for him who differentiates between an old and a recent cemetery. Moreover, the soundness of this motive is in doubt, for scholars differ on the uncleanness of tomb-soil, which is of

⁷⁸⁷ Sound, Ahmad (3844, 4143, and 4332).

the problems of interstice. Most Muslim scholars maintain that by use of interstice *najasa* (impurity) is transformed into *ṭahara* (purity). Such is the view of Abū Hanīfa and the Zahirites, and one of the positions maintained in the schools of Malik and Ahmad. It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet's mosque once served as an enclosure for the Banū Najjar, which included the graves of polytheists, along with date-palms and ruins belonging to them. Upon the command of the Prophet ﷺ, the date-palms were cut down, the ruins were leveled, and the graves were dug up. Furthermore, he aligned the date-palms with the *qibla*. If tomb-soil were considered ritually impure, it would have been applicable to the soil of the polytheists' grave as well. In that case, the Prophet ﷺ would have surely commanded the removal of the soil, as it would unavoidably mix with other soil.

The second reason is that the practice equates to imitating unbelievers in their prayer at graves, which leads to *shirk*. Scholars concur that this is a valid reason.

Some of the scholars who mentioned the first reason, including ash-Shafi' and a few others, also provided this explanation. And their stand as to its validity is borne out the corruption involved in the act. Also, some of the disciples of Ahmad, viz. Abū Bakr al-Athram, and Malik maintained the two reasons. Though there are people who maintained only the first.

About this verse:

﴿وَقَالُوا لَا نَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا نَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا﴾

And they have said (urging (their followers), “Do not abandon your idols—especially Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr.”⁷⁸⁸

Ibn Abbās, among the other *Salafs*, said:

أَسْمَاءُ رِجَالٍ صَالِحِينَ مِنْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ، فَلَمَّا هَلَكُوا أَوْحَى الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ، أَنْ أَنْصَبُوا إِلَى مَجَالِسِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا يَجْلِسُونَ أَنْصَابًا وَسَمُّوَهَا بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ، فَفَعَلُوا، فَلَمْ تُعْبَدْ، حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ أَوْلِيكَ وَتَنَسَخَ الْعِلْمُ عُبِدَتْ

The names (of the idols) were originally belonged to some pious

⁷⁸⁸ Sūrah Nūḥ, 71:23.

men of the people of Nūḥ (Noah). When they passed away, Satan inspired their people to prepare and place idols at the places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by their names. The people did so, but the idols were not worshiped till those people (who initiated them) had died and the origin of the idols had become obscure, whereupon people began worshiping them.⁷⁸⁹

Al-Bukhārī reported it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as did other scholars of *tafsīr*, including Ibn Jarīr and others. It is also mentioned by Wathima and other compilers of the biography of the prophets. Furthermore, the Prophet's invocation of a curse upon those who transform the graves of prophets into sanctuaries appears to lend credence to this argument. One knows beyond doubt that prophets' graves are neither excavated nor is the soil at them unclean. The Prophet ﷺ had said about himself, "O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol for worship," and he said, "Do not turn my grave into a festival".

It is therefore known that this particular prohibition imposed by the Prophet ﷺ is of the same nature as the one prohibiting prayer at sunrise and sunset. This is because unbelievers pray to the sun during those times, despite the fact that one who prays at these times worship Allāh alone and calls upon Him only. This same applies to the prohibition of turning graves into sanctuaries, even though one who prays at them directs his prayers to Allāh only. This is done to avoid invoking the dead and praying to them. Instances of such aberrations have indeed occurred. There are people who prostrate before the sun and other planets, turning to them with various invocation formulas and chants. They wear clothes and rings in honor of these celestial bodies, considering them suitable. Additionally, they seek specific times, places and incense that they believe are appropriate for worshipping these entities. These practices are among the most serious causes of *shirk* and have led many people, past and present, astray.

Such beliefs have even spread among those who claim to be Muslims. A well-known writer has authored a book about planets called *as-Sirr al-Maktūm fī 'S-siḥr wa 'l-Mukhatabat an-Nujūm*, which discusses the

⁷⁸⁹ Al-Bukhārī (4920).

polytheistic systems of various groups such as in India, the Sabians, and the pagan Arabs. The book also delves into the works of authors such as Tamtam al-Hindi, Malkusha al-Babili, Ibn Wahshiya, Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhi, Thābit ibn Qurra, and others. These individuals, despite claiming to be Christians, fell into polytheism, believed in idols, false gods and demonic entities. Allāh, the Most High, has spoken against such practices:

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ
وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَتُّوْا هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَبِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَمَن يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَن لَّن يَجْعَلْ لَهُ نَصِيرًا ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾

Have you (O Prophet) not seen those who were given a portion of the Scriptures yet believe in *jibt* (superstition) and *ṭāghūt* (false objects of worship) and reassure the disbelievers that they are better guided than the believers? (*) Those are the ones whom Allāh has cursed; and he whom Allāh curses—never will you find for him a helper.⁷⁹⁰

A number of *Salaf* referred to *jibt* as sorcery and *ṭāghūt* as idols, while some called *ṭāghūt* is *Satan*, and both are correct.

These people combine *jibt*, which is sorcery, with *shirk*, which is the worship of *ṭāghūt* (idols). They also combine sorcery with star-worship. One knows per force that such practices constitute the forbidden *shirk* according to Islamic faith, rather in the religion of all prophets, that these are of the worst kinds of *shirk* for the prohibition of which prophets had been sent. This was the very object of 'Ibrāhīm's dispute with his people as reflected in these verses:

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلِكُوتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اَلَيْلٌ رَّءَا كَوْكَبًا قَال هٰذَا رَبِّيْ فَلَمَّا اَفَلَ قَالَ لَا اُحِبُّ
الْاَفْلِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رءَا الْقَمَرَ بَارِعًا قَال هٰذَا رَبِّيْ فَلَمَّا اَفَلَ قَالَ لِيْن لَّم يَهْدِيْنِيْ
رَبِّيْ لَأَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رءَا الشَّمْسَ بَارِعَةً قَال هٰذَا رَبِّيْ

⁷⁹⁰ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:51-52.

هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يٰ قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ
 وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
 ﴿٧٩﴾ وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحِبُّونَنِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ
 بِهِ ۖ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ
 ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
 يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿٨١﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ
 ﴿٨٢﴾ وَبَلَّغْ حُجَّتَنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾

And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain (in faith) (*) When the night grew dark upon him, he saw a star and said, “This is my Lord!” But when it set, he said, “I do not love things that set (disappear). (*) Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, “This one is my Lord!” But when it disappeared, he said, “If my Lord does not guide me, I will certainly be one of the misguided people.” (*) Then when he saw the sun shining, he said, “This must be my Lord—it is the greatest!” But again when it set, he declared, “O my people! I totally reject whatever you associate (with Allāh in worship). (*) Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allāh. (*) And his people argued with him. He responded, “Are you arguing with me about Allāh, while He has guided me? I am not afraid of whatever (idols) you associate with Him—(none can harm me,) unless my Lord so wills. My Lord encompasses everything in (His) knowledge. Will you not be mindful? (*) And how should I fear your associate-gods, while you have no fear in associating (others) with Allāh—a practice

He has never authorized? Which side has more right to security? (Tell me) if you really know!" (*) It is (only) those who are faithful and do not tarnish their faith with falsehood who are guaranteed security and are (rightly) guided. (*) And that was Our (conclusive) argument which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing.⁷⁹¹

'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), adopted this course because his people used to take planets as lords whom they called on and entreated. Neither they nor any intelligent person believed any planet to be the creator of heavens and the earth, but they used to call on them apart from Allāh, following the religion of star-worshipping pagans.

Allāh reported him as said:

﴿ قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ وَاَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾

He said, "Then do you see what you have been worshipping, (*) You and your ancient forefathers? (*) They are (all) enemies to me, except the Lord of all worlds."⁷⁹²

Allāh also reported him as said:

﴿ إِنِّي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيِّدِي ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾

Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship (*) Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.⁷⁹³

'Ibrāhīm rejected their polytheism, which consisted of the worship of celestial bodies, as well as their polytheism, which involved idol-worship. This included figures and talismans of planets, as well as images of dead prophets and saints. 'Ibrāhīm smashed the idols, as Allāh informed us:

﴿ فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴾

⁷⁹¹ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:75-83.

⁷⁹² Sūrah ash-Shu'arā', 26:75-77.

⁷⁹³ Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43:26-27.

So he smashed them into pieces, except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it (for answers).⁷⁹⁴

What we intend to state here is that the act of *shirk*, through star-worship has claimed many people. Similarly, there are instances of *shirk* perpetrated through the worship of the interred, such as entreating and begging them. The Prophet ﷺ forbade offering *salāt* (prayer) over tombs, as prayer consists of *du'ā'* to Allāh alone. This prohibition was to prevent any practice that could lead to a form of *shirk*. The more so would he object to direct *shirk* of petitioning the dead, whether for fulfillment of needs and deliverance from distress or for intercession with Allāh in the matter. The Prophet ﷺ would have objected even if someone invoked Allāh's in the oath by mentioning one of His creatures such as a prophet or an angel. Even though the oath may not have been made at the grave because swearing by Allāh's creatures is entirely forbidden. The scholars agree that such a forbidden oath is ineffective. However, there is a dispute regarding whether the forbiddance requires an absolute prohibition or if it merely to be avoided? Two positions exist on this matter; with the more correct of the two being the absolute prohibition. Religious scholars only dispute this issue in relation to making an oath to Allāh in the name of the Prophet ﷺ in particular. Within the school of Ahmad and among some of his students, there are two views. However, majority of the leaders, including Malik, ash-Shāfi'i, Abū Hanīfah, and many others, hold the view that under no circumstances should one make an oath in the name of Allāh's creatures, and such an oath remains absolutely ineffective. This is the correct view. The same principle applies to invoking the name of Allāh's Prophet, Muhammad, ﷺ in an oath.

There was a dispute regarding the matter of making an oath in the name of the Prophet ﷺ. In the *Manāsik* of al-Marwazi, it is reported that Ahmad held the opinion that it is permissible to make an oath in the name of the Prophet ﷺ. However, the correct opinion is that such an oath is not effective, and the same applies to invoking his name. As for other than him, I am not aware of any dispute; rather, scholars

⁷⁹⁴ Sūrah al-'Anbiyā', 21:58.

have mentioned that it is prohibited to make oaths in their names. The scholars unanimously agree that all supplication and seeking assistance must be directed to Allāh alone and one should only swear by His names and attributes. Swearing should be done by His names and attributes, as we find in the well-known prayers reported in *Sunan*:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْمَنَّانُ، بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ، يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ، يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ

O Allāh, I ask You by virtue of the fact that praise is due to You, there is no deity worthy of worship but You, Who shows favor and beneficence, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, O Lord of Majesty and Splendour, O Living One, O Eternal One.⁷⁹⁵

In another tradition:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ، الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ،
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

O Allāh! I ask You by virtue of Your being Allāh, the One, the Self-Sufficient Master, Who begets not nor was begotten, and there is none co-equal or comparable to Him.⁷⁹⁶

In another one, we have it as:

أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَهُ بِهِ نَفْسِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ،
أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ اسْتَأْتَرْتَهُ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ

I ask You by every Name that You have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, taught any one of Your creation, or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1495), an-Nasā'ī (1300) and Ibn Mājah (3858).

⁷⁹⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (985), an-Nasā'ī (1301) and Ibn Mājah (3857).

⁷⁹⁷ Weak, Ahmad (3712 and 4318). Some of the scholars rated it good. Allāh knows best.

The Islamic community agrees that all of these prayers are permissible to be said. However, scholars have differing opinions on this matter:

أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَعَاوِدِ الْعِزِّ مِنْ عَرْشِكَ

I entreat to You by the glory of Your throne.⁷⁹⁸

While some scholars allowed adopting it, for it has come that way in traditions, some disapproved of it; among whom is Abū Hanīfah.

In the book *al-Qudūrī fi Sharīh al-Kirqī* of Abū al-Husain, Abū Yūsuf narrated from Abū Hanīfah, “It is not permissible to invoke Allāh except by Him (using His Names and Attributes), I detest that one says: ‘I entreat to You by the glory of Your throne’, or invoking Allāh ‘by the right of His creatures.’” Abū Yūsuf, on the other hand, commented that: “I do not disapprove of using the expression: ‘I entreat to You by the glory of Your throne,’ because it is similar to seeking entreaty by Him, however, I disapprove of invoking Allāh: ‘by the right of so-and-so, or of Your prophets and messengers, or of the House and the Sacred Monument.’” According to Abū Yūsuf, all these should be disapproved of.

Authorities agree that since no mortal can boast of any claim on Allāh, asking by creatures is not permissible. Creatures cannot claim what they are not entitled to. However, there is a dispute regarding whether the oath, ‘by the glory of Your throne’ is a request directed to a created object or to the Creator Himself. Abū Yūsuf considered the tradition that contained it to be permissible in that way. However, scholars have disputed this, as they also have done with respect to the tradition reported by Ibn Mājah on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī on the *Manners of Leaving Homes for Prayers*:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ السَّائِلِينَ عَلَيْكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مَمَشَايَ هَذَا،
فَإِنِّي لَمْ أَخْرُجْ أَشْرًا، وَلَا بَطْرًا، وَلَا رِيَاءً، وَلَا سُمْعَةً، وَخَرَجْتُ اتِّقَاءً،

⁷⁹⁸ Weak, *ad-Du‘ā’* of at-Ṭabarānī (236), *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir* of at-Ṭabarānī (3), *al-Asmā’ wa as-Sifāt* of al-Baihaqī (250), and *ad-Dāwāt al-Kabirah* of al-Baihaqī (443).

سُخِّطِكَ، وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِكَ، فَأَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُعِيدَنِي مِنَ النَّارِ، وَأَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي

O Allāh, I ask You by the right that those who ask of You have over You, and I ask by virtue of this walking of mine, for I am not going out because of pride or vanity, or to show off or make a reputation, rather I am going out because I fear Your wrath and seek Your pleasure. So, I ask You to protect me from the Fire and to forgive me my sins, for no one can forgive sins except You⁷⁹⁹

And Allāh has said:

﴿وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ﴾

And fear Allāh through Whom you demand (your mutual right), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (*al-Arhāma*) (i.e. fear that you make cut-off the ties of your kinship).⁸⁰⁰

According to the recitals of Abū Hamza and others, who recited “*al-Arhām*” with the sign “*al-Kasra*,” the meaning is supposed to be: “and *al-Arhāmi*”—the wombs (i.e., fear the ties of kinship with which you also demand your mutual rights). It can be understood similar to saying, ‘I implore you by Allāh, and by the ties of kinship’. The implication here is that the pronoun connecting the two parts of the verse is not repeated in the second part, which is permissible in some Arabic grammatical formations, as reported by Sibawai. More so, it is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Umar said:

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا (إِذَا أَجَدَبْنَا) نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّنَا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَسْقِينَا، وَإِنَّا نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكَ بِعَمِّ نَبِيِّنَا فَاسْقِنَا" قَالَ: فَيُسْقَوْنَ."

“O Allāh! We used to ask our Prophet ﷺ to invoke You for rain, and You would bless us with rain, and now we ask his uncle to invoke You for rain. O Allāh! Bless us with rain.” And so it would rain.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁹ Weak, Ibn Mājah (778).

⁸⁰⁰ Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4:1.

⁸⁰¹ Al-Bukhārī (1010, and 3710).

Also, an-Nasā'ī, at-Tirmidhī, and some others reported a tradition about a blind man who came to the Prophet ﷺ seeking his intercession with Allāh to restore his sight. The Prophet ﷺ asked him to perform ablution and then invoke Allāh with the following prayers:

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ، وَأَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ الرَّحْمَةِ، إِنِّي تَوَجَّهْتُ
بِكَ إِلَى رَبِّي فِي حَاجَتِي هَذِهِ فَتَقْضِي لِي، اللَّهُمَّ شَفِّعْهُ فِيَّ"

"O Allāh, I ask You and turn towards You by Your Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Prophet of Mercy. Indeed, I have turned to my Lord, by means of You, concerning this need of mine, so that it can be resolved, so, O Allāh, accept his intercession for me"⁸⁰² He did that and Allāh returned his sight.

In response to this hadith, we say the following:

One: There is no doubt that Allāh on His Own choosing make right for His creatures, as He informed us:

﴿وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

"It is Our duty to help the believers."⁸⁰³, and as said:

﴿كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ﴾

"Your Lord has taken upon Himself to be Merciful"⁸⁰⁴

Also, in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, it is reported that while Mu'adh ibn Jabal was riding behind the Prophet ﷺ (on a donkey), the Prophet ﷺ said to him:

"يَا مُعَاذُ، أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ؟" قَالَ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ:
"أَنْ يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ وَلَا يُشْرَكَ بِهِ شَيْءٌ، قَالَ: "أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّهُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِذَا فَعَلُوا
ذَلِكَ؟" فَقَالَ: "اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ،" قَالَ: "أَنْ لَا يُعَدَّ بِهِمْ"

⁸⁰² Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (3578), an-Nasā'ī in al-Kubrāh (10420), and Musnad of Imām Ahmad (17240 and 17241).

⁸⁰³ Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30:47.

⁸⁰⁴ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:54.

“O Mu`adh! Do you know what Allāh’s Right upon His slaves is?” I said, “Allāh and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “To worship Him (Allāh) Alone and to join none in worship with Him (Allāh). He asked again, “Do you know what their right upon Him is?” I replied, “Allāh and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Not to punish them (if they do so).”⁸⁰⁵ That is a truth; a true promise He mandated on Himself by His perfect Words.

Scholars have a unanimous agreement that by Allāh’s true promise, whatever He mandates must come to pass. However, there is a dispute regarding whether Allāh imposed upon Himself the obligations of ensuring the fulfillment of what He mandated? There are two opinions on this matter. Those who hold the view that Allāh imposed these obligations upon Himself argue their view based on the verse:

﴿كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ﴾

“Your Lord has taken upon Himself to be Merciful”⁸⁰⁶, and the authentic tradition:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي، وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا

O My slaves, I have made oppression unlawful for myself and I have made it unlawful among you, so do not oppress one another.⁸⁰⁷ The issue is well elaborated in elsewhere.

However, as for the claim that certain obligations were imposed on Him by a force apart from him, and that it is forbidden for him to act otherwise; comparing Allāh to His creatures, this is a scandalous innovation asserted by the Qadarites. It is an opinion that contradicts the authentic reports and unadulterated reasoning. The understanding of *Ahlu as-Sunnah* is that Allāh, the Most Glorified, is the Creator of everything and He owns them all. Whatever He wishes comes to pass,

⁸⁰⁵ Al-Bukhārī (2756, 5976, 6267, 6500, and 7373) and Muslim (30).

⁸⁰⁶ Sūrah al-ʿAnʿām, 6: 54.

⁸⁰⁷ Muslim (2577).

and whatever He does not wish never occurs. Man can never impose an obligation upon Him. This is the reason why a group of *Ahlu as-Sunnah*, who support the view that Allāh has obligations that He must fulfill, says: “He is the One Who imposes these obligations upon Himself, as He is the One Who prohibits for Himself that which He ordained not to do.” It is not that man is entitled to anything from Allāh as he would be from another man. Allāh, out of His mercy, prescribe mercy for His servants. He created them, sent prophets to guide them, and made it easy for them to possess Iman and do righteous deeds. So, whoever among the Qadarites and the Mu’tazilites supposes that Allāh owes rights to man as an employer owes to an employee is preposterous.

If that is true, then the only means of seeking divine assistance for human needs and wants is by through the bounties and kindness of Allāh. Whatever Allāh grants to His creatures is out of His own kindness and generosity; not as a form of remuneration, compensation, or obligation imposed on Him by any external force. Allāh, the Most Glorified, is far above such notion.

Therefore, if one seeks his needs from Allāh through means ordained by Him, such as engaging in certain good deeds that attract Allāh’s special favours, provisions, and immeasurable blessings, or seeking the prayers and intercessions of His righteous servants and worshippers, it is a permissible means of seeking His Benediction. However, if one seeks his needs from Allāh through means that He has not designated as a means of soliciting His Benediction, either by claiming on Allāh by virtue of any of His creatures; which is wrong because asking by creatures is not permissible, or by asking for that which can never be granted; which also will make the supplication meaningless. Prophets and true believers do have a claim on Allāh by virtue of His own promises to support and not forsake them, be gracious to them, and to not expose them to suffering. They are distinguished before Him, and He accepts their supplications and intercession. This is unlike someone who calls upon Allāh by virtue of another person; not by his obedience, love, or followership to him—the prophet, rather by his virtues or the special favours Allāh endowed him, then he has called Allāh with a means that does not necessarily result in granting of his prayers.

Seeking Intercession with Allāh Through Righteous Deeds

SEEKING A WAY of approaching Allāh lies in seeking the true means (*tawassul*) of approaching Him and turning to Him through:

One: Seeking His help through one's acts of worship, as exemplified by the three men who sought refuge in a cave with their good deeds, or

Two: Seeking Allāh's mercy and assistance through the *du'ā'* of the prophets or saints and seeking their intercessions.⁸⁰⁸

There is no dispute about this; rather, it is recognized as *al-Wasilah*—the true means of appealing to Allāh, that Allāh commanded in these verses:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ ﴾

“O believers! Fear Allāh and seek the means [of nearness] to Him, and struggle in His Way, so you may be successful.”⁸⁰⁹ and the verse:

﴿ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ﴾

Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, (striving as to) which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment.⁸¹⁰

Seeking *al-Wasilah* with Allāh means using a medium or means to draw closer to Him. It can be through acts of worship, obedience, compliance with His commandments, or through appeal and petition seeking His help in attaining gain or warding off harm.

The word *du'ā'* in the Qur'anic sense beautifully encompasses both the motives of *ibādah* (devotion) and *mas'alah* (appeal).⁸¹¹ When faced with calamity, a person's immediate concern is to seek deliverance from

⁸⁰⁸ The third means of *at-Tawassul* to Allāh by His Names and Attributes.

⁸⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:35.

⁸¹⁰ Sūrah al-'Isrā', 17:57.

⁸¹¹ These are referred to as the two kinds of *du'ā'*.

it. This can be done through entreaty, supplication, or by fulfilling Allāh's injunctions. All of these acts are forms of devotion and obedience, even though the initial motives may be to fulfill one's needs such as sustenance, victory, or health. Thus, the two motives of seeking closeness to Allāh and seeking fulfillment of needs are interrelated.

Moreover, invoking Allāh through *du'ā'* (invocation) and *tadhar'u* (entreaty) opens doors for the servant of Allāh ways to perfect their belief in Allāh, the Most High, to become more acquainted with and love Him. It creates an atmosphere for experiencing the sweetness of Allāh's remembrance and supplication, which are more beloved and valuable to him than the fulfillment of his immediate needs. This is Allāh's blessing upon His servant; as through of their worldly needs, they are endowed with a higher spiritual position.

Conversely, a servant of Allāh can be blessed with worldly gains such as sustenance, victory, and health, due to the love, diligence, fear, and submission with which he executes Allāh's injunctions and obedience. Allāh says:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ﴾

Your Lord has proclaimed, "Call upon Me (i.e, worship me), I will respond to you."⁸¹²

And in a tradition recorded by the compilers of *Sunan Abū Dawūd* and other, the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

"الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ { وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ }

"Invocation is worship (devotion)," he then recited the verse, "Your Lord has proclaimed, "Call upon Me (i.e, worship me), I will respond to you."⁸¹³

This tradition, along with the verse, has been explained to contain two kinds of prayers: prayers of devotion (i.e., worship) and appeal (i.e., invocation). The verse is interpreted in two ways. One interpretation

⁸¹² Sūrah Ghafir, 40:60.

⁸¹³ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1479), at-Tirmidhī (2979, 3247,3372), and Ibn Mājah (3828).

suggests the meaning: “Worship me and obey my commands, and I will respond to you.” The other interpretation suggests the meaning: “Invoke me and I will respond to you.”

This connection is also found in the hadith regarding the descending of Allāh, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

يُنزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ
الَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ يَقُولُ: مَنْ يَدْعُونِي، فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأَعْطِيهِ، مَنْ
يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ

Our Lord, the Blessed and the Exalted, descends every night to the lowest heaven when two-thirds of the night have passed and says, “Who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Who asks of Me so that I may give to him? Who ask My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?”⁸¹⁴

The tradition mentions three things. **First:** “answering of calls,” then: “granting of needs,” and then: “forgiveness of sins.” These encompass the provision of sustenance and the repulsion of evil. More so, Allāh says:

﴿ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴾

And when My servants ask you (O Prophet) about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one’s prayer when he calls upon Me. So let them respond (with obedience) to Me and believe in Me, so that they may be guided (to the Right Way).⁸¹⁵

It is reported in a tradition that the reason for the revelation of this verse was the question posed by some of the Companions to the Prophet ﷺ. They asked: “O the Messenger of Allāh, is our Lord near to us, that we should only talk to Him, or He is far away, that we should call upon him.” Allāh then revealed this verse, informing them that: “He is near to His servants, and responds to their calls when they invoke Him.” He

⁸¹⁴ Al-Bukhārī (1145, 4794) and Muslim (758).

⁸¹⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:186.

then commanded them to respond to His calls by striving for perfect belief. Furthermore, some scholars have given the meaning of the verse as follows: “You should respond to my calls and believe in Me, then, I will respond to your needs.” They said: “One’s prayers will be granted only on these two conditions: *Kamāl at-Tā’a lillah* (Perfect Devotion in Worshipping Allāh) and *al-Iman bi Rubuubiyatillah* (Sincere Belief in His Lordship). Therefore, whoever responds to Allāh by obediently following His orders and refraining from what He prohibits reaps the fruit of his prayers and his calls will be answered, as Allāh has promised:

﴿وَسَتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ﴾

“He responds to those who believe and do good, and increases their reward out of His grace.”⁸¹⁶ That is, He grants their prayers.

Possibly, if a person calls upon Allāh with unshakeable conviction that Allāh necessarily fulfills a need whenever he implore Him, but then he is guilty of either being a *mushrik* (polytheist) or a *fasiq* (lewd), Allāh may still respond to his calls, as He says:

﴿وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ
ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ﴾

And when affliction touches man, he calls upon Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove from him his affliction, he continues (in disobedience) as if he had never called upon Us (to remove) an affliction that touched him.⁸¹⁷, and He says:

﴿وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَٰهَهُ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَكُمُ الْبَرَّ ائْتَمَرْتُمْ
وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا﴾

When you are touched with hardship at sea, you (totally) forget all (the gods) you invoke, except Him. But when He delivers you safely to shore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁶ Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43:26.

⁸¹⁷ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:12.

⁸¹⁸ Sūrah al-’Isrā’, 17:67.

And He says:

﴿ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِلَٰهَةُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ ﴾

Say, "Have you considered: if there came to you the punishment of Allāh or there came to you the Hour - is it other than Allāh you would invoke, if you should be truthful?" (*) No, it is Him (alone) you would invoke, and He would remove that for which you invoked Him if He willed, and you would forget what you associate (with Him).⁸¹⁹

However, in the case of those who affirmed Allāh's Lordship but lacked in sincerity and obedience to Him and His Prophet ﷺ, Allāh may still grant their requests when they are in great distress. However, what they are granted are merely temporary benefits of this worldly life, not the lasting gains of the hereafter.

Allāh says:

﴿ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلِيهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿١٩﴾ كَلَّا نُمَدُّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ وَهَٰؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾

Whoever desires the quick-passing (transitory enjoyment of this world), We readily grant him what We will for whom We like; Then, afterwards, We have appointed for him Hell, he will burn therein disgraced and rejected (*) But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer - it is those whose effort is ever appreciated (by Allāh) (*) To each (category) We extend—to these and to those—from the gift of your Lord. And never has the gift of your Lord been restricted.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁹ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:40-41.

⁸²⁰ Sūrah al-'Isrā', 17:18-20.

When 'Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl ﷺ invoked Allāh for sustenance for the believers, as Allāh reported:

﴿وَأَرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ. مِنَ الشَّجَرَاتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ﴾

And provide its people with fruits—whoever of them believes in Allāh and the Last Day,⁸²¹

Allāh responded:

﴿وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأَمَتَّعُهُ، قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire. What an evil destination!⁸²²

Not everyone whom Allāh grants enjoyment of sustenance and victory, either by answering his call or in some other way, happens to be loved and befriended by Him. Indeed, Allāh sustains both believers and unbelievers alike, as well as the pious and the impious. Allāh may respond to their prayers and grant them their requests in this world, but they may not have a share in the other world.

The story goes that some Christian unbelievers besieged a Muslim town, and as their supply of fresh water ran out, they demanded that the Muslims provide them with fresh water. In return, they promised to cease the siege. The governors of Muslim affairs held a discussion and concluded: “Rather, we should leave them be until thirst weakens them, and then we can capture them.” However, the besiegers stood up and prayed for rain, beseeching Allāh for help. Miraculously, Allāh sent rain upon them. This turn of events caused concern among some people. In response, the king sought the assistance of a knowledgeable man to clarify the situation to the people. The man requested a pulpit to be erected, and from there, he addressed the crowd. He said: “O Allāh, we acknowledge that You are responsible for the sustenance of all creatures, as You have said in Your Book, “There is not a beast on earth but whose

⁸²¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:126.

⁸²² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:126.

sustenance comes from Allāh.”⁸²³ The besiegers, in their distress, called upon You, and You (are wont to) answer the distressed when he calls upon You. You provided them with water, not out of love for them or their religion, but because You had taken it upon Yourself to sustain them, and because they turned to You in their time of need. But now we ask You to show us a sign that will strengthen the faith in the hearts of Your believing worshippers.” In response to this plea, Allāh sent a destructive wind upon the besiegers, causing their demise. And so, the story continues. A similar case can be observed when a person, based on the partial satisfaction of his need, believes that what he did was good, despite having transgressed in his *du‘ā* either through disobedience to Allāh or by requesting something negative. However, this is merely a form of indulgence granted by Allāh, allowing him to further indulge in sin, ultimately leading him to a painful and humiliating punishment. It is akin to the example of someone who was blessed with wealth and children, but failed to realize these were merely temporary provisions and hastily pursued them, thinking they were good.

Allāh says about such:

﴿ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ نَسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

Do they think that what We provide them with wealth and children
(* Is [because] We hasten to (honor) them with all kinds of good?
Rather, they do not perceive.⁸²⁴

And He says:

﴿ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمَ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾

So when they became oblivious to warnings, We opened to them the doors of every (good) thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were (then) in despair.⁸²⁵

⁸²³ Sūrah Hūd, 11:6.

⁸²⁴ Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn, 23:55-56.

⁸²⁵ Sūrah al-‘An‘ām, 6:44.

He says also:

﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ لِيَزَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ﴾
 ﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ لِيَزَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ﴾

Those who disbelieve should not think that living longer is good for them. They are only given more time to increase in sin, and they will suffer a humiliating punishment.⁸²⁶

He says as well:

﴿فَذَرْنِي وَمَن يُكذِّبُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَأُمَلِّ لَهُمْ إِن كِيدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾

“So leave to Me ‘O Prophet’ those who reject this message. We will progressively draw them to destruction in ways they cannot comprehend. (*) I only delay their end for a while, but My planning is flawless.⁸²⁷

And Allāh says:

﴿ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

Call upon your Lord humbly and secretly. Surely He does not like the transgressors.⁸²⁸

This is a wide discussion, extensively covered in other works.

Our purpose is to state that calling upon Allāh can be considered as an act of worship, for which the worshipper is rewarded in the other world, in addition to any blessings granted in this worldly life. Alternatively, it can be seen as a plea for the fulfillment of a specific need. Subsequently, one may be rewarded for their supplication if it is pleasing to Allāh, or he may only attain the satisfaction of his immediate need. However, there are instances where the act of supplication can be detrimental to his faith, resulting in punishment due to the violation of Allāh’s rights and transgressing His limits.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁶ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:178.

⁸²⁷ Sūrah al-Qalam, 68:44-45.

⁸²⁸ Sūrah al-‘A‘rāf, 7:55.

⁸²⁹ This is the summary of the author’s discussions about how prayers are answered,

The *wasilah* that Allāh has commanded men to strive for generally applies to acts of worship or making appeals. This involves seeking Allāh's help through the performance of good deeds as commanded by Him, as well as through supplication and *shafā'a* (intercession) of living prophets and saints. None of these fall under the category of 'swearing to Allāh by His creatures'. The act of seeking the Prophet's intercession on the Resurrection Day also falls within this category. People ask him to intercede with Allāh on their behalf, just as they had previously asked him in this world to pray to Allāh on their behalf for rain and other matters.

'Umar's words, "Whenever we experienced drought before, we sought access to You through our Prophet. Now we seek access to You through the uncle of our Prophet," mean that 'before we used to appeal to You through the Prophet's supplication, intercession, and appeal. And now, we do the same through that of his uncle', and certainly not that 'we swear to You by him', or engage in similar practices that the innovators tend to do after the Prophet's death or during his absence. Some of them say: "I seek Your help by so-and-so's glory." Others say: "We implore Allāh by His prophets and saints," supporting their claim with the fabricated tradition: "If you plead to Allāh for favours, plead with my glory, for my glory is ever extensive." If the Companions practiced seeking intercession (*tawassul*), instead of 'Umar seeking it through 'Abbās, he would have sought it through the deceased Prophet ﷺ. Moreover, they knew that *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ is most superior than seeking it through 'Abbās. It is clear, therefore, that the *tawassul* mentioned by the early Muslims was sought from the *living*, excluding the *dead*. The *living* were sought for their appeal and intercession, while the *dead* cannot be invoked for anything, including *du'ā'* or any other matter.

The same understanding of *tawassul* can be seen in the tradition about the blind man. He asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for him that Allāh may restore his sight. The Prophet ﷺ then taught him a prayer in which he asked him to invoke Allāh to grant intercession through His Prophet ﷺ on his behalf. This implies that the Prophet ﷺ interceded for him with his own prayers. Therefore, the phrase 'through Your

and the kinds of the prayers.

Prophet' in the statement: "I ask You and appeal to You through Your Prophet, Muhammad, the compassionate prophet" means: 'through Your Prophet's invocation and intercession.' The same way 'Umar prayed: "We used to intercede with Your Prophet." Thus, the word 'appeal' and 'intercede' in these two traditions convey the same meaning.

Also, the statement: "O Muhammad, the Messenger of Allāh, I appeal with you unto my Lord for my need, O Allāh, accept his intercession on my behalf," implies that the man invoked Allāh to grant his needs through the Prophet's intercession. Similarly, statements like: "O Muhammad, O Prophet of Allāh," are forms of request made through imagination. In these cases, the intended recipient of the request is not physically present but is imagined to be present.⁸³⁰ The similarity of that occurs in *salāt* when one says: "Peace, blessing and benediction of Allāh be upon you, O you Prophet of Allāh." This form of communication through imagination is a common occurrence.

Given the varying nuances of meaning associated with the concepts of *tawassul* (petitioning) through a man, and *tawajjuh* (appealing) or *su'al* (entreating) through him, it is crucial for individuals to grasp the precise meaning of these terms in order to avoid misconstruing the true intentions of the Companions. While the term *tawassul* at times refers to using a person as a means to seek Allāh's help, such as when requesting for his prayer or intercession due to his status as beloved, dear, and obedient servant of Allāh. At other times it deteriorates into swearing to Allāh by a man and into merely entreating this man—personality, for a given need; not his prayer, nor any other thing, but the man in person.

This second kind mentioned is precisely what the Companions disapproved of and forbade, exhorting men to refrain from it. This specifically applies to the usage of the word *su'al* – in both its first and second usage. Conversely, the story of the three pious men who sought refuge in a cave is a good example of the first type. This popular tradition is reported in *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and other books. When a rock blocked the entrance of the cave, they said (to each other):

⁸³⁰ The author has explained that the man was not interceding with the Prophet ﷺ in his absence, rather; the Prophet ﷺ prayed for him. So, the imagination meant here is not of a dead or someone who is absent.

"إِنَّهُ لَا يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ هَذِهِ الصَّخْرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَدْعُوا اللَّهَ بِصَالِحِ أَعْمَالِكُمْ، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ: اللَّهُمَّ كَانَ لِي أَبَوَانِ شَيْخَانِ كَبِيرَانِ، وَكُنْتُ لَا أَغْبِقُ قَبْلَهُمَا أَهْلًا، وَلَا مَالًا فَتَأَى بِي فِي طَلَبِ شَيْءٍ يَوْمًا، فَلَمْ أُرِحْ عَلَيْهِمَا حَتَّى نَامَا، فَحَلَبْتُ لَهُمَا غَبُوقَهُمَا، فَوَجَدْتُهُمَا نَائِمَيْنِ وَكَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَغْبِقُ قَبْلَهُمَا أَهْلًا أَوْ مَالًا، فَلَبِثْتُ وَالْقَدْحُ عَلَى يَدَيَّ، أَنْتَظِرُ اسْتَيْقَظَهُمَا حَتَّى بَرَاقَ الْفَجْرِ، فَاسْتَيْقَظَا، فَشَرِبَا غَبُوقَهُمَا، اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتُ فَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءً وَجْهَكَ، فَفَرِّجْ عَنَّا مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ الصَّخْرَةِ، فَاَنْفَرَجَتْ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ الْخُرُوجَ"، قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ: اللَّهُمَّ كَانَتْ لِي بِنْتُ عَمِّ، كَانَتْ أَحَبَّ النَّاسِ إِلَيَّ، فَأَرَدْتُهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهَا، فَاْمْتَنَعَتْ مِنِّي حَتَّى أَلَمْتُ بِهَا سَنَةً مِنَ السَّنِينَ، فَجَاءَتْنِي، فَأَعْطَيْتُهَا مِائَةَ دِينَارٍ عَلَى أَنْ تُخَلِّيَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ نَفْسِهَا، فَفَعَلَتْ حَتَّى إِذَا قَدَرْتُ عَلَيْهَا، قَالَتْ: لَا أَجِلُ لَكَ أَنْ تَفُضَّ الْحَاتِمَ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهِ، فَتَحَرَّجْتُ مِنَ الْوُفُوعِ عَلَيْهَا، فَاَنْصَرَفْتُ عَنْهَا وَهِيَ أَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَيَّ، وَتَرَكْتُ الذَّهَبَ الَّذِي أَعْطَيْتُهَا، اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتُ فَعَلْتُ ابْتِغَاءً وَجْهَكَ، فَاْفَرِّجْ عَنَّا مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ، فَاَنْفَرَجَتْ الصَّخْرَةُ غَيْرَ أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ الْخُرُوجَ مِنْهَا"، قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " وَقَالَ الثَّالِثُ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي اسْتَأْجَرْتُ أَجْرَاءَ، فَأَعْطَيْتُهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ غَيْرَ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ تَرَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ وَذَهَبَ، فَثَمَرْتُ أَجْرَهُ حَتَّى كَثُرَتْ مِنْهُ الْأَمْوَالُ، فَجَاءَنِي بَعْدَ حِينٍ فَقَالَ: يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ أَدِّ إِلَيَّ أَجْرِي، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: كُلُّ مَا تَرَى مِنْ أَجْرِكَ مِنَ الْإِبِلِ وَالْبَقَرِ وَالغَنَمِ وَالرَّقِيقِ، فَقَالَ: يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ لَا تَسْتَهْزِئْ بِي، فَقُلْتُ: إِنِّي لَا أَسْتَهْزِئُ بِكَ، فَاْأَخَذَهُ كُلَّهُ، فَاسْتَأْفَهُ، فَلَمْ يَتْرِكْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا، اللَّهُمَّ فَإِنْ كُنْتُ فَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءً وَجْهَكَ، فَاْفَرِّجْ عَنَّا مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ، فَاَنْفَرَجَتْ

الصَّخْرَةَ، فَخَرَجُوا يَمْسُورًا"

Nothing could save you from this rock but to invoke Allāh by giving reference to the righteous deed which you have done (for Allāh's sake only). So, one of them said: "O Allāh! I had old parents and I never provided my family (wife, children, etc.) with milk (supper) until I feed them (my parents). One day, by chance I was delayed, and I came late (at night) while they had slept. I milked the sheep for them and took the milk to them, but I found them sleeping. I disliked to provide my family with the milk before them. I waited for them and the bowl of milk was in my hand and I kept on waiting for them to get up until the day dawned. Then they got up and drank the milk. O Allāh! If I did that for Your Sake only, please relieve us from our critical situation caused by this rock." So, the rock shifted a little but they could not get out. The Prophet ﷺ added: The second man said: "O Allāh! I had a cousin sister who was the dearest of all people to me and I wanted to have sexual relations with her but she refused. Later she had a hard time in a famine year and she came to me and I gave her one-hundred Dinars on the condition that she would not resist my desire, and she agreed. When I was about to fulfill my desire, she said, 'It is illegal for you to outrage my chastity except by legitimate marriage.' So, I thought it a sin to have sexual intercourse with her and left her though she was the dearest of all the people to me, and also I left the gold I had given her. O Allāh! If I did that for Your Sake only, please relieve us from the present calamity."

So, the rock shifted a little more but still they could not get out from there. The Prophet ﷺ added, "Then the third man said: "O Allāh! I employed few laborers and I paid them their wages with the exception of one man who did not take his wages and went away. I invested his wages and I got much property thereby. (Then after some time) he came and said to me, 'O Allāh's slave! Pay me my wages.' I said to him, 'All the camels, cows, sheep and slaves

you see, are yours.’ He said, ‘O Allāh’s slave! Don’t mock at me.’ I said, ‘I am not mocking at you.’ So, he took the entire herd and drove them away and left nothing. O Allāh! If I did that for Your Sake only, please relieve us from the present suffering.” So, that rock shifted completely and they got out walking.⁸³¹

These people beseeched Allāh through the strength of their respective righteous deeds, as a righteous deed is the most effective means by which one pleads to Allāh, beseeches His help, and seeks His assistance. Allāh promises to grant the prayers of those who believe and engage in righteous deeds, and He increases them in His bounties. He says:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ﴾

And your Lord said, “Call upon Me (i.e., worship me), I will respond to you.”⁸³²

So, these individuals beseeched Allāh based on the strength of their worship and the good deeds they performed, which are in accordance with His commandments. Another example is the commonly reported case of al-Fudhail ibn ‘Iyādh, who suffered from dysuria. He then prayed, “With my love for You, I beseech You to give me relief,” and he was healed. Similarly, there is the case of an emigrant woman who lost her child and prayed, “O Allāh! I believe in You and in Your Messenger, and migrated in Your way.” She then prayed for Allāh to revive her son. One can seek Allāh’s help through his good deeds, as Allāh has mentioned in the prayers of the believers:

﴿ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَءَامَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴾ (١١٣) رَبَّنَا وَءَاثِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١١٤﴾

Our Lord, indeed we heard a caller (i.e., the Prophet ﷺ) calling to faith, (saying), “Believe in your Lord,” and we have believed. Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die among the righteous. (*) Our Lord! Grant us what

⁸³¹ Al-Bukhārī (2272, 2333, 3465, 5974, and 2733) and Muslim (2733).

⁸³² Sūrah Ghafir, 40:60.

You promised us through Your messengers and do not disgrace us on the Judgment Day. Indeed, You do not fail in Your promise.⁸³³

So, by obeying to Allāh's commands, refraining from His prohibitions, engaging in His beloved practices, being fervent of His worship, and supplicating to Him using His Names and Attributes, one can beseech and appeal to Allāh with confidence, hoping for His favor and fearing His chastisement. This understanding is derived from the traditions:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْمَنَّانُ، بَدِيعَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ، يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ، يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ

O Allāh, I ask You by virtue of the fact that praise is due to You, there is no deity worthy of worship but You, Who shows favor and beneficence, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, O Lord of Majesty and Splendour, O Living One, O Eternal One,⁸³⁴ and:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ، الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ،
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

By virtue of Your being Allāh, the One, the Self-Sufficient, Who begets not nor was begotten, and there is none co-equal or comparable to Him,⁸³⁵ and so on.

His praiseworthiness confirms His Benevolence, and His Benevolence necessitates praise. Furthermore, His Self-Sufficiency, Who begets not and was not begotten, requires that He is the Only Self-Sufficient—the Self-Sufficient Master Whom all His creatures look up to for their provisions. The Only One Who requires no one's help, but all other beings require His. The One Who they cannot all do without; for which He makes it incumbent upon Himself to provide for them, and perhaps for which reason He allowed them to beseech Him by His Names and Attributes. As for the tradition of Abū Sa'īd that is reported by 'Atiya al-'Aufi adduces the prayer formula:

⁸³³ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:193-194.

⁸³⁴ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (1495), an-Nasā'ī (1300) and Ibn Mājah (3858).

⁸³⁵ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (985), an-Nasā'ī (1301) and Ibn Mājah (3857).

إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ السَّائِلِينَ عَلَيْكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مَمْشَايَ هَذَا

“I beseech You, O Allāh, in the name of those *sa'ilun* (petitioners) who have a right on You, etc.,” is weak.⁸³⁶

However, it can be stated that the right (*haqq*) that Allāh owes to those who petition Him is that He will listen to their petitions, and to His obedient servants. He will reward them. Thus, petitioning and obeying Allāh are the means through which a call is heard and rewarded—true forms of *tawassul*, *tawajjuh*, and *su'al*. And even if the petitioner were to swear, it would imply that he is swearing by Allāh's Attributes, as fulfillment of needs and the answering of calls are among His Attributes. Then, the case becomes like the prophet's statement in the authentic tradition:

أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ، وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ
لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

O Allāh, I seek protection in Your Pleasure from Your anger, and I seek protection in Your Forgiveness from Your punishment. I seek protection in You from You (Your punishment or anger). I cannot count Your praises. You are as You have praised Yourself.⁸³⁷

It is not permissible to seek *isti'ādha* (refuge) in a creature,⁸³⁸ as documented from Ahmad and other scholars. This tradition serves as evidence supporting the assertion that *Kalām* (Speeches of Allāh) are not of His creations.” This understanding can be derived from another tradition reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, among others:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

I seek refuge in the Perfect Words of Allāh from the evil of what He has created.⁸³⁹

⁸³⁶ Mentioned earlier.

⁸³⁷ Muslim (486).

⁸³⁸ They intended that *ar-Ridha* (Pleasures of Allāh) is His Personal Attribute, for the Prophet ﷺ wouldn't have sought refuge in it were it a creature, so also His Speeches.

⁸³⁹ Muslim (2708 and 2709).

These scholars argued that seeking refuge should not be directed towards creatures because Allāh's Speech is considered His Attribute and not a creation. Furthermore, some scholars maintained that *al-Mu'āfāt* (Pardoning) is also one of the Personal Attribute of Allāh,⁸⁴⁰ while the majority of the scholars from *Ahlu as-Sunnah* maintained that it is one of Allāh's (Effectual) Deeds.⁸⁴¹ However, the majority of Muslims from the *Ahlu as-Sunnah* and others sects believe that Allāh's Effectual Deeds exist with Him;⁸⁴² invariably, the Creator is not the same as the creatures. That is the opinion of the majority of the disciples of Ahmad, ash-Shāfi'i, Malik, and Abū Hanīfah, and the opinion of the scholars of hadith, the Suffis sect, and a number of theologians and philosophers.

This fact answers the ambiguity raised by the *Mu'tazilah* and *Jahmiyah* regarding the issue. The proponent of this fact, including *Ahlu Hadīth* (scholars of hadith) and various sects such as *al-Mutakalimah as-Sifātiyah* (the sects that dabbled into the matters of Allāh's Attributes), *al-kullābiyah*, *al-Ashā'irah*, and *al-Karramiyah*, and others, all support the assertion that Allāh's speech is not created. When something is described with an attribute, the nature of that attribute is inherently associated with that particular thing and not with anything else.

Therefore, since Allāh is the One Who endowed knowledge, power, and movements to humanity, He is, thus, the All-Knowing Who taught man knowledge, the Most Powerful Who gave power, and the One Who granted life and movements. It is irrational to claim that He is subject to external forces or power, or that He is not the All-Knowing and the Most Powerful Being with the ability to do all things.

It is argued that if Allāh does not speak directly and instead speaks through His creation, as claimed by some dissenting sects regarding the tree where Allāh spoke to Mūsā; that Allāh spoke through the tree, then the speech would be attributed to the tree itself. Inevitably, the tree would be considered the one making the statement: "I am Allāh."⁸⁴³ Similarly, if Allāh grant speech to any of His creatures, such as the testimony of the skin and hands of the unbelievers (on the Day of Resurrection to testify

⁸⁴⁰ The author meant here *as-Sifah adh-Dhatiyyah*.

⁸⁴¹ He meant here *as-Sifah al-Fi'liyyah*.

⁸⁴² These deeds that exist with Allāh are called *as-Sifah adh-Dhatiyyah al-Fi'liyyah*.

⁸⁴³ Sūrah Ṭā' Hā', 20:14.

against them), the chanting of pebbles, the speech of the mountain, or any other speech made by His creatures, it would be considered His speech, just like the Qur'an, Taurāt (Torah), and Injil (Gospel), as claimed by the author of the book *al-Fuṣūṣ* and similar doctrines such as *al-Jahmiyyah*, *al-Ḥulūliyyah*, and *al-Itihadiyyah* doctrines. In other words, the *Mu'tazilah* holds the belief that Allāh's (effectual) deeds: "Allāh does *ʿAdl* (Justice) and *Ihsān* (Goodness), for instance, but through the justice and goodness of His creatures among one another; He does no justice or good by Himself." This (erroneous) belief has led to confusion among another group of people who believe that although Allāh created all thing, He does not have effectual deeds and instead relies on external forces to carry out His actions.⁸⁴⁴

However, the correct belief is held by those who reject these ideas and assert that: 'Allāh possesses Personal Attributes and Deeds that exist within Him, but the effects of His deeds are separate from Him,' emphasizing the clear distinction between Allāh, the Creator, and the creatures. The aim here is to explain that the Prophet ﷺ sought refuge in Allāh from His punishment through His Forgiveness and Pardon, even though seeking refuge is not sought through His creatures. Similarly, beseeching Allāh by His Power, through which He answers and grants, is permissible. This does not contradict the principle that states: "Allāh is not beseeched except by Himself, ad His Personal Attributes are of Him. This issue is similar to the matter of swearing, where it is not permissible to swear except by Allāh," as established in the authentic traditions:

مَنْ كَانَ حَالِفًا، فَلْيَحْلِفْ بِاللَّهِ أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

Whoever has to take an oath should swear by Allāh or remain silent.⁸⁴⁵

In at-Tirmidhī's version, he has it as:

مَنْ حَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ

Whosoever swears by *ghayr* (other than) Allāh has indeed associated partner with Allāh.⁸⁴⁶ He graded it sound.

⁸⁴⁴ This belief is also erroneous, not better than that of the *Mu'tazilah* themselves.

⁸⁴⁵ Al-Bukhārī (2679, 3836 and 6646) and Muslim (1646).

⁸⁴⁶ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (3251) and at-Tirmidhī (1535).

Despite this, it has been reported that the Prophet ﷺ swore by Allāh's Might and His Existence, etc., which are not considered “*ghayr* (other than) Allāh.” The phrase “*ghayr* (other than)” is used to indicate something that is distinctly separate from something else. Therefore, when describing Allāh, the *Salaf* and the *imāms* did not use the phrase ‘*ghayr* (other than)’ for the Qur’an and other Attributes of Allāh, However, this does not mean that the usage of the term is completely nullified, as it can have ambiguous meanings. It can be used to describe something that is distinctly separate from the whole or part of something, or it can be used to describe something that is connected to or a part of something. For this, intellectuals differ about the usage of the phrase ‘*ghayr* (other than)’, and this difference has led to many ambiguities concerning Allāh's Attributes. These ambiguities can only be resolved by understanding the principle of word formation and connotation, as discussed in more detailed explanations.

Consequently, we can draw a clear difference between the two statements: “*Sifātullah* (Allāh's Attribute) is not His *Dhāt* (Essence [Person])” and “*Sifātullah* is *not* Allāh.” While the first is correct, the second is not. Because “Allāh is His *Dhāt* and *Sifāt* (Attributes),” while conversely, “His *Dhāt* does not consist His *Sifāt*.”

For that, it is not said that Allāh's Attributes are His added qualities, but it may be said that His Attributes are additional qualities to His Essence (Personal Self) –*Dhāt*, this implies that attributes are additional qualities to what is inevitably established as His *Dhāt*, for Allāh is an Entity Whose *Dhāt* definitely has Attributes. Allāh is not an Entity with only a *Dhāt* without Attributes; such does not even exist. That is the reason why Ahmad, in a debate with the *Jahmiyyah*, said: ‘We do not say: Allāh and His Knowledge, or Allāh and His Power, or Allāh and His Light, but we say: ‘Allāh's Knowledge or Allāh by His knowledge, Allāh's Power or Allāh by His Power, and Allāh's Light, He is the Only One God.

We have discussed this issue exhaustively elsewhere.

Regarding the statement, “I implore you by Allāh, and by the womb –ties of kinship,” and the recitation ‘*al-Arhāmi*’ with the sign ‘*al-Kasra*’ in the verse: “And fear Allāh through Whom you demand your mutual right, and ‘*al-Arhāmi*’”—the wombs (i.e. fear the ties of kinship

with which you also demand your mutual rights),”⁸⁴⁷ it is important to understand that these expressions are only a matter of cause and effect. Imploring by the womb demands that people keep their ties of kinship. So, if someone solicits a relative of his by their womb, it means that he is seeking for that which will bring about cogent relationship between them. Therefore, neither is beseeching someone by the womb a way of swearing by the womb, nor is of making an appeal through a non-permissible means. It is like someone who beseeches Allāh by the prayer of a (*living*) prophet, or his obedience to him, or his act of seeking Allāh Benediction for him—the Prophet ﷺ.

Regarding this is what is reported about Abdullah ibn Ja’far. He said, “If I asked ‘Alī ﷺ for anything and he refused to give me, and I said to him, ‘I beg by the right of Ja’far’, he used to give me’,” or a report of such. Some people believe that this practice amounts to swearing by Ja’far, while others think it is similar to the statement: “I beseech You by the rights of Your prophets” or something similar. However, that is not true. In this case, Ja’far, who was Abdullah’s father, was a brother to ‘Alī, so Ja’far had a right of kinship over ‘Alī, which extended to Abdullah, as we find in the tradition:

إِنَّ مِنْ أَبْرِّ الْبِرِّ صَلَاةَ الرَّجُلِ أَهْلَ وَدَّ أَبِيهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يُوَلِّيَ

Indeed, the strongest form of dutifulness is that a man maintains good relations with the people his father loved,⁸⁴⁸ and the other:

"(هَلْ بَقِيَ) مِنْ بَرِّ أَبِي شَيْءٍ أَبْرُهُمَا بِهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِمَا؟" قَالَ: "نَعَمْ الصَّلَاةُ عَلَيْهِمَا، وَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمَا، وَإِنْفَاذُ عَهْدِهِمَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمَا، وَصَلَاةُ الرَّحِمِ الَّتِي لَا تُوصَلُ إِلَّا بِهِمَا، وَإِكْرَامُ صَدِيقِهِمَا"

Of a man who came to ask for the kindness left for him to do for his parents after their death? He replied: Yes, you can invoke blessings on them, seek forgiveness for them, fulfill their promises after their death, join ties of relationship which are dependent on

⁸⁴⁷ Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4:1.

⁸⁴⁸ Muslim (2552).

them, and honor their friends.⁸⁴⁹

However, if that were the case, it would have been better and much preferable for Abdullah to ask ‘Alī by the right of the Prophet ﷺ or ‘Ibrāhīm, the Khalīl, or someone of their stature. ‘Alī, due to his love and respect for the Prophet ﷺ, would have preferred to be asked by him ﷺ, and it would have been a faster way for Abdullah to achieve his goals. It is important to note that there is a difference between seeking assistance through a prophet and appealing to Allāh through permissible means. If such means were to contain any aspect of what is forbidden, it would also be considered forbidden. Swearing by someone or anything may be due to the honor and respect one holds for that individual or thing they are swearing by, as evident in this tradition:

إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَأَبْرَهُ

Verily, there are among the slaves of Allāh who, if they swear by Allāh, Allāh consents to their oath.⁸⁵⁰

And it may be because of the honor and dignity one has for that which he solicited. The first one is categorized as swearing for either exhortation or prevention, while the second is of a solicitation made to Allāh through someone one loves, honors, or dignifies. Moreover, if a solicitation is made by a means that warrants the request being granted, then it is a good appeal. For example, asking by one’s tie of kinship, appealing by one’s good deeds, or soliciting by the prayer or intercession of a (*living*) prophet or saint -not by their positions, honors, or rights with Allāh. This is because using these personalities as a means one of solicitation implies that there is a factor that connects one with them, such as love for or obedience to, them, for which he may be rewarded, or their personal prayers for him. In summary, when seeking assistance from prophets and saints, there are two ways to do so:

One: By demonstrating one’s dutifulness and obedience to them, and

Two: By seeking their personal prayers and intercession on one’s behalf.

⁸⁴⁹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (5142) and Ibn Mājah (3664).

⁸⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī (2703, 2806, 2500, and 4611) and Muslim (1675).

Seeking Intercession Through Prophets and the Righteous: By Obedience, Following, Supplication, and Intercession

THEREFORE, SIMPLY ASKING help from prophets and saints without being obedient to them or without their prayers or intercession holds no benefit. It is important to remember that while prophets and saints hold a higher status in the sight of Allāh, (their assistance is only effective when sought through these appropriate means).

This issue has been discussed extensively elsewhere. The purpose of this discussion is to understand the attitude of the *Salaf* and the *imāms* on the question of soliciting Allāh through His creatures. It is clear that it is not permissible to beseech Him through a prophet or saint, except by seeking their personal prayers or intercessions. Therefore, it follows that the deceased cannot be petitioned, whether for mediation between oneself and Allāh for direct fulfillment of one's needs. Despite the Prophet ﷺ emphatic prohibition and condemnation of taking graves as places of worship and seeking intercession through them, some people continue to engage in these practices. Such practices are considered either *shirk* or a means that leads to *shirk*. The Prophet prohibited performing *salāt* at graves, even though the *salāt* one performs is for the sake of Allāh, and he commanded that none should be sought for needs except Allāh alone. The Prophet ﷺ, took measures to prevent his nation from falling into these practices, yet, they persist to this day. Much had been said about the rulings of offering *salāt* at graves, or turning graves into places of worship.

It is indeed clear that the *Salaf* did not engage in the practice, except for what was mentioned regarding Ibn Umar. He would visit the places the Prophet ﷺ had walked or prayed. There is a reported incident where the Prophet ﷺ performed ablution in a certain place and poured the remaining water at the base of a tree, and Ibn Umar was known to do the same. However, it is important to note that Ibn

Umar visits to those places were solely for the purpose of imitating the Prophet ﷺ. He did not visit those places with the intention of offering *salāt* or making *du'ā'*. Our discussion here encompasses the following three issues:

1. People find comfort in doing the outward form of what the Prophet ﷺ did without understanding his underlying intent or the reasons behind his actions. There is a well-known dispute regarding this matter. Ibn 'Umar and a group of people held one view, while others disagreed with them. Notably, the practices of the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* were contrary to those of Ibn 'Umar ﷺ. However, this is not our main concern. The case of a man who strives to offer a prayer at the time and place where the Prophet ﷺ prayed during his journey falls into this category.⁸⁵¹
2. Attempting to offer prayer in a specific area at a time other than the designated prayer times, essentially creating a separate prayer and *du'ā'* for the sake of that area itself. There are no reports of Ibn 'Umar or anyone else engaging in such practices, despite some people's claim to the contrary. It is a well-established fact that Ibn 'Umar's own father prohibited such conduct, and the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*, as evidenced by uninterrupted accounts, did not engage in such practices either. Therefore, it is impossible for an action of Ibn 'Umar, if he indeed performed it, to be used as an argument against his own father, the *Muhājirūn*, and the *Anṣār*.⁸⁵²
3. Sometimes, the location may not be on one's direct path, requiring a detour or a journey, or to undertake a long or short journey to it, like him who in order to offer prayer and *du'ā'* goes to Hira', or to the cavern of Thaur, or to Mount Tur, where Moses was spoken to by Allāh, or to some mountains or other places that are said to contain stations of prophets and saints, or to a shrine built over the relic of a certain prophet, such as his footprint or such as what is found on Mount Qasiyun, Mount Fath, Mount

⁸⁵¹ Doing what the Prophet ﷺ did exactly as he did it, but without knowing the reason for which he did it.

⁸⁵² Doing that which the Prophet ﷺ did, but not exactly as he did it, rather; for other reasons.

Tur Sina in Palestine and similar locations. Those familiar with the life of the Prophet and his Companions are aware that they never made pilgrimages to these places.⁸⁵³ Before the advent of Islam, the Quraysh used to periodically worship at Mount Hira', the highest mountain in Makkah, as established by Abū Talib in one of his poems.⁸⁵⁴

And, as the tradition reported by 'Ā'ishah indicates, the Prophet had continued to retire to Hira' cave, she said:

أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِيََ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرَّؤْيَا الصَّادِقَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، فَكَانَ يَأْتِي حِرَاءَ فَيَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ، وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ، اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى حَدِيحَةِ فَتَزَوَّدُهُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى فَجِئَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءِ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فِيهِ، فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ، فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجُهْدُ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ، فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجُهْدُ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ، فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّلَاثَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجُهْدُ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: {اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ} - حَتَّى بَلَغَ - {عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ}" فَرَجَعَ بِهَا تَرْجُفُ بَوَادِرِهِ.

The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allāh's Messenger was in the form of good (true) dreams in his sleep. He never had a dream but that it came true like bright day light. He used to go in seclusion (the cave of) Hira where he used to worship (Allāh Alone) continuously for many (days) nights. He used to take with him the journey food for that (stay) and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food like-wise again for another period

⁸⁵³ Doing a deed that does not have connection with the practice of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁸⁵⁴ The author then mentioned a stripe of poem to establish that the Prophet ﷺ used to visit Mount Hira'.

to stay, till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him in it and asked him to read. The Prophet ﷺ replied, “I do not know how to read.” (The Prophet ﷺ added), “The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read, and I replied, ‘I do not know how to read,’ whereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and asked me again to read, but again I replied, “I do not know how to read (or, what shall I read?).” Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me and then released me and said, “Read: In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from a clot. Read and Your Lord is Most Generous...up to...that which he knew not.” Then Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ returned with the Revelation, his neck muscles twitching with terror,⁸⁵⁵ till the end of the narration.

He had continued to retreat to the cave for devotion and meditation until he was surprised by the Revelation. However, it’s important to note that this devotion and meditation at Hira’ cave occurred before he received his prophethood and apostleship. Once Allāh honored him with prophethood and apostleship, and the people were obligated to believe in him, be obedient to him, and follow him, both he and the early Muhājirūn who believed in him remained in Makkah for approximately decade. However, during this period, neither he nor any of his Companions ventured to visit Hira’. Later, he migrated to Madinah and had the opportunity to perform the *‘Umra*) four times. The first was known as *‘Umra al-Hudhaibiyah*, performed when the polytheists denied him entry into Makkah. *Hudhaibiyah* is located on the right axis along *Tan’im* route, near a mosque called ‘Ā’ishah’s mosque, with *Tan’im* Mountain on its right. The second one, known as *‘Umra al-Qadiyah* was performed the following year, during which he and a group of his Companions entered Makkah and stayed for three days. The third *‘Umra* was performed after the conquest of Makkah, while returning from the Battle of Hunain

⁸⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī (3, 4953, 6982).

against the Hawazin. He assumed this *‘umra* from Ja’ranah. The last *‘umra* was performed during the Farewell Pilgrimage, accompanied by a large number of Muslims. However, during none of these occasions did he or any of his Companions visit the cave of Hira’ or any other location near Makkah. Throughout these journeys, worship was only performed at specific locations, such as the Ka’bah, the area between Safa and Marwa, Mina, Muzdalifah, and ‘Arafah. There was an exception when the Prophet ﷺ combined the Dhuhr and ‘Asr prayers at ‘Urnah, and on the Day of ‘Arafah, a tent was set up for him near ‘Arafah at Namrah. After the Prophet, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and other early Muslims also did not go to Hira’ or similar places for *du‘ā* and prayer. They did not visit the cave mentioned in the verse referred to by Allāh :

﴿ثَانِيًا أَتَيْنَا إِدْهُمَا فِي الْغَارِ﴾

The second of the two, when they were in the cave.⁸⁵⁶

This cave is located on Thaur Mountain, to the right of Makkah. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not instruct his nation to make journey to it, offer prayers, and make *du‘ā* there. He did not establish any mosque in Makkah; all the mosques currently visited there were constructed later, such as Mawlud Mosque and others. He also did not prescribe visitation to other specific locations, such as his birthplace or the site of *Bai’at al-‘Aqabah*, behind Mina, where a mosque is now located. It is evident that if these practices were lawful, commendable and deserving of divine rewards, the Prophet ﷺ, who possessed the most knowledge in such matters and was the most eager to engage in acts of worship, would have surely taught them to his Companions. However, since the Companions did not engage in these practices, it is clear that these practices are later innovations that were not considered acts of worship or means of attaining divine closeness and obedience.

If devotional acts cannot be performed at places associated with the life of the Prophet ﷺ, such as cave Hira’ where he received his prophethood and the first revelation, despite the pre-Islamic practice

⁸⁵⁶ Sūrah At-Tawbah, 9:40.

of the Quraysh returning to it periodically for worship, and the cave that was mentioned in the Qur'an, where Allāh caused tranquility to descend upon His Prophet ﷺ, it is unlikely that such acts would be permitted at places associated with other prophets, even if the association is authentic and verifiable. Certainly, they would not be permitted when the association is false and lacks evidence.

As agreed upon by scholars, the Prophet ﷺ only touched the two columns on the Yemenite side during his pilgrimage. He did not touch the two Syrian columns or any other on the sides of the Ka'bah. He also did not touch 'Ibrāhīm's Station or any other *mash'ar* (landmark). As for the kissing, he kissed only the Black Stone. However, there is a difference of opinion regarding the Yemenite column. Some opinions suggest kissing it, touching it and then kissing one's hand, or touching it alone. These three differing opinions are reported in Hanbalite school and others. However, the correct opinion, based on authentic traditions, is to touch it only without kissing it or kissing one's hand afterwards, although scholars have differing views on this matter.

On the other hand, according to the consensus of the four authorities and other *imāms*, it is prohibited to kiss the two Syrian columns or any others on the sides of the House. The Prophet ﷺ only touched the two Yemenite columns, and this is the opinion of the *Salaf*. In support of this, we have a tradition on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās:

"عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّهُ طَافَ مَعَ مُعَاوِيَةَ بِالْبَيْتِ، فَجَعَلَ مُعَاوِيَةُ يَسْتَلِمُ الْأَرْكَانَ كُلَّهَا، فَقَالَ لَهُ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: "لِمَ تَسْتَلِمُ هَذَيْنِ الرُّكْنَيْنِ؟ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَسْتَلِمُهُمَا"، فَقَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ: لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ مِّنَ الْبَيْتِ مَهْجُورًا، فَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: {لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ}، فَقَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ: صَدَقْتَ."

That he circumambulated the House together with Mu'awiyah, and Mu'awiyah was touching all the columns of the House. Ibn Abbās said to him, "Why do you touch these two columns (the two Syrian columns)?

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used not to touch them.” Mu’awiyah responded, “There is no part of the House that is untouchable,” Ibn ‘Abbās remarked, “Indeed, in the Messenger of Allāh you have a good example to follow,”⁸⁵⁷ Mu’awiyah then said, “You are right.”⁸⁵⁸

It is also agreed upon, as established in the Sunnah, that one does not touch or kiss ‘Ibrāhīm’s Station that is mentioned in the verse:

﴿وَأَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى﴾

And take, (O believers), from the standing place of ‘Ibrāhīm (Abraham) a place of prayer.⁸⁵⁹

If it is established by an uninterrupted Sunnah and unanimous agreement of the *imāms* that ‘Ibrāhīm’s stations should not be touched or kissed, then the same principle should apply to the stations of all other prophets. Additionally, the *Salaf*, did not touch or kiss the places in Madinah where the Prophet ﷺ used to offer prayers, nor did they engage in such practices at various places in Makkah where he prayed. If these locations where the Prophet ﷺ set foot and prayed cannot be lawfully prescribed for touching and kissing, then how can it be justified for places where others may have prayed or slept? Furthermore, it is not permissible to touch and kiss the place where he stood in prayer, and even more so, the sandals he wore for walking, if the reports regarding them are true. This is even more applicable to items whose attribution to the Prophet ﷺ is doubtful, such as all the numerous stones on which the forgers create footprints and falsely attribute them to the Prophet ﷺ, deceiving the ignorant. Therefore, if such conduct is not permitted regarding the station of the Prophet and certainly not for the station of ‘Ibrāhīm, which we have been commanded to adopt as a place for prayer, then it cannot be justified for a place like the spot on the Rock in Jerusalem, which has been falsely ascribed to through profound forgery and scandal.

⁸⁵⁷ Sūrah al-‘Aḥzāb, 33:21.

⁸⁵⁸ Sound, at-Tirmidhī (858) and Ahmad (1877).

⁸⁵⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:125.

An objection may arise: If we are commanded to take 'Ibrāhīm's station as a place of prayer, it is possible to apply the same logic to other stations as well. However, this objection can be refuted by stating that the command specifically applies to 'Ibrāhīm's station in Makkah, regardless whether it refers to the spot near Ka'bah where 'Ibrāhīm stood or the landmarks of 'Arafah, Muzdalifah and Minah. Muslim authorities do not dispute that certain devotional acts are specifically associated with particular landmarks related to pilgrimage, to the exclusion of other locations. For example, circumambulation is particularly associated with the House. What is specific to these locations cannot be extended to include other locations through analogy. Similarly, what is not prescribed in these specific locations cannot be prescribed elsewhere.

Therefore, we can infer that since touching and kissing are not prescribed in these specific locations, they should be considered unlawful elsewhere as well. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that what is prescribed in these specific locations must also be prescribed elsewhere. And thus, scholars have reached a consensus that Islamic law does not oblige one to visit the structure located on Mount 'Arafah, known as Dome of Adam, for prayer and *du'ā'*. Additionally, they do not prescribe climbing the mountain called Mount Rahma at 'Arafah, also known as 'Ilāl'. Instead, the Sunnah is to remain in 'Arafah, whether near the rocks where the Prophet ﷺ himself stayed or anywhere else within the entire area of 'Arafah, after his words:

عَرَفَةُ كُلُّهَا مَوْقِفٌ، وَارْتَفِعُوا عَنِ بَطْنِ عُرْنَةَ

The whole of 'Arafah is a place for *mawqif* (tarrying),⁸⁶⁰ except the middle of 'Urnah valley.⁸⁶¹

⁸⁶⁰ Muslim (149), only this part of the tradition.

⁸⁶¹ Sound, Ibn Mājah (3012), Muwatta' (1338), Mūsānaf Ibn Abī Shaibah (13876), *Mu'jam al-Awsat* (9469), *Mu'jam al-Kubrāh* (11005, 11231, and 11408), *Sunan al-Kubrāh* of al-Bayhaqi (9459), and others. Scholars of hadith differ in the rating of this second part of this tradition; however, what is most likely to be correct is its soundness. Allāh knows best.

There occurs also difference as to the ruling concerning tarrying at this portion at 'Arafah owing to the difference in the said rating.

They also agree on the unlawfulness of visiting mosques at 'Arafah, such as the mosque built at *Jamarāt*, the one built close to Khaif known as '*Gār al-Mursalāt*' (where the chapter of Mursalāt was revealed), or the one built over a mountain at 'Arafah called Kabsh Mosque, and so on. The Prophet ﷺ never prescribed visiting any of these places for prayers, *du'ā'*, or any other purpose. Regarding kissing and rubbing on these places, the prohibition is even more evident. It is widely known among Islamic scholars that such practices are not in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Mosques Prescribed for Travelers in Islam

SOME AUTHORS, WHEN writing about the ceremonies and rites of pilgrimage, mention the commendability of visiting mosques in Makkah and its surroundings. In my youth, before my first pilgrimage, I also commended this practice in a treatise I wrote on the rites of pilgrimage for a certain *shaykh*. I compiled it based on the statements of scholars on the subject. However, later I realized that all such practices were mere innovations without having any basis in the *Shari'a*. The early Muslims among the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* did not engage in such practices, and the truly learned and guided *imāms* prohibited them.

We are commanded by Islamic law to visit the Sacred Mosque in Makkah for prayer, *du'ā'*, circumambulation and other devotional acts, and we are not encouraged to visit any other place in Makkah for its own sake. It is not in our best interest to build a mosque here which we may compete for to observe any of the devotional stipulations. It is more meritorious and follows the Sunnah for a person to perform prayer, *du'ā'*, and other acts of worship in the Sacred Mosque instead of those other mosques. Visiting any other mosques in Makkah for the purpose of performing religious services, believing them to have superiority, is an outright innovation and, therefore, unauthorized. The basis for this is that the mosques to which journeying is prescribed are three, as established in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

لَا تُشَدُّ الرَّحَالَ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: مَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى،
وَمَسْجِدِي هَذَا

“No one should prepare a mount (travel) to visit any mosque except three: the Sacred Mosque, al-Aqsa (Jerusalem Mosque), and this mosque of mine.”⁸⁶² (This is an authentic tradition; it is reported in several other versions and unanimously agreed upon by people of knowledge). Thus, it is a righteous deed to journey to these three mosques for prayer, *du‘ā*, *dhikr*, recitation and pious retreat. Scholars agree that journeying to other mosques is not provided for in the Law, even to Quba’ Mosque, it is only commendable to visit it from a nearer place, for instance Madinah, but unlawful to embark upon a journey to it. In *Ṣaḥīḥayn* Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was reported to have said:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْتِي مَسْجِدَ قُبَاءٍ كُلَّ سَبْتٍ، مَا شِئًا
وَرَاكِبًا. وَكَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا "يَفْعَلُهُ"

The Prophet ﷺ used to go to the Mosque of Quba every Saturday (sometimes) walking and (sometimes) riding.” ‘Abdullah (Ibn ‘Umar) used to do the same.”⁸⁶³

Another version has the addition:

فَيُصَلِّي فِيهِ رَكْعَتَيْنِ

“And he would offer two *Rak‘a* prayer there.”⁸⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī reported it without giving its chain of transmitters.

This is because Allāh forbade His Prophet ﷺ to stand in the Opposition Mosque. He says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا
لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ

⁸⁶² Al-Bukhārī (1189, 1197, 1864, 1990) and Muslim (1397).

⁸⁶³ Al-Bukhārī (1193) and Muslim (1399).

⁸⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī (1194) and Muslim (1399).

لَكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ وَأَقْبَقُ
 أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ حُجَّةً لِمَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
 أُمَّمٍ أُسِّسَ بُيُوتُهُ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَلْفِ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أُمَّمٍ أُسِّسَ بُيُوتُهُ عَلَى شِفَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ لَا يَزَالُ بُنِنَهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيْبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ
 قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

And (there are) those (hypocrites) who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allāh and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, “We intended only the best.” And Allāh testifies that indeed they are liars. (*) Do not (O Prophet) ever pray in it. Certainly, a mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy of your prayers. In it are men who love to be purified. And Allāh loves those who purify themselves.⁸⁶⁵

The Opposition Mosque had been erected for the lewd Abū ‘Amir, who was known as Abū ‘Amir the monk. In pre-Islamic days, he had converted to Christian, and the polytheists held him in high regard. However, with the arrival of Islam, he became envious and resisted the Prophet ﷺ. Eventually, he fled to join the unbelievers. A group of hypocrites took it upon themselves to build this mosque, specifically intended for Abū ‘Amir. The story is quite well known that they did not construct this mosque in accordance with the command of Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, but rather for ulterior motive. This prohibition encompasses all structures, including shrines, that are constructed with the intention of rivaling the mosques of Muslims for unprescribed acts of worship, especially if they are conducive to rebellionism, unbelief, and discord among the believers and if they are used as an ambush by the hypocrites, the innovators and opponents of Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, all of which reinforce their resemblance to the Opposition Mosque. So, in obedience to the command of Allāh stated in the verse: “Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid

⁸⁶⁵ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:107-110.

from the first day on Allāh-fearing is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray)”, the Prophet ﷺ used to remain in his mosque on Fridays and would visit the Quba’ Mosque on Saturday. The Quba’ Mosque was established upon Allāh-fearing, and yet, the Prophet’s own mosque surpassed even the Quba’ Mosque in terms of being established upon Allāh-fearing principles. This has been established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, where the Prophet ﷺ was asked: “Which is the mosque that was erected upon Allāh-fearing principles?” to which he replied: “This mosque of mine.”⁸⁶⁶ Both mosques were established upon Allāh-fearing, but the Prophet’s mosque stands out as the most perfect embodiment of this characteristic. In the *Sunan*, on the authority of Usayd ibn Dhuhayr al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه the Prophet ﷺ was also reported to have said:

الصَّلَاةُ فِي مَسْجِدِ قُبَاءٍ كَعُمْرَةٍ

One *salāt* (prayer) in the Quba’ Mosque is like ‘*Umra* (the reward).⁸⁶⁷

And on the authority of Sahl ibn Hunaif رضي الله عنه the Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

مَنْ تَطَهَّرَ فِي بَيْتِهِ ثُمَّ أَتَى مَسْجِدَ قُبَاءٍ، فَصَلَّى فِيهِ صَلَاةً، كَانَ لَهُ
كَأَجْرِ عُمْرَةٍ

Whoever having done his cleanliness in his house, then goes to Quba’ Mosque and prays, he has the reward of ‘*Umar*.⁸⁶⁸ (Ahmad, an-Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah reported it).

According to some scholars, the statement in the tradition that says: “Whoever having done his cleanliness in his house, then goes to Quba’ Mosque,” indicates that one should not undertake a special journey specifically to visit it. Instead, the permissibility of visiting Quba’ Mosque is limited to those who can perform ablution in their house and conveniently come to it, just like visiting any local mosque, unlike the three mosques (Masjid al-Ḥarām in Makkah, Masjid al-Nabawi in Madinah, and Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem).

⁸⁶⁶ Muslim (1398), however the text cited is close to the report of at-Tirmidhī (3099) and an-Nasā’ī (697).

⁸⁶⁷ Authentic, at-Tirmidhī (324, an-Nasā’ī (699), and Ibn Mājah (1411).

⁸⁶⁸ Authentic, Ibn Mājah (1412).

Muslim authorities agree upon the commendability of visiting the three mosques for prayer but hold different opinions regarding the admissibility of vows to perform devotional acts there. There are two opinions on this matter:

First: it is not compulsory on someone who vows to visit any of the three mosques, except the Sacred Mosque. This opinion is attributed to ash-Shāfi'ī and is the only opinion of Abū Hanīfah. They base this opinion on the notion that fulfilling a vow is not obligatory unless the act vowed upon is considered compulsory according to the *Shari'a*.⁸⁶⁹

Second: this opinion is held by Malik and Ahmad and they state that it is compulsory to fulfill a vow made to visit any of the three mosques. However, if one vows to visit a mosque that is less virtuous among the three, it suffices to visit a superior one. For instance, if someone vows to visit both the Prophet and al-Aqsa's Mosques, it would be sufficient for him to visit the Sacred Mosque. Similarly, if someone vows to visit al-Aqsa Mosque, he can fulfill his vow by visiting either the Sacred and the Prophet's Mosques. This opinion is based on the on tradition established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ نَذَرَ أَنْ يُطِيعَ اللَّهَ فَلْيُطِعهُ، وَمَنْ نَذَرَ أَنْ يَعْصِيَهُ فَلَا يَعْصِهِ

If anyone vows to obey Allāh let him obey Him, but if anyone vows to disobey Him not disobey Him.⁸⁷⁰

We do not aim to elaborate on this issue at the moment. Rather, we intend to emphasize that according to the stipulations of *Shari'a*, it is absolutely not permissible to undertake a special journey to any mosque other than the three specified mosques. Therefore, if someone vows to visit any mosque other than the three, they are not obligated to fulfill their vow. However, there is a dispute regarding whether the

⁸⁶⁹ They meant by this principle—Allāh knows best—that, the *Shari'a* does not make visiting both the Prophet and Al-Aqsa's Mosques compulsory for any act of worship, unlike the Sacred Mosque in Makkah where ones visits for *hajj*; a pillar of Islam. However, the tradition that was mentioned in support of the second opinion overrules this principle, because, though visiting both mosques are not compulsory ordinarily, by virtue of the vow made by the person it becomes compulsory on himself to visit them. Therefore, anyone who makes a vow must fulfill it whether on a compulsory or voluntary act, except a vow made on a sinful act. Allāh knows best.

⁸⁷⁰ Al-Bukhārī (6696 and 6700).

person should make expiation for the unfulfilled vow. There are two known opinions on this matter.

In Madinah, it is lawful to visit only the Quba' Mosque. All other mosques in Madinah should be treated like general mosques. This means that visiting them is not specifically sanctioned by the Prophet. That is why the scholars of Madinah are not inclined to make a special effort to visit any mosque other than the Quba' Mosque. As for this tradition that is reported in the *Musnad* on the authority of Jābir ibn Abdullah that he said:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَعَا فِي مَسْجِدِ الْفَتْحِ ثَلَاثًا: يَوْمَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ،
 وَيَوْمَ الثَّلَاثَاءِ، وَيَوْمَ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ، فَاسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ بَيْنَ الصَّلَاتَيْنِ،
 فَعَرَفَ الْبِشْرُ فِي وَجْهِهِ " قَالَ جَابِرٌ: " فَلَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِي أَمْرٌ مِثْلَ عَمِّي، إِلَّا
 تَوَخَّيْتُ تِلْكَ السَّاعَةَ، فَأَدْعُو فِيهَا فَأَعْرِفُ الْإِجَابَةَ "

The Prophet ﷺ invoked Allāh for three consecutive days at al-Fath Mosque, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, on Wednesday, in-between the two prayers (Dhur and 'Asr), his invocation was granted, and so, joy was noticed on his face. Jābir remarked: "I thereafter do not encounter any great matter of concern except that I strive to invoke Allāh at this time, and I will be sure that my prayer is granted."⁸⁷¹

The authenticity of the tradition in question is disputed due to the presence of Kathīr ibn Zayd in its chain of transmission. Scholars of hadith have missed opinions about his reliability, with Ibn Ma'in sometimes attesting to his reliability and at other times questioning it. Based on this tradition, some individuals, both among our associates and others, used to pray at the mentioned time, following the practice of Jābir. However, it should be noted that there is no established evidence that Jābir used to specifically visit the place, rather, he tried to pray at that time. Considering that none of the mosques in Madinah, where the Prophet ﷺ prayed and were erected by his orders, have anything justifies a special visit, except for the Quba' Mosque which allows for a specific journey, it raises questions about the permissibility of special visits to mosques elsewhere.

⁸⁷¹ Weak, Ahmad (14563).

XXIII

About Al-Aqsa Mosque

CONCERNING AL-AQSA MOSQUE: it is one of the three mosques towards which one may journey. During ‘Umar’s caliphate, when Bait al-Maqdis was conquered by Muslims and ‘Umar came to the Muslims, the Christians having surrendered the city to him. He entered Bait al-Maqdis and found a great pile of garbage on the Sakhira—Rock, which the Christians had dumped there to spite the Jews who venerate the Rock and pray in its direction. ‘Umar picked some of it in his garments, and the Muslims followed his example.

It is said that the Nabateans were forced to clear the dunghill entirely. Subsequently, ‘Umar asked Ka’b al-Ahbar: “Where do you think I should build the place of prayer for Muslims?” Ka’b replied, “Build it behind the Rock.” ‘Umar exclaimed, “O son of the Jew, has Jewishness still prevailed in you?” ‘Umar continued, “I shall rather build it in the Sanctuary’s forepart; for the foreparts of sanctuaries belong to us.” And he proceeded to build it in the southern part of the Sanctuary. This is the part that commoners still refer to as al-Aqsa Mosque, although

al-Aqsa refers to the whole compound. Neither this mosque nor any other is referred to as *ḥarām* –Sacred, indeed the term *ḥarām* refers specifically to the sanctuaries of Makkah and Madinah. There is some dispute about the Wadi Wajj of Taif. ‘Umar built a prayer place facing southern direction, and it is said that under it is a staircase that leads to a point in front of al-Aqsa. He built the prayer place on a platform. Neither the People of the Book had used to pray, nor ‘Umar and other Muslims prayed near the Rock, nor did they touch or kiss it. ‘Umar rather prayed at David’s *Mihrab* (Arch) outside.

It is a confirmed fact that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, whenever he visited Bait al-Maqdis, he would enter and pray there, but would neither visit the Rock nor get close to it nor come near to its vicinity. The same conduct is reported of other respected *Salaf*, like ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and Sufyan ath-Thauri. This is the case because no section of the sanctuary may claim a privileged position, except for the place of prayer ‘Umar had built for Muslims. The Sacred Mosque and the Madinah Mosque are by consensus more privileged than the Aqsa Mosque, for one of them, the Sacred Mosque at Madinah, it is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection that the Prophet ﷺ said:

صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ، إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ

“Prayer in this mosque of mine is more meritorious than a thousand prayers observed in other mosques, with the exception of the Masjid al-Ḥarām –the Sacred Mosque at Makkah,”⁸⁷² which Allāh made compulsory the pilgrimage to and circumambulation of, and which is also the prayer direction for the servants of Allāh. Yet both (The Sacred Mosque and the Madinah Mosque) have nothing in them which is kissed or touched, except the Black Stone which Allāh has set up on the earth as “*yamin*,” how can al-Aqsa Mosque has something that may be touched and kissed? The Rock was roofless, with none of the Companions, their governors or scholars marking it with any worship. It remained roofless during the caliphate of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, despite their rule of Syria. It remained the same

⁸⁷² Al-Bukhārī (1190) and Muslim (1394).

during the caliphate of 'Alī, though he did not rule over Syria, and as well as the reigns of Mu'awiyah, his son and grandson. It was 'Abdul-Malik who built a dome over the Rock during his reign, following the civil war that broke out between him and Ibn az-Zubair. It is reported that some people perform the pilgrimage and joined Ibn az-Zubair, and some of them used the pilgrimage as an excuse to join him. 'Abdul-Malik erected a structure over the Rock to increase its reverence, and held it covered throughout the year, so that more pilgrims would come to Bait al-Maqdis instead of Ibn az-Zubair. People follow the religion of their king. Since then, the number of believers who venerate the Rock and Bait al-Maqdis has reached previously unheard-of levels. Some began to transmit *Isrā'iliyāt* (Jewish lore and legend) regarding the Rock's veneration. One even related on the authority of Ka'b al-Ahbar at the court of 'Abdul-Malik, in the presence of 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair: "Allāh said to the Rock, 'You are My nethermost throne!'" to which 'Urwa replied, "Allāh says: 'His throne extends over the heavens and earth'⁸⁷³, why do you say the Rock is His throne?"

Thus, there is no doubt that neither the Rightly-Guided Caliphs nor the Companions build this dome, nor did they worship at it. Even Ibn 'Umar who travelled from Hijaz to the Aqsa Mosque, refused to visit the Rock. Because the Rock had been the *qibla* (for the Muslims), which was later abrogated. And this was the *qibla* of the Jews. There is nothing in our *Shari'a* calling for some special stipulation concerning its veneration, just as there is nothing concerning the veneration of the Sabbath. Observing it with veneration necessarily amounts to imitating the Jews. A presentation of the views of scholars on Sabbath, 'Āshura', and similar had preceded this discussion.

A number of the latter jurists of our school, as well as others, assert that an oath uttered at the Rock in Bait al-Maqdis is elevated, just as it is when uttered at the Sacred Mosque, and between the *rukn* and *maqam* (inside the Sacred Mosque), or next to the Prophet's pulpit in the mosque at Madinah. This, however, has no foundation in the teachings of Ahmad or any other leader. The Sunnah states that an oath

⁸⁷³ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:255.

becomes intensified at al-Aqsa near the pulpit as it does in all other mosques near it. An oath taken near an object whose veneration is not prescribed for Muslims does not become intensified as it also does not become intensified at *mashāhid*, stations of prophets, etc. Whoever does that is a gone-astray, an innovator and an opponent of the *Shari'a*.

Some people have authored books concerning the merits of Bait al-Maqdis and other locations in Syria, in which they recount stories coming down from the People of the Book and from those who learned from them—stories on which Muslims should not base their faith. Ka'b al-Ahbar is the best example of a person who quoted from the *Isra'iliyyāt*, from which the Syrians had acquired a great deal. Mu'awiyah reportedly said: "Of these Traditionists transmitting on the authority of the People of the Book, we found Ka'b to be the most representative, albeit sometimes misleading." A tradition of the Prophet ﷺ quoted in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* has it:

إِذَا حَدَّثَكُمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ فَلَا تُصَدِّقُوهُمْ وَلَا تُكْذِّبُوهُمْ، وَقُولُوا:
 "أَمَّا بِاللَّهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، فَإِنْ كَانَ حَقًّا لَمْ تُكْذِّبُوهُمْ، وَإِنْ كَانَ بَاطِلًا
 لَمْ تُصَدِّقُوهُمْ"

When the People of the Book narrate to you, do you neither believe nor refute them, lest you should believe something wrong they may tell you or disbelieve something that is right in their words.⁸⁷⁴

It is surprising that people readily accept these narrations when the preserved nation of Islam doesn't accept *mursal* traditions attributed to some distinguished *Tābi'un*, prominent scholars of Islam and esteemed leaders of the religion, such as 'Attā' ibn Abī Rabāh, al-Hasan al-Basari, Abū al-'Āliyah. These traditions are claimed to be from the Prophet ﷺ yet scholars hesitate to embrace them. Some scholars conditionally accept them, while others outright reject them. Some distinguish between those who only narrated from reliable transmitters like Sa'īd ibn al-Mūsāyyib, 'Ibrāhīm an-Naqa'i, and Muhammad ibn Sirīn, and

⁸⁷⁴ Sound, Abū Ahmad (17225), but al-Bukhārī reported with another next, (7362 and 7542).

those who occasionally narrated from unreliable sources, like Abū al-'Āliyah and al-Hasan. The connections between these *Tābi'ūn* and the Prophet ﷺ are often limited to one, two, or at best, three links.

According to the unanimous agreement of scholars, what is contained as *mursal* in the books of contemporary Muslim authors cannot be accepted as authentic unless it is one of the reports of traditionists who transmit only sound traditions. For instance, al-Bukhārī in respect to the *Mu'alaqāt* reports in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, which he asserted their authenticity authoritatively as those he traced back to the Companions, e.g., the report of Bahz ibn Hakeem on the authority of his father from his grandfather, etc., which is to him sound. And there is no book more reliable than the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī except the Qur'an.

What else is there to say about Ka'b and others like him who transmit on behalf of the prophets? And also there are a thousand years between Ka'b and the prophet. In addition to that, he did not authenticate the report from one reliable person to the next; but instead drew on some books written by Jewish elders whom the Qur'an exposes as responsible for distortion and forgery. How, then, can a Muslim trust anything of this kind, merely on the strength of this transmission. Instead, he should not trust such material and should refute it when he has a clear proof that it is false. That is what the Prophet ﷺ commanded us to do. More so, a very large proportion of those *Isra'iliyāt* report are falsehood told on the authority some prophets and very many others are abrogated.

Since the Prophet's Companions and the *Tābi'ūn* did not venerate these sites and did not intend to mark them by prayer, *du'ā'*, etc., we are not supposed to act contrary to them in this matter, despite the fact that some of the latter eminent and pious men did that. For it is far more proper to follow the path of the former than of those who deviated from it. This, coupled with the fact that no one is reported to have contracted the path of the former among the later generations, unless it has come down from someone among his contemporaries, superior to him in knowledge and honor, what contradicts his practice. This conclusion has broad meanings that we cannot continue to discuss it at this point. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* states, "When the Prophet ﷺ visited Bait

al-Maqdis on the night of his ascension, he performed two *raka'as* there." He did not visit or pray at any other place there. The tradition on the ascension appears in various collections; part of it is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections, while some of it is reported in the *Sunan* and *Masānīd*, some of which are weak, part outright fabrication, for instance what, some of which are reported as follows: "Gabriel said to the Prophet ﷺ 'This is the grave of your ancestor 'Ibrāhīm, so alight and pray at it. And this is Bethlehem, birthplace of your brother Jesus, so alight and offer prayer at it.'" Strange still is the story that during his nocturnal journey the Prophet ﷺ 'was told in Madinah, "Stop to pray here," 'even though his mosque had not yet been built there and the place was only a pagan cemetery. When the Prophet's she-camel knelt there after the *hijra*, he alighted. It is agreed among the learned that this and similar reports are fabrications. Bethlehem is one of the Christian churches, and visiting it has no religious significance for Muslims, regardless of whether or not it was the birthplace of Jesus. None of the Companions or *Tābi'ūn* would even go the grave of 'Ibrāhīm for prayer and *du'ā'*. Muslims had come to Syria more than once with 'Umar, and some of the Companions made it their permanent home, yet none of them practiced such visits. Muslims never built a sanctuary over 'Ibrāhīm's grave, but when toward the later part of the fourth century, when the Christians came to dominate these regions and captured Bait al-Maqdis, as a result of the seizure of Syria by the *Rāfidha*, who were then rulers of Egypt, the Christians grew stronger and captured the shores and other regions from the *Rāfidah*. The Rafidha were a forsaken people, devoid of common sense, authentic tradition, right faith, and a divinely assisted world. It was at this time that the Christians penetrated the chamber of 'Ibrāhīm and erected a gate over it. This door bears the mark of the Christian incursion. One of the Christian innovations was to turn the chamber into a sanctuary. This was not the work of the past's pious Muslims.

XXIV

Mosques and Other Places People Took for Worship, a Muslim's Concern

IT IS A Muslim religious principle that only mosques are designated as special places of worship. The pagans and the People of the Book used to venerate areas other than mosques for devotional acts; they used to venerate Hira' and similar places during the pre-Islamic era—*jāhiliya*. Islam came to eradicate, eliminate, and abrogate this practice.

Furthermore, all mosques partake in devotional acts. Thus, what is performed in one mosque is performed in all others, with the exception of circumambulation, which is particularly associated with the Sacred Mosque, just as prayer cannot be offered in the direction of any other mosque but it. As for the Prophet's Mosque and the Aqsa Mosque, acts of worship, for instance prayer, *du'ā'*, *dhikr*, recitation, and pious retreat, are prescribed in these just as much as in all others. Similarly, anything which is not prescribed elsewhere is not prescribed here either,

e.g., kissing, touching, circumambulation, etc. In spite of this, they are more privileged than other mosques; the reward for praying there is enormous. In an authentic report about the Prophet's Mosque, it is said that, a single prayer in it is superior to a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except the Sacred Mosque. Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported it, as collected in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيَمَا سِوَاهُ، إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ فَإِنِّي آخِرُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَإِنَّ مَسْجِدِي آخِرُ الْمَسَاجِدِ

A single prayer in this mosque of mine is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except the Sacred Mosque, for I am the last of the Prophets and my mosque also is the last.⁸⁷⁵

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection of Muslim, on the authority of Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was reported to have also said:

صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيَمَا سِوَاهُ، إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ

A single prayer in this mosque of mine is superior to a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except the Sacred Mosque.⁸⁷⁶

Also in *Muslim*, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, he narrated:

إِنَّ امْرَأَةً اشْتَكَّتْ شَكْوَى، فَقَالَتْ: "إِنْ شَفَانِي اللَّهُ لَأَخْرُجَنَّ فَلَأُصَلِّيَنَّ فِي بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ،" فَبَرَأْتُ، ثُمَّ تَجَهَّزْتُ تُرِيدُ الْخُرُوجَ، فَجَاءَتْ مَيْمُونَةُ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهَا، فَأَخْبَرْتَهَا ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَتْ: "الْجِلْسِي فَكُلِّي مَا صَنَعْتُ، وَصَلِّي فِي مَسْجِدِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ: صَلَاةٌ فِيهِ أَفْضَلُ

⁸⁷⁵ Muslim (1394) with the addition.

⁸⁷⁶ Muslim (1395).

مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ مِنَ الْمَسَاجِدِ، إِلَّا مَسْجِدَ الْكَعْبَةِ"

A woman complained, and said: "In case Allāh cures me, I will certainly go and observe prayer in Bait al-Maqdis. She recovered and so she made preparations to go out (to that place). She came to Maimūna, the wife of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and after greeting her, she informed her about it, to which she said: Stay here and eat the provision (which you had made) and observe prayer in the mosque of the Messenger ﷺ for I heard Allāh's Messenger ﷺ say: "Prayer in it is better than a thousand prayers observed in other mosques except the mosque of the Ka'bah."⁸⁷⁷

And in the *Musnad*, on the authority of Ibn az-Zubair رضي الله عنه, he said:

صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيمَا سِوَاهُ، إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ، وَصَلَاةٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ مِائَةِ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِي مَسْجِدِي

A single prayer in this mosque of mine is superior to a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except the Sacred Mosque, and a single prayer in the Sacred Mosque is superior to a hundred thousand prayers than in my mosque.⁸⁷⁸ Abū Abdullah al-Maqdisi remarked its chain of transmitters is that of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* report.

Therefore, the *Sharī'a* prescribed permissible pious retreat in mosques in place of the cleaving practiced at in the Cave of Hira' and elsewhere before Islam. Up until his death, the Prophet ﷺ was used to retreating for the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. The leaders concur that pious retreat is a permissible act of worship at mosques. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

﴿وَلَا تُبَشِّرُوهُمْ بَكِّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْكُمْ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ﴾

And do not have sexual relations with them while you are in *Ṭitikāf*

⁸⁷⁷ Muslim (1396)

⁸⁷⁸ Authentic. The author meant here by the *Musnad* of Imām Abū Dawūd at-Tayālisi, not that of Imām Ahmad, though that of Imām Ahmad is usually meant if mentioned without ascription. It is Abū Dawūd at-Tayālisi who reported it on the authority of Ibn az-Zubayr in his *Musnad* (1496), while Imām Ahmad reported it on the authority of Jābir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه (14694 and 15271).

(retreat or seclusion) in the mosque for the purpose of worship.⁸⁷⁹

That is, while observing *I'tikāf* (retreat or seclusion) in the mosque for the purpose of worship, do not have sexual relations with your women, even though the sexual relations are not in the mosque. This is why the jurists argue that: “The basic of *I'tikāf* is to confine in the mosque for the purpose of worship,” and “sexual relations” invalidates it. On the other hand, retreating and cleaving near a tree or stone where there may or may not be an image, or retreating near a tomb or station of a prophet or non-prophet, is not part of Islamic teaching. It is rather a variety of pagan cults, to which many Qur’anic passages allude. Allāh says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ
مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾
قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ
الِّلَّعِينِ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُمْ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ مِنَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ
جُدَاثًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾﴾

And We had certainly given Abraham his sound judgement before, and We were of him well-Knowing (*) When he said to his father and his people, “What are these statues to which you are devoted?” (*) They replied, “We found our forefathers worshipping them (*) He said, “You were certainly, you and your fathers, in manifest error (*) They asked, “Have you come to us with the truth, or are you of those who jest (*) He replied, “(No), rather, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth who created them, and I am, to that, of those who testify (*) And (I swear) by Allāh, I will surely plot against your idols after you might have turned and gone away (*) So he smashed them into pieces, except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:187.

⁸⁸⁰ Sūrah al-'Anbiyā', 21:51-58.

He also says:

﴿وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بَنَاءَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عُنُقَيْنِ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ وَعِبَادُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾

Relate to them (O Prophet) the story of Abraham (*) When he said to his father and his people, “What do you worship?” (*) They said, “We worship idols, and to them we are ever devoted” (*) He said, “Do they hear you when you supplicate? (*) Or do they benefit or harm you?” (*) They said, “No! But we found our forefathers doing the same.” (*) He said, “Then do you see what you have been worshipping, (*) you and your ancestors? (*) Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds (*) (He is) the One Who created me, and He (alone) guides me (*) And it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink (*) And when I am ill, it is He who cures me (*) And who will cause me to die, and then bring me back to life (*) And who I aspire that He will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment.⁸⁸¹ Until the end of the story.

And He says:

﴿وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَمُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَأَهْلَاءُ مُتَّبِعَةٌ مَّا هُمْ فِيهِ وَنَظِلُّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلِهَاتٍ وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾

We brought the Children of Israel (with safety) across the sea and they came up upon a people devoted to idols. They demanded, “O

⁸⁸¹ Sūrah ash-Shu‘arā’, 26:69-82.

Moses! Make for us a god like their gods.” He replied, “Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly! (*) Indeed, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in (idol-worship). And all that they doing is in vain.” (*) He added, “Shall I seek for you a god other than Allāh, while He has given you superiority over the others?”⁸⁸²

In these verses, the devotion of polytheists is described, whereas in the former, the devotion of Muslims is described. While Muslims seclude in the mosques to worship Allāh, the Only One God Who is worthy of being worshipped alone, polytheists do their seclusions to worship their deities, they fear them besides Allāh and seek intercession through them. None of the polytheists have ever claimed that the universe had two creators or that Allāh has another god that shares His attributes in equal measure with Him. Instead, they professed that the Creator of the heavens and earth was One, as Allāh informed us about them:

﴿وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ﴾

And if you ask them, “Who created the heavens and the earth?” they will definitely say, “Allāh”.⁸⁸³

Also in these verses:

﴿قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا نُنْقِطُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنْ مِنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾﴾

Ask (them, O Prophet), “To whom belong the earth and all those on it, if you (really) know?” (*) They will reply, “To Allāh!” Say, “Then will you not then remember?” (*) (And) ask (them), “Who

⁸⁸² Sūrah al-'A'raf, 7:138-140.

⁸⁸³ Sūrah Luqman, 31:25; Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:38.

is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne?”
 (*) They will reply, “Allāh.” Say, “Will you not then fear (Him)?”
 (*) Ask (them also,) “In Whose Hands is the authority over all things, protecting all while none can protect against Him, if you (really) should know?” (*) They will reply, “(All that belongs) to Allāh.” Say, “How then are you so deluded?”⁸⁸⁴

Peoples' Views on Intercession and the Correct Stance

THEY USED TO register their certainty in the Lordship of Allāh in their *talbiyah*:

لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ، إِلَّا شَرِيكًا هُوَ لَكَ، تَمْلِكُهُ وَمَا مَلَكَ

Here I am at Your service, there is no associate with Your, except one associate with you, you possess mastery over him.⁸⁸⁵

Allāh gives this similitude as well:

﴿ ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِي مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ ﴾

He presents to you an example from yourselves. Do you have among those whom your right hands possess (i.e., slaves) any partners in what We have provided for you so that you are equal therein (and) would fear them as your fear of one another (within a partnership)?⁸⁸⁶

But they used to consider their deities intermediaries and intercessors with Allāh, the following passages reveal that:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ ﴾

And those who take protectors besides Him, (saying), “We only worship them that they may bring us closer to Allāh”⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁴ Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23:84-89.

⁸⁸⁵ Muslim (1185).

⁸⁸⁶ Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30:28.

⁸⁸⁷ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:3.

﴿ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴾

Or have they taken other than Allāh as intercessors? Say, “Even though they (the idols) neither possess any authority over anything nor have reasoning?” (*) Say, “All intercession belongs to Allāh (alone) To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.”⁸⁸⁸

﴿ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعُونَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

And they worship besides Allāh that which neither harm nor benefit them, and they say, “These are our intercessors with Allāh.” Ask (them, O Prophet), “Do you inform Allāh of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?”⁸⁸⁹

﴿ وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً إِنْ يُرَدِّدِ الرَّحْمَنُ بَصِيرًا لَا تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ شَفَعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَيَّ إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ﴾

And why should I not worship the One Who has created me, and to Whom you will be returned (*) Should I take other than Him [false] gods [while], if the Most Compassionate intends for me some adversity, their intercession will not avail at me at all, nor can they save me? (*) Indeed, I would then be in manifest error (*) Indeed, I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me.⁸⁹⁰

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ نَقَطَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴾

⁸⁸⁸ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:43-44.

⁸⁸⁹ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:18.

⁸⁹⁰ Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36:22-25.

(It will be said to them), “And you have certainly come to Us alone [i.e., individually] as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you. And We do not see with you your ‘intercessors’ which you claimed that they were among you associates (of Allāh). It has (all) been severed between you, and lost from you is what you used to claim.⁸⁹¹

﴿ مَا لَكُمْ مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ ﴾

You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor.⁸⁹²

﴿ وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴾

And warn with this (Qur’an) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord—for them beside Him will have no protector and no intercessor—that they might be righteous.⁸⁹³

In this matter (i.e., intercession), people split into three groups: two occupying extreme positions and one staying in the middle.

One: The polytheists and those who agreed with them among the innovators of the People of the Book, such as the Christians, as well as the innovators among the Muslim, affirm the intercession that the Qur’an opposed.

Two: The Kharijites and the Mu’tazilites, who denied that the Prophet ﷺ could intercede for Muslims who had committed major sins. Some heretics even dispute that a man may benefit from the intercession of another person, just as they deny that man can benefit from another’s *sadaqa* (alms) and fasting. Their denial is based on these Qur’anic verses:

﴿ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفْعَةٌ ﴾

Before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession.⁸⁹⁴

⁸⁹¹ Sūrah al-’An‘ām, 6:94.

⁸⁹² Sūrah as-Sajdah, 32:4.

⁸⁹³ Sūrah al-’An‘ām, 6: 51.

⁸⁹⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:254.

And the verse:

﴿ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ ﴾

There will be no friend for the evildoers, nor any intercessor for the *zālimūn* (polytheist and wrong-doers), who could be given heed to,⁸⁹⁵ etc.’

Three: The *Salaf*, the leaders of the Muslim community, and those from *Ahlus Sunnah wa’l Jamāah* who followed them all uphold the *Sunnah*, viz., the Prophet’s intercession for those Muslims who have committed major sins, as well as other kinds of intercession, and the intercession of other prophets and angels. They held that no monotheists would stay in hell forever, acknowledging the *Sunnah* that man benefits from another person’s prayer and intercession, or even from another person’s *sadaqa* and fasting, according to the more accurate of the two scholars’ opinions and as established by the authentic and unadulterated *Sunnah*. In addition, they also argued that an intercessor could only intercede after seeking Allāh’s permission, as intercession is impossible without Allāh’s permission.

Allāh says:

﴿ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ﴾

Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?⁸⁹⁶

He also says:

﴿ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَرْضَى ﴾

And they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves.⁸⁹⁷

And He says:

﴿ وَكَرَّ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى ﴾

⁸⁹⁵ Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:18.

⁸⁹⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:255.

⁸⁹⁷ Sūrah al-’Anbiyā’, 21:28.

And how many angels there are in the heavens, whose intercessions will not avail at all except [only] after Allāh has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.⁸⁹⁸

It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection that on the Day of Resurrection, after the people may have beseeched Adam to intercede for them, then *Ulul-'Azm*—the highly placed—among the prophets; Nūh (Noah), 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses), and 'Isā (Jesus), and they all directed the people to Muhammad ﷺ (the Leader of the Intercessors and the servant of Allāh whose sins, the past and the present, had been forgiven), he would then proceed to ask Allāh's permission. He ﷺ said:

فَأَقْعُ سَاجِدًا لِرَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ مِنْ مَحَامِدِهِ وَحُسْنِ الثَّنَاءِ
عَلَيْهِ شَيْئًا، لَمْ يَفْتَحْهُ عَلَيَّ أَحَدٌ قَبْلِي، ثُمَّ يُقَالُ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ
سَلْ تُعْطَهُ، وَاشْفَعْ تُشَفَّعَ فَأَرْفَعُ رَأْسِي، فَأَقُولُ: أُمَّتِي يَا رَبِّ، أُمَّتِي يَا رَبِّ،
أُمَّتِي يَا رَبِّ

I would fall in prostration before my Lord, the Great and the Almighty, He would then inspire on me praises and adorations that which He has never inspired on any one before me, with which I shall praise and adore Him. It will, then, be said to me: “O Muhammad, raise your head, say and it would be listened to, ask it would be granted, and intercede, it would be accepted.” I would then say: “My Lord, my ummah, my ummah.”⁸⁹⁹

Allāh says:

﴿ قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفِ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا
مُخَوِّلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ
وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

Say, “Invoke those you have claimed (as gods) besides Him, for they do not possess the (ability for) removal of adversity from

⁸⁹⁸ Sūrah an-Najm, 53:26.

⁸⁹⁹ Al-Bukhārī (471) and Muslim (194).

you or (for its) transfer (to someone else). (*)Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, (striving as to) which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.⁹⁰⁰

Some of the *Salaf* explained that this verse was revealed in response to those who took ‘Uzayr, Messiah, and some angels as deities besides Allāh, while these servants of Allāh; ‘Uzayr, Messiah, and the angels, are themselves seeking to gain closeness and favor from Him, hoping for His blessings, and fearing His punishment. Also in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is established that Abū Hurairah asked the Messenger of Allāh:

"يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَسْعَدُ النَّاسِ بِشَفَاعَتِكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ؟" فَقَالَ: "لَقَدْ ظَنَنْتُ، يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنْ لَا يَسْأَلَنِي عَنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَحَدٌ أَوْلَ مِنْكَ، لِمَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ حِرْصِكَ عَلَى الْحَدِيثِ، أَسْعَدُ النَّاسِ بِشَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ قَالَ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، خَالِصًا مِنْ قِبَلِ نَفْسِهِ"

“O Allāh’s Messenger! Who will be the luckiest person who gain your intercession on the Day of Resurrection?” Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “O Abū Hurairah! I have thought that none will ask me this before you, for as I know your longing for the (learning of) Hadiths. The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who said sincerely from the bottom of his heart ‘None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh.’⁹⁰¹

So, the more a man shows extreme dedication to Allāh, the more deserving he is of intercession; conversely, one who attaches his heart to a creature to the point that he fears him or expects his pleasure has the least chance of being allowed intercession.

Intercession of a man by another man is a form of assistance offered by the intercessor to the one he interceded for. In this type of intercession, the intercessor does not need permission from the person he intends to intercede from; in fact, the person may wish for intercession to be made,

⁹⁰⁰ Sūrah al-‘Isrā’, 17:56-57.

⁹⁰¹ Al-Bukhārī (99 and 6570).

either because of the benefit he will derive from it or out of the fear of any danger that may befall him if the matter is not resolved. However, for the intercession that would be done before Allāh, Allāh, the Most High, benefits nothing from His creatures; He is the Only One God, He has no partner. He grants the intercession of His servants just as He grants their prayers; He inspires His servants to pray for their needs, teaches them how to pray, and then grants it. He controls everything. Furthermore, if a man wishes a creature as his intercessor, he may discover that the intercessor does not wish to intercede on his behalf, even if he does, Allāh may not grant it. Firstly, the Prophet ﷺ, and secondly, 'Ibrāhīm, are among the most qualified beings to serve as intercessors. Despite this, the Prophet ﷺ refused to seek Allāh's forgiveness for his uncle, Abū Talib, even though he had previously said:

لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ مَا لَمْ أَنُحَ عَنْكَ

I will keep on asking (Allāh) for forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden to do so.⁹⁰²

Meanwhile, he prayed for some of the hypocrites, and it was said to him:

﴿ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ ﴾

And do not ever offer (funeral) prayer for any of their dead, nor stand at his grave (at burial). Indeed, they disbelieved in Allāh and His Messenger,⁹⁰³

It was earlier said to him:

﴿ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ۗ ﴾

(and even) if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness - Allāh will never forgive them,⁹⁰⁴

upon which he ﷺ said:

⁹⁰² Al-Bukhārī (1360, 3884, 4675, and 4771) and Muslim (24).

⁹⁰³ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:84.

⁹⁰⁴ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:80.

لَوْ أَعْلَمْتُ أَنِّي إِنْ زِدْتُ عَلَى السَّبْعِينَ يُغْفَرُ لَهُ لَزِدْتُ عَلَيْهَا

Had I known that he would be forgiven by asking Allāh's forgiveness for more than seventy times, surely, I would have done so.⁹⁰⁵

Allāh then revealed:

﴿سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ﴾

It is all the same for them whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them, Allāh will never forgive them.⁹⁰⁶

As for 'Ibrāhīm ﷺ, Allāh said about him:

﴿فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبَشْرَىٰ مُجْدِلَاتًا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَااتِهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرَ مَرْدُودٍ ﴿٧٦﴾﴾

And when the fright had left 'Ibrāhīm and the good tidings had reached him, he began to plead with Us concerning the people of Lot (*) Truly, 'Ibrāhīm was forbearing, tender-hearted, and (frequently) returning (to his Lord) (*) (The angels said,) "O Abraham! Plead no more! Your Lord's decree has already come, and they will certainly be afflicted with a punishment that cannot be averted!"⁹⁰⁷

And when he sought Allāh's forgiveness for his father with the prayer,

﴿رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ﴾

Our Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day when the judgment will be established.⁹⁰⁸

Allāh revealed the aftermath to the Prophet ﷺ in this passage:

﴿قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرءُؤُا

⁹⁰⁵ Al-Bukhārī (1366 and 4671).

⁹⁰⁶ Sūrah al-Munāfiqun, 63:6.

⁹⁰⁷ Sūrah Hūd, 11:74-76.

⁹⁰⁸ Sūrah 'Ibrāhīm, 14:41.

مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ
أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُوْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُ ۚ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ ﴿

There has already been for you an excellent example in 'Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allāh. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allāh alone"—except for the saying of 'Ibrāhīm to his father, "I will surely ask forgiveness for you."⁹⁰⁹

Allāh further cleared this issue in these other passages, telling His Prophet ﷺ about him:

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴾ (١١٣) وَمَا كَانَ
أَسْتَغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ
عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ ﴿

It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire (*) And the request of forgiveness of 'Ibrāhīm for his father was only in fulfilment of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to him that he (the father) was an enemy to Allāh, he disassociated himself from him.⁹¹⁰

So, Allāh, the Most Gracious, has rights that none shares with Him, so also, He endowed His prophets some rights that no one shares with them as well, and He prescribed for the believers rights over one another, that which they share among themselves. The hadith of Mu'adh ibn Jabal in *Ṣaḥīḥain* alludes that:

⁹⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah, 60:4.

⁹¹⁰ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:113-114.

يَا مُعَاذُ، أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ؟" قَالَ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: "أَنْ يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ وَلَا يُشْرَكَ بِهِ شَيْءٌ، قَالَ: "أَتَدْرِي مَا حَقُّهُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ؟" فَقَالَ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: "أَنْ لَا يُعَذَّبَهُمْ"

“O Mu`adh! Do you know what Allāh’s Right upon His slaves is?” I said, “Allāh and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “To worship Him (Allāh) Alone and to join none in worship with Him (Allāh). He asked again: “Do you know what their right upon Him is?” I replied, “Allāh and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Not to punish them (if they do so).”⁹¹¹

The Central Tenet of Monotheism in the Revelations

Therefore, the right of Allāh over His servants is to worship Him alone, and to do not associate any partner with Him. And that is the fundamental of the monotheism with which Allāh sent all His prophets, and upon which He sent His Books. Allāh ascertains that when He says:

﴿وَسَأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ﴾

And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers, “Have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshipped?”⁹¹²

Also from His saying:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾

And We sent not before you any messenger except We revealed to him that, “There is no deity worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me.”⁹¹³

⁹¹¹ Al-Bukhārī (2756, 5976, 6267, 6500, and 7373) and Muslim (30).

⁹¹² Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43:45.

⁹¹³ Sūrah al-‘Anbiyā’, 21:25.

And this passage as well:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾

And We certainly sent a messenger into every nation, saying, “Worship Allāh and shun false gods.”⁹¹⁴

The worship of Allāh entails fearing Him alone; we should, therefore, not fear or be wary of anything except Him, in respect of that Allāh says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴾

And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger and fears Allāh and is conscious of Him—it is those who (truly) triumph.⁹¹⁵

He ordained obedience to Him and to His Prophet ﷺ but for the fear, He prescribed that they should fear Him alone, as He said in this other verse:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ﴾

If they had been contented with what Allāh and His Messenger gave them, and had said, “Allāh is Sufficient for us, Allāh will give us from His Bounties, and His Messenger will give us as well, verily, it is Allāh we implore (for our needs).”⁹¹⁶

Among other things mentioned, only the supply of provision is attributed to Allāh, and then the Prophet ﷺ; while Allāh was the One who Provided for them, the Prophet used to share out for them, as established in the verse:

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ﴾

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you from, leave it.⁹¹⁷

⁹¹⁴ Sūrah an-Naḥl, 16:36.

⁹¹⁵ Sūrah an-Nūr, 24:52.

⁹¹⁶ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:59.

⁹¹⁷ Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr, 59:7.

The right to make something lawful or unlawful belongs to Allāh alone, then to His Prophet ﷺ, so does the stipulation of religious acts, but for *at-Tahassub* (sufficiency), the people said: “Allāh is sufficient for us”, but they did not add: “and His Prophet.” This clarification is more evident in the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدَّ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَأَخْشَوْهُمْ فَرَّادَهُمْ إِيْمَانًا
وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

Those to whom people (i.e., hypocrites) said, “Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.” But it (merely) increased them in faith, and they said, “Sufficient for us is Allāh, and (He is) the best Disposer of affairs.”⁹¹⁸

And the verse:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

O Prophet! Sufficient for you is Allāh and for whoever follows you of the believers.⁹¹⁹

That is, Allāh alone is sufficient for you and your followers. Therefore, those who interpreted the verse as: “Allāh and those who follow you are sufficient for you” got it outright wrong for many reasons. We have elaborated on this elsewhere.

For the part: “Allāh will give us from His Bounties, and His Messenger will give us as well,” the bounties were only mentioned of Allāh, but for the supply of materials, it was ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ, for it was he ﷺ who would give each of them his share, it was not permissible for anyone to take anything by his wish (of the war booty), but only what the *Shari’a* permitted. And for the part: “Verily, it is Allāh we implore (for our needs),” the people directed their desires unto Allāh, the One and Only God, they never placed their confidence in anybody else. This verse of the Qur’an juxtaposes the following:

﴿فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ﴿٨﴾﴾

⁹¹⁸ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:173.

⁹¹⁹ Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:64.

So when you have finished (your duties), then stand up (for worship)
 (*) And to your Lord direct your longing (desires)⁹²⁰

Allāh commanded His Prophet ﷺ to direct all his wishes unto Him. He, the Most High, absolutely never commanded mankind to beseech their fellowmen for intercession, though this is permissible in some circumstances, man must beseech only Allāh.

As indicated in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection of the characteristics of those who will enter Paradise without reckoning, it is thus better for a servant of Allāh not to intercede through a fellow human being.

هُمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَسْتَرْقُونَ، وَلَا يَتَطَيَّرُونَ، وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ، وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ
 يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

They are those who do not practice *Ar-Ruqyah*, nor cauterise, nor see an evil omen in things, they only put their trust in their Lord.⁹²¹

It is mentioned that one of the characteristics of these people is that they will not seek anyone to perform *ar-Ruqyah* (incantation) for them. Meanwhile, this tradition does not state that they will not perform the *Ruqyah* themselves; however, this is a mistake, because that occur in a report of Muslim that the Prophet ﷺ performed the *Ruqyah* for himself and some other persons, but he sought it from anyone. Thus, there is a distinction between performing the *Ruqyah* for oneself and requesting others to perform it for one. The Prophet ﷺ said to Ibn 'Abbās:

إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ

If is you wish to ask for anything, ask Allāh, and if you wish for seek any assistance, seek it from Allāh.⁹²²

Only Allāh has the right to be relied upon, sought for help, called out unto, hoped in, feared, worshiped, humbled before, and haunted by; there is no strength or might other than His, and in He alone is sought

⁹²⁰ Sūrah ash-Sharh, 94:7-8.

⁹²¹ Al-Bukhārī (5705, 5752, and 6541) and Muslim (218).

⁹²² Muslim (2516).

refuge in. The whole of the Qur'an establishes this. But the Prophet ﷺ entitles one the right to believe in him and the message he brought, as well as to obey, follow, love, support, and honor him. One must also be pleased with him and succumb to his judgment. Obedience to the Prophet ﷺ is obedience to Allāh, Allāh affirms:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ﴾

Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allāh.⁹²³

And He says:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ﴾

And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allāh.⁹²⁴

As for being pleased with him ﷺ and succumb to his judgment, Allāh says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ﴾

It is the pleasure of Allāh and His Messenger they should seek.⁹²⁵

The following verse also confirms the rights enumerated:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكِنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ﴾

Say, (O Prophet,) "If your parents and children and siblings and spouses and extended family and the wealth you have acquired and the trade you fear will decline and the homes you cherish—(if all these) are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and struggling in His Way, then wait until Allāh brings about His Will."⁹²⁶

⁹²³ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:80.

⁹²⁴ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:64.

⁹²⁵ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:62.

⁹²⁶ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:24.

And in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, it is reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ: أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ
إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا، وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ، وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي
الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقَدَفَ فِي النَّارِ

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith:

1. The one to whom Allāh and His Messenger are dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he does not love him except for Allāh's sake.
3. Who hates to revert to disbelief after Allāh has brought (saved) him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire."⁹²⁷

He ﷺ was also reported to have said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ، حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ
أَجْمَعِينَ

None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind.⁹²⁸

And 'Umar رضي الله عنه said to the Prophet ﷺ:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، لَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا مِنْ نَفْسِي

O Allāh's Messenger! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self.

The Prophet ﷺ told him:

"لَا، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ"

No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have complete

⁹²⁷ Al-Bukhārī (16, 21 and 6941) and Muslim (43).

⁹²⁸ Al-Bukhārī (15) and Muslim (44).

faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self.

‘Umar then said:

فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ، وَاللَّهِ، لَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي

However, now, by Allāh, you are dearer to me than my own self.

The Prophet ﷺ replied:

الآنَ يَا عُمَرُ

Now, O ‘Umar, (now you are a complete believer).⁹²⁹

Allāh, concerning loving the Prophet ﷺ, says:

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ﴾

Say, (O Prophet,) “If you (sincerely) love Allāh, then follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive your sins.”⁹³⁰

He also says:

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ لِيُتُومِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَيُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُقِرُّوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

Verily, We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a witness, as a bearer of good tidings, and a warner (*) That you (mankind) may believe in Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, and that you assist and honor him, and that you glorify His (Allāh’s) praises in the morning and evening.⁹³¹

In the verse, assisting and honoring is for the Prophet ﷺ, but ‘to glorify’ is reserved for Allāh alone. The connection between these acts as described in this verse, is well-explained elsewhere.

Allāh sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to assert *Tawhīd* (Monotheism) and free it of all *shirk*, and to reject *shirk* in every means, even verbally, as we have, for instance, in this tradition:

⁹²⁹ Al-Bukhārī (6632).

⁹³⁰ Sūrah Ali-‘Imran, 3:31.

⁹³¹ Sūrah al-Faḥ, 48:8-9.

لَا تَقُولْنَ: مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ، قُولُوا: مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، ثُمَّ شَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ

Do not say: “What Allāh wills and Muhammad wills.” Say: “What Allāh wills then what Muhammad wills.”⁹³²

And when a man said to the Prophet ﷺ:

مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، وَشِئْتِ

What Allāh and you wish.

He ﷺ told him:

أَجَعَلْتَنِي وَاللَّهِ عَدْلًا بَلْ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ

Do you make me an associate with Allāh? Rather, say: “What Allāh wishes alone!”⁹³³

All prescribed acts of devotion must be performed with entire sincerity to worship Allāh, in accordance to the commands of Allāh in this verse:

﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ﴾

And they were not commanded except to worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to pay the alms. And that is the right religion.⁹³⁴

Thus, prayer, *sadaqa*, fasting or pilgrimage to the House of Allāh should all be performed exclusively for Allāh alone. Pilgrimage is the act of worshipping Allāh, the One, in a place where He has prescribed that He be worshipped. For this reason, pilgrimage is a token of the true faith, so much so that some of the *Salaf* interpreted the words *hunafan'* in the verse to mean pilgrims, since Jews and Christians do

⁹³² Authentic, Ibn Mājah (2118) and Ahmad (20694 and 23339)

⁹³³ Authentic, Ahmad (1839).

⁹³⁴ Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98:5.

not make pilgrimages to the House. While explaining this, some of the *Salaf* said: ‘When Allāh revealed the verse:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ عَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ﴾

Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him⁹³⁵

Some Jews and Christians say: “We are Muslims, Allāh then revealed the verse:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ حَجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنْ أَسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا ﴾

And (due) to Allāh from the people is a pilgrimage to the House— for whoever is able to find thereto a way.⁹³⁶

The Jews and Christian then said: “We cannot perform *hajj*, so, the completion of the verse was revealed:

﴿ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

But whoever disbelieves (i.e., refuses) - then indeed, Allāh is free from need of the worlds.⁹³⁷

However, the stipulation in the verse, “whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him,” is a general one in respect of the past and the later generations. Islam is the religion of all the prophets, and their followers are all Muslims. Allāh stated this in respect of all the Messengers, from the first of them, Nūh, to ‘Ibrāhīm, to Israel, to Mūsā, to Sulaimān and others. Concerning Nūh, Allāh says:

﴿ وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يٰ قَوْمِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَتَذِكْرِي بَيَّانَتِ اللَّهُ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٧١﴾ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ

⁹³⁵ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:85.

⁹³⁶ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:97.

⁹³⁷ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:97.

﴿أَجْرٌ إِنِ اجْتَرَىٰ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾﴾

Relate to them 'O Prophet' the story of Nūh –Noah, when he said to his people, "O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allāh's signs are unbearable to you, then 'know that' I have put my trust in Allāh. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods—and you do not have to be secretive about your plot—then carry it out against me without delay! (*) And if you turn away (from my advice) - then no payment have I asked of you. My reward is only from Allāh, and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims"⁹³⁸

In respect of 'Ibrāhīm, He says:

﴿وَمَنْ يَرْعُبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾﴾

And who would reject the faith of 'Ibrāhīm except a fool! We certainly chose him in this life, and in the Hereafter he will surely be among the righteous (*) When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted (in Islām) to the Lord of the worlds."⁹³⁹

And in respect of Yūsuf:

﴿رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ﴾

"My Lord, You have given me (something) of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and earth, You are my protector in this world and the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous."⁹⁴⁰

⁹³⁸ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:71-72.

⁹³⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:130-131.

⁹⁴⁰ Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:101.

And as for Mūsā, He says:

﴿ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَوْمَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِمْنًا بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴾

And Moses said, “O my people, if you have believed in Allāh, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims.”⁹⁴¹

And about the Children of Israel:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا
لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ﴾

Indeed, We sent down the *Tawrah* (Torah), in which was guidance and light. The prophets who were Muslims (submitted to Allāh) judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of Allāh.⁹⁴²

In respect of Bilqīs:

﴿ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I have become a Muslim (submit) with Sulaimān (Solomon) to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.⁹⁴³

And regarding the followers of ’Isā, He says:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَأَشْهَدُ
بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

And (remember) when I inspired to the disciples, “Believe in Me and in My messenger ’Isā (Jesus).” They said, “We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims (in submission to Allāh).”⁹⁴⁴

About them, Allāh also says:

⁹⁴¹ Sūrah Yūnus, 10:84.

⁹⁴² Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:44.

⁹⁴³ Sūrah an-Naml, 27:44.

⁹⁴⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:111.

﴿رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ﴾

Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the messenger 'Isā (Jesus), so register us among the witnesses (to truth).⁹⁴⁵

Also the Word of Allāh:

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا﴾

And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allāh (becomes a Muslim) while being a doer of good and follows the religion of 'Ibrāhīm, inclining toward truth? And Allāh took Abraham as an intimate friend.⁹⁴⁶

And the verse:

﴿وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَىٰ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾﴾

And they say, “No one will ever enter Paradise but that he is a Jew or Christian.” These are their desires. Say: “Bring your proof, if you are truthful.” Nay, but whoever submits his face to Allāh (becomes a Muslim in devotion to Allāh), and he is a *Muhsin*—good doer, his reward lies with his Lord, and no fear shall fall on them, neither shall they sorrow.⁹⁴⁷

The part “whoever submits his face to Allāh” had been said to infer sincerity of intention in one’s devotion to Allāh. And the part “and he is a *Muhsin*—good doer,” means doing good deeds of the prescribed worships. These two fundamentals are the cornerstone of religion: that we should worship no one but Allāh, and that we should worship Him based on what He has prescribed and not on heresy. As Allāh says:

⁹⁴⁵ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 3:53.

⁹⁴⁶ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4:125.

⁹⁴⁷ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:111-112.

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

So whoever hopes for the meeting with their Lord, let them do good deeds and associate none in the worship of their Lord.⁹⁴⁸

‘Umar رضي الله عنه used to utter in his prayer: “O Allāh, make all my deeds righteous and make them fully, without exception, dedicated to You.”

Concerning this Word of Allāh:

﴿لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

That He may test you, which of you is best in deed.⁹⁴⁹

Based on the verse, Al-Fudhail ibn ‘Iyadh remarked, “Which of you is more sincere and more apposite.” He was asked: “O Abū ‘Alī, what is the meaning of one being ‘*more sincere and more apposite (in his deeds)*’”, he replied: “If one is sincere in his deed but he’s not appropriate, his deed is not acceptable, and if he is appropriate in it, but lack sincerity, his deed is not also acceptable, so, a deed is not considered acceptable until one is sincere in it and do it correctly, and being sincere means doing one’s deeds for the sake of Allāh, while being apposite means doing the deeds in conformity with the Sunnah.”

And these two principles fulfill the two essential tenets of Islam, namely the testimony that “there is no one worthy of being worshipped except Allāh” and the testimony that “Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم is His Messenger.” The first testimony consists of Allāh’s unshared Divinity. Thus, the heart should not deify anyone else, either in love, fear, hope, glory, admiration, longing, or awe. Rather, all religion should of necessity be dedicated to Allāh, as Allāh commanded:

﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ﴾

And fight against them until there is no more fitnah (disbelief and polytheism) and (until) the religion (worship) will all be for Allāh alone.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁸ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:110.

⁹⁴⁹ Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:2.

⁹⁵⁰ Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:39.

If one devotes only some parts of his deeds to Allāh, and the other parts to other than Him, he has indeed engaged in *shirk* in the proportion of his involvement. And the meaning of devoting the religion completely to Allāh is as mentioned in this tradition:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلَّهِ، وَأَبْغَضَ لِلَّهِ، وَأَعْطَى لِلَّهِ، وَمَمَعَ لِلَّهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ

If anyone loves for Allāh's sake, hates for Allāh's sake, gives for Allāh's sake and withholds for Allāh's sake, he has perfected his faith.⁹⁵¹ (at-Tirmidhī and some others reported it).

So, Muslims love Allāh, while the polytheists give their loves to Allāh and other deities, as Allāh expressed in the verse:

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ﴾

And (yet), among the people are those who take other than Allāh as equals (to Him). They love them as they [should] love Allāh. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allāh.⁹⁵²

The testimony that Muhammad is Allāh's Messenger means that one should accept as true everything he announced and obey his injunctions. One should assert what he asserted, and no one should deny what he denied. Similarly, man must assert the Divine Names and Attributes he established for Allāh and deny what he denied for Him of *tamthil* (likening Allāh to the creatures) and hold the correct creed in regards to Allāh's Divine Names and Attributes, which is establishing those Names and Attributes for Allāh without *ithbat bi-la tamthil* (likening Him to any of His creatures) and without *tanzih bi-la ta'atil* (denying Him of that which He established for Himself). It is also incumbent upon man to follow the Prophet's injunctions, both positive and negative, and to hold lawful that which he made lawful and

⁹⁵¹ Authentic, Abū Dawūd (4681). Abū Dawūd reported this tradition with this text, the text of at-Tirmidhi has some addition.

⁹⁵² Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:165.

unlawful that which he made unlawful; nothing is not unlawful except that which Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ made unlawful, and nothing is regarded as part of Dīn (religion), except that which Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ ordained. It is for this reason, Allāh censures the pagans in *Sūrah al-An'ām* and *Sūrah al-'A'raf*, etc., for declaring unlawful what Allāh had not declared unlawful and for instituting a religion which He had not commanded. Allāh says:

﴿وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا﴾

And they (i.e., the polytheists) assign to Allāh from that which He created of crops and livestock a share⁹⁵³, till the end of the chapter. Likewise what He mentioned in the beginning of *Surat al-'A'raf*.

And the verse:

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾

Or do they have partners who have instituted for them as religion to which Allāh has given no permission?⁹⁵⁴

And Allāh has said to His Prophet ﷺ:

﴿إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾﴾

We have sent you as a witness, and a deliverer of good tidings and a warner (*) And one who invites to Allāh, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.⁹⁵⁵

In this verse, Allāh informed his Prophet ﷺ that He sent him as a caller to His path, and by His permission, so whoever calls to anything other than Allāh is guilty of *shirk*, and whoever calls to His Path, but without His permission is guilty of *bid'a* (innovation). *Shirk* is a kind of

⁹⁵³ *Sūrah al-'An'ām*, 6:136.

⁹⁵⁴ *Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:21.

⁹⁵⁵ *Sūrah al-'Aḥzāb*, 33:45-46.

innovation, and an innovator tends to do *shirk*. There is no innovator except that he has an element of *shirk*, as Allāh informed:

﴿ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِلَّا إِلَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحٰنَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as lords besides Allāh, even though they were commanded to worship none but One God. There is no god (worthy of worship) except Him. Glorified is He above what they associate (with Him)!⁹⁵⁶

The part of the *shirk* they did was to obey their rabbis and monks when they forbade for them what was permissible or made permissible what was forbidden.

Allāh has also said to His Prophet:

﴿ قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴾

Fight those who do not believe in Allāh and the Last Day, nor comply with what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, nor embrace the religion of truth from among those who were given the Scripture, until they pay the tax, willingly submitting, fully humbled.⁹⁵⁷

But for the believers, they accepted all that the Prophet ﷺ announced as true from Allāh, so also what he announced of events of the Day of Resurrection, so, they believed in Allāh and the Last Day, obeyed the Prophet's injunctions, both positive and negative, and in respect of the lawful and the unlawful, they made lawful what Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ made lawful and vice-versa, and they acknowledged the true religion, for Allāh sent His Prophet ﷺ to command the people of good and forbid them of evil, and to make permissible for them that which

⁹⁵⁶ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:31.

⁹⁵⁷ Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:29.

is pleasant and prohibit the unpleasant. The Prophet ﷺ commanded them of all kinds of good and forbade them of all evil, and he also permitted for them all pleasant things and prohibited the unpleasant. The word Islam includes the notions of submission, obedience and sincerity. This follows from the Qur'anic verse:

﴿ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّمُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِرَجُلٍ ﴾

Allāh puts forth a similitude: a (slave) man belonging to many partners disputing with one another, and a (slave) man who belongs exclusively to one man.⁹⁵⁸

Thus, Islam necessitates submission to Allāh alone and to none else, which is the true meaning of our testimony *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* (There is none worthy of being worshipped truly except Allāh!). So, whoever submits himself to Allāh and another god is a *mushrik*, and Allāh does not forgive the sin of associating partner with Him, and whoever does not submit to Allāh is arrogant in worshipping Allāh. Allāh has said:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴾

And your Lord proclaimed, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell (rendered) contemptible.⁹⁵⁹

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is established that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ." قَالَ رَجُلٌ: "إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ تَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً،" قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ، الْكِبَرُ بَطْرُ الْحَقِّ، وَغَمَطُ النَّاسِ"

"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise." A man (among the audience) said: "Verily a person loves that his dress should be nice, and his shoes should be nice." He (the

⁹⁵⁸ Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:29.

⁹⁵⁹ Sūrah Ghafir, 40:60.

Prophet ﷺ) remarked: “Verily, Allāh is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is to disdain the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people.”⁹⁶⁰

Jews are characterized by their pride, whereas Christians by their *shirk*. Allāh, about the Jews says:

﴿أَفَكَلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ﴾

Is it (not) that every time a messenger came to you, (O Children of Israel), with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party (of messengers) you denied and another party you killed.⁹⁶¹

And about the Christians, He says:

﴿اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمْرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِلَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as lords besides Allāh, even though they were commanded to worship none but One God. There is no god (worthy of worship) except Him. Glorified is He above what they associate (with Him)!⁹⁶²

Because of this, Allāh, when addressing Christians, says:

﴿قُلْ يَتَّاهِلَ الْكَافِرُ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

⁹⁶⁰ Muslim (91).

⁹⁶¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:87.

⁹⁶² Sūrah at-Tawbah, 9:31.

Say, “O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allāh and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allāh.” But if they turn away, then say, “Bear witness that we are Muslims (submitting to Him).”⁹⁶³

And while establishing the truth of Islam, Allāh addressed the People of the Book in general as:

﴿وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ فَإِنِ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾ صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ قُلْ أَنَحَا جُوتَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلِنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلْتُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾

They say, “Be Jews or Christians (so) you will be guided.” Say, “Rather, (we follow) the religion of ‘Ibrāhīm, inclining toward truth, and he was not of the polytheists (*) Say, (O believers), “We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants (*al-Asbāt*) and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him (*) So if they believe in what you believe, then

⁹⁶³ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 3:64.

they will indeed be (rightly) guided. But if they turn away, they are simply opposed (to the truth). But Allāh will spare you their evil. For He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (*) This is the (natural) Way of Allāh. And who is better than Allāh in ordaining a way? And we are His worshippers (*) Say, (O Muḥammad), “Do you argue with us about Allāh while He is our Lord and your Lord? For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. And we are sincere (in deed and intention) to Him. (*) Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians? Say, “Are you more knowing or is Allāh?” And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony¹ *he has from Allāh? And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.*”⁹⁶⁴

The Core Unity of Prophetic Faith (Monotheism) Amidst Diverse Laws

THE ORIGIN OF religion, which is the religion of Islam is one (that Allāh sent with all His Prophets and Messengers), despite the fact that its legislation varied (from time to time). In a *Ṣaḥīḥ* tradition, the Prophet ﷺ is said to have said:

الْأَنْبِيَاءُ إِخْوَةٌ لِعَلَّاتٍ، أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ شَتَّى وَدِينُهُمْ وَاحِدٌ

Prophets are brothers with one father, their mothers differ, and their religion is one.⁹⁶⁵

أَنَا أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِابْنِ مَرْيَمَ، وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ أَوْلَادُ عِلَّاتٍ، لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ نَبِيٌّ

I am the most deserving companion unto the son of Mary; prophets are brothers with one father, for no prophet stands between me and him.⁹⁶⁶

Thus, the religion of all prophets is one (identical): To worship

⁹⁶⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:135-140.

⁹⁶⁵ Al-Bukhārī (3442)

⁹⁶⁶ Al-Bukhārī (3443)

Allāh alone, without associating any other partner with Him. He is worshipped at all time in accordance with His prescription at that moment; this is *Islam* at any given point in time.

The diversity among religious laws, regarding what is abrogating and the abrogated, assuming both are lawful, is similar to the diversity within a single religious law. Similarly, the religion of Islam which the Prophet ﷺ was commissioned to spread, remains one. However, at a certain period, it was mandatory to face the direction of Bait al-Maqdis while praying, as the Prophet ﷺ had instructed the Muslims to do for over ten months after the *hijra*. After that period, it became obligatory to face the Ka'bah, as facing the Rock was prohibited. Thus, the religion remained to be one despite the use of different *qiblas* at different eras. By the same token, Allāh prescribed Saturday for the Israelites, afterwards abrogated it, and subsequently prescribed Friday for us, deeming Saturday congregation unlawful. He who left the *Shari'a* of Moses before its abrogation was not a Muslim, and he who does not enter the *Shari'a* of Muhammad after the *Shari'a* of Moses has been abrogated is also not a Muslim. Allāh absolutely never commanded any prophet to worship a force other than Himself. The Prophets are commanded in the Qur'an 'to establish the religion and not to split concerning it.'

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا نَدَعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ﴾

He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus—to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allāh is that to which you invite them,⁹⁶⁷ He commanded the prophets not to be divided.

⁹⁶⁷ Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:13.

He also said to them:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾
 وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾﴾

O messengers! Eat from what is good and lawful, and act righteously. Indeed, I fully know what you do.⁹⁶⁸

Allāh also says:

﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾
 ﴿مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلٌّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾

So direct your face (your self) towards the religion, inclining to truth, adhering to the *fiṭrah* (nature) of Allāh upon which He has created (all) people. No change should there be in the creation of Allāh. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know (*) Turning to Him in repentance, fear Him, establish the prayer, and do not be of those who associate others with Him (*) Of those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction rejoicing in what it has.⁹⁶⁹

The polytheists are divided while the sincere believers are together, as Allāh stated:

﴿وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ﴾

They will not cease to differ (*) Except those shown mercy by your Lord—and so He created them.⁹⁷⁰

The people of blessing are together, while the polytheists split their religion into groups. Therefore, you find *shirk* and *bid'a* to be a source of

⁹⁶⁸ Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23:51-52.

⁹⁶⁹ Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30:30-32.

⁹⁷⁰ Sūrah ar-Ra'd, 13:118-119.

schism among their adherents. Each Arab pagan tribe had an idol that it regarded as a deity, to whom it offered sacrifices, to whom it prayed for assistance, and whom it associated with Allāh. Each tribe despised the deity of the other, and the deities were supposed to have laws. Consequently, the people of Madinah used to worship Manat and refrain from circumambulating between Safa and Marwa, for which reason Allāh revealed:

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ﴾

Indeed, (the hills of) Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh.⁹⁷¹

The situation would be the same for anyone who participates in this *shirk*, for instance, people who make graves and relics of prophets and saints into sanctuaries with the intend to pray, seek assistance, and venerate a figure who is mostly ignored by the general community. This is in contrast to the true believers of Allāh. Despite the fact that Allāh has made the entire earth a place of worship and purity for them, they worship Allāh alone, without associating Him with any of His houses that He Himself has allowed to be erected and in which His name is mentioned. Even if they disagree on a subject where independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) is permissible, this does lead to a schism or disagreement among them. They are well aware that the one who is accurate among them receives two rewards, while the one who is mistaken receives one reward for resorting to *ijtihad*, and his error is forgiven. They worship Allāh alone, they rely on Him alone, they hope in Him, they fear Him alone, they seek assistance from Him alone, and they call on Him alone for help. Though they go to mosques for prayers and supplications, they only call upon Allāh, soliciting His favours and pleasures. Allāh describes them as:

﴿تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا﴾

You see them bowing and prostrating² (in prayer), seeking Allāh's bounty and pleasure.⁹⁷²

⁹⁷¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:158.

⁹⁷² Sūrah al-Fatḥ, 48:29.

Even when they make pilgrimage to one of the Three Mosques, particularly the Sacred Mosque where *hajj* is performed, they go there seeking Allāh's favours and blessings, they have no desire for anyone other than Allāh, no hope in anyone else, and no fear in anything other than Him. Allāh says about them:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا مُجْلُوا شَعَعِيرِ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا
الْقَائِدَ وَلَا ءَامِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا﴾

O you who have believed, do not violate the rites of Allāh or (the sanctity of) the sacred month or (neglect the marking of) the sacrificial animals and garlanding (them) or (violate the safety of) those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and (His) pleasure.⁹⁷³

The devil embellishes the unrighteous deeds of many men, diverting them from total devotion to their Lord to various form of *shirk*. Consequently, by means of travel and visits, these men seek the pleasure of and request for a force other than Allāh. They embark on journeys to the grave of a prophet or saint, or one who is held by them as a prophet or saint, calling upon him and entreating him. One of them believes that this is the purpose of pilgrimage. All that he perceives is to perform a pilgrimage to the inmate of a tomb. Another believes that this visit is more rewarding than a pilgrimage to the House.

Among their teachers you will find one who embarks on a pilgrimage to Makkah but, when he reaches Madinah, he decides that visiting the Prophet's grave is sufficient and, believing that this is more efficacious, he returns home. A fool among them believe that visiting tombs is even a need. Most of them pray to the dead in the same way they pray to Allāh: "O my master so-and-so, forgive me, have mercy on me, pardon me," or: "Help me to pay my debt, help me against so-and-so; I am your client and your protégé." Sometimes, they vow to sacrifice their children to the dead and set free such *sawā'ib* as cows, sheep, etc., as the pagans were used to do in honor of their idols. Allāh informs about them:

﴿مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامِرٍ﴾

⁹⁷³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:2.

Allāh has not appointed [such innovations as] *baḥīrah* or *sā'ibah* or *waṣīlah* or *ḥām*.⁹⁷⁴

﴿وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرِزْقِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ﴾

And they (the polytheists) assign to Allāh from that which He created of crops and livestock a share and say, “This is for Allāh,” by their claim, “and this is for our associate-gods.” But what is for their associate-gods does not reach Allāh, while what is for Allāh—this reaches their associate-gods. Evil is that which they rule.⁹⁷⁵

Some tomb keepers tend to mislead the ignorant, saying: “I will remind the inmate of the grave about your need, who will then refer it to the Prophet ﷺ, who will present it to Allāh.” Some of them hang curtains and clothes over the grave, whether it’s real or false, and deposit silver and gold jewelry; a practice that all Muslims unanimously consider pagan and absolutely un-Islamic. This happens at the time when the mosque is both spiritually and materially deserted.

⁹⁷⁴ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:103.

⁹⁷⁵ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:136. However, the verses that follow this verse give the complete intent of the author here; perhaps the mistake was made by those who copied the original text. The verses continue: “And likewise, to many of the polytheists their evil associates have made (to seem) pleasing the killing of their children in order to bring about their destruction and to cover them with confusion in their religion. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have done so. So leave them and that which they invent. (*) And they say, “These animals and crops are forbidden; no one may eat from them except whom we will,” by their claim. And there are those (camels) whose backs are forbidden (by them) and those upon which the name of Allāh is not mentioned—(all of this) an invention of untruth about Him. He will punish them for what they were inventing. (*) And they say, “What is in the bellies of these animals is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our females. But if it is (born) dead, then all of them have shares therein.” He will punish them for their description. Indeed, He is Wise and Knowing. (*) Lost indeed are those who have murdered their own children foolishly out of ignorance and have forbidden what Allāh has provided for them—falsely attributing lies to Allāh. They have certainly strayed and are not (rightly) guided!. (6:137-140).

Many of these people believe; even though it's false, that praying at the grave of a certain holy man is much greater than praying in a mosque, the house of Allāh. So, they congregate to pray in the places of *shirk*, which the Prophet ﷺ prohibited from being converted into mosques, even if they are built on the graves of prophets—while abandoning prayer at places that Allāh has permitted to be constructed and in which His name is proclaimed. Allāh says:

﴿إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَن ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا
مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾

The mosques of Allāh are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and establish prayer and give Zakāh and do not fear anyone except Allāh, for it is expected that they will be among the (rightly) guided.”⁹⁷⁶

The most senior among them would even declare that the Ka’bah serves as a *qibla* for general people (non-initiated), but the *qibla* of the initiated elite is the tomb of such-and-such a saint, whose tomb faces away from the Ka’bah. All Muslim scholars agree that such beliefs constitute glaring disbelief. This topic may require more in-depth discussions in which the opinions of scholars are addressed and more compelling evidence is mentioned than what we have done in this summary.

We have dealt with this issue more thoroughly elsewhere; in this treatise, we have only managed to mention the principal issues pertaining to it, the common evidences thereof, and the objective of the *Shar’ia* as a whole; among dedication of religion to Allāh, devoting worship to Him alone, and not associating partner with Him, and warning against any instrumentation to *shirk*, small or large, which are summarily the fundamental of the true religion of the prophets; the *Tawhīd* of Allāh—asserting that none is worthy of worship in truth but Allāh Alone.

⁹⁷⁶ Surah at-Tawbah, 9:18.

Misinterpretations about Monotheism

MANY SPECULATIVE THINKERS, scholastic theologians, partisans of Free Will and Sufis have made such grave errors about the concept of *Tawhīd* that they have completely altered it.

Thus, a group asserted that *Tawhīd* means a denial of Attributes, rather; a denial of Divine Names. They call themselves *Ahl at-Tawhīd* (the Partisans of Divine Unity). They postulated an entity divested of attributes and an existence absolute, while it is evident on both rational and traditional grounds that such a thing is only possible in the imagination and not in reality. They asserted that an admission of attributes would necessarily result in what they called *tarkīb* (compositeness), and they believed that reason rejects it. Elsewhere, we have uncovered their secrets, revealing the extent of these people's ignorance and how they have been misled by comprehensive and diffuse terms. Another segment conjectured that *Tawhīd* signified nothing more than recognizing Allāh as the only Lord and the Creator of all things. They called this as the Unity of (Divine) Acts.

Some of the scholastic theologians speculated at length in resolving this issue using the argument that co-partnership necessitates a diminishing of power and lapse of perfection, or that independence of each of the two agents in the production of an act is absurd, or any other argument, imagining that the Divine Unity is thereby established, so also that Allāh is One, and that Allāh's divinity is in effect the power to create, etc. Now since it has been established that Allāh alone is capable of creating and that He has no partner among the creatures, this, according to them, is the meaning of our proclamation: *'lā ilāha illa Allāh!*'. However, they are unaware that even pagan Arabs knew such a brand of *Tawhīd*, as alluded by the Qur'an.

﴿وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ﴾

And if you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will definitely say, "Allāh!"⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁷ Sūrah Luq̄mān, 31:25.

And Allāh says:

﴿ قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ ﴾

Ask (them, O Prophet), “To whom belong the earth and all those on it, if you (really) know? (*)” They will reply, “To Allāh!” Say, “Why are you not then mindful?”⁹⁷⁸

He also says:

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others with Him (in worship).⁹⁷⁹

Ibn ‘Abbās and some other scholars said: “You asked them who created the heavens and earth and they replied: “Allāh “, and yet they worshipped other gods besides Him.” This kind of *tawhīd* is only a measure of the incumbent *Tawhīd*; it does not lead to a complete belief in *Tawhīd* and does not free man of the most grave and unforgivable sin of association. In fact, only Allāh deserves trust and adoration; only He should be served, and He should be worshipped only in accordance with His precepts. Then only will faith be completely centered on Allāh. He is that Entity of worship which hearts deify. His being worthy of divinity necessitates the Attributes of Perfection. Only He deserves to be worshipped and loved for His own sake. Any action that is not intended for the sake of Allāh is futile, and worshipping and loving a force apart from Him leads to corruption, as Allāh says:

﴿ لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ﴾

Had there been gods in both of them (the earth and heaven) other than Allāh, then they would have indeed been disrupted.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁸ Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn, 23:84-85.

⁹⁷⁹ Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:106.

⁹⁸⁰ Sūrah al-‘Anbiyā’, 21:22.

This issue had been discussed more extensively in other works.

And we have shown: The meaning of this verse is not as *Ahl al-Kalām* (the Scholastic Theologians) who believe in the concept of objectivity interpreted it, as it implies the Oneness of Allāh. This concept assumes the denial of the presence of an effect whose recurrence indicates its validity.⁹⁸¹

This concept is frequently mentioned when discussing matters pertaining to *reasons* and *inceptions*, which follows first, from the concept of *causes* and *effects*, and second, from the concept of *judgments* and *terminations*, and which is mentioned in relation to the *causes* that are in real sense *goals*, as reflected in the verse: “You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help,” in which the *goal* precedes the *cause*. The issue has also been well enumerated elsewhere. Some of those who attempted to clarify the notion of *Tawḥīd* in the manner of *Ahl at-Tasawwuf* (the Mystics) believed that *Rubūbiyyah* (Lordship of Allāh), is the acme, and its *fanā'* (annihilation) therein is the goal. If one reaches this stage, he is no longer constrained by considerations of good and evil. The situation reached a point where they rejected all commands, both good and negative, as well as the Divine Promise and Threat. They did not differentiate between the Divine Will, which is inclusive of all creatures and the Divine Love and Pleasure reserved for acts of obedience, nor on the one hand between universal precepts which neither righteous nor wicked can transcend because the Divine Might extends to all of creation, and, on the other hand, the religious precepts to which specifically Allāh's prophets and saints respond.

Man who testifies to the Divine Lordship, which encompasses both believer and the unbeliever, the righteous and the wicked, must also testify to the *Ulūbiyyah* (Oneness of Allāh in His worship), which Allāh bestows upon the truly believing worshippers who worship Him, obey His commands, and follow His messengers. Allāh says:

﴿ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ

⁹⁸¹ According to their erroneous belief, they meant that that principle suggests absence of no other god.

﴿الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ﴾

Or should We treat those who believe and do righteous deeds like corrupters in the land? Or should We treat those who fear Allāh like the wicked?⁹⁸²

And He says:

﴿أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ﴾

Or do those who commit evil deeds 'simply' think that We will make them equal—in their life and after their death—to those who believe and do good? How wrong is their judgment!⁹⁸³

Allāh also says:

﴿أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾

Should We then treat the Muslims like the wicked? (*) What is the matter with you? How do you judge?⁹⁸⁴

Unless a man differentiates between Allāh's friends and foes, between His commands and obligations (such as faith, righteous deeds), and what He has forbidden, what He does not like, what He despises (such as disbelief, impiety, and disobedience) though Divine Might, Will, and Creation extend to everything—he is liable to plunge into paganism, the followers of which paganism had declared:

﴿لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا ءَابَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

Had Allāh willed, neither we nor our fathers would have ascribed partners (to Him), nor would we have forbidden anything.⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸² Sūrah Šād, 38:28.

⁹⁸³ Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45:21.

⁹⁸⁴ Sūrah al-Qalam, 68:35-36.

⁹⁸⁵ Sūrah al-'An'ām, 6:148.

It is obligatory to believe in predestination, but not to use it as an excuse; rather, man is required to invoke predestination in hardship, begging Allāh for forgiveness of his sins and transgressions. Allāh says:

﴿فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِدُنْيِكَ﴾

So be patient, for Allāh's promise is certainly true. Seek forgiveness for your shortcomings.⁹⁸⁶

Adam commented to Moses, after being rebuked by Moses for the misery he brought upon humanity by eating the (forbidden) tree: "This was decreed even before I was created!" Adam's response to Moses is consistent with the Qur'anic passage:

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾

No calamity befalls in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a Book, before We bring it into being; indeed, that is easy for Allāh.⁹⁸⁷

And:

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ﴾

No calamity strikes, except it is by Allāh's permission. And whoever believes in Allāh, He will guide his heart.⁹⁸⁸

Some of *Salaf* said: Such is the person who, when afflicted by a calamity, recognizes that it is from Allāh, is pleased with it and accepts it. In this sense, Adam's argument from predestination proceeds. Allāh forbids Adam or any Muslim for that matter from using predestination as a justification for transgression. For if this had been permissible, it would also have been acceptable for Iblis, together with his followers among the jinns and humans, the peoples of Nūh, 'Ad, and Thamud, and all the unbelievers,

⁹⁸⁶ Sūrah Ghafir, 40:55.

⁹⁸⁷ Sūrah al-Hadid, 57:22.

⁹⁸⁸ Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64:11.

the impious, and the rebellious to use predestination as an excuse for their sins. Our Lord would have punished none. We are aware of the dangers inherent in such a proposition, whether viewed from a *Shar'i* or rational perspective. No reasonable person will disagree with this statement, but if he does, then no one should be censured or punished for anything. A person who believes in predestination would seek his attacker if he were attacked. If predestination is considered an excuse, it will be in favor of the attacker, otherwise, predestination cannot be an argument for either side. If the predestination argument were accepted, it would be impossible for people to survive, since every oppressor would be able to exonerate himself on the basis of the excuse, and the victim would be obligated to accept his plea and not punish him. Even if there were a conflict between two proponents of this idea, neither could survive since each could kill the other, disrupt his affairs, and argue all the time about predestination.

Then, when the innovators who rejected the Divine Attributes in the concept of *Tawhīd* and those who have banished compliance with Divine Command carried out their respective positions, they were unable to differentiate between the Creator and the creations. In contrast, they adhere to pantheism, as do the heretics who believe in unification, incarnation and unionism, as well as those who venerate idols and their worshippers, such as Pharaoh, Haman, and their ilk. They equate the existence of the Creator of the earth and heavens with the existence of all existents and claim monotheism, the discovery of *truth*, and gnosis, while being arch-polytheists, misleaders and deluders.

Says one of their gnostics: At the outset, a *sālik* (spiritual wayfarer) distinguishes between obedience and disobedience (i.e., with regard to Divine Injunctions), then envisions an obedience without disobedience (i.e., with reference to predestination) and, finally, is mindful of neither obedience nor disobedience (i.e., with reference to pantheism). He perceives no difference between the concrete individual and one of the species, as all existents fall under the category of existence.

Existence is shared by that which is self-existent and that which is existent-through-another, or that which is necessary-by-itself and that which is contingent-by-itself, just as animals share in the term *animal* and human beings share in that which is designated by the term *man*, despite the self-

evident knowledge that the existential identity of this man is not the existential identity of this horse, indeed not even the existential identity of this animal or his animality and humanity is the existential identity of that animal or his animality or humanity. There is, however, a commonality between them, which is sometimes called as an absolute universal and a common factor, etc. But this does not exist as an absolute and general universal in the external reality beyond the mind. Indeed, in the external reality, only particular existents exist. Therefore, every existent has a particular mode of being that is not shared by anything other. Indeed, any two external existents have nothing in common; they merely resemble one another. This, for instance, has something that corresponds to that, just as this itself corresponds to that, despite the fact that each is distinct in being and attributes from anything else. Such being the case, how about Allāh the Creator and the Exalted!

This has been elaborated elsewhere in greater length—an elaboration most fitting for the subject. This is the point where feet lose their rhythm and minds err, and Allāh guides whoever He wishes into the Straight Path. One who masters these two basic principles about Divine Attributes, creation, and commands is able to distinguish between a praiseworthy, Allāh-pleasing man and a different kind of man, though they both come under predestination. He will also assert that the Creator possesses attributes that distinguish Him from the creatures; and that there is nothing of His Essence in His creatures nor anything of His creatures in His Essence. Then he will proclaim that *Tawhīd* which Allāh sent through His messengers and which He revealed in His Scriptures, to which the Qur'an alerts us in the two *Suras*, viz., *Qul yā ayyuha 'l-kafirun* and *Qul huwa 'l-Lāhu Ahad*.

Qul huwa 'l-Lāhu Ahad is the theme of one-third of the Qur'an, as the concepts of the Qur'an can be classified under three headings: one-third *Tawhīd*, one-third parables, one-third positive and negative instructions. The Qur'an is Allāh's speech. Speech, again, is either *insha'*, i.e., commands about what should and should not be done as well as what is permissible, and *ikhbar*, i.e., accounts either about the Creator or the creatures. This Qur'anic chapter, which contains one-third of *Tawhīd*, describes the Creator. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ تَعَدِلُ ثُلُثُ الْقُرْآنِ

Qul huwa 'l-Lāhu Ahad is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'an.⁹⁸⁹

And the meaning of it being equivalent to one-third of the Qur'an is that its recitation gives the reward of reciting one-third of the Qur'an, but not its equivalent in essence. Similar to one possessing one thousand dinars, and another possessing its equal in different denominations. It is for this reason that one necessarily requires the whole of the Qur'an, and this chapter alone does not suffice, just as a person with only one denomination of the available currency will require other denominations, so, together with *Tawhīd*, one requires commands, both positive and negative, and parables. It also contains a proclamation, both by word and knowledge, of Allāh's Oneness indicated by His Names and Attributes, as for instance, 'Say: "He is Allāh, the One (*) *Allāhu-s-Samad* –Allāh the Eternal."⁹⁹⁰ (This matter has also been well dealt with elsewhere). The chapter *Qul yā ayyu 'l-kāfirūn*, on the other hand, means a proclamation of Allāh's Unity by intent and act. The Qur'an says:

﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝﴾

Say: "O unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship."⁹⁹¹

It seeks to distinguish between those who worship Allāh and those who worship a force other than Allāh, although both acknowledge Allāh as the Lord and Possessor of everything. As it distinguishes the true worshippers of Allāh from those who give their service to other deities, associating partners with Allāh, or between the devoted worshippers of Allāh and who, by virtue of their consideration of Allāh's Total Power over His creatures, equate the believers and the unbelievers. For this, the Prophet ﷺ about this chapter, said:

⁹⁸⁹ Al-Bukhārī (5013, 5015, 6643, and 7374) and Muslim (811 and 812).

⁹⁹⁰ Sūrah al-'Ikhlāṣ, 112:1-2.

⁹⁹¹ Sūrah al-Kāfirūn, 109:1-2.

إِنَّهَا بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ الشَّرِكِ

Verily, it is a disavowal of Shirk.⁹⁹²

Furthermore, the chapter of ‘*Qul huwa ‘l-Lāhu Ahad*’ establishes the *Dhāt* (Essence [Personal Self]) of Allāh and His Divine Names and Attributes, the belief that distinguishes true believers who establish for Allāh, the Creator, the One, and the Eternal, His Attributes, from the *Mu’atṭilūn* (the disruptors), those who deny Allāh of His Names and Attributes, the ilk of Pharaoh and his kinds, among the advocates of *Tā’atīl*—the denial of Allāh Attributes, and *Juhūd*—the denial of Allāh’s Presence, though acknowledge Him inwardly, as informed by Allāh:

﴿وَحَدُّوا بِهَا وَأَسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا﴾

And they rejected them, while their (inner) selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness.⁹⁹³

And Allāh reports Mūsā as saying to Pharaoh:

﴿لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَمَا أَنزَلَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَابِرٍ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ
يَفْرَعُونَ مُنْبُورًا﴾

Moses replied, “You know well that none has sent these (signs) down except the Lord of the heavens and the earth as insights. And I really think that you, O Pharaoh, are doomed.”⁹⁹⁴

Allāh sent His Prophets to establish comprehensively what is to be attributed to Him and to be concise on the side of expatriation. Consequently, they established Allāh’s Names and Attributes in great detail; while denying His resemblance to His creatures abstractly. However, those who oppose the prophets, among them the *mu’atīlah* (disruptors), the *mutafalsafah* (philosophers), and others, reversed the

⁹⁹² Authentic, Abū Dawūd (5055) and at-Tirmidhī (3403).

⁹⁹³ Sūrah an-Naml, 27:14.

⁹⁹⁴ Sūrah al-‘Isrā’, 17:102.

issue by establishing Allāh's Attributes concisely, and contrarily, while expatriating they are exhaustive. They say: He is not this or that! Or He is not such and such. In defining Allāh's Attributes, they assert: "He exists without presence," or "He exists just absolutely,"⁹⁹⁵ accepting the Greek philosophical tradition.⁹⁹⁶

But for the Messengers, their methodology was as explained in the Qur'an, and that is the reason why Allāh praised them. He says:

﴿سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾﴾

Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honor and Power, above what they claim! (*) And peace upon the messengers (*) And praise be to Allāh, Lord of all worlds.⁹⁹⁷

Allāh informs us in the Qur'an that He is the Living, the Everlasting, All-knowing, All-wise, All-forgiving, All-compassionate, All-hearing, All-seeing, All-glorious, Who created the heavens and the earth, and what lies between them in six days, and then rose over His Throne, Who spoke to Mūsā (Moses) directly, Who appeared to the mountain, thereby crumbled it to dust, Who is pleased with the believers and wrathful unto unbelievers, and similar other Names and Attributes.

On the side of expatriation, Allāh says:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

Like Him there is none.⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁵ They meant that He exists without any attributes, of which His presence over His Throne is. And that is the belief of all the sects that deny Allāh's Attributes, they claim Allāh's existence, but without being present anywhere, all in the denial of His presence over His Throne, above the heavens in the manner befitting His Majesty. Allāh exists and He's present over His Throne, there is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

⁹⁹⁶ The author then reiterated, in some view lines, their belief about 'self-existence and existence -through-another' he did mention shortly.

⁹⁹⁷ Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt, 37:180-182.

⁹⁹⁸ Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:11.

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

And equal to Him is none.⁹⁹⁹

﴿هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا﴾

Do you know of anyone who is similar to Him in Name?¹⁰⁰⁰

﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا﴾

And do not set up rivals to Allāh.¹⁰⁰¹

In these verses, Allāh expatriates of Himself attributes that resemble those of His creatures, establishing that there is none like Him, not in His Holy *Dhāt* (Self/Essence); unto Whom His Names and Attributes are ascribed, and not in His Attributes or Deeds.

﴿سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تَسْبِيْحٌ لِّهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَاْلْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ وَاِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِۦ وَلٰكِنْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿٤٤﴾﴾

Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim! (*)
The seven heavens, the earth, and all those in them glorify Him.
There is not a single thing that does not glorify His praises—but
you (simply) cannot comprehend their glorification. He is indeed
Most Forbearing, All-Forgiving.¹⁰⁰²

The true believer believes in Allāh and His Most Beautiful Names,
calls Him by those Names, and avoid doing shirks by blaspheming His
Names and Signs, as He commanded:

﴿وَلِلّٰهِ الْاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنٰى فَادْعُوْهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوْا الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْ اَسْمَائِهٖ﴾

⁹⁹⁹ Sūrah al-'Ikhḷāṣ, 112:5.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Sūrah Maryam, 19:65.

¹⁰⁰¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:22.

¹⁰⁰² Sūrah al-'Isrā', 17:43-44.

Allāh has the Most Beautiful Names. So call upon Him by them, and keep away from those who Abuse His Names. They will be punished for what they used to do.¹⁰⁰³

And He says;

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ﴾

Indeed, those who Abuse Our revelations are not hidden from Us.¹⁰⁰⁴

Allāh alone does he calls upon and Allāh alone does he worships, and in his worship he does not associate any force with Allāh, and shuns the road of the polytheists, regarding whom Allāh says:

﴿ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ۗ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ۗ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴾

Say, “Invoke those you have claimed (as gods) besides Him, for they do not possess the (ability for) removal of adversity from you or (for its) transfer (to someone else). (*) Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, (striving as to) which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.”¹⁰⁰⁵

Allāh says also:

﴿ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ شَرِكٍ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ ظَهِيرٍ ۗ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴾

Say, (O Muḥammad), “Invoke those you claim (as deities) besides Allāh.” They do not possess an atom’s weight [of ability] in the heavens

¹⁰⁰³ Sūrah al-‘A‘rāf, 7:180.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:40.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Sūrah al-‘Isrā’, 17:56-57.

or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership (with Him), nor is there for Him from among them any assistant (*) And intercession does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits. (And those wait) until, when terror is removed from their hearts, they will say (to one another), "What has your Lord said?" They will say, "The truth." And He is the Most High, the Grand.¹⁰⁰⁶

These expressions have explanations and wisecracks that can serve as platforms for other lofty discussions. Therefore, let the believer exert himself to strengthen his knowledge and faith, and take Allāh as his guide, helper, controller, and protector, because He is the best protector and best helper to have. Your Lord is sufficient as a guide and helper. And if he so desires, let him utter this supplication reported by Muslim, Abū Dawud and others on the authority of 'Ā'ishah:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ افْتَتَحَ صَلَاتَهُ: "اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ، وَمِيكَائِيلَ، وَإِسْرَافِيلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ، اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ، إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ."

When the Prophet got up at night, he would begin his prayer by saying: "O Allāh, Lord of Jibra'il, Mika'il and Israfil, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the seen and the unseen, You are the arbitrator between Your servants in that which they have disputed. Guide me by Your permission to the truth in that which they have differed; for verily You guide whom You will to a Straight Path."¹⁰⁰⁷

So because, Allāh says:

﴿كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً...﴾

The people were one community...

¹⁰⁰⁶ Sūrah Saba', 34:22-23.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Muslim (770) Abū Dawūd (767), at-Tirmidhī (3420), an-Nasa'ī (1625), and Ibn Mājah (1357).

I.e., subsequently, as the Sūrah Yūnus has it ‘they differed.’¹⁰⁰⁸ It was said that the copy of the report of Ibn Mas’ūd (of the verse of al-Baqarah) contained this addition as well.

...فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ
 بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اختلفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
 الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ
 وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿

Then Allāh sent the prophets as bringers good tidings and as warners and He sent down with them the Book in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed; and none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it—after the clear proofs came to them, out of mutual jealousy among themselves. And Allāh guided those who believed to the truth, concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission; and Allāh guides whomsoever He wills to a Straight Path.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁸ ﴿وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا﴾ “Mankind were but one community, then they differed” (Sūrah Yūnus, 10:19).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:213.