

Islamic Creed Made Easy

EXPLANATION OF SULLAM AL-WUSUL

COMMENTARY BY

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Commentator's Preface

In the name of Allah. Praise belongs to Allah, and may Allah's blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, upon his wives and descendants, and upon everyone who follows him and adheres to his Sunnah until the Day of Judgement.

To proceed: in this book I have commented on the poem Sullam al-Wusul by the learned Shaykh Hafiz ibn Ahmad al-Hakami, may Allah have mercy on him. It is one of the poems that became well known among Ahl al-Sunnah, the people who follow the Sunnah, because of the soundness and clarity of its content, its agreement with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and the creed of the righteous early generations, the Salaf. Along with that, it is distinguished by good composition, easy expression, and subjects suited to ordinary people.

This is what I intended in this explanation: to present something for ordinary people and non-specialists that acquaints them with the foundations of creed and its most important questions, without entering into excessive detail or prolonged debate over disputed matters. My aim was simply to establish the issues for them in an easy and accessible way. For that reason the explanation is concise. I have limited myself to explaining each issue in language people can understand, by Allah's permission, while giving its evidence from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His noble Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

By Allah's favour, my usual practice is not to cite anything but an authentic hadith. If I mention a weak report for a particular reason, I make its weakness clear, by Allah's permission. I have also mentioned some of what earlier scholars transmitted from our predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them.

I should also point out that although I tried in this explanation to follow the meanings intended by the poet, on some occasions I deliberately moved to another sound meaning that the wording of the verse can bear because I needed to discuss that issue.

I also rearranged the material concerning the events of the Day of Resurrection according to the sequence that appeared strongest to me. I do not think the Shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him, intended to arrange all of those events according to the order in which they occur. I changed the order in a few other places as well.

I added headings for the individual topics, while the chapter headings are from the poet, may Allah have mercy on him.

The poet himself explained this poem in a beneficial and detailed commentary that a student of knowledge should not do without, and I recommend it.

Finally, I remind the reader that only Allah, His Book, and His Messenger are free from error. We are not. Whatever you find in my words that agrees with the Book and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Companions and those who followed them well is a favour from Allah. Whatever conflicts with that is an error from me and from Satan. I ask Allah to make it clear to me before I die and to make it easy for me to return from it. I ask Allah to make what I have written a proof for me and not against me, to record its reward for me, to make it sincerely for His Face, and to guide you, reader, to the truth and to righteousness in all your affairs.

Written by Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din
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22 December 2017

Sullam al-Wusul to the Knowledge of the Foundations

Concerning Tawhid - affirming Allah's oneness and worshipping Him alone - and Following the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him

Introduction to the Poem

1

I begin with the name of Allah, seeking His help, pleased with Him as the One who directs all affairs and gives aid.

EXPLANATION

I begin my words seeking help through the name of Allah. I am pleased with Allah as my Lord: the One who governs and directs His creation by His will, wisdom, and power, and aids me in what I am about to say.

Saying "In the name of Allah" is prescribed at the beginning of every good matter. We begin our affairs seeking Allah's help by His name. The intended meaning is: I begin, I write, I eat, I drink, and so on, seeking help by the name of Allah - or, in meaning, seeking help from Allah Himself.

2

Praise belongs to Allah for the way He guided us to the path of truth and chose us for it.

EXPLANATION

I praise Allah abundantly in proportion to the greatness of His favour upon us in guiding us to Islam and the Sunnah, which are the path of truth and the road leading to His pleasure. We praise Him for choosing this guidance for us without any power or strength from ourselves. The people of Paradise will say: "Praise belongs to Allah, who guided us to this; we would never have been guided had Allah not guided us." [al-A'raf 7:43]

Praise means abundant and emphatic praise of the One praised. When we praise Allah, we praise Him with every kind of true praise. Praise in this absolute sense belongs to Allah alone.

3

I praise Him, exalted is He, and thank Him; and for the evils of my own deeds I seek His forgiveness.

EXPLANATION

I praise Him for His favours - I commend Him and speak well of Him for the blessings He has given me - and I thank Him for them. Allah says: "Remember Me, and I will remember you; be grateful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me." [al-Baqarah 2:152]

Gratitude to Allah is obligatory. It is shown by drawing near to Him through obedience, while asking Him to forgive our sins and overlook them. Allah says of the people of taqwa - those who are mindful of Allah and fear Him: "Those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who forgives sins except Allah? - and they do not knowingly persist in what they have done." [Ali 'Imran 3:135]

4

I seek His help to attain what pleases Him, and I ask for His gentleness in what He has decreed.

EXPLANATION

I ask Him to help me attain His pleasure.

Allah says: "Say: He is the Most Merciful; we believe in Him and upon Him we rely." [al-Mulk 67:29] We rely upon Allah in all our affairs.

"I ask for His gentleness in what He has decreed" means that I ask Him to be gentle with me in what He has decreed for me. The

Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Nothing repels the decree except supplication." **[R1]**

This shows the error of the expression, "O Allah, I do not ask You to repel the decree; I only ask You to be gentle in it," when it is said as though repelling a decree were impossible. There is no problem with asking Allah for gentleness in what He decrees. The problem is with a formulation implying that asking Him to repel a decree is impossible, or that repelling it would somehow be difficult for Allah. Allah is the One who decrees, and He is the One who repels one decree by means of another decree, including through the supplication of His servant. Asking Him for gentleness in a decree is likewise good.

The Two Testimonies

5-6

Then, with certainty, I testify to the testimony of sincerity: that none has the right to be worshipped except the Most Merciful, who is exalted above every defect and deficiency.

EXPLANATION

After praising Allah and praising Him highly, I testify, affirm, and acknowledge with certain conviction the testimony of sincerity: *la ilaha illa Allah*. Its meaning is that no one has the right to be worshipped except Allah. Allah says: "They were only commanded to worship Allah, making the religion sincerely His, inclining to pure monotheism." [al-Bayyinah 98:5]

References

[R1] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2139 (al-Tirmidhi called it *hasan gharib*; al-Albani graded it *hasan*); Musnad Ahmad 22438 (graded *hasan* by the editors); al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak 1814 (authenticated by al-Hakim).

Allah is exalted above every defect and deficiency. It is not permissible to attribute the deficiencies of creation to Him.

7

And I testify that Muhammad, the best of His creation, came to us with clear proofs and guidance.

EXPLANATION

I testify that Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to us with the clear signs from Allah that distinguish truth from falsehood, and with guidance encompassing everything to which the Messenger directed us. All of it leads to the truth. Allah says: "Indeed, you guide to a straight path - the path of Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth." [al-Shura 42:52-53] Here, "you guide" means: you point out and direct.

As for calling him the best of all creation, this matter requires care. It is established that he is the master of the children of Adam. He said: "I am the master of mankind on the Day of Resurrection." [R2] Some among Ahl al-Sunnah say that he is the best of all created beings, including the angels. It is preferable, however, to say that this comparison is not one of the matters Allah commanded us to enter into.

8

He sent His Messenger to all mankind and jinn [E1] with light, guidance, and the religion of truth.

EXPLANATION

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is Allah's Messenger to all creation - meaning here human beings and jinn.

Explanations

[E1] Jinn are created beings normally unseen by humans. Like human beings, they are commanded to worship Allah and can believe or disbelieve.

References

[R2] Sahih al-Bukhari 4712; Sahih Muslim 194.

The verse is not saying that he was sent with a law to angels, inanimate objects, and animals. Allah says: "We have not sent you except to all mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know." [Saba 34:28] The Prophet said: "I was sent to all people." [R3]

Allah sent him with light. Every ruling, teaching, wisdom, and manner he brought illuminates hearts and sight and enables the believer to distinguish truth from falsehood just as physical light enables a person to distinguish visible things that cannot be made out in darkness.

For this reason, the people of Islam who hold firmly to Allah's revealed law are the people of light, while those who turn people away from the truth are the people of darkness. Whoever describes those who hold firmly to Allah's religion as "people of darkness" has reversed the Qur'anic description. Allah says: "Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out of darkneses into light. As for those who disbelieve, their allies are the taghut; they bring them out of light into darkneses." [al-Baqarah 2:257] Allah says: "Those who deny Our signs are deaf and dumb, in darkneses." [al-An'am 6:39] He says: "Alif Lam Ra. A Book We sent down to you so that you may bring people out of darkneses into light, by their Lord's permission, to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy." [Ibrahim 14:1] The Messenger came with guidance and the religion of truth. Allah says: "O mankind, there has come to you a proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light." [al-Nisa 4:174] He also says: "O People of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you much of what you used to conceal of the Book and overlooking much. There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book. By it Allah guides those who seek His pleasure to the ways of peace, brings them from darkneses into light by His permission, and guides them to a straight path." [al-Ma'idah 5:15-16]

References

[R3] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 1553; Musnad Ahmad 22209. Al-Albani graded it authentic, as did the editors of Musnad Ahmad.

Sending Blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad

9

May our Lord bless and honour him, together with his family and Companions, continually and without end.

EXPLANATION

Allah says: "Indeed Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe, send blessings and peace upon him." [al-Ahzab 33:56]

When this verse was revealed, the Companions asked: "Messenger of Allah, how should we send blessings upon you?" He taught them to say: "O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad, his wives and his descendants, as You sent blessings upon the family of Ibrahim; and bless Muhammad, his wives and his descendants, as You blessed the family of Ibrahim. You are Praiseworthy, Glorious. " **[R4]**

Sending blessings upon the Prophet means asking Allah to purify, praise, and honour him. It is permissible and recommended to invoke Allah's blessings upon all of His prophets. Such a supplication can also be made for believers in principle, but it was not the normal practice of the Salaf to use the formula of sending blessings for people other than the prophets. Since doing so may sound strange to people, it is better left, and one can supplicate for purification and blessing for other believers without using that particular formula.

Introducing the Poem

10

To proceed: this poem concerns the foundations for anyone who wishes to know the path of the Messenger.

EXPLANATION

This is a poem in which a body of knowledge is arranged in verse. It concerns the foundations of the religion, which are called creed. They

References

[R4] Sahih al-Bukhari 6360; Sahih Muslim 407.

are called foundations because the religion is built upon them. If a person's creed is corrupt at its foundations, his religion is corrupt even if he prays and fasts. How can the worship of one who does not know the God for whom he acts be sound? How can worship be sound from someone who thinks evil thoughts about his Lord or describes Him with what does not befit Him - such as claiming that He is mixed throughout creation, that He resembles created beings, or that He has a child? Worship is not sound without knowing the One worshipped.

Yet not every question of creed is a foundation whose corruption destroys the whole religion. There are comprehensive foundations: knowing Allah and distinguishing Him from creation; knowing that He alone deserves worship and that worship of another is not permitted; knowing His Messenger by the qualities that distinguish him, being certain of his truthfulness and the obligation to follow him; knowing Allah's religion, Islam, and what distinguishes it from other religions; and knowing the Book of Allah, believing what it contains and knowing the obligation to follow it.

Then there are detailed matters that fall under those foundations. Under knowing Allah, for example, is knowing that al-Samad is one of Allah's names. A person who thinks it is merely a description or does not understand its meaning has a deficiency in knowledge, but his religion is not destroyed because of that. The same applies to details such as knowing the hadith that Allah's veil is light and that if He removed it the splendors of His Face would burn as far as His sight reaches of His creation, or knowing that Allah laughs. Someone ignorant of such details is not simply declared corrupt in creed. Likewise, belief in the prophets includes detailed matters. Knowing that Dhu al-Nun is the name of a prophet is one such detail. Questions such as whether Khalid ibn Sinan al-'Absi was a prophet ^[E2] or whether Daniel was a prophet ^[E3] are not matters without which a person's religion cannot be sound. A person

Explanations

^[E2] Khalid ibn Sinan al-'Absi was a righteous man who lived about fifty years before the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and called people to obedience to Allah. Some historians claimed that he was a prophet. This is not established, because in the hadith of Abu Sufyan in the two Sahih collections, Heraclius asked whether anyone had claimed prophethood before Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Sufyan answered no.

^[E3] A report from 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, states that Daniel was a prophet; see Ibn Abi Shaybah 33818. Daniel is well known among the People of the Book, although most Muslims know little about him.

who differs on such questions is not simply called a disbeliever from the outset; the ruling depends on the proof, the strength of the report, and whether it reached him.

There are also subtle questions of two kinds. The first are matters about which the early scholars were generally silent and which ordinary people would never have needed to enter had people of falsehood not introduced unsound doctrines. Examples include technical disputes connected with Allah's attributes, the word "limit," the succession of events, whether one should use the expression "Allah has a place" when affirming His highness, and the philosophical innovation of substance and accident. These are not matters everyone should enter into. Keeping ordinary hearts away from them is safer.

The second kind are questions in which a recognised disagreement existed among the Salaf, such as whether the Pen was created before the Footstool or the Footstool before the Pen, and whether the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saw Allah during the heavenly Ascension (Mi'raj). There is no problem, by Allah's permission, in recognising such disagreements without turning them into tests of the foundations of faith. The poem is written for one who wants to know the Messenger's path and way.

11

One whose request I could not refuse asked me for it, so I complied with the request.

EXPLANATION

The poem was requested by someone whose request could not be rejected: Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Qar'awi, under whom Hafiz al-Hakami studied. This is an example of the respect scholars showed their teachers and of their good treatment of those who had the favour of teaching them Allah's religion.

12

So I answered despite my inability and fear, relying upon the All-Powerful, the Everlasting.

EXPLANATION

When the request was made, I knew that I was unable to do it full justice and feared error, because writing on creed carries tremendous responsibility. It is speech concerning the unseen. Whoever writes in this field must fear Allah, say only what he knows from the Book and Sunnah, and carefully pursue what agrees with them. To say otherwise about Allah's religion is to fabricate against Allah.

His "fear" is fear of making a mistake. He said in his own explanation that in this field "one issue is greater than the world and all that is in it." His reliance upon "the All-Powerful, the Everlasting" is reliance upon Allah, asking Him to grant success in saying what is correct and to protect him from error and slipping.

Introduction: What the Servant Was Created For, the First Obligation upon Him, the Covenant Taken from Him in the Back of His Father Adam, and What He Is Going Toward The Purpose of Creation

13-14

Know that Allah, majestic and exalted, did not leave creation neglected and without purpose. Rather, He created creation so that they would worship Him and single Him out in divinity.

EXPLANATION

The first thing you need to know is why creation exists. This is an important question for every thinking person. A sensible person does

not find himself somewhere without asking, "Why am I here?" Allah did not create the heavens, the earth, and what is between them as an aimless game. He says: "We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in play. Had We intended to take an amusement, We could have taken it from Ourselves, if We were to do so." [al-Anbiya 21:16-17]

He created creation to worship Him. Allah says: "I did not create jinn and mankind except that they worship Me." [al-Dhariyat 51:56] He also says: "The seven heavens, the earth, and whoever is in them glorify Him. There is nothing except that it glorifies Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Forbearing, Forgiving." [al-Isra 17:44] All created things glorify Allah and worship Him in the manner Allah has given them.

Because rational creatures - human beings and jinn - need guidance showing them the truth, Allah did not leave them neglected. He sent messengers to guide them to the purpose for which they were created. Allah says: "We certainly sent into every nation a messenger: Worship Allah and avoid the taghut." [al-Nahl 16:36]

The Covenant Allah Took from the Children of Adam

15-16

Long ago He brought forth from Adam's back his offspring like tiny particles, and He took the covenant from them that no lord besides Him has the right to be worshipped.

EXPLANATION

When Allah created Adam, He brought his descendants forth and made them testify to His lordship. We all testified to that. Allah says: "When your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, we testify' - so that you do not say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were unaware of this,' or say, 'Our fathers associated partners before us and we were descendants after them; will

You destroy us for what the falsifiers did?' Thus We explain the signs so that they may return." [al-A'raf 7:172-174]

Our souls were truly created before our bodies, according to what is transmitted from Ishaq ibn Rahawayh and others. ^[R5] Allah made us truly testify to Him and took this covenant from us.

I also hold - and Allah knows best - that the offer of the Trust mentioned in the verse, "We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains; they refused to bear it and feared it, but man bore it. He is indeed ever unjust and ignorant" [al-Ahzab 33:72], occurred at that same station, because no other station has been mentioned to us at which we can confidently place that offer.

The Trust means that Allah gave us reason, the capacity to choose and act, and the possibility of obedience and disobedience, then charged us with obligations. Whoever fulfills them enters Paradise and enjoys its blessings; whoever turns away enters the Fire and is punished there. We accepted this, while other created things refused it out of fear of Allah, disobedience, and punishment. Those created things ultimately pass away, while our end is lasting life either in bliss or - Allah protect us - in the Fire. Reports with this meaning are transmitted from Ibn 'Abbas, al-Dahhak, Mujahid, and others among the Salaf. ^[R6]

Sending the Messengers to Guide People

17-18

After this He sent His messengers and sent down the Book with truth, so that they would remind people of this covenant, warn them, and give them good news.

EXPLANATION

When we were created in this worldly life, we could not simply remember that immense event by ourselves because it occurred in

References

^[R5] Ishaq ibn Rahawayh said: "The people of knowledge are agreed that the souls were before the bodies." Ibn 'Abd al-Barr transmitted it in al-Istidhkar, 3/107.

^[R6] See Ta'zim Qadr al-Salah, report 500 and following, and al-Mustadrak, Ta'sil edition, report 3626 and following.

another life and another state of existence. The same person does not remember how he lived in his mother's womb. The very nature of the test also requires that we not retain an ordinary waking memory of Allah speaking to us and presenting the choice to us; if that scene were present in everyone's memory, virtually no one would associate partners with Allah.

Even Iblis, although accursed and disobedient, did not deny Allah's oneness or His attributes, nor did he worship another as Allah. He knew Allah and had heard Him. His disbelief came through wicked disobedience and rebellion.

Allah therefore sent messengers to remind us of the covenant and command us to believe. Praise belongs to Allah for granting us success in obeying them.

The Messengers Establish the Proof against People

17, 19

After this He sent His messengers and sent down the Book with truth, so that people would have no argument against Allah, mighty and majestic.

EXPLANATION

If people could have argued before Allah on the basis of forgetfulness, Allah sent them messengers. They therefore have no argument after the messengers have conveyed the truth clearly. Allah says: "Messengers as bearers of good news and warners, so that mankind would have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah is Mighty, Wise." [al-Nisa 4:165]

Along with the messengers, Allah sent down revealed books. He says: "He sent down upon you the Book in truth, confirming what came before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel before, as guidance for mankind, and He sent down the Criterion. Those who disbelieve in Allah's signs will have a severe punishment. Allah is Mighty, possessor of retribution." [Ali 'Imran 3:3-4]

20-21

Whoever believes the messengers in truth has fulfilled that covenant. That is salvation from the punishment of the Fire and inheritance of the everlasting home.

EXPLANATION

Whoever believes the messengers, follows them, and does not break obedience to what they brought is saved. Whoever turns away from them or turns others away from what they call to is destroyed. Allah says: "We do not send the messengers except as bearers of good news and warners. Whoever believes and reforms will have no fear, nor will they grieve. But those who deny Our signs will be touched by punishment because of their persistent disobedience." [al-An'am 6:48-49]

Rejecting the Messengers

22-23

Whoever denies them and the Book and persists in turning away and refusing has broken both covenants and deserves disgrace in both worlds.

EXPLANATION

Whoever turns away from the prophets, denies them, or refuses to follow them has broken two covenants: first, the covenant Allah took from us; and second, Allah's command that we follow His messengers. Allah says: "Children of Adam, whenever messengers from among you come to you reciting My signs, whoever has taqwa and reforms will have no fear, nor will they grieve. But those who deny Our signs and act arrogantly toward them are the people of the Fire; they will remain there." [al-A'raf 7:35-36]

The denier therefore deserves disgrace in this world and the Hereafter. Allah says concerning those who disbelieve: "I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers." [Ali 'Imran 3:56]

Worldly punishment, however, is not required to appear continuously. Allah may, in His wisdom, allow people to continue wandering blindly in rebellion. He says: "When they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened for them the doors of every good thing, until, when they rejoiced in what they had been given, We seized them suddenly and they were plunged into despair." [al-An'am 6:44] Allah may leave them for a time and pour worldly provision upon them, then destroy them and disgrace them when He wills.

Allah may also decree that disbelievers be disgraced at the hands of believers. Yet special divine victory is tied to believers truly fulfilling the qualities of iman (faith). Allah says: "Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands, disgrace them, grant you victory over them, and heal the hearts of believing people." [al-Tawbah 9:14]

Iman is a rank higher than merely entering Islam. If Muslims do not attain that rank, they are not automatically entitled to a special victory from Allah. Victory may come through the worldly causes Allah has placed in creation - strength, preparation, and planning - or it may come as a special aid from Allah to the believers. If people neither deserve that special aid through iman nor build sufficient worldly strength through the available causes, political and military power may remain with disbelievers until Allah wills otherwise. We ask Allah to grant us iman and victory.

Chapter: Tawhid Is of Two Types - The First Is Tawhid of Knowledge and Affirmation

The First Obligation upon People

24

The first obligation upon the servants is to know the Most Merciful through tawhid.

EXPLANATION

The first obligation upon people, both in precedence and in importance, is to know Allah through tawhid: to know that He is Allah, that there is no true god besides Him, and that no one besides Him deserves worship. Allah says: "He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command upon whomever He wills among His servants: Warn that there is no god except Me, so fear Me." [al-Nahl 16:2]

The prophets therefore began by calling people to single out Allah in worship. When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Mu'adh to Yemen, he said: "Let the first thing to which you call them be to single out Allah in worship." Another ^[R7]

authentic wording says: "Let the first thing to which you call them be the worship of Allah." ^[R8] Another says: "Call them to testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah." ^[R9] These authentic wordings explain one another.

Merely knowing that Allah exists, or that there is a Creator, is an item of knowledge in the mind. By itself it is not the iman required by the religion. Iman is speech and action, as the Salaf consistently affirmed.

References

^[R7] Sahih al-Bukhari 7372.

^[R8] Sahih al-Bukhari 1458; Sahih Muslim 19.

^[R9] Sahih al-Bukhari 1395; Sahih Muslim 19.

25

Tawhid is greater than every command, and it is of two types, for whoever understands.

EXPLANATION

Tawhid is greater than every other command because if a person destroys tawhid he disbelieves, and no part of the religion is sound without it.

Tawhid can be divided into two types: knowledge and action. This division is taken from the statements of the righteous Salaf. Ibn 'Ata ibn Abi Rabah, one of the Followers, said: "Their faith was their saying: Allah created us, He provides for us, and He causes us to die. This was faith together with shirk in their worship of another besides Him." [R10] Amir al-Sha'bi, a hadith scholar among the Followers, said: "They knew that Allah was their Lord and their Creator, while they associated partners with Him." [R11] Mujahid ibn Jabr said: "They knew that Allah was their Lord, their Creator, and their Provider, yet along with that they committed shirk." [R12]

The First Type of Tawhid

26

Affirm the Lord, majestic and exalted, together with His most beautiful names and His highest attributes.

EXPLANATION

This is tawhid of knowledge: believing in Allah, acknowledging Him, and affirming the names and attributes by which He informed us of Himself through revelation. The expression "the Divine Essence" has been used by many scholars, but it is preferable not to make it a standard expression because this technical use is not itself found in the Book and Sunnah. [R13]

References

- [R10] Al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, 4/593.
 [R11] Al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, 4/593.
 [R12] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, 16/286.
 [R13] Al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, 4/593.

27

He is the majestic Lord, the Greatest, the Creator, the Originator, and the Fashioner.

EXPLANATION

Allah says: "He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner; to Him belong the most beautiful names." [al-Hashr 59:24]

Allah's Attributes

28

He is the Originator of all creatures, their Maker, bringing them forth without any prior model.

EXPLANATION

Allah created human beings without copying any previous design. He created their bodies, minds, bodily functions, emotions, instincts, and senses. He created the systems by which food is converted into energy, cells are produced and damaged cells replaced, information is carried from the organs of sense to the brain, interpreted and understood, and the body moves, sleeps, and grows. He created this entire cosmic order with its complexity and precision without any prior model.

29

He is the First, beginning without a beginning, and the Last, remaining without end.

EXPLANATION

He is the First, before whom there was nothing, and He is the One who began the creation of things. He is the Last, after whom there is nothing. Allah says: "He is the First and the Last, the Most High and the Most Near, and He knows all things." [al-Hadid 57:3] The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said in supplication: "O Allah, You are the First, and there is nothing before You; You are the Last, and there is nothing after You. " [R14]

References

[R14] Sahih Muslim 2713.

30

He is the One, the unique and peerless, the All-Powerful, the First without beginning, al-Samad, al-Barr, al-Muhaymin, the Most High.

EXPLANATION

Al-Ahad means the One who has no second. "The unique and peerless" is a description here, not one of the established divine names; it means that Allah is alone and unmatched in His acts and attributes.

Al-Qadir means the Possessor of perfect power. The technical word "eternal without beginning" was introduced by later theological schools, so it is preferable to use the revealed name "the First" instead.

Al-Samad is the One to whom creation turns and resorts in its needs.

Allah says: "Say: He is Allah, One; Allah, al-Samad." [al-Ikhlās 112:1-2]

Al-Barr is the One who does abundant good to His servants: "Indeed, He is al-Barr, the Merciful." [al-Tur 52:28] Al-Muhaymin is the One who has complete oversight and authority over His creation, so nothing escapes His dominion. Allah says: "He is Allah, besides whom there is no god: the King, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Giver of Security, the Overseer, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Supremely Great. Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him." [al-Hashr 59:23]

Al-'Ali, the Most High, is the One possessing highness and elevation: "He is the Most High, the Magnificent." [al-Baqarah 2:255]

Allah's Highness

30-31

He is the One, the unique, the All-Powerful, al-Samad, al-Barr, al-Muhaymin, the Most High: high through overpowering dominion and high in rank and majesty, exalted above rivals and helpers.

EXPLANATION

Highness is among Allah's attributes. It includes the highness of dominion and overpowering authority over His creation: "He is the Subduer above His servants." [al-An'am 6:18] It also includes highness of

status, greatness, and rank: He is "Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, the Great, the Most High." [al-Ra'd 13:9] He has no rival who contests His kingdom and no helper upon whom He depends, because He is exalted above any need for assistance.

32-33

Likewise, He possesses highness and aboveness over His servants without our knowing how; and despite this He fully sees them and has complete knowledge and authority over them.

EXPLANATION

Highness also includes the highness of Allah Himself: He is above His created beings and over His Throne. Allah says: "They fear their Lord above them and do what they are commanded." [al-Nahl 16:50] He says: "Indeed your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then rose over the Throne." [al-A'raf 7:54] He says: "Do you feel secure from the One above the heaven that He will not cause the earth to swallow you?" [al-Mulk 67:16]

Despite His highness over creation, nothing is hidden from Him. Allah says: "He is Allah in the heavens, and on earth He knows your secret and what you make public, and He knows what you earn." [al-An'am 6:3] In Arabic, what is above can be called sama'. Imam al-Shafi'i said: "The One above the heaven is the One above the heaven, over the Throne." He cited: "The Most Merciful rose over the Throne," and said: "Everything above is called sama'. The Throne is above the heavens, and Allah is over the Throne as He informed us, without asking how, distinct from creation and not touching it. Nothing is like Him; He is the Hearing, the Seeing." [R15] Allah also says: "He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then rose over the Throne. He knows what enters the earth and what emerges from it, what descends from heaven and what ascends into it. He is with you wherever you are, and Allah sees what you do." [al-Hadid 57:4] He says: "The Most Merciful rose over the Throne. To Him belongs what is in the heavens, what is on the earth, what is between them, and what is beneath the soil. If you speak aloud,

References

[R15] Al-Shafi'i, Tafsir, on the verse "Do you feel secure from the One above the heaven?" [al-Mulk 67:16].

He knows the secret and what is even more hidden." [Ta Ha 20:5-7] The Jahmiyyah [E4] denied this highness, and other innovated sects followed them in that denial. Al-Karaji al-Qassab, who died in 360 AH, took the verse "They fear their Lord above them" as evidence that Allah Himself is above, over the Throne, while His knowledge encompasses everything. He cited the report of the Nubian [E5] slave woman whom the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked, "Where is Allah?" She replied, "Above the heaven." He asked, "Who am I?" She replied, "You are the Messenger of Allah." He said: "Free her, for she is a believer." [R16]

Sa'id ibn 'Amir al-Duba'i, who died in 208 AH, said: "The Jews, Christians, and the adherents of the religions agree that Allah is over the Throne, while the Jahmiyyah say that nothing is over the Throne." [R17] Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, after leaving the methods of the theologians [E6], said: "They agreed that Allah is above His heavens, over His Throne, and not on the earth." He cited the verses: "Do you feel secure from the One above the heaven," "To Him ascends good speech, and righteous action raises it," and "The Most Merciful rose over the Throne." He said: "Its meaning is not merely that He conquered it or took possession of it, because Allah has always had complete dominion over everything." [R18]

Explanations

[E4] The Jahmiyyah were a theological sect associated with Jahm ibn Safwan. They denied Allah's highness above creation and rejected many of His attributes.

[E5] Here, "Nubian" refers to peoples living along the Nile; the slave woman in this report was from them.

[E6] The theologians intended here include the Jahmiyyah, the Mu'tazilah, those later called the Ash'aris and Maturidis, and also the later Rafidah.

References

[R16] Ibn Khuzaymah 219. A related hadith from Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam al-Sulami is in Sahih Muslim 537 and Malik's Muwatta' 2875; Al-Qassab, al-Nukat al-Dallah 'ala al-Bayan fi Anwa' al-'Ulum wa al-Ahkam, 2/70.

[R17] Al-Bukhari, Khalq Af'al al-'Ibad, p. 30. The report is authenticated by al-Bukhari and al-Dhahabi.

[R18] Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, Risalah ila Ahl al-Thaghr, p. 131.

Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani, who died in 430 AH, said: "They agreed that Allah is above His heavens, high over His Throne, having risen over it. Its meaning is not merely, 'He conquered it,' as the Jahmiyyah claim." [R19] Whoever says that Allah is in every place is a disbeliever by consensus. Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Salam (d. 728 AH) said: "Whoever says that Allah Most High Himself is in every place contradicts the Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the Muslims. Rather, he contradicts the three religious traditions. Allah, exalted is He, created the created things. Nothing of His being is in His created things, and nothing of His creation is in His being. Rather, He is independent of them and distinct from them. The imams among the Companions, the Followers, the four imams, and the other imams of the religion agreed that His saying, 'He is with you wherever you are, and Allah sees what you do,' does not mean that He is mixed with creation or that He Himself is in every place. Rather, He is with everything by His knowledge, power, and similar meanings." [R20] [R21]

Allah's Being with Creation Does Not Contradict His Highness

34-35

Mentioning His nearness and His being with His creation does not negate His highness and aboveness. He is the Most High in His nearness and the Near in His highness.

EXPLANATION

Allah informed us of a nearness that does not contradict His highness: "We are nearer to him than his jugular vein." [Qaf 50:16] He also said that He is "with" creation: "He is with you wherever you are." [al-Hadid 57:4] This does not negate His being over the Throne. He is with us in the sense indicated by the revelation: He knows what we do, hears us, sees us, and exercises complete authority over us.

References

[R20] Here, "the three religious traditions" means the Hanif religion - our religion and the religion of Ibrahim - Judaism, and Christianity.

[R21] Naqd al-Ta'sis, 5/307.

[R19] Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani, Aqawil al-Thiqat fi Ta'wil al-Asma' wa al-Sifat, p. 90.

"With" does not necessarily mean physical adjacency. If someone says, "My mother is closer to me than my father," the listener does not understand that he means a smaller physical distance. If a person says, "I am with the oppressed wherever they are in the world," no one understands that he occupies the same physical location as each of them. Allah also descends as His Messenger informed us, while remaining the Most High over His Throne. His attributes and acts are not to be imagined as resembling the attributes and acts of created beings.

The Ever-Living, the Qayyum

36

He is Ever-Living and Qayyum, so He does not sleep; and He is far above resembling created beings.

EXPLANATION

Allah has informed us that He is al-Hayy, the Ever-Living who never dies and never sleeps, and al-Qayyum: perfectly self-subsisting, dependent upon none, and sustaining and maintaining all creation. He governs the affairs of His creatures without drowsiness, sleep, forgetfulness, or need. Allah says: "Allah - there is no god except Him - the Ever-Living, the Qayyum. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him." [al-Baqarah 2:255]

He is too majestic and great to resemble His creatures: "Nothing is like Him; He is the Hearing, the Seeing." [al-Shura 42:11]

We Cannot Comprehend How Allah's Attributes Are

37

Imaginations cannot reach the reality of His being, and reason cannot determine how His attributes are.

EXPLANATION

Because Allah has no equal, the mind cannot comprehend the reality of His being or how His attributes are. His knowledge is not like our knowledge; His sight is not like our sight; His hearing is not like our hearing; His descent is not like our descent; His hand is not like our hands. Allah is exalted above resemblance to creation.

Every form or image the mind constructs is based on things it has already seen or experienced. Allah has no likeness in that experience. Therefore whatever image the mind imagines, Allah is unlike it. "Nothing is like Him; He is the Hearing, the Seeing." [al-Shura 42:11]

Allah's Permanence

38

He remains and never perishes; nothing remains except what He wills to remain.

EXPLANATION

Allah is everlasting and does not perish. He says: "Everyone upon it will perish, and the Face of your Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Honour, will remain." [al-Rahman 55:26-27] He also says: "He is the First and the Last." [al-Hadid 57:3]

Nothing occurs in creation except what Allah wills to occur: "Never say of anything, 'I will certainly do that tomorrow,' except, 'if Allah wills.'" [al-Kahf 18:23-24]

Allah's will is spoken of in two senses. The first is the religious or legislative will: what Allah commands and loves. Prayer is willed in this sense because Allah commanded it. The second is the cosmic will, meaning what Allah decrees to occur. When a servant actually prays, that act occurs by Allah's cosmic will as well.

Adultery, for example, is not willed religiously because Allah forbids it. If a person commits it, however, its occurrence is within Allah's cosmic will in the sense that He allowed it to occur in His decree. Allah may will the occurrence of something He does not love because His wisdom requires a world in which people are genuinely tested. If no disobedience could occur, people would be like angels and the command-and-prohibition test would lose its meaning. Allah allows what He forbids to occur for wise purposes known to Him, so that, among other things, "Allah may distinguish the impure from the good." [al-Anfal 8:37]

Allah Alone Creates, Wills, and Judges

39

He alone creates and wills, and He judges, majestic is He, whatever He wills.

EXPLANATION

Allah has no partner in creating or willing. He says: "That is Allah, your Lord, Creator of everything." [Ghafir 40:62] He says: "Allah does whatever He wills." [Ibrahim 14:27] He judges what He wills: "Indeed Allah judges whatever He intends." [al-Ma'idah 5:1]

No one has authority over Allah, and no one can place Him under questioning for His decree: "He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned." [al-Anbiya 21:23]

Because Allah alone is the Creator and has the final right of judgement, a servant may not replace Allah's judgement with a rival judgement. Allah says: "No, by your Lord, they do not believe until they make you judge regarding what disputes arise among them, then find within themselves no discomfort from what you decide and submit completely." [al-Nisa 4:65]

Nor should a Muslim voluntarily seek judgement from a taghut that does not judge by what Allah revealed. Allah says: "Have you not seen those who claim to believe in what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you? They wish to seek judgement from the taghut, although they were commanded to reject it, and Satan wishes to lead them far astray." [al-Nisa 4:60]

If a person has no court applying Allah's revealed law and cannot recover a right through any lawful means, necessity may require approaching the existing court to obtain that right - for example, reporting a thief so stolen property can be recovered, or reporting a dangerous criminal so that the authorities stop his harm. This is different from preferring a rival law over Allah's judgement.

Allah Grants Success to His Servants

40

Whomever He wills He grants success through His favour, and whomever He wills He leaves astray through His justice.

EXPLANATION

Allah says: "Whomever Allah wills, He lets go astray, and whomever He wills, He places upon a straight path." [al-An'am 6:39] He helps some of His creatures and grants them success in righteousness as a favour: "But Allah guides whomever He wills." [al-Qasas 28:56]

Those who do not receive that favour are dealt with justly, not wronged. Allah says: "So We leave those who do not expect to meet Us wandering blindly in their rebellion." [Yunus 10:11] And: "When they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate. Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people." [al-Saff 61:5]

Allah's Servants: Unhappy and Happy

41

Among His servants is the unhappy one and the happy one; this one is brought near, and that one is cast far away.

EXPLANATION

The unhappy servant is unhappy through disbelief and Allah's punishment; the happy servant is happy through iman and Allah's reward. The believer may be brought near: "The foremost are the foremost; those are the ones brought near, in Gardens of Bliss." [al-Waqi'ah 56:10-12]

The disbeliever is cast away from Allah's mercy: "Those who deny Our signs and act arrogantly toward them - the gates of heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel passes through the eye of a needle. Thus We repay the criminals." [al-A'raf 7:40]

Allah's Wisdom

42

His decree is based upon perfect wisdom, and He deserves praise for what He decrees.

EXPLANATION

Allah is Wise. Everything He decrees is decreed with wisdom. Some things occur in the cosmos that He does not love religiously - such as wrongdoing and disbelief - and yet He permits their occurrence by His cosmic will for wisdom known to Him. He is exalted above error, purposelessness, and play. He deserves praise for what He decrees in His creation.

Allah Hears and Sees

43-44

He sees the movement of the tiny ant in darkness upon a smooth solid rock. He hears speech whether it is spoken aloud or hidden, by His hearing that encompasses every sound.

EXPLANATION

Allah is Seeing. He sees even the tiny ant walking upon a smooth rock on a dark night. The point is that nothing whatsoever escapes His sight. Allah says: "Does he not know that Allah sees?" [al-'Alaq 96:14]

Allah is Hearing. Loud speech, quiet speech, and even words a person speaks so softly that no human hears them are all within His hearing. Allah says: "If you speak aloud, He knows the secret and what is even more hidden." [Ta Ha 20:7]

When a woman spoke to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, concerning her husband, Allah revealed: "Allah has certainly heard the statement of the woman who disputes with you concerning her husband and complains to Allah; Allah hears the conversation of you both. Allah is Hearing, Seeing." [al-Mujadilah 58:1] 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, praised Allah whose hearing encompasses all sounds, noting

that part of the woman's speech was hidden even from 'A'ishah although she was nearby. [R22]

Allah's Knowledge

45

His knowledge encompasses what is apparent and what is hidden; He has surrounded both the manifest and the concealed with knowledge.

EXPLANATION

Allah is Knowing. His knowledge encompasses outward and hidden matters, and all of it is written in the Preserved Tablet. Allah says: "He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls except that He knows it, nor a grain in the darknesses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, except that it is in a clear record." [al-An'am 6:59]

Allah's Self-Sufficiency

46

He is rich and self-sufficient in Himself - exalted is He and exalted is His station.

EXPLANATION

Allah is completely self-sufficient and independent of all else. Allah says: "They say, 'Allah has taken a child.' Exalted is He! He is the Self-Sufficient; to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth." [Yunus 10:68] He also says: "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth; indeed Allah alone is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy." [al-Hajj 22:64]

Everything belongs to Him. He is independent of everything and needs nothing. If a servant worships well, the benefit returns to the servant, not to Allah: "Whoever is grateful is grateful only for himself; whoever is ungrateful, my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous." [al-Naml 27:40]

References

[R22] Al-Nasa'i 3460; Ibn Majah 2063. Authenticated by al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi.

Gratitude here includes thanking Allah for His favours by worshipping Him alone and obeying Him.

Allah says: "If you disbelieve, Allah is independent of you, and He does not approve disbelief for His servants." [al-Zumar 39:7] He says: "Your Lord is the Self Sufficient Possessor of mercy. If He wills, He can remove you and replace you after you with whomever He wills, just as He produced you from the descendants of another people." [al-An'am 6:133] Allah says: "That is because their messengers came to them with clear proofs, but they said: Can human beings guide us? So they disbelieved and turned away. Allah had no need of them. Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy." [al-Taghabun 64:6]

Allah Is Rich and We Are Poor

47

The provision of every creature is upon Him, and all of us are needy before Him.

EXPLANATION

Allah is the Provider. He provides for all His creatures. Allah says: "Who begins creation and then repeats it? Who provides for you from heaven and earth? Is there a god with Allah? Say: bring your proof, if you are truthful." [al-Naml 27:64]

Every created being is poor and needy before Allah: "Allah is the Self Sufficient and you are the poor." [Muhammad 47:38] Allah has no need of His servants; we need Him and His gifts. When He wills, He can make His servants independent of other created beings: "He is the One who enriches and grants possessions." [al-Najm 53:48]

Speech Is among Allah's Attributes

48

He spoke directly to His servant Musa, and He has always known His creation.

EXPLANATION

Allah speaks. He says: "Allah spoke to Musa directly." [al-Nisa 4:164] He says: "A group of them used to hear the speech of Allah, then distort it after understanding it, while they knew." [al-Baqarah 2:75] He calls the Qur'an "the speech of Allah" in the verse: "If any of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection until he hears the speech of Allah." [al-Tawbah 9:6] And He says of some people: "They wish to change the speech of Allah." [al-Fath 48:15]

49-51

His speech is exalted beyond counting, limitation, exhaustion, or end. If every tree became a pen and the sea, with seven more seas, became ink, and creation wrote with every tongue, the ink would end while His words would not end.

EXPLANATION

The words of our Lord cannot be counted, contained, or exhausted. If all trees became pens and the seas became ink, with seven seas added to them, the ink would run out and the pens would break while Allah's words, which contain knowledge and wisdom, would not be exhausted. Allah says: "If all the trees on earth were pens and the sea were ink, supplied after it by seven more seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Allah is Mighty, Wise." [Luqman 31:27]

He also says: "Say: if the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought another like it as a supplement." [al-Kahf 18:109]

Imam 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Darimi, who died in 280 AH, said: "If all the waters of the heavens and earth and their springs were gathered, and all their trees were cut into pens, the created water and pens would perish before Allah's words were exhausted. Allah wrote an end for those created things. Allah, by contrast, is Ever-Living and does not die. His speech does not perish, and He continues to speak after creation just as He spoke before them." [R23]

References

[R23] 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Darimi, al-Radd 'ala al-Jahmiyyah, p. 156.

The Qur'an Is the Speech of Allah

52-53

Concerning His detailed Book, the truth is that it is His revealed speech, sent down upon the chosen Messenger, the best of mankind. It is not created and it is not fabricated.

EXPLANATION

The correct statement concerning the magnificent Qur'an is that it is Allah's speech, revealed to His noble chosen Messenger. It is not created. Allah says: "If any of the polytheists seeks your protection, grant him protection until he hears the speech of Allah." [al-Tawbah 9:6] Allah explicitly calls the Qur'an His speech. Like His knowledge, will, and power, His speech is not described as created. 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad transmitted that a man told 'Abd Allah ibn Idris, a scholar of the generation after the Followers who died in 192 AH, that people in his region said the Qur'an was created. Ibn Idris asked, "Are they Jews?" "No." "Christians?" "No." "Magians?" "No." "Then who are they?" "People of tawhid." He replied, "They are lying. They are not people of tawhid. Whoever says the Qur'an is created has claimed that Allah is created, and whoever says that Allah is created has disbelieved." [R24] Ibn Khuzaymah, who died in 311 AH, said: "The Qur'an is the speech of Allah, uncreated. Whoever says the Qur'an is created has disbelieved in Allah Almighty."

The point is simple: Allah creates things by His command, "Be," while the command itself is His speech. For a fuller treatment, I recommend al-Haydah wa al-I'tidhar fi al-Radd 'ala man Qala bi-Khalq al-Qur'an by 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Yahya al-Kinani, who died in 240 AH. [R25]

The Qur'an is not fabricated and falsely attributed to Allah. It is truly His speech. Allah says: "Or do they say, 'He invented it'? Rather, it is the truth from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner came before you, so that they may be guided." [al-Sajdah 32:3]

References

[R24] 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad, Kitab al-Sunnah, report 29.

[R25] See the cited discussion in al-Tawhid, 1/391, and the recommended work al-Haydah wa al-I'tidhar fi al-Radd 'ala man Qala bi-Khalq al-Qur'an.

The Qur'an Is Uncreated; Ink and Paper Are Created

54-58

It is preserved in the heart, recited by the tongue, heard by the ears, seen by the eyes, and written by hands. All of those instruments are truly created, but the speech of the Creator is not. The voice and melody are the reader's voice; what is recited is the speech of the Creator.

EXPLANATION

The Qur'an is preserved in hearts: "Rather, it is clear signs in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge." [al-'Ankabut 29:49] It is recited with the tongue, heard by ears, seen in written copies with the eyes, and written by created hands upon created paper.

None of this changes the fact that the Qur'an itself is Allah's speech. The heart that memorises it is created; the tongue that recites it is created; the ear that hears it is created; the paper and ink are created; and the eyes that read it are created. Allah's speech itself is not created.

Al-Shafi'i said: "I met the scholars and found them saying: Whoever says that the Qur'an is created is a disbeliever." [R26]

When a reader recites, the physical voice, breath, tongue, and melody belong to the created reader. The words being recited are the speech of Allah. We do not therefore rename the Qur'an "the speech of so-and-so" merely because a particular person vocalised it.

References

[R26] Al-Bayhaqi, al-Asma' wa al-Sifat, report 555.

Allah's Book Is Preserved

59

What He has said admits no replacement; none is more truthful in speech than Him.

EXPLANATION

The Qur'an does not accept alteration, distortion, addition, or subtraction. It is preserved as Allah revealed it because Allah Himself preserves it: "Indeed We sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it." [al-Hijr 15:9]

Alongside this unseen divine preservation, Allah has established visible worldly means through which people can witness its preservation. Muslims memorise the Qur'an in their chests letter by letter. A student recites it to a teacher, who corrects even the pronunciation of a single letter and the length with which it is pronounced. If teachers correct such fine details, then changing a vowel, a consonant, or an entire word cannot pass unnoticed.

A student of knowledge may recite the Qur'an to one teacher, two teachers, or many teachers until it is mastered. Ordinary Muslims hear it every day in mosques and prayers. A mistaken letter is quickly recognised. Printed copies of the Qur'an have been destroyed when even a dot or a smaller typographical mark was found wrong. Muslims do not accept the smallest known error in the Book of Allah. We see this preservation with our own eyes. What a sign this is. Praise belongs to Allah for His generosity.

Allah's Descent in the Last Third of the Night

60-62

The trustworthy narrators transmitted from the best of mankind that Allah, mighty and exalted, descends in the last third of the night and says: "Is there anyone who will repent and be accepted? Is there any sinner seeking forgiveness who will find Me generous and accepting of excuse?"

EXPLANATION

Among the attributes Allah has informed us of is His descent during the last third of the night, in a manner we cannot comprehend and must not imagine as resembling the descent of created beings. His descent does not contradict His highness or His rising over the Throne. To imagine a contradiction is to measure Allah by created bodies, whose location changes when they descend.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Our Lord, blessed and exalted, descends every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains and says: Who calls upon Me so that I may answer him? Who asks Me so that I may give him? Who seeks My forgiveness so that I may forgive him? " [R27]

A person may wonder that the last third of the night is continually occurring in different regions of the earth as the earth turns. This question becomes a problem only when Allah's act is imagined according to the limitations of created beings, who are bound by place, time, the movement of the sun, and the physical conditions of descent. Allah is not like His creation. The conditions that constrain created beings do not constrain Him, and His attributes are not measured by theirs.

References

[R27] Sahih al-Bukhari 1145; Sahih Muslim 758.

Allah's Favours upon His Creation

63

He bestows good things and favours, conceals faults, and gives to the one who asks.

EXPLANATION

Allah favours His servants with good things and virtues, conceals their faults by His grace, and answers the caller through His generosity: "Indeed Allah is full of favour toward mankind, but most people are not grateful." [al-Baqarah 2:243]

He favoured us by creating us in a complete and beautiful form. Allah says: "That is the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, the Mighty, the Merciful, who perfected everything He created and began the creation of man from clay, then made his descendants from an extract of humble fluid, then fashioned him and breathed into him of the spirit He created, and made for you hearing, sight, and hearts. Little are you grateful." [al-Sajdah 32:6-9]

He gave us organs and senses that are means of strength and perception, and He placed in our bodies the ability to adapt to different conditions of life. He favoured us with clothing that covers us: "Children of Adam, We have sent down upon you clothing to conceal your nakedness and as adornment; but the clothing of taqwa is best." [al-A'raf 7:26]

He gave us homes for shelter: "Allah has made for you from your homes places of rest." [al-Nahl 16:80] He prepared the world for our life: "He made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a structure, and sent water down from the sky and brought forth fruits as provision for you. So do not set up rivals to Allah while you know." [al-Baqarah 2:22]

He favoured us by sending the Messenger: "There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; your suffering is grievous to him; he is deeply concerned for you, and to the believers he is kind and merciful." [al-Tawbah 9:128] Without Allah's favour in sending messengers and revealing books, we would not know our Lord. Allah says: "Rather, Allah has favoured you by guiding you to faith." [al-Hujurat 49:17]

He also favoured us with an easy revealed law. Allah says: "We will ease you toward ease." [al-A'la 87:8] The Prophet said: "The religion is ease." [R28] Allah says: "Allah does not intend to place hardship upon you, but He intends to purify you and complete His favour upon you so that you may be grateful." [al-Ma'idah 5:6]

He aids us and answers the person in distress: "Who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes harm?" [al-Naml 27:62] Allah's favours cannot be counted: "If you count Allah's blessing, you cannot enumerate it." [al-Nahl 16:18]

Allah's Coming

64

He comes on the Day of Decision as He wills, to judge with perfect justice.

EXPLANATION

Allah has informed us that He comes, in a way we cannot imagine, in order to judge between people on the Day of Resurrection. Allah says: "Your Lord will come, and the angels, rank upon rank." [al-Fajr 89:22]

Seeing Allah

65-69

He is seen with the eyes in the Garden of Firdaws, as the clear Qur'an states. Every believer will see Him with true sight, as came in the hadith of the master of mankind without doubt or ambiguity. His believing allies are specially granted this vision, while His enemies are screened from it.

EXPLANATION

Among what Allah informed us of is that the believers will see Him in Paradise. The clear verse says: "Faces that Day will be radiant, looking at their Lord." [al-Qiyamah 75:22-23]

References

[R28] Sahih al-Bukhari 39.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "You will see your Lord just as you see this moon; you will not crowd or struggle in seeing Him." [R29] The comparison is between the clarity and certainty of the seeing, not between Allah and the moon.

This vision is a special honour for Allah's believing allies. The criminals of the Fire are screened from Him: "No! Indeed, from their Lord that Day they will be veiled." [al Mutaffifin 83:15]

Believing in Allah's Attributes as They Came

70-73

Every attribute that came in the clear Qur'an or in an authentic report from the chosen Messenger is accepted and submitted to. We pass it on as it came, while believing the meaning it requires, without distortion or negation, and without asking how or making likenesses.

EXPLANATION

Every attribute established in the clear Qur'an or authentic Sunnah is received with acceptance and submission. We explicitly believe what the revelation has said. We affirm the meanings understood in the Arabic language without distorting the wording or its meaning, without ta'til (emptying the attribute of its meaning), without takyif (trying to imagine or specify how the attribute is), and without tamthil (claiming or believing that Allah's attribute resembles the attributes or conditions of created beings).

Ibn Khuzaymah, who died in 311 AH, said: "Our position, and the position of all our scholars from the Hijaz, Tihamah, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, is that we affirm for Allah what Allah has affirmed for Himself. We acknowledge this with our tongues and affirm it as true in our hearts, without likening the Face of our Creator to the face of any created being. Exalted is our Lord above resembling created beings; exalted is our Lord above the statement of the negators; and exalted is He above being non-existent, as the negators say, because that which has

References

[R29] Sahih al-Bukhari 554; Sahih Muslim 633; Ibn Khuzaymah, Kitab al-Tawhid, 1/26.

no attribute is non-existent. Exalted is Allah above what the Jahmiyyah say - those who deny the attributes of our Creator by which He described Himself in His clear Revelation and upon the tongue of His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him." [R30] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, who died in 463 AH, said: "Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimously agreed on acknowledging all the attributes reported in the Qur'an and Sunnah, believing in them, and taking them upon their true meaning, not figuratively. However, they do not describe the how of any of them, nor do they delimit them with a specific description. As for the people of innovation - the Jahmiyyah, all of the Mu'tazilah, and the Khawarij [E7] - they all deny them and do not take any of them upon their true meaning, and they claim that whoever affirms them is a likener. In the view of those who affirm them, however, they are negators of the One worshipped. The truth is in what is said by those who speak in accordance with what the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger have spoken, and they are the imams of the Jama'ah. Praise be to Allah." [R31]

We Do Not Speak about Allah's Attributes from Personal Opinion

74

Our statement is the statement of the imams of guidance. Glad tidings to the one who follows their guidance.

EXPLANATION

Our way concerning Allah's attributes is the way of the imams of guidance among the Companions, the Followers, and those who followed them well. Good news belongs to the person who understands the Book and Sunnah through their understanding and leaves innovated speculation.

Explanations

[E7] The Khawarij were an early sect known for declaring Muslims disbelievers because of major sins and for rebellion against Muslim rulers.

References

[R30] Ibn Khuzaymah, Kitab al-Tawhid, 1/26.

[R31] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Tamhid, 7/145.

Allah says: "Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. He is a clear enemy to you. He only commands you to evil and indecency and to say about Allah what you do not know." [al-Baqarah 2:168-169]

The Name of the First Type: Tawhid of Affirmation

75-78

Call this first type tawhid of affirmation without hesitation. Clear revelation has explained it, so seek illuminating guidance from revelation. Do not follow the statements of every rebellious, misleading opponent who departs from its meanings. After rejecting this clear explanation, not an atom's weight of iman remains.

EXPLANATION

What has been discussed concerning belief in Allah, His oneness, and His attributes is the first type of tawhid. It is called tawhid of affirmation, tawhid of knowledge and affirmation, or intellectual tawhid, because it concerns knowledge of Allah and His attributes and affirming their reality, truth, and meanings. Some scholars also call it tawhid al-rububiyah.

Allah has explained this iman through revelation - the Qur'an and Sunnah. Whoever seeks guidance should take it from Allah's Book and the speech of His Prophet. Beware of following those who rise against revelation with opinion, desire, and speculation, leave its path, oppose it, and misguide people through that opposition.

If a person knowingly rejects the clear explanation of Allah and His Messenger, nothing of true iman remains after that rejection.

Chapter: The Second Type of Tawhid - Tawhid of Worship, Request, and Intention

Practical Tawhid

79-80

This is the second type of tawhid: single out the Lord of the Throne from every rival. Worship Allah as the one and only God, acknowledging His right, and you will attain success.

EXPLANATION

The first type was tawhid of knowledge and affirmation. The second is practical tawhid. It is also called tawhid of request and intention, because supplication and all forms of seeking are directed to Allah and because Allah alone is intended by worship. It is also called tawhid al-'ibadah (tawhid of worship). Some scholars call it tawhid al-uluhiyyah (tawhid of divinity).

It means singling out Allah in worship. No one is worshipped together with Him. Whoever worships another with Him has made that other equal with Him, while Allah says: "And there is none comparable to Him." [al-Ikhlās 112:4] Allah says: "Surely, to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth. Those who call upon partners besides Allah follow nothing but conjecture; they are only guessing." [Yunus 10:66]

A servant acknowledges that Allah alone deserves every form of worship, whether the servant has actually fulfilled every commanded act or has fallen short. This acknowledgement and exclusive direction of worship is the meaning of la ilaha illa Allah: none has the right to be worshipped except Allah.

Practical Tawhid Is the Foundation of the Messengers' Call

81

For this tawhid Allah sent His messengers, and to it they called first.

EXPLANATION

Allah sent His messengers first and foremost to call people to single Him out in worship. Most people did not deny that Allah existed. Their problem was that they took persons and objects besides Him and directed acts of worship to them. The messengers therefore called them away from those rivals to Allah alone.

Allah says concerning the messengers who came to 'Ad: "The messengers had already come to them before them and after them, saying: Do not worship except Allah." [Fussilat 41:14] He says concerning Hud: "Remember the brother of 'Ad when he warned his people at al-Ahqaf - while warners had passed before him and after him - saying: Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous Day." [al-Ahqaf 46:21]

The Books Were Revealed to Establish Practical Tawhid

82

For its sake He revealed the Book with clarification, and by it He made the Furqan distinguish.

EXPLANATION

Allah revealed His books to command people with this tawhid. Allah says: "Alif Lam Ra. A Book whose verses have been perfected and then explained in detail from One who is Wise and All-Aware: do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bearer of good news." [Hud 11:1-2]

The Qur'an is also called al-Furqan, the Criterion, because it separates faith from disbelief and truth from falsehood. Allah says: "The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and the Criterion." [al-Baqarah 2:185]

He says: "Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds." [al-Furqan 25:1]

Among the distinctions established by revelation is the distinction between the believer and the polytheist. Whoever directs worship such as supplication, vows, ritual prayer, seeking supernatural rescue, or devotional circumambulation to other than Allah has committed shirk.

The Messenger Was Charged with Jihad against Those Who Opposed Tawhid

83-84

Allah charged the chosen Messenger to fight whoever turned away from it and refused, until the religion was sincerely for Allah, openly and secretly.

EXPLANATION

The word jihad would be broader here than the word "fighting." Allah commanded jihad against the polytheists, and jihad is conducted by proof and the Qur'an as well as by the sword. Allah says: "Do not obey the disbelievers, but strive against them with it - the Qur'an - a great striving." [al-Furqan 25:52] He also commanded fighting where fighting is legislated: "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or the Last Day, who do not forbid

what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not follow the religion of truth from those who were given the Book, until they give the jizyah ^[E8] by hand while humbled." [al-Tawbah 9:29] The objective stated in the verse is that the religion be directed sincerely to Allah, inwardly and

outwardly, without worship being divided between Him and rivals.

Explanations

[E8] Jizyah is a payment required from eligible non-Muslim subjects living under Muslim rule.

The Ummah Was Also Charged with Jihad

85

Likewise, his Ummah was charged with it, and in the explicit Book they were described by it.

EXPLANATION

Allah commanded the believers with what He commanded the messengers. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah commanded the believers with the same thing with which He commanded the messengers." [R32]

Allah praises the believers who strive with their wealth and their lives: "But the Messenger and those who believed with him strove with their wealth and their lives. Those will have all good, and those are the successful." [al-Tawbah 9:88] Allah says: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. Their description in the Gospel is like a crop that brings forth its shoot, strengthens it, grows thick, and stands firm on its stalk, delighting the sowers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers by them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward." [al-Fath 48:29]

The Meaning of La Ilaha Illa Allah

86-88

The wording of the testimony contains it; it is the path to success and happiness. Whoever says it while believing its meaning and acts according to what it requires, in word and deed, and dies as a believer, will be raised on the Day of Gathering saved and secure.

References

[R32] Sahih Muslim 1015.

EXPLANATION

La ilaha illa Allah means that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah. [E9]

89-91

For its meaning, which it certainly indicates and to which it guides, is: that none is truly worthy of worship except the One God, the Unique, the One alone in creation, provision, and governance, exalted above partner and peer.

EXPLANATION

It does not mean merely that there is no Creator except Allah, because many polytheists acknowledged Allah as Creator while worshipping others.

Conditions of La Ilaha Illa Allah

92-93

It is bound by seven conditions, truly established in the texts of revelation. Merely uttering it does not benefit the one who says it unless he fulfills them.

EXPLANATION

The testimony has conditions.

94-95

Knowledge, certainty, acceptance, and submission -understand what I say - and truthfulness, sincerity, and love. May Allah grant you success in what He loves.

EXPLANATION

The seven conditions named in verses 92-95 are knowledge, certainty, acceptance, submission, truthfulness, sincerity, and love.

1. Knowledge

EXPLANATION

The person must know what the testimony affirms and what it negates. Allah says: "Know that none has the right to be worshipped except

Explanations

[E9] Ummah here means the Muslim community.

Allah." [Muhammad 47:19] He says concerning those called upon besides Him: "Those whom they call upon besides Him possess no intercession, except those who testify to the truth while they know." [al-Zukhruf 43:86]

2. Certainty

EXPLANATION

Certainty excludes doubt. Allah says: "The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then do not doubt, and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. Those are the truthful." [al-Hujurat 49:15]

3. Acceptance

EXPLANATION

A person must accept what the testimony requires instead of arrogantly rejecting it. Allah says of the disbelievers: "Indeed, when it was said to them, 'There is no god except Allah,' they were arrogant, and said: 'Are we to abandon our gods for a mad poet?'" [al-Saffat 37:35-36]

4. Submission

EXPLANATION

Acceptance in the heart is accompanied by submission in action. Allah says: "Whoever submits his face to Allah while doing good has grasped the firmest handhold." [Luqman 31:22]

5. Truthfulness

EXPLANATION

The testimony must be spoken truthfully rather than as the speech of a hypocrite whose heart rejects it. Allah says: "Among the people are those who say, 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' but they are not believers." [al-Baqarah 2:8]

6. Sincerity

EXPLANATION

Worship must be purified for Allah. Allah says: "They were not commanded except to worship Allah, sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth." [al-Bayyinah 98:5]

7. Love - continued**EXPLANATION**

A person loves Allah, loves the testimony and what it entails, loves the Messenger and the revelation he brought, and loves iman and the believers in general. He also hates disbelief, shirk, and what Allah hates. Allah says: "Among the people are those who take rivals besides Allah, loving them as they love Allah; but those who believe are stronger in love for Allah." [al-Baqarah 2:165]

Allah says: "You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day showing devoted allegiance to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they are their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred." [al-Mujadilah 58:22] He also says concerning those who disbelieve: "That is because they hated what Allah sent down, so He made their deeds worthless." [Muhammad 47:9]

Chapter: Worship and Its Types

The Definition of Worship

96

Worship is a comprehensive name for every inward and outward word and deed that the Lord loves and approves. Every part of it belongs to Him alone; directing it elsewhere is forbidden.

EXPLANATION

Worship is a comprehensive term for everything Allah loves and is pleased with from outward and inward words and actions. It includes the prayer, zakah, fasting, pilgrimage, truthfulness, keeping trusts, honouring parents and relatives, fulfilling covenants, commanding right,

forbidding wrong, striving against the disbelievers and hypocrites, doing good to neighbours, orphans, the poor and travellers, supplication, remembrance, recitation, love of Allah and His Messenger, fear of Allah, turning to Him, sincerity, patience with His judgement, gratitude for His favours, contentment with His decree, reliance upon Him, hope in His mercy, and fear of His punishment.

Since worship is Allah's right, no part of it may be directed to another as worship.

Types of Worship

Supplication Is Worship

97

Supplication is among the greatest kinds of worship, so direct it to the Lord alone and do not call upon anyone besides Him.

EXPLANATION

The report, "Supplication is the marrow of worship," is weak. ^[R33] The authentic wording is stronger and clearer: "Supplication is worship." ^[R34] Allah says: "Your Lord said: Call upon Me; I will answer you. Indeed, those who are too arrogant to worship Me will enter Hell humiliated." [Ghafir 40:60] In this verse He called supplication worship.

Supplication of worship and supplication of request both belong to Allah. Calling upon an absent or dead created being for what only Allah can do is therefore worship directed away from Allah.

Fear, Reliance, and Hope

94-97

Among worship are fear, reliance, and hope. Combine fear with hope, and rely upon the Lord while taking the means He has permitted.

EXPLANATION

Fear of Allah is worship.

References

^[R33] Al-Tabarani, al-Du'a', no. 8, and al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, no. 3196. The report "Supplication is the marrow of worship" is weak.

^[R34] Sunan Ibn Majah 3828, authenticated by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and al-Albani; also Musnad Ahmad 18352, authenticated by its editors.

Ibn Battah al-'Ukbari said: "The scholars agreed without disagreement, Allah made fear and hope obligatory on creation. He called His servants to Him with desire and dread." [R35]

Mujahid said concerning "For whoever fears standing before his Lord are two gardens" [al-Rahman 55:46]: "It is a person who intends a sin, remembers Allah, and leaves it." [R36]

Qatadah said: "The believers feared that standing, so they acted for it and worshipped by night and day."

Natural fear does not contradict tawhid. Musa and Harun said: "Our Lord, we fear that he may hasten against us or transgress." [Ta Ha 20:45] A person naturally fears a wolf, a sword, poverty, illness, or other ordinary harm. Shirk occurs when a created being is feared with the devotional fear that belongs to Allah, or is feared as Allah is feared.

Reliance is depending upon Allah and entrusting affairs to Him while believing that nothing succeeds and nothing occurs in His dominion except by His permission and command, together with taking lawful causes. Allah says: "Upon Allah rely, if you are believers." [al-Ma'idah 5:23] He says: "The believers are only those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, whose faith increases when His verses are recited to them, and who rely upon their Lord." [al-Anfal 8:2] He says: "When you have decided, rely upon Allah; indeed Allah loves those who rely upon Him." [Ali 'Imran 3:159]

Hope is having a good expectation of Allah, desiring to meet Him, and hoping for what He possesses of gifts and favour. Allah says: "Those who do not hope to meet Us, are satisfied with worldly life and feel secure in it, and those who are heedless of Our signs - their home is the Fire because of what they used to earn." [Yunus 10:7-8] Fear and hope are not opposites in worship; the servant needs both. Allah says: "Their sides leave their beds; they call upon their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend from what We have provided them." [al-Sajdah 32:16]

References

[R35] Ibn Battah al-'Ukbari, al-Sharh wa al-Ibanah 'ala Usul al-Sunnah wa al-Diyanah, p. 321.

[R36] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, under al-Rahman 55:46.

Acts of Worship of the Heart

98

Desire and dread, humility, reverent fear, turning back to Allah, and submission are all worship.

EXPLANATION

Desire resembles hope but includes actively wanting and seeking the good hoped for. Dread resembles fear but carries the sense of prolonged, continuing fear. Allah says of the prophets: "They used to hasten to good deeds and call upon Us in hope and fear, and they were humble before Us." [al-Anbiya 21:90] A linguistic source defines this dread as lengthened and continuing fear. [R37]

Humility here includes submission accompanied by inward reverence. Allah says: "They fall upon their faces weeping, and it increases them in humility." [al-Isra 17:109]

Reverent fear is not identical to ordinary fear. Allah says: "They fear their Lord and fear the evil reckoning." [al-Ra'd 13:21] Reverent fear is the feeling produced by awareness of the greatness of the One before whom a person stands. Ordinary fear may arise from one's sin and shortcoming; reverent fear arises from knowing Allah's greatness. "Only those of His servants who have knowledge truly fear Allah." [Fatir 35:28] Turning back to Allah means returning to Him and seeking refuge with Him: "Turn to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes to you, then you will not be helped." [al-Zumar 39:54]

Submission resembles humility, but the humility meant here is joined to reverent fear, while submission is joined to fear and yielding. Allah says: "If We willed, We could send down upon them a sign from heaven so that their necks would remain humbled before it." [al-Shu'ara 26:4] The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "When Allah decrees a matter in heaven, the angels strike their wings in submission to His word." [R38]

References

[R37] al-Furuq al-Lughawiyah, p. 261.

[R38] Sahih al-Bukhari 4701.

Seeking Refuge, Seeking Help, and Seeking Rescue Are Worship

99

Seeking refuge and seeking help, and likewise seeking rescue from Him - glorified is He - are worship.

EXPLANATION

Seeking refuge means asking one's Lord to protect him from something. Allah says: "Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak from the evil of what He created." [al-Falaq 113:1-2]

Seeking help means asking Allah for aid and facilitation. Allah says: "You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help." [al-Fatihah 1:5] The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Ibn 'Abbas: "When you ask, ask Allah; and when you seek help, seek help from Allah." [R39]

Seeking rescue means asking to be saved when calamity has already occurred. Allah says concerning Badr: "When you sought rescue from your Lord, He answered you: I will reinforce you with a thousand angels following one another." [al-Anfal 8:9] He says: "Who answers the desperate one when he calls upon Him, removes evil, and makes you successors on earth? Is there a god with Allah?" [al-Naml 27:62]

These acts may also be requested from a living, present created person concerning an ordinary matter within that person's ability. Asking someone to hand you an object, give you money, tell you what he saw, help lift a load, or rescue you from an ordinary danger he can actually address is not the supplication of worship. The prohibited and polytheistic form is to direct to creation the unseen, independent, or divine kind of aid that belongs to Allah.

References

[R39] Musnad Ahmad 2669; its editors said its chain is strong. Also Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2516, which calls it a hasan sahih hadith.

Slaughter and Vows Are Worship

100

Slaughter, vows, and other such acts are worship. Understand this and you will be guided to the clearest paths.

EXPLANATION

Ritual slaughter means slaughtering an animal as an act of drawing near to the one for whom it is slaughtered, not merely slaughtering food to eat. Allah says: "So pray to your Lord and sacrifice." [al-Kawthar 108:2] Devotional slaughter therefore belongs to Allah alone.

A vow is a servant binding himself to perform a righteous act as an act of drawing near to Allah. Allah says: "They fulfil vows and fear a Day whose evil will spread far." [al-Insan 76:7]

One kind is a straightforward vow of worship, in which a person binds himself to an act of obedience for Allah. Another is the conditional vow, such as: "If Allah cures me, I vow that I will do such-and-such." This is not permissible because it resembles bargaining with Allah and is bad manners toward Him. Ibn 'Umar said: "The Prophet forbade vows and said: 'They do not repel anything; rather, what is extracted through them is only extracted from the miser.'" [R40]

If someone vows to commit a sin, he may not fulfill the sinful vow; he must repent and make the expiation of an oath. If he vows something he is unable to perform, the expiation of an oath is due.

There are many other forms of worship: prayer, zakah, glorification of Allah, recitation of the Qur'an, and more. The poem mentions in particular forms of worship that many people overlook.

References

[R40] Sahih al-Bukhari 6608; Sahih Muslim 1639.

Directing Any Type of Worship to Other than Allah Is Shirk

101

Directing any of these acts to other than Allah is shirk, and that is the ugliest of prohibitions.

EXPLANATION

If a servant directs worship to other than Allah, he has committed shirk. Allah says: "Who is more astray than one who calls upon besides Allah those who will not answer him until the Day of Resurrection, while they are unaware of their calling?" [al-Ahqaf 46:5]

Actions related to worship are of two broad kinds. The first includes actions that have both a devotional aspect and an ordinary human aspect, such as love and fear. Loving Allah is worship, while human nature also requires love of family, homeland, and possessions. Fear of Allah is worship, while people naturally fear wolves, swords, poverty, and similar harms. In such actions, shirk occurs when the act is directed to another with the intention of worship, or when a created being is made equal to Allah in the devotional act - such as loving a created being as Allah is loved or fearing one as Allah is feared.

The second kind is an act whose very form is pure worship, such as ritual prayer, fasting, and supplication. Directing such an act to another is shirk by the very act. A person who performs Christian ritual prayer intending to try it or participate for amusement has performed an act of worship for other than Allah. Likewise, a person who calls upon Jesus son of Mary, Mary, 'Ali, al-Husayn, Muhammad, or another created being saying, "Heal me of this illness," "Provide for me," "Give me your supernatural aid," or "Make my affair easy," has directed supplication to other than Allah, and supplication is worship.

Supplication is not identical to every ordinary request. Saying to another person, "Hand me that object," "Tell me what you saw," or "Give me a dirham" is an ordinary request, not the devotional supplication discussed here.

Chapter: The Opposite of Tawhid Is Shirk, and Shirk Is Major and Minor

Major Shirk

102-103

Shirk is of two kinds. The first is major shirk, through which there is everlasting punishment in the Fire when it is not forgiven: the servant takes other than Allah as a rival, making it equal and comparable to Him.

EXPLANATION

Shirk is of two kinds. Major shirk takes a person outside Islam. If he dies upon it, he remains in the Fire and does not leave it. Minor shirk does not remove a person from Islam, but it is among the gravest forms of disobedience. Its perpetrator may be punished in the Fire, but he does not remain there eternally; intercession or mercy reaches him after whatever punishment Allah wills.

The basic reality of major shirk is making something besides Allah equal with Allah, or taking another as a rival to Him. A rival is a counterpart or equal.

104-107

He turns to that rival when harm descends, seeking good or removal of evil, or for any purpose that none can accomplish except the Sovereign, the All-Powerful; and he gives the one called upon, magnified, or hoped in unseen authority by which he is thought to know the hidden state of the one who cries out to him.

EXPLANATION

One form of shirk is that a servant takes a created being and calls upon him for benefit, removal of harm, or another matter that only

Allah can accomplish. A person may say, "O Muhammad," "O 'Ali," "O Husayn," "O Sayyidi al-Badawi," "O my master so-and-so," or "O saints of Allah, grant me success, rescue me, cure me, or remove this harm," while believing that the one called upon has an unseen ability to hear and respond.

The created beings being called upon do not control benefit or harm even for themselves. Allah is the One who answers the desperate person when he calls and removes harm. If someone calls a dead person in a distant grave believing that the dead person hears every caller and can act upon the universe to answer him, he has attributed to creation an unseen hearing resembling the all-encompassing hearing of Allah and an ability resembling divine power, while also directing supplication to other than Allah. This combines shirk in worship with likening creation to Allah.

This is different from telephoning the police or asking a present person for something within ordinary created ability. Such a person does not believe the police possess Allah's all-encompassing hearing or hidden control of the universe. He speaks to them through an ordinary means and asks them to do what people are normally capable of doing.

Minor Shirk

108

The second is minor shirk, and it is showing off, as the Seal of the Prophets explained it.

EXPLANATION

Minor shirk leaves a person within Islam but makes him sinful and deserving of punishment. An example is *riya'* (showing off): performing an act of obedience so that people will see it. The Prophet said: "The thing I fear most for you is minor shirk." They asked: "What is minor shirk, Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Showing off." ^[R41]

References

^[R41] The Prophet continued: "Allah will say to them on the Day of Resurrection, when people are repaid for their deeds: Go to those before whom you used to show off in the world and see whether you find any reward with them." Musnad Ahmad 23630; its chain is hasan.

Swearing by Other than Allah Is Minor Shirk

109

Among it is swearing by other than the Creator, as has come in established reports.

EXPLANATION

Among minor shirk is swearing by other than Allah, such as saying, "By the Prophet," "By the Ka'bah," "By my mother's head," or "By my honour." A servant may swear only by his Lord or by one of His attributes: by Allah, by Allah's might, by Allah's majesty, by the Mighty, by the One who created me, or by the One in whose hand is my soul.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah forbids you from swearing by your fathers. Whoever swears, let him swear by Allah or remain silent." [R42] Swearing by Allah should itself be reserved for something worthy of invoking His great name. Allah commands: "Guard your oaths." [al-Ma'idah 5:89] He condemns the one who is habitually profuse in oaths: "Do not obey every worthless habitual swearer." [al-Qalam 68:10]

Chapter: Common Practices - Some Are Shirk and Some Are Close to It; Ruqyah (Healing Recitations) and Amulets

EXPLANATION

This chapter warns against practices widespread among ordinary people, some of which are shirk and some of which resemble or lead toward it. Many were inherited from the pre-Islamic period or from pagan religions while people continued them without understanding their reality.

References

[R42] Sahih al-Bukhari 6646.

Believing That Inanimate Objects Bring Benefit or Harm

110-112

Whoever trusts in a seashell, a fang, a ring, the eyes of wolves, a thread, a part of a vulture, an old bowstring, or soil from graves, attaching it for any purpose, Allah leaves him to what he has attached himself to.

EXPLANATION

People used to hang shells to repel the evil eye. A fang here means a wolf's tooth, likewise hung on children to ward off envy. A ring may be a copper bracelet worn in the belief that it protects from pain or disease in the arm. Some hang a wolf's eye because they believe jinn flee from it.

A thread may be knotted repeatedly while formulas are recited over the knots, then tied to a sick person in the belief that it will cure him. A part of a vulture - such as a bone - may be hung upon children to repel envy. An old bowstring was hung on children or animals for the same reason. Some rub themselves with soil taken from graves seeking healing or blessing.

Other examples include blue beads hung upon bodies, houses, vehicles, and possessions against the evil eye; this became especially widespread in Turkey and lands once under Ottoman rule. Some hang an old shoe on a vehicle or house, or a horseshoe on a door, to repel envy, evil, or supposed harmful spirits. Some keep a tortoise or another animal believing it brings provision or removes bad luck. All these examples share the same error when the object is taken as an unseen cause of benefit or protection without evidence from revelation or observed created causation.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever attaches himself to something is entrusted to it." [R43] If someone hangs a blue bead to repel envy, Allah leaves him to the bead -

References

[R43] Musnad Ahmad 18781; Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2072; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, 7503. Al-Albani and the editors of Musnad Ahmad graded it hasan.

and the bead possesses no power of benefit or harm. The Prophet also said: "Whoever hangs an amulet has committed shirk." [R44]

The shirk involved in such attachments has two levels. If a person believes the object itself benefits and harms independently of Allah, that is major shirk. If he believes Allah alone ultimately benefits and harms but asserts without evidence that the object is a cause Allah has made effective, that is minor shirk: he has invented a cause that Allah did not make a cause.

Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam, who died in 224 AH, said: "Sins do not necessarily remove iman completely or make a person a disbeliever, but they negate the completeness and purity with which Allah described the people of iman." [R45]

Lawful Ruqyah

113-114

As for ruqyah against poison, a sting, or the evil eye: if it is from pure revelation, it is from the guidance of the Prophet and his law, and there is no disagreement over its legitimacy.

EXPLANATION

Ruqyah for poison, a bite or sting, the evil eye, illness, and similar harm is lawful when it follows revelation. 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "When the Messenger of Allah became ill with the illness in which he died, he would blow over himself while reciting the chapters of seeking refuge. When his illness became severe, I recited them over him and wiped him with his own hand, seeking its blessing." [R46]

Four conditions are stated for lawful ruqyah. First, it is from the Book and Sunnah. Second, it is in Arabic, or a clear supplication in another language understood by the one making it if he does not know Arabic. Third, its words are audible and intelligible; someone must not mutter secret words whose meaning cannot be checked. Fourth, the heart

References

[R44] Musnad Ahmad 17422; authenticated by Ahmad Shakir.

[R45] Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam, Kitab al-Iman, p. 73 and following.

[R46] Sahih al-Bukhari 5735.

believes that Allah is the Healer and that ruqyah is only a created cause, like medicine.

Unlawful Ruqyah

115-119

As for ruqyahs of unknown meanings, they are whisperings from Satan. The hadith has stated that such things contain shirk, so beware of them without doubt. The speaker does not know: perhaps his words are pure disbelief, or are borrowed from Jewish sorcery and disguised for ordinary people. Beware of it repeatedly, so that you know the truth and remain far from it.

EXPLANATION

If a practitioner mutters speech that cannot be understood, or writes talismanic symbols and mysterious signs, the practice may contain shirk or magic. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Indeed, ruqyahs, amulets, and love-charms are shirk." [R47]

Some charlatans, soothsayers, and liars claim that their incomprehensible formulas are Syriac, Hebrew, or even an "angelic language." The words must be understood and checked rather than accepted because of an exotic label.

I came across supplications circulating among Sufis called the Jaljalutiyyah and the Barhatiyyah. They claimed that their strange words were names of Allah in Syriac. I asked people who speak Syriac, and they said these were not Syriac words. They are names by which devils are invoked besides Allah.

One example, quoted only as a warning, is: "By the light, majesty, bazakh wa-rashantakh; by the Holy, barkut; by it the darkness was dispelled." The words bazakh, rashantakh, and barkut are not intelligible Arabic. Syriac speakers who were asked about this formula said: "These are not Syriac words." Quoting the formula here is only to warn against it, not to use it as worship.

References

[R47] Sunan Abi Dawud 3883.

Amulets

120-121

Concerning hanging amulets: if they consist of clear Qur'anic verses, there was disagreement among the Salaf; some permitted them and others refrained.

EXPLANATION

Amulets are objects hung upon people, homes, vehicles, or possessions for the purpose of bringing benefit or repelling harm. If the amulet consists only of Qur'anic verses, the Salaf differed. Some permitted it, provided the writing was clearly readable, no letters or words were moved, no additions were inserted, and it was not written in a talismanic form. Other Salaf held that even this should not be done. The stronger view is that Qur'anic amulets are not permissible, because there is no text authorising the Qur'an to be hung for protection in this manner.

122-123

If the amulet contains something other than revelation, it is shirk without doubt. It is a counterpart of the divining arrows and is far removed from the practice of the early Muslims.

If an amulet contains talismans, invented symbols, human formulas, altered letters, reversed or rearranged words, additions, or anything outside the Book and Sunnah, it is forbidden without disagreement and is shirk. The poet likens such things to the divining arrows (azlam) used by the people of Jahiliyyah. ^[E10]

Explanations

[E10] Azlam were divining arrows used by the people of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic Arabia) to make decisions by drawing lots with the arrows.

Chapter: Seeking Blessing from Trees, Stones, Places, Graves, and Similar Things; Types of Grave Visitation

Magnifying What Allah Did Not Authorize People to Magnify

124-127

Among the acts of the people of shirk, without hesitation or doubt, is the ignorant person's magnification of what Allah did not authorise to be magnified: seeking refuge in a place, stone, dead person's grave, or a tree, taking that place as a recurring festival like the worshippers of idols.

Among the practices of polytheists is to give religious sanctity to something for which Allah gave no evidence of sanctity. A person may repeatedly visit a particular place, stone, grave, or tree, making the repeated return to it a recurring festival or religious observance while believing it has a holiness Allah never established. The following verses divide grave visitation into three types.

Three Types of Visiting Graves

128

Then visitation is of three types, O Ummah of Islam.

EXPLANATION

Visiting graves is divided here into a Sunnah visitation, an innovated visitation, and a polytheistic visitation.

1. The Sunnah Visitation

129-132

If the visitor intends within himself to remember the Hereafter, then supplicates for the deceased, asking pardon and forgiveness for their slips, without undertaking a special journey to the grave and without uttering forbidden speech like the speech of fools, then this is an established Sunnah found explicitly in authentic reports.

EXPLANATION

The first type is to visit in order to remember the Hereafter and one's own death, and to supplicate for the dead. The visitor does not undertake a journey specifically for the grave and does not use forbidden or indecent speech that contradicts the revealed manners of visitation. This includes wailing over the dead, objection to Allah's decree, tearing clothes, and other forbidden mourning practices. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I had forbidden you from visiting graves; whoever wishes to visit them may visit, but do not say forbidden speech." [R48] He also said: "Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter." [R49]

It is also reported from 'Ali ibn al-Husayn that Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her, used to visit the grave of her uncle Hamzah on Fridays, pray there, and weep beside it. [R50] The lawful visitation is therefore for remembrance, greeting the dead, and supplication for them - not supplication to them.

2. The Innovated Visitation

133-134

If the purpose is supplication and seeking a means through the occupants of the graves to the Most Merciful, mighty and exalted, then it is an invented innovation and a misguidance far from the guidance of the Messenger.

References

[R48] Sunan al-Nasa'i 2033.

[R49] Musnad Ahmad 1236, authenticated by the editors; Sunan Ibn Majah 1569, authenticated by al-Albani.

[R50] Al-Hakim 1414, who said the narrators in the chain after its beginning are trustworthy. It is also related without this chain by 'Abd al-Razzaq 6717 and Ibn Abi Shaybah in Tarikh al-Madinah, no. 382.

EXPLANATION

The second type is to go to a grave seeking to draw near to Allah through the person buried there, using the person buried there as an intermediary in worship. This is an invented practice. Allah did not legislate it, His Messenger did not command it, and the Companions did not practice it. Introducing it as a religious means of drawing near to Allah is therefore a religious innovation.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Every newly invented matter is an innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire." [R51] Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "The foundations of the Sunnah with us are to hold to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allah were upon, to follow them, and to leave innovations; every innovation is misguidance." [R52]

Abi Dawud said in his poem: "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah and follow the guidance; do not be an innovator, so that perhaps you will succeed." [R53]

3. The Polytheistic Visitation

135-137

If he calls upon the buried person himself, he has committed shirk with Allah the Magnificent. Allah will not accept from him any substitute or compensation by which He would pardon him. Every sin is near to forgiveness except taking a rival with the Most Merciful in religion.

EXPLANATION

The third type is to call upon the dead person himself. This is major shirk that removes a person from Islam. The same ruling applies if he calls upon the dead from his own home rather than physically going to the grave.

Allah says: "That is Allah, your Lord; His is the dominion. Those whom you call upon besides Him do not possess even the membrane of a date-

References

[R51] Sunan Abi Dawud 4607; Sunan al-Nasa'i 1578.

[R52] Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Usul al-Sunnah, p. 15.

[R53] Ibn Abi Dawud, al-Qasidah al-Ha'iyyah.

stone. If you call upon them, they do not hear your call; and if they heard, they could not answer you. On the Day of Resurrection they will disown your shirk. None can inform you like the All-Aware." [Fatir 35:13-14] Allah Himself calls this act shirk.

The righteous people who were invoked will disown the worship directed to them. 'Ali and al-Husayn, may Allah be pleased with them, will disown those who called upon them besides Allah. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani will disown those among Sufis who called upon him besides Allah. Even a disbelieving person who was invoked will disown the worship directed to him on the Day of Resurrection.

Whoever says to a buried person, "Support me," "Heal me," "Protect me," "Provide for me," or "Make my affair easy," asking him for the divine and unseen kind of aid that only Allah possesses, has committed major shirk.

Chapter: Practices at Graves - Explicit Shirk and Excessive Exaltation of the Dead

EXPLANATION

These are contemporary afflictions that spread within the Ummah through Satan's deception and imitation of the people of shirk.

Building over Graves and Taking Them as Places of Worship

138-140

Whoever lights lamps at a grave or builds a mosque over a shrine openly renews the way of the Jews and Christians. How often the Chosen Messenger warned against that and cursed the one who did it, as the people of the Sunnah transmitted.

EXPLANATION

Lighting devotional lamps at graves and building mosques over them abandons the law of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and follows a deviation into which Jews and Christians fell.

'A'ishah reported that Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah mentioned to the Messenger of Allah a church they had seen in Abyssinia containing images. He said: "When a righteous man among those people died, they built a place of worship over his grave and made those images in it. They are the worst of creation before Allah on the Day of Resurrection." [R54] The Prophet also said: "May Allah curse the Jews and Christians; they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship." [R55]

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was not originally buried inside the mosque. He died in 'A'ishah's room and was buried there. Later expansions of the Prophet's Mosque surrounded that room. The fact that the expanded mosque now surrounds the chamber does not turn his burial into evidence for deliberately burying people in mosques or constructing mosques over graves.

A report specifically prohibiting lamps upon graves is found in the Sunan, but its chain is weak. The prohibition of taking graves as places of worship, however, is established by authentic reports.

Raising Graves

141-142

He also forbade raising a grave above a handspan or adding to it beyond that. He ordered every elevated grave to be leveled; this is authentically reported.

EXPLANATION

The grave is not to be raised into a monumental structure.

References

[R54] Sahih al-Bukhari 434; Sahih Muslim 528.

[R55] Sahih al-Bukhari 435; Sahih Muslim 529.

Fadalah ibn 'Ubayd, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, commanding that they be leveled." [R56] The word means reducing elevated graves so that they are close to the ground.

The Prophet said to 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him: "Do not leave an image without obliterating it, nor an elevated grave without leveling it."
" [R57]

Excessive Praise of the Messenger

143-144

He warned the Ummah against excessive praise of him, but Iblis deceived them through his daring. They openly opposed him and committed what he had forbidden instead of avoiding it.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in praising the son of Mary. I am only His servant, so say: the servant of Allah and His Messenger." [R58]

Some nevertheless went beyond prophethood and gave him qualities of divinity. They call upon him at his grave in distress saying, "O Muhammad, rescue me," or "O Muhammad, save me." Others claim that the world and the Hereafter are from his generosity and that knowledge of what is written in the Preserved Tablet and by the Pen is only one part of his knowledge.

Al-Busiri's famous verses say: "O noblest of creation, I have none to seek refuge with except you when the overwhelming event descends. Messenger of Allah, your rank will not be too narrow for me when the Generous One manifests as Avenger. For from your generosity are this

References

[R56] Sahih Muslim 968.

[R57] Sahih Muslim 969.

[R58] Sahih al-Bukhari 3445.

world and its counterpart, and from your knowledge is the knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen." These words direct refuge to the Messenger at the great calamity, make the world and Hereafter part of his giving, and attribute to him knowledge of the Tablet and Pen. We seek refuge with Allah from shirk.

People of Innovation Contradicted the Messenger concerning Graves

145-148

Look at them: they have gone to excess, raised the buildings, and strengthened them with plaster, bricks, and stones, especially in these later times. How many lamps they have lit over them, banners they have tied above them, standards and flags they have erected, and how they have become infatuated with decaying bones.

EXPLANATION

These practices oppose the Messenger's guidance concerning graves. Graves are enlarged, plastered, built upon, decorated, illuminated, draped with flags, and magnified intensely, even though beneath them are only the bones of human beings whom Allah never commanded people to sanctify.

149-154

They slaughter sacrifices in their courtyards like those devoted to al-Tasayyib and al-Ha'ir, seek their needs from their dead, and take their own desires as their god. Iblis has caught them in his traps; some have even become his young, calling to the worship of idols with wealth, self, and tongue. If only I knew who permitted this and plunged the Ummah into destruction. O Possessor of mighty favour and beneficence, to You we complain of the ordeal of Islam.

EXPLANATION

Among the acts of grave-worshipping polytheists is slaughtering animals as devotional sacrifices for the dead, just as the people of the pre-Islamic period sacrificed to their idols. They call upon the inhabitants of graves

besides Allah, seek needs from them, circumambulate their shrines, prostrate there, and treat the dead as objects of worship.

This follows the same path by which Satan trapped the people of Nuh. Ibn 'Abbas said: "Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr were names of righteous men among the people of Nuh. When they died, Satan inspired their people to set up images where they had sat and name the images after them. They were not worshipped at first; when that generation died and knowledge disappeared, they were worshipped." [R59]

In this Ummah, the Prophet forbade images and also blocked the path of turning graves into shrines. Satan therefore draws people through buildings and exaggerated sanctification until the grave itself becomes an object around which acts of worship are performed. We complain of this calamity to Allah and ask Him to guide the Muslims.

Chapter: The Reality of Magic, the Ruling on the Sorcerer, Astrology, and Believing Soothsayers

The Reality of Magic

155-156

Magic is real and has effects, but only through what the All-Powerful has decreed. By decree I mean what He has decreed in the created universe, not what He has legislated in the revealed law.

EXPLANATION

Magic is real. Allah mentions the magicians of Pharaoh: "They bewitched the eyes of the people, terrified them, and produced a tremendous

References

[R59] Sahih al-Bukhari 4920.

magic." [al-A'raf 7:116] The verse establishes that magic has a reality and effects.

Some magic kills, some causes illness, some produces illusions, and some is used to separate husband and wife. None of this occurs independently of Allah. It occurs only within what Allah permits to happen by His cosmic decree. Allah's allowing a thing to occur in creation does not mean that He commanded or approved it in His religion. There is a distinction between Allah's cosmic decree and His revealed law.

The Sorcerer Is a Disbeliever

157

Judge the sorcerer to be a disbeliever, and his judicial punishment is death by the sword.

EXPLANATION

The ruling upon the sorcerer described here is disbelief. Allah says: "They followed what the devils recited during the reign of Sulayman. Sulayman did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic... Yet the two angels taught no one without saying: We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve." [al-Baqarah 2:102]

The devils accused Sulayman, peace be upon him, of practising magic. Allah denied their accusation by saying, "Sulayman did not disbelieve," which shows that the magic they attributed to him would have been disbelief. Allah then says, "but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic," and the two angels warned: "Do not disbelieve." Learning and practising this magic is therefore described as disbelief (kufr).

The Judicial Ruling concerning the Sorcerer

157-160

Judge the sorcerer to be a disbeliever, and his judicial punishment is death by the sword, as has come explicitly in transmitted reports: from Jundub, and in a report from 'Umar commanding that sorcerers be killed; and it is authentically transmitted from Hafsa. What is reported from Malik is among the clearest guides on this path.

EXPLANATION

The judicial ruling stated here is execution.

Jami' al-Tirmidhi 1460 transmits from Jundub: "The prescribed punishment of the sorcerer is a stroke of the sword." This wording is not authentically established as a statement of the Prophet; it is a statement of Jundub.

It is also reported from the Commander of the Believers 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said: "Kill every male and female sorcerer." [R60]

It is authentically reported that Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with her, had a female slave who had bewitched her killed. The basis of the report is in Ibn Abi Shaybah. [R61]

'Abd al-Razzaq transmits from Ibn 'Umar: "A slave woman of Hafsah bewitched her. They found her magic; she admitted it. Hafsah ordered 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd to kill her. When 'Uthman heard, he objected strongly. Ibn 'Umar told him she had bewitched Hafsah, admitted it, and that they had found her magic. It appears 'Uthman objected because she was killed without his permission." [R62]

This is a judicial ruling.

Branches and Forms of Magic

161

Among its types and branches is the knowledge of the stars; know this and pay attention.

EXPLANATION

Among forms of magic is the magic of the Sabians and Chaldeans, performed at particular movements and configurations of the stars.

References

[R60] Sunan Abi Dawud 3043.

[R61] Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, no. 27912.

[R62] 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, no. 18747.

This is not the lawful study of astronomy used to know directions, seasons, or observable movements. It is the occult use of stars as part of sorcery and claims to hidden influence.

Another type is called the science of letters. It is attributed to the Jews and is known among scholars as the letters of Abjad. Each letter is assigned a numerical value. Practitioners take people's names, calculate values from their letters, and use the results in magic or claim the calculations reveal something of the unseen. 'Abd al-Razzaq and Ibn Abi Shaybah transmit with an authentic chain from Ibn 'Abbas, who said about people who study the stars and letters of Abjad: "I do not see that such people have any share with Allah." [R63]

Al-Kalbi said: "They are the Jews. They sought to know the lifespan of this Ummah and extract it by the numerical calculation of Abjad." [R64]

The same method appears today in "numerical miracles." Allah's help is sought.

Another branch uses talismans: words and symbols arranged in squares, stars, or decorative figures. Sometimes numbers are written inside squares. The papers are placed in specified locations according to the intended spell. Sometimes a talisman is washed in water, which is then given to a person to drink, poured over him, or poured at the threshold of his home. There are many other forms.

Magic should be understood like other known forms of harm rather than as something that makes a Muslim surrender to obsessive fear. At the same time, people must recognise its signs because many who present themselves as miracle-working shaykhs or "spiritual healers" are sorcerers. Beware of them.

References

[R63] 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, no. 20715; Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, no. 25648.

[R64] Al-Tha'labi, Tafsir, under the verse: "As for those in whose hearts is deviation..." [Ali 'Imran 3:7].

Signs of a Sorcerer

EXPLANATION

Because Muslims naturally recoil from sorcery and know that it is disbelief (kufr), sorcerers adopt titles and appearances that deceive people. Some call themselves "spiritual healers." Such a spiritual healer who practices these occult methods is a sorcerer without doubt. Some claim they work with "Muslim jinn." A person making that claim while engaging in these practices is a lying sorcerer without doubt. Others present themselves as shaykhs with miraculous powers, ruqyah practitioners, or herbal healers.

The following are signs by which such a practitioner is recognised. They need not all be present; a single one is sufficient reason for serious warning and avoidance:

1. He tells a visitor something hidden about him - such as his name or why he came - without the visitor having told him.
2. He asks for the name of the person's mother.
3. He asks for a personal trace: a fingernail, hair, undergarment, or similar item.
4. He gives the person a sealed or wrapped object and orders him not to open it.
5. He asks for something impure or filthy.
6. He asks for an animal to be slaughtered.
7. He speaks words he claims are Syriac, Hebrew, or another secret language, or tells the person to say such formulas.
8. He mutters words that cannot be understood.
9. He reads or writes Qur'anic verses while deleting letters or words, reverses the verses, writes them backwards, or tells the patient to do so.

A lawful shaykh or raqi has the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, without occult tricks, incomprehensible symbols, and bizarre conditions.

Undoing Magic

162

Undoing magic by revelation is expressly lawful, but undoing it through another magic like it is forbidden.

EXPLANATION

It is lawful to treat magic with the texts of revelation, such as reciting the Qur'an and making the supplications taught by the Messenger of Allah. It is not permissible to undo magic by practising another magic, because the practice of magic itself is disbelief. Allah says concerning the Qur'an: "Say: It is guidance and healing for those who believe." [Fussilat 41:44]

Disbelief of the One Who Believes a Soothsayer

163

Whoever believes a soothsayer has disbelieved in what the recognised Messenger brought.

EXPLANATION

A soothsayer is a person who claims knowledge of the unseen.

Whoever believes the soothsayer's claim has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Prophet said: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller or soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in what was sent down upon Muhammad. " [R65] Among what was revealed to Muhammad is Allah's statement: "Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected." [al-Naml 27:65] A person who attributes independent knowledge of the unseen to another has contradicted this revelation. Allah may inform a messenger of particular unseen matters: "Knower of the unseen; He does not disclose His unseen to anyone, except a messenger whom He has chosen." [al-Jinn 72:26-27] There is also a distinct ruling for merely consulting such a person without believing him. The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and asks him about something, no prayer will be accepted from him for forty nights." [R66] This includes palm-reading, coffee-cup reading, horoscopes in magazines, "your luck today," and games or services that claim to tell when a person will die, what his future profession will be, or other unseen matters.

References

[R65] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, no. 15; he authenticated it, and al-Dhahabi said it met the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

[R66] Sahih Muslim 2230.

Chapter: The Hadith of Jibril (Gabriel) and the Three Levels of the Religion

The Religion Is Speech and Action

164

Know that the religion is speech and action. Preserve this and understand everything included within it.

EXPLANATION

The religion is speech and action. This is what the Companions of the Messenger of Allah and those who followed them from the people of the Sunnah held. Allah says: "I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me." [al-Dhariyat 51:56] He says: "They were commanded only to worship one God." [al-Tawbah 9:31] Nuh, Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb each said to their people: "Worship Allah; you have no god other than Him." Ibrahim said: "Worship Allah and fear Him." [al-Ankabut 29:16] The Messiah said: "I said to them only what You commanded me: worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." [al-Ma'idah 5:117]

This was the agreement of all the prophets: "We sent no messenger before you except that We revealed to him: There is no god except Me, so worship Me." [al-Anbiya 21:25] Worship is action conforming to Allah's command with the intention of drawing near to Him alone.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, who died in 463 AH, transmitted the agreement of the people of reports and the jurists of the major lands that iman increases through obedience and decreases through disobedience. [R67]

The Three Levels of the Religion

165-167

The words of the Messenger are enough for you when Jibril came asking him. He divided the religion into three levels that together contain it all: Islam, iman, and ihsan, and each is built upon pillars.

Jibril (Gabriel), peace be upon him, came to the Messenger of Allah in human form and asked him questions so that people would learn their religion.

References

[R67] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Tamhid, 9/252.

He asked about Islam, iman (faith), and ihsan (excellence in worship), and the Messenger gave distinct answers showing that these are different levels. The full hadith is recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim. [R68][R69] The relevant part is mentioned with each level below.

The Pillars of Islam

168

Islam has come built upon five. Establish them firmly and understand what has been transmitted.

EXPLANATION

Jibril said: "Muhammad, tell me about Islam." The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "Islam is that you testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish the prayer, give zakah, fast Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the House if you are able to find a way to it." These five are the pillars of Islam.

Whoever abandons the two testimonies or abandons the prayer leaves Islam. As for zakah, fasting, and Hajj, a person who acknowledges their obligation but abandons them from laziness or negligence is sinful and has committed lesser disbelief (kufr), not the major disbelief that takes a person outside Islam.

'Abd Allah ibn Shaqiq said: "We did not know of any deed whose abandonment the Companions of Muhammad regarded as disbelief except the prayer." [R70] Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "Among the binding Sunnah is this: whoever abandons the prayer has disbelieved. No deed is disbelief merely by abandoning it except the prayer. Whoever abandons it is a disbeliever, and Allah has made his execution lawful." [R71]

References

[R68] Sahih al-Bukhari 50.

[R69] Sahih Muslim 9.

[R70] Al-Khallal, al-Sunnah, no. 1378.

[R71] Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Usul al-Sunnah, p. 35.

The First Pillar: The Two Testimonies

169-170

The first and greatest foundation is the straightest path. Remain firm upon the two testimonies and hold fast to the firmest handhold that never breaks.

EXPLANATION

The first pillar is the two testimonies. They are the firmest handhold. Allah says: "Whoever disbelieves in taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest handhold that never breaks." [al-Baqarah 2:256] Disbelieving in taghut means rejecting everything worshipped besides Allah and rejecting that worship. Believing in Allah means believing that He is the one God who alone deserves worship and submitting to Him.

The Second Pillar: Prayer

171

Second is establishing the prayer; and third is giving zakah.

EXPLANATION

Allah made five prayers obligatory each day and night. "Establish the prayer; indeed the prayer has been prescribed for the believers at appointed times." [al-Nisa 4:103]

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The time of Zuhr is until 'Asr arrives; the time of 'Asr is until the sun becomes yellow; the time of Maghrib is until the red twilight disappears; the time of 'Isha is until the middle of the night; and the time of Fajr is until the sun rises.

" [R72]

Zuhr begins when the sun passes its highest point and the shadows begin moving in the opposite direction. Its time ends when the shadow of an object becomes equal to its length, which is the beginning of 'Asr. The preferred time of 'Asr continues until the sun begins to yellow. A later period still remains before sunset. Another hadith says: "Whoever

References

[R72] Sahih Muslim 612.

catches one rak'ah - one unit of the prayer - of 'Asr before sunset has caught 'Asr." Deliberately delaying it into that late period is blameworthy. Maghrib begins as soon as the disk of the sun has disappeared. It ends when the red twilight disappears. Its time is therefore comparatively short. 'Isha continues until the middle of the night. The middle is calculated from sunset to true dawn, not automatically as twelve o'clock: if that night lasts ten hours, its middle is five hours after sunset; if it lasts twelve, its middle is six hours after sunset.

Fajr begins with the true dawn: a white light spreading horizontally along the horizon. It ends when any part of the sun rises. A person who deliberately waits until after sunrise has not performed Fajr in its prescribed time. One who genuinely sleeps through it despite taking the ordinary means to wake, or forgets it, prays when he wakes or remembers.

The Messenger of Allah said: "Between a man and shirk and disbelief (kufr) is abandoning the prayer." [R73] Ibn Majah also records the wording: "If he abandons it, he has committed shirk." [R74]

The Third Pillar: Zakah

171

Second is establishing the prayer; and third is giving zakah.

EXPLANATION

Zakah is taking a specified share of specified property in the manner Allah has prescribed. Allah says: "If they repent, establish the prayer, and give zakah, then they are your brothers in religion." [al-Tawbah 9:11] Zakah applies to monetary wealth, specified agricultural produce, livestock, and trade goods.

Monetary wealth includes gold, silver, and what takes their place as currency, including modern paper money and other currencies used as money. The amount is calculated against a minimum threshold. For gold, that threshold is approximately 88.85 grams of 24-carat gold. When a

References

[R73] Sahih Muslim 82.

[R74] Sunan Ibn Majah 1080.

person owns at least this amount and one lunar year passes over it, one quarter of one tenth - 2.5 percent - is due.

Trade inventory is treated as wealth. A merchant who owns cars for sale, for example, values the trade cars and gives zakah after the required year. His personal car, his wife's personal car, and other vehicles for ordinary personal use are not trade inventory. Likewise, real estate held for sale as merchandise is valued for zakah, while a residence or property merely held for personal use or rental is not itself treated as trade inventory.

Livestock here includes camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. Each has its own minimum threshold and detailed rules, studied in Islamic law, and the relevant zakah is due after the required year when its conditions are met. Mu'adh ibn Jabal's written instructions include taking charity from wheat, barley, raisins, and dates. [R75]

Agricultural zakah is given at harvest, not after waiting a year.

Ordinary possessions such as furniture, clothing, jewelry used personally, household goods, residences, and similar property are not subject to this zakah merely because they have value, unless they are held as trade goods.

When the Prophet sent Mu'adh to Yemen, he said: "Teach them that Allah has made a charity obligatory in their wealth, taken from their rich and returned to their poor." [R76] The word "returned" shows that the obligatory zakah is a right belonging to its recipients. A wealthy person who withholds it consumes another person's right wrongfully. Allah says: "Those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way - give them tidings of a painful punishment." [al-Tawbah 9:34] Meaning if they do not give its zakah.

References

[R75] Al-Daraqutni 1914; al-Hakim 1458. Al-Hakim said it is a hadith whose narrators were relied upon, and Musa ibn Talhah was a senior member of the generation after the Companions whose reaching the time of Mu'adh was not denied.

[R76] Sahih al-Bukhari 1395; Sahih Muslim 19.

The Fourth Pillar: Fasting Ramadan

172

The fourth is fasting, so listen and follow; the fifth is Hajj for whoever is able.

EXPLANATION

Fasting Ramadan is refraining from food, drink, and sexual desire from true dawn until sunset. Allah says: "The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and the Criterion. Whoever among you witnesses the month must fast it; whoever is ill or on a journey, then an equal number of other days." [al-Baqarah 2:185]

Allah also says: "Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread; then complete the fast until night." [al-Baqarah 2:187] The white thread is the true dawn already described in the prayer times. The fast ends when the sun sets and night begins.

Some people have told Muslims living in Europe, where summer days may be long, to fast and break the fast according to the timetable of Makkah instead of the local signs Allah specified. This is tampering with Allah's religion and making oneself a legislator alongside Allah. Allah fixed the beginning and end of the fast by observable signs; those signs are followed where they occur.

The Fifth Pillar: Hajj

172

The fourth is fasting, so listen and follow; the fifth is Hajj for whoever is able.

EXPLANATION

Hajj is going to Makkah to perform the specific acts of worship legislated there: circumambulating the Ka'bah, walking between al-Safa and al-Marwah, staying at Mina, standing at 'Arafah, staying at Muzdalifah, casting the pebbles, and the other rites.

It is obligatory once in a Muslim's lifetime if he is able. Anything beyond the obligatory pilgrimage is voluntary. Allah says: "Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by people who are able to find a way to it; and whoever disbelieves, Allah is free of need of all worlds." [Ali 'Imran 3:97]

A Muslim who is able and deliberately abandons Hajj while affirming its obligation commits the lesser disbelief described above rather than the major disbelief associated here with abandoning prayer. Allah has no need of the disbelievers, and polytheists are forbidden to approach the Sacred Mosque: "The polytheists are impure, so let them not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year." [al-Tawbah 9:28]

The Pillars of Iman

173

Those are five and iman has six pillars without denial.

EXPLANATION

After the five pillars of Islam come the six pillars of iman. Jibril asked: "Tell me about iman." The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "That you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and that you believe in divine decree, its good and its evil." The following sections explain each pillar.

The First Pillar of Iman: Belief in Allah

174

Our belief is in Allah, the Possessor of majesty, and in every attribute of perfection that belongs to Him.

EXPLANATION

The first pillar of iman is belief in Allah with the attributes by which He has described Himself in revelation. Allah says: "He is Allah, other than whom there is no god, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. He is Allah, other than whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Source of Peace, the

Granter of Security, the Overseer, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Supremely Great. Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. To Him belong the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise." [al-Hashr 59:22-24]

He also says: "Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds - He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and earth, who has not taken a son and has no partner in dominion, and who created everything and determined it with precise determination." [al-Furqan 25:1-2]

Al-Muzani, who died in 264 AH, said: "No one's tawhid is sound until he knows that Allah is above His Throne with His attributes." [R77]

The Second Pillar of Iman: Belief in the Angels

175

And in the noble, righteous angels, and in His pure books that were sent down.

EXPLANATION

The second pillar is belief in the angels. They are created beings whom Allah created from light. They do not become too proud to worship Him and they do not tire: "Those who are near Him are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary. They glorify Him night and day without slackening." [al-Anbiya 21:19-20]

Allah appoints angels to different tasks. Jibril, peace be upon him, brings Allah's messages to the prophets. Mika'il [E11] is entrusted with rain; Israfil with blowing the Trumpet before the Day of Resurrection. Other angels record people's deeds and words: "He does not utter a word except that with him is an observer ready to record it." [Qaf 50:18]

Explanations

[E11] The name Mika'il appears in several recognised Qur'anic readings with this form; Abu 'Amr, Hafs, and Ya'qub read it as Mikal.

References

[R77] Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', 12/494.

Muslims love the angels. Some disbelievers showed hostility to them. Allah says: "Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His messengers, Jibril and Mika'il - then indeed Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers." [al-Baqarah 2:98]

Among the beliefs of Jahiliyyah - the pre-Islamic period of ignorance - was the claim that the angels were females. Allah says: "They have made the angels, who are servants of the Most Merciful, females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded and they will be questioned." [al-Zukhruf 43:19]

The Third Pillar of Iman: Belief in the Revealed Books

175

And in the noble, righteous angels, and in His pure books that were sent down.

EXPLANATION

The third pillar is belief in the books Allah sent down to His messengers. Allah says: "O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book He sent down upon His Messenger and the scripture He sent down before." [al-Nisa 4:136]

We believe that Allah sent books to His messengers. Some of their names are known to us and some are not. All of them were truth when Allah revealed them, containing guidance and light. Among them are the Scriptures of Ibrahim, the Torah, the Zabur, and the Injil. Allah says: "Indeed this is in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa." [al-A'la 87:18-19] He says of the Torah: "Indeed We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light." [al-Ma'idah 5:44] He says: "And We gave Dawud the Zabur." [al-Isra 17:55] He says of 'Isa: "We gave him the Injil, in which was guidance and light." [al-Ma'idah 5:46]

The last revealed book is the magnificent Qur'an, and it is the criterion and guardian over what came before it: "We have sent down to you the

Book in truth, confirming what came before it of scripture and as a guardian over it." [al-Ma'idah 5:48]

The Torah was altered by the Jews. The Injil that Allah sent down to 'Isa, peace be upon him, is lost. What Christians today call "the Gospel" is not that revealed book. The works now called the Gospels are later writings about the life of the Messiah, written by people after him, containing some of his reported words as well as corruption; even the attribution of those writings to the persons whose names they bear is not established with certainty.

Books That Displace Revelation

'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said: "Among the signs of the Hour is that speech becomes widespread while action diminishes. Among the signs of the Hour is that the mathnah will be recited and no one will object to it." He was asked: "What is the mathnah?" He said: "What is written from a book other than the Qur'an. Hold fast to the Qur'an; by it you were guided, by it you will be rewarded, and about it you will be questioned." [R78]

If we open the creed books of the people of kalam, such as the Mu'tazilah and Ash'aris, we find in them open rejection of verses of Allah and hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, and much philosophical speech that is the foundation of their creeds. In some of their books many pages pass without a verse or hadith, yet those books are recited to them without anyone objecting. The same is true of many books of the legal schools: pages pass without a verse or hadith, filled instead with opinions, deductions, and disputes. When someone is advised to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah, some resist that advice. Allah's help is sought. [E12]

Explanations

[E12] The people of kalam here are the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, those later called Ash'aris and Maturidis, and the later Rafidah.

References

[R78] Al-Darimi 493; Husayn Salim Asad said its chain is good. Al-Hakim also narrated related versions at 8660 and 8661 and authenticated them; al-Dhahabi agreed.

The Fourth Pillar of Iman: Belief in the Books

176

And in His messengers, guides for mankind, without separating between them in belief or casting doubt.

EXPLANATION

Here I discuss belief in the messengers as the fourth pillar of iman. We must believe in all the messengers, peace be upon them, without differentiating between them in believing their truthfulness or in the obligation of obeying them. Allah says: "The Messenger has believed in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and so have the believers. All have believed in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say: We hear and obey. Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the final return." [al-Baqarah 2:285]

A messenger is of a higher rank than a prophet. A messenger is sent to a people who oppose him in order to convey to them a new revealed law. Allah says: "For each of you We have appointed a law and a clear way." [al-Ma'idah 5:48] A prophet receives revelation according to the law of a messenger before him, judges new cases by it, preserves it, and conveys it to a people who already agree with its foundation. All prophets and messengers called to tawhid, even though particular laws differed.

Twenty-Five Prophets Named in the Qur'an

The prophets are many. Allah has told us the names of twenty five of them. Their names are gathered here in a short mnemonic poem:

This is a little poem of the prophets' names, I counted them from the clear Qur'an: Adam and Idris; Nuh, the first messenger sent to the first people of idols; Hud and Salih; Ibrahim, the chosen; Lut and Isma'il, devoted in submission; Ishaq, Ya'qub, and his son Yusuf; Shu'ayb and Ayyub, a man of steadfast knowledge; Dhu al-Kifl and Yunus; then after them Musa and eloquent Harun; remember among the righteous Ilyas

and al-Yasa'; Dawud, possessor of strength, and father of Sulayman; Zakariyya, Yahya, 'Isa, then Muhammad -with him I conclude, and all praise belongs to the Most Merciful.

The First and Last Messengers

177

The first of the messengers is Nuh, without doubt; and Muhammad came as their seal.

EXPLANATION

Nuh, peace be upon him, is the first messenger. Allah says: "Indeed We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh and the prophets after him." [al-Nisa 4:163] His people were the first nation to reject a messenger. Adam, peace be upon him, was a prophet but was not a messenger.

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the last prophet and the last messenger. Allah says: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets." [al-Ahzab 33:40] The Prophet said: "There is no prophet after me." [R79]

Whoever claims prophethood after Muhammad has disbelieved, and whoever believes in a prophet after Muhammad has disbelieved. The followers of Ghulam al-Qadiyani are disbelievers and Ghulam is a disbeliever. The Baha'is are disbelievers and al-Baha is a disbeliever.

'Isa ibn Maryam, peace be upon him, will return near the end of time. This does not make him a prophet after Muhammad, because he was already a prophet before Muhammad. When he descends, he will rule by the law of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Prophet said: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, the son of Maryam will soon descend among you as a just ruler." [R80]

References

[R79] Sahih al-Bukhari 3455; Sahih Muslim 1842.

[R80] Sahih al-Bukhari 3448; Sahih Muslim 155.

The Messengers of Firm Resolve

178

Five of them are the messengers of firm resolve, those mentioned together in Surat al-Ahzab and al-Shura.

Allah calls some messengers "those of firm resolve" and says: "So be patient as the messengers of firm resolve were patient." [al-Ahqaf 46:35]

The poet says they are five, mentioned in al-Ahzab: "And [remember] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and 'Isa son of Maryam." [al-Ahzab 33:7] And in al-Shura: "He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nuh, and what We revealed to you, and what We enjoined upon Ibrahim, Musa, and 'Isa: establish the religion and do not be divided therein." [al-Shura 42:13]

Many scholars said these five are the messengers of firm resolve. I have not found an authentic proof restricting the title exclusively to them.

The Fifth Pillar of Iman: Belief in the Last Day

179

Be certain of the return without hesitation, and do not claim knowledge of the appointed time.

EXPLANATION

The fifth pillar is belief in the Last Day: the day on which Allah raises people for judgement and reward or punishment. Allah says:

"Righteousness is the righteousness of one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets." [al-Baqarah 2:177]

No created being knows the time of the Hour. Allah says: "People ask you about the Hour. Say: its knowledge is only with Allah. And what will make you know? Perhaps the Hour is near." [al-Ahzab 33:63]

Signs of the Hour

180-181

But we believe without doubt in everything authentically reported from the best of mankind: the signs that will occur before it, its marks and indications.

EXPLANATION

Although the time of the Hour is unknown to creation, we believe in the signs of its approach that Allah and His Messenger have described. Allah says concerning 'Isa ibn Maryam and his descent: "Indeed he is a sign of the Hour, so have no doubt about it and follow Me." [al-Zukhruf 43:61] Allah says concerning the Beast: "When the word falls upon them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them, because mankind did not have certainty in Our signs." [al-Naml 27:82]

The Prophet said: "The Hour will not be established until two great groups fight one another in a great battle though their call is one; until nearly thirty lying impostors are sent, each claiming that he is the Messenger of Allah; until knowledge is taken away, earthquakes increase, time draws close, trials appear, and killing becomes widespread; until wealth becomes so abundant that a wealthy man worries about who will accept his charity, and the person to whom he offers it says, 'I have no need of it'; until people compete in building; until a man passes a grave and says, 'If only I were in his place'; and until the sun rises from the west. When it rises and people see it, they will all believe. That is when faith will not

benefit a soul that did not believe before or earn good through its faith." [R81]

Many more than thirty people may claim prophethood in history. The phrase "nearly thirty" concerns major impostors whose claims produce major trials, influence, and followers.

References

[R81] Sahih al-Bukhari 7121; Sahih Muslim contains reports of closely related meaning.

Death and the Life of the Grave (Barzakh)

182

Belief also includes death and what inevitably comes upon the servants after it.

EXPLANATION

Belief in the Last Day includes belief in death. Allah says: "Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you are in fortified towers." [al-Nisa 4:78] He says: "Every soul will taste death, then to Us you will be returned." [al-'Ankabut 29:57]

The prophets die, including Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him: "Indeed you will die and they will die." [al-Zumar 39:30]

A group among the grave-venerators denied his death, so this point must be affirmed plainly.

After death there is a distinct life in the grave called barzakh, the barrier between this life and resurrection. It contains blessing for the righteous and punishment for criminals. Allah says: "When death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back so that I may do righteousness in what I left behind. No. It is only a word he is saying, and behind them is a barrier until the day they are raised." [al-Mu'minun 23:99-100] Here, what is behind them can mean what lies ahead of them: this barrier-life continues until resurrection.

The Prophet said: "The deceased is surrounded by the angels. If he was a righteous man, they say to the good soul that was in the good body: Come out praiseworthy, and receive glad tidings of rest, fragrance, and a Lord who is not angry. It is then taken upward through the heavens. If he was an evil man, the soul is told to come out blameworthy and is given tidings of boiling water, foul discharge, and other punishment; when it is taken upward, the gates of heaven are not opened for it and it is sent back toward the grave." [R82]

References

[R82] Musnad Ahmad 8769; its editors authenticated it. Sunan Ibn Majah 4262; Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and al-Albani authenticated it.

The Questioning of the Grave

183-185

Every person in his resting place will be questioned: Who is the Lord? What is the religion? Who is the Messenger? Then the Protector makes those who believed firm with the firm word, while the doubter becomes certain at that moment that his destination is ruin.

EXPLANATION

The Prophet said: "When the believer is made to sit in his grave, he testifies that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Then he said: "This is Allah's saying: 'Allah keeps those who believe firm with the firm word in the worldly life and in the Hereafter.'" [Ibrahim 14:27] ^[R83]

The Prophet said: "After a servant is placed in his grave and his companions turn away, he hears the sound of their sandals. Two angels come, sit him up, and ask: What did you use to say about this man Muhammad? The believer says: I testify that he is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. It is said: Look at your place in the Fire; Allah has exchanged it for a place in Paradise, and he sees them both." His grave is expanded for him. The hypocrite or disbeliever says: "I do not know; I used to say what the people said." He is told: "You neither knew nor followed," and is struck with iron hammers; his cry is heard by those near him except human beings and jinn. ^[R84]

The Mu'tazilah and the hypocrites denied these realities because their minds did not accept them. We ask Allah for safety. Revelation is not rejected because a person cannot fit a matter of the unseen into his own assumptions.

References

[R83] Sahih al-Bukhari 1369; Sahih Muslim 2871.

[R84] Sahih al-Bukhari 1374; Sahih Muslim 2870.

Resurrection from the Graves

186-187

And we believe in meeting Allah, resurrection and rising, and in our standing from the graves uncircumcised, barefoot and naked, like scattered locusts. The disbeliever says: This is a difficult day.

EXPLANATION

Belief in the Last Day includes belief in meeting Allah after resurrection. Allah will raise all the dead: "On the day Allah raises them all together, He will inform them of what they did. Allah counted it while they forgot it, and Allah is witness over everything." [al-Mujadilah 58:6]

The rising from the graves is compared to vegetation growing from dead earth. Allah says: "Allah is the One who sends the winds, and they stir up clouds; then We drive them to a dead land and revive the earth after its death. Such will be the resurrection." [Fatir 35:9]

People will be gathered barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised; whatever was cut away from the body in this life is restored. The Prophet said: "You will be gathered barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised," then recited: "As We began the first creation, We will repeat it - a promise binding upon Us; surely We will do it." [al-Anbiya 21:104]

They will emerge in vast numbers, compared in the Qur'an to scattered locusts, and the disbelievers will say: "This is a difficult day." [al-Qamar 54:7-8] What follows is the gathering, reckoning, intercession, scales, bridge, Paradise, and Hell.

The Great Gathering

188

Creation will be gathered for the Day of Decision, all of them: those above and those below.

EXPLANATION

After resurrection Allah gathers all creation. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "You will be gathered barefoot, naked, and

uncircumcised," and then recited: "As We began the first creation, We will repeat it - a promise binding upon Us; surely We will do it." [R85]

Those above include the inhabitants of the heavens. Allah says: "On the day the Spirit and the angels stand in rows, none will speak except one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and who speaks correctly." [al-Naba 78:38] Those below include the inhabitants of the earth: "Allah - there is no god except Him - will surely gather you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt." [al-Nisa 4:87]

The Terrors of the Day of Resurrection

189, 191

In that standing the calamity will descend, and the terror and anguish will become immense. Clouds of dread will gather until even the eloquent are unable to speak.

EXPLANATION

The standing is tremendous. Allah says: "Warn them of the approaching Day, when hearts will be at the throats, choking." [Ghafir 40:18] A person will flee even from those closest to him: "On the day a man will flee from his brother, his mother and his father, his wife and his children. Every person that day will have enough concern of his own." [Abasa 80:34-37]

Allah lightens that terror for the people of taqwa. The believers say: "We fear from our Lord a grim and distressful Day," and Allah says: "So Allah protected them from the evil of that Day." [al-Insan 76:10-11] In a divine hadith Allah says: "By My might, I will not combine two fears for My servant, nor combine two securities for him. If he feels secure from Me in the world, I will frighten him on the Day of Resurrection; and if he fears Me in the world, I will grant him security on the Day of Resurrection." [R86]

References

[R85] Sahih al-Bukhari 3349; Sahih Muslim 2860.

[R86] Sahih Ibn Hibban 640.

The Prophet's Basin (Hawd)

205

The basin of the best of creation is true; at it, in the Hereafter, all his people drink.

EXPLANATION

At the gathering, when the sun draws near and people become thirsty, Allah gives each prophet a basin from which his followers drink. The Prophet said: "Every prophet has a basin, and they will boast as to which of them has the greatest number of followers coming to it. I hope that I will have the greatest number coming to mine." [R87] The basin of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is true. He said: "My basin is a month's journey across. Its water is whiter than milk, its fragrance is more pleasant than musk, and its cups are like the stars of the sky. Whoever drinks from it will never thirst again." [R88]

Some people from his Ummah will approach and he will recognise them by their signs, but the angels will prevent them from reaching the basin because they introduced changes after him. He said: "People will come to me whom I recognise and who recognise me, then a barrier will be placed between me and them. I will say: They are from me. It will be said: You do not know what they introduced after you. Then I will say: Away, away with those who changed after me." [R89]

The Greatest Intercession

207-210

He also has the greatest intercession, with which Allah specially honoured him. It is only after Allah's permission, not as every grave-worshipper invents about Allah. He first intercedes with the Most Merciful for judgement to begin among those standing, after the people seek it from each of the noble messengers of firm resolve.

References

[R87] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2443; al-Tabarani 6881. Al-Albani authenticated it.

[R88] Sahih al-Bukhari 6579; Sahih Muslim 2292.

[R89] Sahih al-Bukhari 6583, 6584; Sahih Muslim 2295.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, has three types of intercession discussed here. Two are especially his: the intercession for the reckoning to begin and the intercession for the gate of Paradise to be opened. A third type is shared with others whom Allah permits to intercede: intercession for people to be taken out of the Fire, for punishment to be lightened, or for ranks in Paradise to be raised.

Intercession belongs to Allah and occurs only after His permission. It is not an independent power possessed by a prophet, saint, or dead person that can be demanded from him in the grave. Allah says: "Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?" [al-Baqarah 2:255]

The Long Hadith of the Greatest Intercession

The Prophet said: "I am the master of mankind on the Day of Resurrection. Do you know why? Allah will gather the first and the last on one plain. The caller will be heard by all, and sight will reach all. The sun will draw near and distress and anguish will reach a degree they cannot bear. The people will say to one another: 'Do you not see what has reached you? Will you not look for someone who will intercede for you with your Lord?'

They will go to Adam and say: 'You are the father of mankind. Allah created you with His hand, breathed into you from the spirit He created for you, and commanded the angels to prostrate to you. Intercede for us with your Lord.' Adam will say: 'My Lord is angry today with an anger unlike any before or after. He forbade me the tree and I disobeyed Him. Myself, myself, myself. Go to someone else. Go to Nuh.' They will go to Nuh and say: 'You are the first messenger sent to the people of the earth, and Allah called you a grateful servant. Intercede for

us with your Lord.' He will say: 'My Lord is angry today with an anger unlike any before or after. I used my supplication against my people. Myself, myself, myself. Go to Ibrahim.'

They will go to Ibrahim. He will say: 'My Lord is angry today with an anger unlike any before or after,' and mention the three statements described as lies. 'Myself, myself, myself. Go to Musa.'

They will go to Musa. He will say: 'My Lord is angry today with an anger unlike any before or after. I killed a soul I was not commanded to kill. Myself, myself, myself. Go to 'Isa.'

They will go to 'Isa ibn Maryam and say: 'You are the Messenger of Allah and His word which He cast to Maryam, and a spirit created by Him; you spoke to people in the cradle. Intercede for us with your Lord.' He will say: 'My Lord is angry today with an anger unlike any before or after.' He will not mention a sin, but will say: 'Myself, myself, myself. Go to Muhammad.'

They will come to Muhammad and say: 'You are the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah has forgiven what preceded of your sin and what came after. Intercede for us with your Lord.' He will go beneath the Throne and fall in prostration to his Lord. Allah will open for him praises and beautiful words of glorification not opened for anyone before him. Then it will be said: 'Muhammad, raise your head. Ask and you will be given; intercede and your intercession will be accepted.'" This is the greatest intercession.

A weak report adds: "I will say: My Lord, You promised me intercession, so allow me to intercede for Your creation and judge between them." He said: "Then Allah will say: I will come to you and judge between you." [R90]

The previous hadith then continues: "I raise my head and say: My Ummah, my Lord; my Ummah, my Lord; my Ummah, my Lord." It will be said: "Muhammad, admit from your Ummah those who will have no reckoning through the right-hand gate of Paradise. They share the other gates with the rest of the people." Then he said: "By the One in whose

References

[R90] The expanded wording is reported by Ishaq in his Musnad, 10; al-Bayhaqi, al-Ba'th wa-l-Nushur, 609; and al-Marwazi, Ta'zīm Qadr al-Salah, 273. Its chain is very weak. Isma'il ibn Rafi' al-Madani is weak, and al-Nasa'i called him abandoned. Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Abi Ziyad is unknown, and another narrator is an unknown man from the Ansar. I asked Shaykh Mustafa ibn al-'Adawi whether this addition was established through a sound route; he said: "It is not established." As for its meaning, the context suggests that the report has been shortened. Ahmad 2546 contains a sound report in which the Messenger prostrates, praises Allah, and then says, "My Ummah," after the people of Paradise have entered Paradise. But the chain before us does not stand. If a sound chain for this wording is found, that would be sweeter to the heart than honey.

hand is my soul, the distance between two gateposts of Paradise is like the distance between Makkah and Himyar." [R91]

Abu Hurayrah said concerning Allah's words, "Perhaps your Lord will raise you to a praised station" [al-Isra 17:79]: "It is the station in which the Prophet intercedes for his Ummah." [R92]

The Banner of Praise

206

He also has the Banner of Praise that will be raised, and beneath it all the messengers will be gathered.

The Prophet said: "I am the gatherer, upon whose footsteps the people will be gathered." [R93] He also said: "I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and this is no boast; I am the first for whom the earth will split open, the first intercessor and the first whose intercession is accepted. In my hand will be the Banner of Praise, and beneath it will be Adam and everyone after him." [R94]

He will also advance with the people at the second intercession, when the gate of Paradise is opened. The Prophet said: "I am the master of mankind on the Day of Resurrection, and this is no boast. There is no one who is not beneath my banner on the Day of Resurrection waiting for relief. The Banner of Praise is with me. I will walk and the people will walk with me until I reach the gate of Paradise. I ask for it to be opened. It is asked: Who is this? I say: Muhammad. It is said: Welcome to Muhammad." [R95]

References

[R91] Sahih al-Bukhari 4712; Sahih Muslim 194.

[R92] Musnad Ahmad 9684; Jami' al-Tirmidhi 3137. Al-Albani authenticated it.

[R93] Sahih Muslim 2354; Sahih al-Bukhari 3532.

[R94] Ibn Abi 'Asim, al-Sunnah, 793; Sahih Ibn Hibban 6478.

[R95] Al-Hakim 82, who said it is authentic according to the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim; al-Dhahabi agreed. A similar report is in al-Tirmidhi 3615.

The Records of Deeds Are Distributed

196-198

The records of deeds will be spread out and taken in the right hand and the left. Glad tidings for the one who takes his book in his right hand, with glad tidings of the maidens of Paradise. Woe to the one who takes it in his left, behind his back, destined for the Blaze.

EXPLANATION

When Allah permits the reckoning to begin, the records of deeds are spread out. Every servant has a record in which his actions were written. Allah says: "When the records are spread open." [al-Takwir 81:10] He says: "This is Our record, speaking about you in truth. We used to have recorded what you did." [al-Jathiyah 45:29]

The record reaches its owner. The people of Paradise receive it in the right hand. The people of the Fire receive it in the left. Some wrongdoers place the left hand behind the back, hoping to take the record with the right, so it reaches them from behind their backs.

Allah says of the person given his record in the right hand: "Here, read my record. I was certain that I would meet my account." Then: "He will be in a pleasant life, in a lofty Garden, its clusters hanging near. Eat and drink pleasantly for what you sent ahead in days past." [al-Haqqah 69:19-24]

As for the one given his record in the left, he says: "If only I had not been given my record and had not known what my account was. If only death had been the end. My wealth has not benefited me; my authority has vanished from me." It will be said: "Seize him and shackle him, then burn him in Hell. Then fasten him in a chain whose length is seventy cubits. Indeed he did not believe in Allah, the Magnificent, and did not encourage feeding the poor. So today he has no close friend here and no food except foul discharge, which none but the sinners eat." [al-Haqqah 69:25-37]

The Reckoning

190, 193

They will be brought for presentation and reckoning, and ties of lineage will be cut off. Kings will be equal with ordinary soldiers, and the Book and the witnesses will be brought.

EXPLANATION

After people are gathered and receive their records, they are presented before Allah. "They will be presented before your Lord in rows: You have come to Us as We created you the first time." [al-Kahf 18:48] The Trumpet will be sounded and the day will be hard for the disbelievers; the heaven will shake and the mountains will

Family ties will no longer help anyone. King and servant, rich and poor, stand alike before Allah: "Everyone in the heavens and earth will come to the Most Merciful as a servant." [Maryam 19:93]

The Prophet said: "On the Day of Resurrection Allah will put the heavens on one finger, the earths on one finger, and the created beings on one finger, then say: I am the King. Where are the kings of the earth?" [R96]

He then recited: "They did not appraise Allah with true appraisal. The whole earth will be in His grasp on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand. Exalted is He above what they associate with Him." [al-Zumar 39:67]

The Witnesses

The Book containing the servant's deeds will be brought and witnesses will testify. Allah says: "The earth will shine with the light of its Lord, the Book will be placed, and the prophets and witnesses will be brought, and judgement will be passed between them in truth and they will not be wronged." [al-Zumar 39:69]

References

[R96] Sahih al-Bukhari 7513; Sahih Muslim 2786.

The Easy Presentation and the Severe Reckoning

233

The presentation is the easy reckoning described in the reports; whoever is interrogated closely in the account will be punished.

There are two kinds of reckoning. The people of the right receive an easy reckoning: Allah makes them acknowledge their deeds, they admit them, and He forgives them and admits them to Paradise. The people of the left deny their sins, are interrogated about them, and are punished.

The Prophet said: "Whoever is closely examined in the reckoning will be punished." 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, asked about Allah's saying that the believer "will be called to an easy account." He answered: "That is only the presentation. No one is closely interrogated in the reckoning on the Day of Resurrection except that he is punished." [R97]

The Messenger explained the presentation and said: "One of you will draw near to his Lord until He places His covering over him. He will say: 'You did such and such,' and the servant will say: 'Yes.' He will make him acknowledge his sins, then say: 'I concealed them for you in the world, and today I forgive them for you.'" [Sahih al-Bukhari 6070]

Another report says: "For every evil deed, you will have a good deed in its place." [R98]

The Body Testifies against Its Owner

194

The limbs and organs will testify, and shameful deeds and scandals will be exposed.

EXPLANATION

The people of the right acknowledge their sins and Allah forgives them.

References

[R97] Sahih al-Bukhari 6537; Sahih Muslim 2876.

[R98] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2596. Al-Tirmidhi called it hasan sahih; al-Albani authenticated it.

The criminals deny what they did. The angels who recorded their deeds testify against them, and the earth itself testifies. Abu Hurayrah said: "The Messenger of Allah recited: 'That day it will report its news.' [al-Zalzalah 99:4] He said: 'Do you know what its news is?' They said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'Its news is that it will testify against every male and female servant about what they did upon its back, saying: You did such-and-such on such-and-such day. That is its news.'" [R99]

The criminal disputes until his own body speaks. Allah says: "On the day their tongues, hands, and feet will testify against them about what they used to do." [al-Nur 24:24] The Messenger of Allah said: "A servant will say to his Lord: 'My

did You not protect me from wrongdoing?' He says: 'Yes.' The servant says: 'I accept no witness against myself except from myself.' Allah says: 'Today you are enough as a witness against yourself, with the noble recording angels.' His mouth is sealed and his limbs are told: 'Speak.' They testify. Then he says: 'Away with you! It was for your sake that I was arguing.'" [R100]

Hidden Realities Are Exposed

195

There the secrets will be tested, and what was hidden in the hearts will be uncovered.

EXPLANATION

What people concealed will appear. Allah says: "On the day the secrets are tested." [al-Tariq 86:9] Intentions hidden in the heart will be revealed. The Prophet said: "On the Day of Resurrection Allah will descend to judge His servants while every nation kneels. The first called will be a Qur'an reciter, a man killed in Allah's cause, and a wealthy man. Allah asks the reciter: 'Did I not teach you what I sent down to My Messenger?' He says: 'Yes, my Lord.' He asks: 'What did you do with what you learned?' He says: 'I stood with it night and day.' Allah says, and the angels say: 'You lied. You wanted it said: So-and-so is a reciter; and it was said.' The wealthy man is asked: 'Did I not give you enough

References

[R99] Al-Hakim 3012; he said it is authentic according to the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim, and al-Dhahabi agreed.

that you needed no one?' He says: 'Yes, my Lord.' Allah asks: 'What did you do with what I gave you?' He says: 'I kept family ties and gave charity.' Allah says, and the angels say: 'You lied. You wanted it said: So-and-so is generous; and it was said.' The man killed is asked: 'Why were you killed?' He says: 'I was commanded to fight in Your way, so I fought until I was killed.' Allah says, and the angels say: 'You lied. You wanted it said: So-and-so is brave; and it was said.' The Prophet struck Abu Hurayrah's knee and said: 'O Abu Hurayrah, these three are the first of Allah's creation with whom the Fire will be kindled on the Day of Resurrection.'" [R101]

The Prophet also said: "When Allah gathers the first and the last on the Day of Resurrection, a banner will be raised for every betrayer, and it will be said: This is the betrayal of so-and-so, son of so-and-so." [R102]

Restitution for the Wronged

192

Faces will be humbled before the Self-Sustaining One, and restitution will be taken from the wrongdoer for the wronged.

EXPLANATION

Allah says: "Faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining." [Ta Ha 20:111] Every creature is subdued before its Allah restores rights to those who were wronged. The Prophet said: "Rights will certainly be restored to those entitled to them on the Day of Resurrection, until retaliation is made for the hornless sheep against the horned sheep." [R103]

The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever accuses his slave of zina will have the prescribed punishment carried out on him on the Day of Resurrection, unless it was as he said." [R104]

The Prophet said: "The bankrupt of my Ummah is the one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting, and zakah, but he comes having insulted this one, slandered that one, consumed this one's wealth, shed that one's blood, and struck that one. This one is given from his good deeds and that one from his good deeds. If his good deeds run out

References

[R100] Sahih Muslim 2969.

[R101] Sahih Muslim 1905; the quoted wording is also in al-Hakim 1527.

[R102] Sahih al-Bukhari 1386 and 6177; Sahih Muslim 1735.

[R103] Sahih Muslim 2582.

[R104] Sahih Muslim 1660.

before what he owes is settled, their sins are taken and cast upon him, then he is cast into the Fire." [R105]

The Prophet said: "The first matter judged between people will be bloodshed." [R106]

The Messenger of Allah said: "When the believers are saved from the Fire, they will be held on a bridge between Paradise and Hell, where they settle wrongs that were between them in this world. When they are purified and cleansed, they are permitted to enter Paradise." [R107]

The Scales and Perfect Justice

199

The weighing is with perfect justice: there is no wrongdoing, and no servant is charged with anything except what he did.

EXPLANATION

Allah sets up the Scale to weigh the deeds of His servants. "We will set up the just scales for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be wronged at all. Even if it is the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it, and sufficient are We as reckoners." [al-Anbiya 21:47]

The majority of scholars hold that the Scale is one. The Qur'an speaks of "scales" in the plural because different things are weighed. The scales are perfectly just: "Allah does not wrong even the weight of an atom." [al-Nisa 4:40]

Allah multiplies good deeds and gives additional reward from Himself. An evil deed is repaid only with its like, and Allah may pardon it entirely. He may even change evil deeds into good deeds for the one who meets the conditions: "Except one who repents, believes, and does righteous work - for them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good deeds." [al-Furqan 25:70]

Some people seek the reward of this worldly life and receive it here, leaving themselves no reward in the Hereafter. Allah says: "Whoever

References

[R105] Sahih Muslim 2581.

[R106] Sahih al-Bukhari 6533; Sahih Muslim 1678.

[R107] Sahih al-Bukhari 2440.

desires the worldly life and its adornment, We will pay them in full for their deeds there... Those are the ones for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire." [Hud 11:15-16] Disbelief nullifies otherwise outwardly good deeds: "The deeds of those who disbelieved in their Lord are like ashes blown fiercely by the wind on a stormy day." [Ibrahim 14:18]

No soul bears another's burden. But one who causes another person to go astray bears his own sin and a share equal to the sin of those whom he misled, because their misguidance was caused by what he spread. Conversely, the Prophet said: "Whoever guides to a good deed has a reward like the reward of the one who does it." [R108]

A person should therefore be extremely careful about what he spreads. A song, indecent image, false hadith, lie, religious doubt, or innovation may continue being passed from person to person after its originator dies, while a share of its sin continues to reach him. The innovations of the Khawarij, Rafidah, Jahmiyyah, Mu'attilah, and others continued long after the people who first established them. In contrast, teachers and transmitters of the Qur'an and Sunnah continue receiving reward through the knowledge people learned from them. The widespread recitations transmitted through 'Asim and Hafs, al-Duri, Warsh from Nafi', and others show the lasting reward of teaching revelation; the same is true of scholars such as al-Bukhari who preserved authentic Sunnah for the Ummah.

Three Conditions at the Weighing

200

Some are saved because their scale is heavy, while a criminal is ruined by his wrongdoing.

People are of three kinds when deeds are weighed. If the scale of good deeds is heavy, "he will be in a pleasant life" [al-Qari'ah 101:6-7], in Paradise. If the scale of good deeds is light and evil deeds outweigh them,

References

[R108] Sahih Muslim 1893.

then "his refuge is an abyss - and what will make you know what it is? A blazing Fire." [al-Qari'ah 101:8-11]

Among those whose evil deeds outweigh their good are disbelievers who remain eternally in the Fire, and sinful Muslims whom Allah punishes according to their deeds and then brings out by an intercession He permits or by His mercy without intercession.

The Prophet said: "When Allah wants mercy for some people of the Fire, He orders the angels to bring out those who worshipped Allah. They know them by the marks of prostration, which Allah forbade the Fire to consume." [R109]

A third group has equal good and bad deeds. Their exact ruling is under Allah's will. It is commonly said by many scholars that these are the people of al-Araf who remain at a place between Paradise and Hell until Allah admits them to Paradise, but I do not know a strong text establishing this identification.

Before the Bridge over Hell

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah said: "A caller will call: 'Let each people follow what they used to worship.' The cross-worshippers go with their cross, the idol-worshippers with their idols, and each worshipper with his god, until only those who worshipped Allah remain, righteous and sinful. Hell is brought like a mirage. The Jews are asked, 'What did you worship?' They say, 'Uzayr, son of Allah.' It is said, 'You lied. Allah has no wife or son. What do you want?' They say, 'Give us drink.' It is said, 'Drink,' and they fall into Hell. The Christians are asked likewise; they say, 'The Messiah, son of Allah,' and they too fall into Hell. Those who worshipped Allah remain. The Compeller comes in another form and says, 'I am your Lord.' They say, 'You are our Lord.' Asked for the sign, they say, 'The shin.' He uncovers His shin. Believers prostrate; the show-off tries, but his back is rigid." [R110]

Allah says: "On the day the shin is uncovered and they are called to prostrate, but they will not be able." [al-Qalam 68:42]

References

[R109] Sahih al-Bukhari 806.

[R110] Sahih al-Bukhari 7439; Sahih Muslim contains a closely related wording at 183.

A person who did not prostrate to Allah in this world will not be able to prostrate in the Hereafter.

The Bridge over Hell (Sirat)

201-204

The bridge will be set up exactly as the authentic reports have come. People will cross it in different states according to what they earned: some pass safely toward the Gardens, while others are seized and cast down because of their excesses.

EXPLANATION

Whoever denies Allah's true form and shin, unlike creation, how will he recognise Him? The Prophet said: "Then the Sirat will be laid across the middle of Hell. It is slippery. In Hell are hooks like the thorns of al-Sa'dan; no one knows their size except Allah. They seize people by their deeds. The believers pass like the blink of an eye, lightning, wind, birds, and the finest horses and mounts. Some pass safely; some are scratched but

released; others are seized and thrown into Hell." [R111]

The Final Bridge (Qantarah) after the Sirat

The Messenger of Allah said: "When the believers are saved from the Fire, they will be held on a bridge between Paradise and Hell. They settle wrongs that were between them in this world until, when purified and refined, they are permitted to enter Paradise." [R112]

Some Qur'an commentators understood this later settlement to concern comparatively minor

References

[R111] Sahih al-Bukhari 806; Sahih Muslim 182.

[R112] Sahih al-Bukhari 2440.

matters between believers, at which point they pardon one another so that they enter Paradise with pure hearts.

The Second Intercession: The Gate of Paradise

211-212

Second, he intercedes for the gate of the Home of Bliss to be opened for the people of success. These two intercessions are especially his, without dispute.

EXPLANATION

After the believers cross the Sirat and are purified at the Qantarah, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, comes to the gate of Paradise. He said: "I will come to the gate of Paradise, take hold of its ring, and knock. It will be said: Who are you? I will say: Muhammad, and it will be opened for me." [R113] This is the second intercession that is especially his: he intercedes for the gate of Paradise to be opened.

The Prophet said: "By the One in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, each will know his home in Paradise better than he knew his home in this world." This is because his place was shown to him in the grave. [R114]

References

[R113] Musnad Ahmad 2546 and 2692.

[R114] Sahih al-Bukhari 2440.

The Prophet said: "The poor Muslims enter Paradise before the rich by half a day - five hundred years." [R115]

Paradise and Hell

204

Hell and Paradise are true, and both already exist; there will be no end to either of them.

EXPLANATION

After the judgement people separate: some enter Paradise and some enter Hell. Paradise is the home of bliss and Hell is the home of punishment. Both remain and do not pass away.

Allah says concerning the disbelievers: "Those who disbelieve will have the Fire of Hell. It will not be decreed for them that they should die, nor will its punishment be lightened for them. Thus We repay every persistent disbeliever." [Fatir 35:36]

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Death will be brought in the form of a black-and-white ram. A caller will call: People of Paradise! They will look up, and it will be said: Do you know this? They will say: Yes, this is death. Then: People of the Fire! They will look up and say: Yes, this is death. It will be slaughtered, then it will be said: People of Paradise, eternity and no death; people of the Fire, eternity and no death." He then recited: "Warn them of the Day of Regret, when the matter will have been decided, while they are heedless and do not believe." [Maryam 19:39][R116]

Allah says: "Those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, remaining there forever. They will have purified spouses there, and We will admit them into deep shade." [al-Nisa 4:57] He says: "Allah has cursed the disbelievers and prepared for them a Blaze, remaining there forever; they will find neither protector nor helper." [al-Ahzab 33:64-65] The Arabic word for remaining or abiding can in some contexts denote a very long stay;

References

[R115] Musnad Ahmad 7933; Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2352.

[R116] Sahih al-Bukhari 4730; Sahih Muslim 2849.

when it is joined to "forever" in these verses, it indicates unending permanence.

Description of Hell

181

Hell and Paradise are true, and both already exist; there will be no end to either of them.

EXPLANATION

Hell is the home of punishment. It has descending levels in which its people are punished according to what they deserve. Allah says: "Indeed Hell has been lying in wait, a home for the transgressors, remaining in it for ages. They will taste there neither coolness nor drink except boiling water and foul discharge - a fitting punishment." [al-Naba 78:21-26] He also says: "Hell is the promised place for them all. It has seven gates; for each gate is an allotted share of them." [al-Hijr 15:43-44]

Whenever its flame subsides, Allah increases it in blaze: "Their refuge is Hell; whenever it subsides We increase for them the blaze." [al-Isra 17:97] Its air is samum, intensely hot wind. Its shade is black smoke. Its drink is hamim, boiling water: "The companions of the left - what are the companions of the left? In scorching wind and boiling water, and a shade of black smoke, neither cool nor pleasant." [al-Waqi'ah 56:41-44] Its shade neither cools nor shields from flame: "Proceed to a shadow of three branches, neither shading nor protecting from the flame." [al-Mursalat 77:30-31]

The food of its people includes the tree of zaqqum. Allah says: "It is a tree that grows from the bottom of Hell. Its fruit is like the heads of devils. They will eat from it and fill their bellies with it. Then over it they will have a mixture of boiling water." [al-Saffat 37:62-68] Images sometimes circulated as though a particular earthly tree were the tree of zaqqum are false to this description: the verse says that it grows from the bottom of Hell.

Some levels contain only dari', a thorny plant: "They will have no food except from a thorny plant, neither nourishing nor satisfying

hunger." [al-Ghashiyah 88:6-7] Others have ghislin: "Nor any food except foul discharge." [al-Haqqah 69:36] It is the pus and discharge of the people of Hell.

The least punishment in Hell is itself unbearable. The Prophet said: "The person with the lightest punishment among the people of Hell on the Day of Resurrection will have two embers beneath the soles of his feet from which his brain boils," like a pot boiling. [R117]

The hypocrites are in the lowest depth of the Fire: "The hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire, and you will never find for them a helper." [al-Nisa 4:145] A hypocrite outwardly displays Islam while inwardly being a disbeliever. Those who outwardly present themselves as Muslims while attacking the Sunnah and the religion belong to this description when the inward disbelief described by revelation is present. Pharaoh openly displayed his disbelief; the hypocrite combines inward disbelief with an outward claim to Islam.

Among the punishments is what is threatened for those who hoard gold and silver and do not give what Allah obligated from it. The wealth will be heated in the Fire and their foreheads, sides, and backs branded with it: "This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard." [al-Tawbah 9:34-35]

Allah says: "They sought victory, and every stubborn tyrant failed. Before him is Hell, and he will be given foul water to drink. He will sip it but can hardly swallow it. Death will come to him from every direction, but he will not die; and beyond him is a severe punishment." [Ibrahim 14:15-17]

The people of Hell will wish for death but will not find it. They will call: "Malik, let your Lord put an end to us." He will answer: "You are remaining." [al-Zukhruf 43:77]

When their skins are burned through, Allah replaces them with new skins so that they continue to taste the punishment: "Whenever their skins are completely burned, We will replace them with other skins so that they may taste the punishment." [al-Nisa 4:56] Allah says: "Boiling

References

[R117] Sahih al-Bukhari 6562; Sahih Muslim 212.

water will be poured over their heads; with it what is in their bellies and their skins will be melted." [al-Hajj 22:19-20]

Their punishment includes regret: "On the day their faces are turned over in the Fire, they will say: If only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger." [al-Ahzab 33:66] It includes mutual hatred and quarrelling. Allah says: "This is a crowd rushing in with you. No welcome for them; they will burn in the Fire." They say: "Rather, no welcome for you! You brought this upon us. What an evil place to settle." They say: "Our Lord, whoever brought this upon us, increase him with double punishment in the Fire." [Sad 38:59-61]

It also includes humiliation when the believers look upon them. Allah says: "Today those who believed are laughing at the disbelievers, upon couches looking on. Have the disbelievers been repaid for what they used to do?" [al-Mutaffifin 83:34-36] Allah says: "The people of Paradise will call to the people of the Fire: We have found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised to be true? They will say: Yes. Then an announcer between them will announce: Allah's curse is upon the wrongdoers." [al-A'raf 7:44]

I ask Allah to make us among the people of Paradise and to let our eyes rejoice at that moment as a reward for the harm inflicted by the disbelievers and criminals.

Description of Paradise

181

Hell and Paradise are true, and both already exist; there will be no end to either of them.

Paradise is the home of reward and mercy. In the divine hadith Allah says to Paradise: "You are My mercy; through you I show mercy to whomever I will among My servants." [R118] It is entirely goodness and bliss: "When you look there, you will see bliss and a vast kingdom." [al-Insan 76:20] "No soul knows what delight of the eyes has

References

[R118] Sahih al-Bukhari 4850; Sahih Muslim 2846.

been hidden for them as a reward for what they used to do." [al-Sajdah 32:17]

The people of taqwa are driven to Paradise in groups. When they arrive its gates are opened and its keepers say: "Peace be upon you. You have done well, so enter it forever." [al-Zumar 39:73] The angels enter upon them from every gate saying: "Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. Excellent is the final home." [al-Ra'd 13:23-24]

Paradise has ranks according to deeds: "For all are degrees according to what they did." [al-An'am 6:132] It has lofty chambers and dwellings. The Prophet said: "The people of Paradise will see the people of the lofty chambers above them as you see a brilliant star far away on the eastern or western horizon, because of the difference in rank." The Companions asked whether those chambers belonged only to prophets.

He said: "No. By the One in whose hand is my soul, they are for men who believed in Allah and affirmed the messengers." [R119]

The highest Paradise is al-Firdaws. The Prophet said: "When you ask Allah, ask Him for al-Firdaws. It is the middle and highest part of Paradise; above it is the Throne of the Most Merciful, and from it the rivers of Paradise spring." [R120] I ask Allah to admit me and you to al-Firdaws al-A'la.

Among its bliss is the purity and harmony of the hearts of its people. Allah says: "We will remove whatever rancor is in their breasts; rivers will flow beneath them, and they will say: Praise belongs to Allah who guided us to this. We would never have been guided had Allah not guided us." [al-A'raf 7:43]

References

[R119] Sahih al-Bukhari 3083; Sahih Muslim 2831.

[R120] Sahih al-Bukhari 2790.

Its dwellings are good and permanent. Allah says: "Allah has promised believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, remaining there forever, and good dwellings in gardens of everlasting residence. But Allah's pleasure is greater. That is the great success." [al-Tawbah 9:72] The Prophet said: "Its bricks are of gold and silver, its mortar is fragrant musk, its pebbles are pearls and rubies, and its soil is saffron." [R121]

Its food and drink are delightful. The people of taqwa are in gardens and bliss, rejoicing in what their Lord gives them. They are told: "Eat and drink with enjoyment for what you used to do." [al-Tur 52:17-19] Allah says: "We will supply them with fruit and meat of whatever they desire. They will pass between themselves a cup in which there is no useless speech and no sin. Young servants will circulate among them as if they were protected pearls." [al-Tur 52:22-24] Allah says: "Golden trays and cups will be passed around among them. In them is whatever souls desire and eyes delight in, and you will remain there forever." [al-Zukhruf 43:71]

Allah says: "They will be given to drink from sealed pure wine, whose seal is musk - so let those who compete compete for that - and its mixture is from Tasnim, a spring from which those brought near drink." [al-Mutaffifin 83:25-28]

Its bliss includes inward peace and perpetual youth. "You will recognise in their faces the radiance of bliss." [al-Mutaffifin 83:24] The Prophet said of the one who enters Paradise: "He will live in bliss and never suffer misery; his youth will never pass away and his clothes will never wear out." [R122]

The greatest bliss of Paradise is seeing Allah. "Faces that day will be radiant, looking at their Lord." [al-Qiyamah 75:22-23] The Prophet said: "When the people of Paradise enter Paradise, Allah will say: Do you want anything more? They will say: Have You not whitened our faces, admitted us to Paradise, and saved us from the Fire? Then the veil will be removed." They will be given nothing more beloved than looking at

References

[R121] Musnad Ahmad 8030; Ahmad Shakir authenticated it.

[R122] Musnad Ahmad 8030; Ahmad Shakir authenticated it.

their Lord, mighty and majestic. [R123] I ask Allah to make me and you among them.

The Third Intercession

213-216

Third, he intercedes for people who died upon the religion of Islam but whose many sins destroyed them and caused them to enter the Fire, so that they may leave it for the Gardens through the favour of the Lord of the Throne, the Possessor of goodness. After him every messenger, every righteous servant, and every saint whom Allah permits will intercede.

EXPLANATION

This third intercession of our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is for Muslims who died as monotheists but whose sins outweighed their good deeds and who entered Hell as punishment. A person may have accumulated so many grave sins that only the smallest amount of iman remains in his heart. Iman increases through obedience and decreases through sin.

This intercession occurs after the people of Paradise have entered Paradise. The Messenger of Allah said: "I come to the gate of Paradise and take hold of the door-ring. It is asked: Who are you? I say: I am Muhammad. It is opened for me. I come to Him while He is upon His Kursi, and I fall in prostration to my Lord. I praise my Lord with praises that no one praised Him with before me and no one after me. It is said to me: Raise your head; speak and you will be heard; ask and you will be given; intercede and your intercession will be accepted. So I intercede, and it is said: Bring out of the Fire whoever has such-and-such amount of goodness in his heart." [R124]

In another report the Prophet said: "I go and bring out from it whoever has in his heart the weight of a grain of barley of iman. Then I return, praise Him with those praises, and fall in prostration before Him. It is

References

[R123] Sahih Muslim 181.

[R124] Musnad Ahmad 2693; Ahmad Shakir authenticated it.

said: Muhammad, raise your head; speak and you will be heard; ask and you will be given; intercede and your intercession will be accepted. I say: My Lord, my Ummah, my Ummah. He says: Go and bring out whoever has in his heart the weight of a particle - or a mustard seed - of iman. Then I return again, and it is said to me the same. I say: My Lord, my Ummah, my Ummah. He says: Go and bring out whoever has in his heart the least, least, least weight of a mustard seed of iman. I go and do so." [R125]

Believers Intercede for One Another

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah said: "When the believers have been saved from the Fire, by the One in whose hand is my soul, none of you is more insistent with Allah in seeking a right on the Day of Resurrection than the believers will be with Allah for their brothers who are in the Fire. They say: Our Lord, they used to fast with us, pray with us, and perform Hajj with us. It is said to them: Bring out those whom you recognise. Their forms are forbidden to the Fire. They bring out many people whom the Fire has taken to half of their shins and to their knees. Then they say: Our Lord, no one remains in it from those You commanded us to bring out." [R126]

Allah, mighty and majestic, says: "The angels have interceded, the prophets have interceded, and the believers have interceded." [R127]

Allah Brings the Monotheists out of the Fire

217-219

Allah brings out of the Fire everyone who died upon iman. They are cast into the River of Life after becoming charred, then live and grow as a seed grows in the silt carried by a flood.

References

[R125] Sahih al-Bukhari 7510; Sahih Muslim 193.

[R126] Sahih Muslim 183; a similar report is in Sahih al-Bukhari 44.

[R127] Sahih Muslim 183.

EXPLANATION

After those intercessions comes Allah's mercy without the intercession of any created being. The Messenger of Allah said: "Allah, mighty and majestic, says: The angels have interceded, the prophets have interceded, and the believers have interceded. None remains except the Most Merciful of those who show mercy. Then He takes a handful from the Fire and brings out people who never did any good and who have become charred. He casts them into a river at the mouths of Paradise called the River of Life. They come out as a seed comes out in the silt carried by a flood. Do you not see that what faces the stone or tree is yellow-green, while what faces the shade is white?" They said:

"Messenger of Allah, it is as though you used to pasture animals in the desert." He said: "They come out like pearls, with seals on their necks. The people of Paradise recognise them. These are those set free by Allah, whom Allah admitted into Paradise without a deed they did or good they put forward. Then He says: Enter Paradise. Whatever you see is yours. They say: Our Lord, You have given us what You did not give anyone among the worlds. He says: I have something better for you. They say: Our Lord, what is better than this? He says: My pleasure; I will never be angry with you after this." [R128]

The Prophet said: "I know the last person to leave the Fire and the last person to enter Paradise: a man who comes out of the Fire crawling. Allah says: 'Go and enter Paradise.' He goes to it, but it seems full to him. He returns and says: 'My Lord, I found it full.' Allah says again: 'Go and enter Paradise.' He goes, but it seems full. He returns and says: 'My Lord, I found

it full.' Allah says: 'Go and enter Paradise. You will have ten times the like of the world.' The man says: 'Are You making fun of me while You are the King?'" The narrator said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah laugh until his molar teeth showed." He said: "That is the lowest rank among the people of Paradise." [R129]

O Allah, make us among the people of Paradise and its righteous inhabitants, and grant us al-Firdaws al-A'la.

References

[R128] Sahih Muslim 183.

[R129] Sahih al-Bukhari 6571; Sahih Muslim 186.

The Sixth Pillar of Iman: Divine Decree

220-221

The sixth is belief in the decrees, so be certain of them and do not dispute. Everything is by decree and measure, and all of it is written in the Mother of the Book.

EXPLANATION

The sixth pillar of iman is belief in divine decree. We believe in four matters.

First: Allah's knowledge. Allah knew everything that was and everything that will be. "Knower of the unseen; not even the weight of a particle is hidden from Him in the heavens or the earth, nor anything smaller or greater, except that it is in a clear Book." [Saba 34:3]

Second: Allah's writing. Allah wrote what will occur until the Hour. "Do you not know that Allah knows whatever is in heaven and earth? Indeed, it is in a Book. That is easy for Allah." [al-Hajj 22:70] The Messenger of Allah said: "The first thing Allah created was the Pen. He said to it: Write. It said: My Lord, what shall I write? He said: Write the decrees of everything until the Hour is established."^[R130]

Third: Allah's will. Everything that occurs does so by His cosmic will. This includes things Allah does not love religiously but which He wills to occur because of His wisdom in governing creation. "Say: Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has written for us." [al-Tawbah 9:51] And: "Never say of anything, 'I will surely do that tomorrow,' except, 'if Allah wills.'" [al-Kahf 18:23-24] This cosmic will is different from His legislative or religious will, which means what He loves and commands. In other words, something may occur by Allah's decree even though He does not love or command that action. "Allah intends ease for you and does not intend hardship for you." [al-Baqarah 2:185]

References

^[R130] Sunan Abi Dawud 4700; Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2155; al-Hakim 3840. Al-Dhahabi said it meets the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Fourth: creation. Allah created everything that He knew, wrote, and willed. "Allah is the Creator of everything." [al-Zumar 39:62] And: "Allah created you and what you do." [al-Saffat 37:96]

Allah facilitates each person toward what he deserves and chooses. He says: "As for the one who gives, has taqwa, and affirms the best, We will make easy for him the way of ease. But as for the one who is miserly, thinks himself self-sufficient, and denies the best, We will make easy for him the way of hardship." [al-Layl 92:5-10] When some Companions asked whether they should simply rely upon what was written and abandon action, the Prophet said: "Act, for everyone is facilitated toward that for which he was created." [R131]

Things that Contradict Belief in Divine Decree

222-223

No constellation, contagion, omen, ghul, hamah, or Safar can turn aside what Allah, exalted is He, has decreed. The master of mankind informed us of this.

EXPLANATION

Events occur by Allah's decree. Stars, lunar mansions, constellations, and zodiac signs do not independently cause happiness or misery in people's lives. Nor does the flight of a bird to the right produce good fortune or its flight to the left produce bad fortune.

Nor is it correct to believe that a person dies because a ghul killed him, that an owl or hamah brought death, that Safar - a worm in the belly - independently causes a fate, or that contagion acts independently of Allah. Allah may create ordinary physical causes for death, such as an accident, illness, or killing, but the event occurs by His decree. The Prophet said: "There is no contagion, no evil omen, no hamah, and no Safar," [R132] and in another report: "There is no contagion, no evil omen, and no ghul." [R133]

References

[R131] Sahih al-Bukhari 4949; Sahih Muslim 2647.

[R132] Sahih al-Bukhari 5707.

[R133] Sahih Muslim 2222.

The same applies to objects people believe bring luck, such as a horseshoe; things believed to bring bad luck, such as a crow or owl; and things believed to repel evil without revealed or observable proof, such as a blue bead or knocking on wood. These are inherited pagan practices from which we have been prohibited.

The Third Level of the Religion: Ihsan

224-225

The third level is ihsan, the highest level before the Most Merciful: the heart becomes firmly established in recognition until the unseen is as though seen with the eyes.

EXPLANATION

We have discussed the first level, Islam, and the second, iman. The third is ihsan, and it is the highest level. Allah loves the people of ihsan. He says: "Who is better in religion than one who submits his face to Allah while doing good and follows the way of Ibrahim, inclining to truth?" [al-Nisa 4:125]

The Messenger of Allah defined ihsan: "That you worship Allah as though you see Him; and if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you." [R134] This is a high degree of certainty. A person acts while feeling as though Allah were before him and visible to him. If he has not reached that station - and the reality is that we do not see Allah in this world - then he should be conscious of the fact that Allah truly sees him.

References

[R134] Sahih al-Bukhari 50; Sahih Muslim 8.

Iman Increases through Obedience and Decreases through Sin

226-227

Our iman increases through acts of obedience, and its decrease occurs through slips and sins. Its people differ greatly in rank; are you like the perfect believer, or like the messengers?

EXPLANATION

Iman is speech, action, and belief. At its minimum, a person believes that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, says the testimony, and establishes prayer. Iman increases through righteous deeds. Allah says: "Whenever a surah is revealed, some of them say: Which of you has this increased in iman? As for those who believe, it increases them in iman and they rejoice." [al-Tawbah 9:124] Their iman increases by hearing the revelation, reciting it, and submitting to its commands and prohibitions.

Just as iman increases through obedience, it decreases through sins. It may decrease until only the smallest particle remains.

The Sinful Muslim

228-229

The sinful member of the Muslim community, the one who commits disobedience, is not stripped of iman altogether. Rather, his iman continues to decrease in proportion to his sin and disobedience.

EXPLANATION

The sinful Muslim discussed here is one who has departed from Allah's obedience by committing sins and abandoning commands but has not fallen into disbelief. He remains within the Muslim community. We do not say that all iman has vanished from him. His iman decreases in

proportion to his sins and is not completely removed unless he commits disbelief.

Monotheists Do Not Remain Eternally in the Fire

230-232

We do not say that the sinful Muslim remains eternally in the Fire. His affair belongs to the Creator and is under Allah's will: if He wills He pardons him, and if He wills He takes him to account according to his sin. If he dies upon iman, he is eventually brought out and taken to the Gardens.

EXPLANATION

We do not say, as the Mu'tazilah and some Khawarij said, that a sinful person who dies as a Muslim remains eternally in Hell. His affair belongs to Allah and he is beneath Allah's will. If Allah wills, He pardons him; if He wills, He punishes him according to his sin and then brings him out of the Fire, as has already been explained.

We Do Not Declare a Muslim a Disbeliever Merely for a Sin

234-236

Do not declare a believer a disbeliever for sins unless he regards as lawful what he committed. Repentance is accepted before the death-rattle, according to the revealed law. When does its door close? When the sun rises from its west.

EXPLANATION

We distinguish between the sinner and the disbeliever. A Muslim monotheist is not described as a disbeliever merely because he commits sins and wicked deeds, unless he commits an act for which the evidence itself establishes disbelief. Examples include insulting Allah, His Messenger, or His religion; mocking them; prostrating to idols; supplicating to other than Allah; or saying that a judgement other than

Allah's is better than Allah's judgement. These are acts of disbelief; whoever commits them is a disbeliever.

Sins for which no proof establishes disbelief do not make their perpetrator a disbeliever. Theft, unlawful sexual intercourse, murder, drinking alcohol, uncovering the parts of the body that must be covered ('awrah), and disobedience to parents do not make the one who commits them a disbeliever.

If a person regards as lawful something whose prohibition is established by clear evidence and consensus and because of that denies Allah's ruling, he has denied Allah and is a disbeliever. This does not include issues for which there is no decisive text or consensus and in which recognised early scholars differed with evidence, such as the permissibility of eating hyena meat, or new questions not present in the time of the Salaf for which there is no explicit text, such as photographic images. These are matters of scholarly judgement (ijtihad) in which the person holding the other recognised view is excused.

Repentance remains accepted until the soul reaches the throat at death. Its general door also closes at the great sign when the sun rises from the west; after that, a faith newly adopted because the sign has become visible does not benefit the person who did not believe before.

Knowing Our Prophet Muhammad, His Delivery of the Message, the Completion of the Religion through Him, and His Finality

The Lineage and Birth of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him

237

Our Prophet Muhammad is from Hashim, and without doubt his lineage reaches the sacrificed son.

EXPLANATION

Our Prophet is Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr ibn Malik ibn al-Nadr ibn Kinanah ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma'add ibn 'Adnan. Above 'Adnan the line is disputed. The lineage adopted here continues through Add, Muqawwim, Nahur, Tarih, Ya'rub, Yashjub, Nabit, Isma'il, Ibrahim al-Khalil, then through the line stated in the historical reports until Adam. Up to 'Adnan the lineage is agreed; above him the reports differ. I follow here the line preferred by leading investigators such as al-Dhahabi. [R135]

His mother was Aminah bint Wahb ibn 'Abd Manaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab. He is Hashimi because Banu Hashim are a branch of Quraysh.

His descent through Isma'il ibn Ibrahim is certain. The identity of the son whom Ibrahim was commanded to sacrifice was disputed among the

References

[R135] Al-Dhahabi chose this lineage in Tarikh al-Islam, 1/480, and said it was the view of the leading specialists.

Salaf: was it Isma'il or Ishaq? The stronger view here is that it was Isma'il.

His Birth and Upbringing

239

His birth was in purified Makkah, and his migration was to the city of Taybah.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was born in Makkah in the Year of the Elephant, the year in which the Abyssinian ruler Abraha came with an elephant intending to destroy the Ka'bah. Allah prevented him, as related in Surat al-Fil.

His father died while he was in his first year; it is also said that his father died while his mother was pregnant with him. A woman named Thuwaybah nursed him, and his uncle Hamzah and Abu Salamah al-Makhzumi were nursed with him. He was then nursed by Halimah al-Sa'diyyah.

His mother died when he was six. His grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib then cared for him; after the grandfather died two years later, his uncle Abu Talib took responsibility for him.

He worked as a shepherd. While still young he also travelled with his uncle in trade toward Syria. In his twenties Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who possessed wealth, entrusted him with trading on her behalf. When she saw his honesty she admired him and sought marriage with him, and he married her.

His Life after Revelation and before Migration

239-242

His birth was in purified Makkah and his migration to illuminated Taybah. After forty years revelation began with him. Then for ten and three years he called: O people, worship your Lord, exalted is His affair, and affirm Him alone. Before that he used to withdraw from people in the Cave of Hira, sweetening his solitude with remembrance of his Lord.

EXPLANATION

He lived in Makkah until the age of fifty-three. At thirty-nine he began spending periods in a cave in Makkah called Hira, reflecting on Allah's signs. When he reached forty, Jibril came and the first five verses of Surat al-'Alaq were revealed: "Read in the name of your Lord who created..." With that he became a prophet. Then Allah revealed: "O you who are wrapped up, arise and warn; magnify your Lord; purify your garments; and keep away from idols." [al-Muddaththir 74:1-5] He began calling people to worship Allah alone and abandon idols.

For three years he called privately among those he trusted. Then Allah commanded him to proclaim the call and warn his close relatives. The polytheists persecuted his Companions in an effort to turn them from their religion, but they failed.

Seven years after his prophethood Quraysh agreed to boycott him and his relatives from Banu Hashim: they would not speak to them, buy from them, sell to them, or marry with them. Banu Hashim were forced into the mountain pass of Abu Talib for three years and suffered hunger. The pact was written on a document and hung in the Ka'bah. After three years Allah sent an insect that ate the document except the mention of Allah. Allah informed His Messenger, who told Abu Talib. Abu Talib challenged Quraysh: if his nephew's report was false he would leave him to them, but if it was true they should end their injustice. They took down the document, found the matter as the Prophet had reported, and the boycott ended.

The Message of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him

238

Allah sent him to us as a guide, a mercy to all worlds, and guidance.

EXPLANATION

Allah sent him as a guide who directs us to the path of truth. "You surely guide to a straight path - the path of Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth." [al-Shura 42:52-53] He is also a mercy to the worlds: "We have not sent you except as a mercy to all worlds." [al-Anbiya 21:107]

Whoever obeys him is guided. Allah says: "If you obey him, you will be guided." [al-Nur 24:54] Allah says: "My mercy encompasses all things. I will decree it for those who have taqwa, give zakah, and believe in Our signs - those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel. He commands them to what is right, forbids them from what is wrong, makes good things lawful for them, forbids filthy things to them, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So those who believe in him, honour him, support him, and follow the light sent down with him - they are the successful." [al-A'raf 7:156-157]

The Night Journey and Ascension (Isra and Mi'raj)

243-244

After fifty years had passed of the life of the master of mankind, he was taken by night and raised through the heavens until he heard the writing of the Pens and saw of the signs what Allah showed him.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah said: "The roof of my house was opened while I was in Makkah, and Jibril came down. He opened my chest, washed it with Zamzam water, then brought a golden vessel filled with wisdom and iman. He poured it into my chest, then closed it. Then he took my

hand and ascended with me to the lowest heaven. When we reached it, Jibril said to the keeper of heaven: Open. He asked: Who is this? He said: Jibril. He asked: Is anyone with you? He said: Yes, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He asked: Was he sent for? He said: Yes. The gate was opened. We rose into the lowest heaven and saw a man sitting there. On his right were groups and on his left were groups. When he looked to his right he laughed, and when he looked to his left he wept. He said: Welcome to the righteous prophet and righteous son. I asked Jibril: Who is this? He said: This is Adam. The groups on his right and left are the souls of his descendants. The people on the right are the people of Paradise, and the groups on his left are the people of the Fire. Then I was raised through the heavens. I met Idris, Musa, 'Isa, and Ibrahim. Each welcomed me as a righteous prophet and righteous brother, and Ibrahim welcomed me as a righteous prophet and righteous son." Ibn Hazm reported from Ibn 'Abbas and Abu Habbah al-Ansari that the Prophet said: "Then I was raised until I reached a level where I could hear the scratching of the Pens." [R136] Ibn Hazm and Anas ibn Malik said: The Prophet said: "Allah, mighty and majestic, prescribed fifty prayers for my Ummah. I returned with that until I passed Musa. He asked: What has Allah prescribed for your Ummah? I said: Fifty prayers. He said: Return to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear that. I returned, and He reduced them by half. I returned to Musa and told him. He said: Return to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear that. I returned again, and they were reduced, until He said: They are five and they are fifty; My word does not change. I returned to Musa. He said: Return to your Lord. I said: I am ashamed before my Lord. Then I was taken until I reached Sidrat al-Muntaha, which was covered by colours I do not know. Then I was admitted to Paradise. There were structures like ropes or domes of pearl, and its soil was musk." [R137]

References

- [R136] Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Hazm; he is not the Andalusian imam who wrote al-Muhalla.
[R137] Sahih al-Bukhari 349; Sahih Muslim 162.

Migration to Yathrib

245-246

After three years following the Prophet's ascent had passed, permission was given to migrate toward Yathrib, and every Muslim accompanied him in the migration according to his circumstance.

EXPLANATION

Some people of Yathrib came to Makkah for pilgrimage, as pilgrimage remained known among the Arabs even before Islam. The Messenger of Allah met them and presented Islam to them. They recognised truth in his call partly because they had heard the Jews say that a prophet would soon be sent. They accepted Islam, returned to their people, called them to him, and later pledged to support him. The Jews living in and around Madinah did not accept him, because they disliked that the Prophet was from the Arabs.

When Quraysh gathered and agreed to kill the Prophet, Allah permitted him to migrate. He had already instructed his Companions to migrate. He left that night with Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.

Upon reaching the area of Madinah he established a mosque at Quba, then established the Prophet's Mosque. He joined the Muhajirun and Ansar in bonds of brotherhood. The Muhajirun were the Muslims who migrated from Makkah; the Ansar were the people of Madinah who supported them. A person among the Muhajirun was paired with a brother among the Ansar who would shelter and assist him.

Fighting the Polytheists

247-248

After that he was charged with fighting the party of disbelief and misguidance until they came under the religion in submission and entered the rule of Islam.

EXPLANATION

When the Messenger settled in Madinah and established the Islamic state, Allah charged him with fighting the supporters of disbelief.

Fighting had not been permitted before migration. This was from Allah's wisdom: the Muslims in Makkah were few and weak, and fighting there would have given their enemies a pretext and opportunity to destroy them.

In Madinah they possessed a state, organised strength, and an army. Allah says: "Permission to fight is given to those who are fought because they were wronged, and Allah is fully able to give them victory - those who were expelled from their homes without right only because they said: Our Lord is Allah." [al-Hajj 22:39-40]

Later came the command to fight the disbelievers generally after they had been called to Islam, or to bring the land under the judgement of Islam. Allah says concerning the People of the Book: "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or the Last Day, do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah with willing submission while humbled." [al-Tawbah 9:29] The aim stated here is that the land come beneath Allah's revealed rule: Muslims under Islam and People of the Book under its authority while paying jizyah.

The Death of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him

249-251

After he had conveyed the message and rescued creation from ignorance, and Allah completed Islam through him and the religion of truth stood established, Allah, exalted is He, took him to the Highest Companion.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger lived his life conveying Allah's religion. Allah says: "We sent down the Reminder to you so that you may make clear to people what was sent down to them, so that they may reflect." [al-Nahl 16:44] He conveyed the revelation - the Book and Sunnah - and explained the Qur'an by his words and deeds. Allah says: "Say: The truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Falsehood is bound to vanish." [al-Isra 17:81]

Allah says: "Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favour upon you, and approved Islam for you as religion." [al-Ma'idah 5:3] The religion is complete. The Messenger said: "I have left you upon a white path whose night is like its day; none deviates from it after me except one who is destroyed. Whoever among you lives will see much disagreement, so adhere to what you know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs. " [R138]

Accordingly, nothing invented later as a supposed religious improvement, renewal, or "good innovation" can complete a religion Allah already declared complete. What is needed in disagreement is the revelation and the established Sunnah, not making later opinions or books judges over them.

After the religion was completed and the Messenger had conveyed his message, Allah took his soul. Allah says: "We did not grant immortality to any human before you. If you die, will they live forever?" [al-Anbiya 21:34]

The Prophethood of Muhammad and His Delivery of the Message

252-253

We testify with truth and certainty that he is the Messenger sent with the Book, that he conveyed what he was sent with, and everything revealed to him.

EXPLANATION

We testify that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, sent to convey His revelation. Allah says: "Indeed, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, and a warner, so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger, support and honour him, and glorify Him morning and evening." [al-Fath 48:8-9] He says: "He is the One who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth so that He may make it prevail over every religion, even if the polytheists hate it." [al-Saff 61:9] He says:

References

[R138] Musnad Ahmad 17142; its chain is authentic.

"O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, a warner, one who calls to Allah by His permission, and a shining lamp." [al-Ahzab 33:45-46] He says: "We have not sent you except to all mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know." [Saba 34:28] He also says: "We did not send down the Book to you except so that you may make clear to them what they differed about, and as guidance and mercy for people who believe." [al-Nahl 16:64]

He was sent to all people - Arab and non-Arab - and to mankind and jinn. "We have not sent you except to all mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner." [Saba 34:28] We believe that he conveyed what Allah revealed to him and explained what people needed to know of the revelation.

There Is No Prophet after Muhammad

254-255

Every person who claims prophethood after him is a liar in what he claims. He is the Seal of the Messengers by agreement, and the best of creation without qualification.

EXPLANATION

We believe that Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the Seal of the Prophets. Allah says: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets." [al-Ahzab 33:40] The ten recognised Qur'an reciters other than 'Asim read the word as khatim, while the meaning of finality remains clear. The Messenger of Allah said: "The Children of Israel were governed by prophets. Whenever one prophet died another succeeded him. There is no prophet after me, and there will be caliphs, many of them." [R139]

References

[R139] Sahih al-Bukhari 3455; Sahih Muslim 1842.

Therefore anyone who claims prophethood after him is a lying disbeliever, and whoever believes such a claimant is a disbeliever like him because he follows falsehood and denies Allah and His Messenger.

Among the best known liars who claimed prophethood or a comparable post-Muhammadan revelation are Musaylimah al-Kadhdhab, al-Aswad al-'Ansi, Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadiani, founder of the Ahmadi/Qadiani movement; Husayn al-Nuri, identified here with the founding of the Baha'i movement; Nanak, founder of

Sikhism; Hamzah al-Zuzani, identified here with the Druze movement; Nasir al-Yamani, who claimed to be the Mahdi and claimed revelation; and Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism. These are heretics and polytheists, and their followers share their ruling. A Muslim does not doubt the finality of Muhammad's prophethood.

The Best of the Ummah after the Messenger, the Virtues of the Companions, and Refraining from Their Faults and Disputes

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq

256-258

After him is the compassionate caliph, the excellent leader of the Ummah: al-Siddiq, the companion of the Chosen One in the cave, the elder of the Muhajirun and Ansar. He is the one who personally undertook the struggle against whoever turned away from guidance.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah said: "The Children of Israel were governed by prophets. Whenever one prophet died, another prophet succeeded him. There is no prophet after me, but there will be caliphs, and they will be many." [R140]

References

[R140] Sahih al-Bukhari 3455; Sahih Muslim 1842.

The Messenger of Allah also said: "Follow the two after me," pointing to Abu Bakr and 'Umar. [R141]

Allah mentions Abu Bakr in the Qur'an in the account of the migration: "When he said to his companion, 'Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.'" [al-Tawbah 9:40] Abu Bakr was the Prophet's companion during the migration from Makkah to Madinah. They entered the Cave of Thawr to conceal themselves from the polytheists who were searching for them and intended to kill them. The Prophet reassured him with these words.

Abu Bakr is the best of this Ummah after its Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Messenger of Allah died, the Companions pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr as caliph so that he would lead the Muslims and manage their affairs.

Among his greatest merits was fighting the people of riddah. Tribes of the Arabs apostatised from Islam after the Prophet's death. Abu Bakr fought them and, by Allah's favour, restored tawhid throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

He died after holding the caliphate for two years and four months. He was sixty-three years old.

'Umar ibn al-Khattab

259-261

Second after al-Siddiq in virtue, without doubt, was the truthful one who spoke in accordance with what was right. I mean the resolute Abu Hafs 'Umar, who made the religion manifest and aided it, stern against the disbelievers and through whom conquests spread through the lands.

EXPLANATION

Second in virtue after al-Siddiq is the Commander of the Believers and second rightly guided caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ibn Nufayl ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Riyah ibn Qurt ibn Razah ibn 'Adi ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy, Abu

References

[R141] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 3805; Sunan Ibn Majah 97; Musnad Ahmad 23245. Al-Albani graded it authentic, and Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut graded it good.

Hafs al-Qurashi al-'Adawi, known as al-Faruq, may Allah be pleased with him. His mother was Hantamah bint Hisham al-Makhzumiyyah, the sister of Abu Jahl ibn Hisham.

'Umar accepted Islam in the sixth year of prophethood when he was twenty-seven. Ibn Mas'ud said: "We continued to be mighty from the time 'Umar accepted Islam. " [R142]

He assumed the caliphate after the death of Abu Bakr by Abu Bakr's designation. Allah opened through him all of Syria, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and Iraq. This is why the Persians hate him.

He was martyred near the end of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 23 AH at the age of sixty, after a wicked Magian slipped into the mosque and stabbed him while he stood leading the Muslims in prayer.

When he was placed on his bed after being stabbed, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib said: "You have left behind no one whose deeds I would rather meet Allah with than yours. By Allah, I used to think that Allah would place you with your two companions, because I often heard the Messenger of Allah say: 'I came with Abu Bakr and 'Umar; I entered with Abu Bakr and 'Umar; and I went out with Abu Bakr and 'Umar.' I hoped, or thought, that Allah would place you with them. " [R143]

'Uthman ibn 'Affan

262-264

Third was 'Uthman, the possessor of the two lights, a man of forbearance and modesty without doubt: an ocean of knowledge and gatherer of the Qur'an, before whom the angels of the Most Merciful felt shy. The master of creation pledged on his behalf with his own hand in the Pledge of Ridwan.

EXPLANATION

Third among the followers of the Messenger in virtue is the third rightly guided caliph and martyr, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan ibn Abi al-'As ibn Umayyah

References

[R142] Sahih al-Bukhari 3684.

[R143] Sahih al-Bukhari 3677; Sahih Muslim 2389.

ibn 'Abd Shams, Commander of the Believers, Abu 'Amr and Abu 'Abd Allah, al-Qurashi al-Umawi, may Allah be pleased with him.

When 'Uthman once entered, the Messenger of Allah said: "Should I not feel shy before a man before whom the angels feel shy? " [R144]

At al-Hudaybiyyah, the Messenger sent 'Uthman to the people of Makkah to negotiate with them. News reached the Muslims that he had been killed, so the Messenger took the pledge from the Muslims to fight. He placed his right hand over his other hand and said: "This is 'Uthman's hand." This was the Pledge of Ridwan, concerning whose participants Allah said: "Allah was certainly pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree." [al-Fath 48:18] [R145]

'Uthman assumed the caliphate after the killing of 'Umar and remained caliph for about twelve years. By Allah's favour he rendered an immense service in standardising written copies of the Qur'an. Six or seven official copies of the Qur'an were prepared and sent to the Muslim lands. Other personal written copies were ordered burned so that defects, abrogated readings, or explanatory comments written alongside Qur'anic words would not later be confused with the Qur'an itself. During his rule Allah opened lands including Ifriqiyyah, Cyprus, Armenia, and the lands of Sind, identified here with Bangladesh.

In his time, the first Kharijite sedition occurred at the hands of 'Abd Allah ibn Saba, a heretic who outwardly claimed Islam while being a disbeliever. Agitators came from Iraq to Madinah, reached 'Uthman's house, and killed him while he was reading the Qur'an. He was eighty-two years old.

References

[R144] Sahih Muslim 2401.

[R145] Sahih al-Bukhari 3698.

'Ali ibn Abi Talib

265-268

The fourth was the cousin of the best of the Messengers: I mean the true imam of lofty rank, destroyer of every renegade Kharijite and every deceitful, sinful Rafidi. He held with the Messenger the position Harun held with Musa, without denial - except in prophethood, for what has already been stated is sufficient for one who is free of evil suspicion.

EXPLANATION

Fourth among the followers of the Prophet in virtue is the fourth caliph, Commander of the Believers and martyr, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf, Abu al-Hasan al-Qurashi al-Hashimi: reciter, hadith scholar, scholar, fighter and lion of the battles. He was the cousin of the Messenger of Allah and the husband of his pure daughter Fatimah al-Zahra.

The chains of the most widespread recitation of the Qur'an, the narration of Hafs from 'Asim used across the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and much of Asia, return through 'Ali. Qur'anic recitation is learned person-to-person: students read to teachers, teachers to their teachers, until the chains reach the great reciters and through them the Companions.

The Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali: "Are you not pleased to be to me as Harun was to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me?" [R146]

People chose 'Ali as Commander of the Believers after 'Uthman's killing. Many trials occurred during his caliphate because of the Kharijites. 'Ali wanted to postpone carrying out the legal punishment on those who killed 'Uthman until the country became stable. They were numerous and strong, and many had come from other regions. He wanted conditions to settle and the outsiders to return to their lands so that the killers could then be dealt with.

References

[R146] Sahih al-Bukhari 4416; Sahih Muslim 2404.

A number of Companions, including Talhah, al-Zubayr, and Mu'awiyah, insisted that the killers of 'Uthman be punished. Some gathered a force and came from Makkah toward Madinah, with the Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah among them. 'Ali came out to explain his position and prevent fighting. Some of the Kharijites who had entered 'Ali's camp shot arrows toward 'A'ishah, which caused the force of Talhah and al-Zubayr to attack, and the two sides fought in the event known as the Battle of the Camel.

Mu'awiyah was governor of Syria. 'Ali went toward him, and the two sides were negotiating toward an agreement when Kharijites attacked men from both armies. Each army thought the other had betrayed it, and fighting continued for days at Siffin. They finally agreed to refer the dispute to the Book of Allah. The Kharijites then separated from 'Ali and Mu'awiyah, declared them and their armies disbelievers, and withdrew to Harura in Iraq. 'Ali fought them and crushed them.

In the year 40 AH, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam - who before this trial had been known as a devout and respected member of the generation after the Companions - was corrupted by the Kharijites and joined them. He undertook to kill 'Ali, assisted by Shabib ibn Bajrah al-Ashja' i ^[E13]. They waited for him around Fajr, when 'Ali used to go out to awaken people for prayer. Shabib struck him but did not kill him; Ibn Muljam then struck him in the head with a sword and killed him.

Explanations

[E13] Shabib ibn Bajrah al-Ashja'i is not the later Shabib ibn Yazid al-Shaybani, who rebelled during Marwan's caliphate and died in 80 AH. The latter killed many Muslims and was the husband of Ghazalah, concerning whom the famous verses mocking al-Hajjaj were recited.

This killer was praised by two groups. The Nusayris of Syria, who call themselves 'Alawites, love him because of their false claim that God was confined in 'Ali's body and was released when 'Ali was killed -exalted is Allah far above their statement. The Kharijites, the group to which the killer belonged, also praised him. The doctrine of the Khawarij deforms hearts and corrupts minds: a man who had been known for worship was changed until he undertook to kill the best man of the Ummah in his time.

The Kharijite 'Imran ibn Hittan praised Ibn Muljam in verse, calling his blow an act by which he sought the pleasure of the Lord of the Throne and describing the killer as weighty in Allah's scale. A Sunni answered him by reversing the poem: it was the blow of an unhappy man whose purpose deserved loss from the Lord of the Throne, and remembering him shows him to be among the most unhappy of creation.

The Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

269

Then the six who complete the ten, and all the remaining noble, righteous Companions.

EXPLANATION

The Messenger of Allah said: "Abu Bakr is in Paradise, 'Umar is in Paradise, 'Uthman is in Paradise, 'Ali is in Paradise, Talhah is in Paradise, al-Zubayr is in Paradise, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf is in Paradise, Sa'd is in Paradise, Sa'id is in Paradise, and Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah is in Paradise." [R147]

The Messenger gave glad tidings of Paradise to others as well. Among those mentioned separately are Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, Bilal, 'Ukashah ibn Mihsan, Khadijah, Fatimah, Umm Ruman, and others.

Abu 'Uthman al-Sabuni transmitted from the people of hadith: "They testify and believe that the best Companions of the Messenger of Allah

References

[R147] Jami' al-Tirmidhi 3474.

are Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'Ali, and that they are the rightly guided caliphs whose caliphate the Messenger mentioned when he said: 'The caliphate after me will be thirty years.'" [R148]

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, after leaving the doctrines of the Ash'aris, said: "They agreed that the best generations are the generation of the Companions, then those who follow them, as the Messenger said: 'The best of you are my generation.' They agreed that the best Companions are the people of Badr, the best of the people of Badr are the ten, and the best of the ten are the four leaders: Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with them." [R149]

The Household of the Prophet

270

And the pure household of the Chosen One, and those who followed him: the noble leaders.

EXPLANATION

Among the best of this Ummah are the members of the Messenger's household. His wives are included. Allah addressed the wives of the Prophet and said: "Remain in your houses, do not display yourselves as in the former time of ignorance, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove impurity from you, O people of the household, and to purify you completely." [al-Ahzab 33:33] Allah says: "The Prophet has a greater claim over the believers than they have over themselves, and his wives are their mothers." [al-Ahzab 33:6]

Fatimah, 'Ali, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn are also among the Prophet's household. 'A'ishah related that the Prophet went out wearing a patterned black cloak. Al-Hasan came and he admitted him beneath it;

References

[R148] Abu 'Uthman al-Sabuni, 'Aqidat al-Salaf wa Ashab al-Hadith.

[R149] Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, Risalah ila Ahl al-Thaghr, p. 170.

then al-Husayn, then Fatimah, then 'Ali. He then recited: "Allah only intends to remove impurity from you, O people of the household, and to purify you completely." [R150] The patterned cloak mentioned in this report was a type of wrap. The Prophet repeatedly said: "I remind you of Allah concerning my household." [R151]

Fatimah is the leading woman of this Ummah. The Prophet said to her: "Fatimah, are you not pleased to be the leader of the believing women, or the leader of the women of this Ummah?" [R152]

Concerning al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the Prophet said: "An angel who had never descended to earth before this night asked his Lord for permission to greet me and give me glad tidings that al-Hasan and al-Husayn are leaders of the young men of Paradise; Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise." [R153]

Al-Ajurri said: "Know, may Allah have mercy on us and you, that al-Hasan and al-Husayn, may Allah be pleased with them, have an immense rank, a noble standing, and great virtue. They closely resembled the Messenger of Allah in appearance and character." He also said: "Every believing man and woman must love the household of the Messenger of Allah: Banu Hashim; 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and his children and descendants; Fatimah and her children and descendants; al-Hasan and al-Husayn and their children and descendants; Ja'far al-Tayyar and his children and descendants; Hamzah and his children; and al-'Abbas and his children and descendants. These are the household of the Messenger of Allah. Muslims must love and honour them, bear patiently with them, deal well with them, and supplicate for them." [R154]

References

[R150] Sahih Muslim 2424.

[R151] Sahih Muslim 2408.

[R152] Sahih al-Bukhari 6285; Sahih Muslim 2450.

[R153] Musnad Ahmad 23329; the editors graded it authentic. A variant adding, "and their father is better than them," has a ruined chain containing al-Mu'alla ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, whom al-Daraqutni called a liar; despite this, one contemporary scholar authenticated it.

[R154] Al-Ajurri, al-Shari'ah, 5/2137.

Al-Ajurri said concerning their descendants: "Whoever follows the noble character of his righteous forefathers is honoured for his lineage and his righteousness. If a person's conduct is blameworthy, he should be advised with good manners and urged to resemble his righteous forefathers." [R155]

The Companions and the Followers of the Messenger

270-274

And the pure household of the Chosen One and those who followed him, the noble leaders. All of them are praised in the decisive Qur'an; the Creator of all beings commended them in al-Fath, al-Hadid, al-Qital, and other passages in the fullest terms. Their mention in the Sunnah of the Chosen One has travelled through the regions like the sun.

EXPLANATION

The best of the Ummah generally are the Companions of the Prophet, then those who followed them well. Allah praised them throughout His Book.

In Surat al-Fath He says: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Those with him are firm against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. Their description in the Gospel is like a crop that puts forth its shoot, strengthens it, grows thick, and stands firmly on its stalk, delighting the sowers so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward." [al-Fath 48:29]

In Surat al-Hadid: "Those among you who spent and fought before the conquest are not equal to those who did so afterward. They are greater in rank, though Allah has promised the best to all." [al-Hadid 57:10]

References

[R155] Al-Ajurri, al-Shari'ah, 5/2276.

In Surat Muhammad: "Those who believe, do righteous deeds, and believe in what was sent down to Muhammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He expiates their sins and sets their condition right."

[Muhammad 47:2]

Allah says in Surat al-Tawbah: "The first forerunners among the Muhajirun and Ansar and those who followed them with excellence - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him." [al-Tawbah 9:100]

Allah says in Surat al-Hashr: "For the poor Muhajirun who were expelled from their homes and wealth, seeking bounty from Allah and His pleasure and supporting Allah and His Messenger - those are the truthful. And those who were settled in the Home and in faith before them love those who migrated to them. They find no need in their hearts for what the Muhajirun were given, and they prefer them over themselves even when they are in need. Whoever is protected from the greed of his own soul - those are the successful. And those who came after them say: Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith. Put no rancor in our hearts toward those who believe. Our Lord, You are Most Kind, Most Merciful." [al-Hashr 59:8-10]

By this verse, Allah excludes the one who hates the Companions from these categories of believers. The believers are the Muhajirun, the Ansar, or those who come after them asking forgiveness for those who preceded them and keeping their hearts free of rancor toward the believers.

The Companions in the Torah and Gospel

273

Their descriptions are known in detail in the Torah and Gospel.

EXPLANATION

Allah informed us that Muhammad's Companions were described in the Torah and Gospel. The verse of al-Fath quoted above first says, "That is

their description in the Torah," then gives their description in the Gospel as a crop whose shoot emerges, supports it, becomes thick, and stands firm, delighting the sowers and enraging the disbelievers. [al-Fath 48:29]

Imam Malik said: "Whoever wakes with hatred in his heart for any of the Companions has been struck by the verse," meaning Allah's words: "to enrage by them the disbelievers." [R156]

Refraining from What Occurred between the Companions

275-276

Then refraining from what occurred among them is obligatory regarding what Allah decreed to take place. All of them exercised ijihad and are rewarded; their mistakes are forgiven by the Bestower.

EXPLANATION

Among the foundations of Ahl al-Sunnah is refraining from delving into the conflicts and trials that occurred among the Companions. We say as Allah taught us: "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith." [al-Hashr 59:10]

Abu Zur'ah al-Razi (d. 264 AH) and Abu Hatim al-Razi (d. 277 AH) said: We met scholars in all the regions - the Hijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen - and among their creed was:

1. Iman is speech and action; it increases and decreases.
2. The Qur'an is Allah's speech, uncreated in every respect.
3. Divine decree, its good and evil, is from Allah, mighty and majestic.

References

[R156] Al-Baghawi, Sharh al-Sunnah; Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya', 6/327.

4. The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, then 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, then 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, then 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. They are the rightly guided caliphs. The ten whom the Messenger of Allah named and testified would enter Paradise are affirmed as he testified, and his statement is true.

5. Mercy is asked for all the Companions of Muhammad, and we refrain from what occurred between them.

6. Allah, mighty and majestic, is over His Throne, separate from His creation, as He described Himself in His Book and on the tongue of His Messenger, without asking how. His knowledge encompasses everything: 'Nothing is like Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.' [R157]

We believe that they exercised ijtihad in pursuit of the truth and were qualified for ijtihad. Some were correct and some erred. We ask Allah to reward their effort and their desire for the truth even when they made a mistake. We do not claim that they were infallible.

The Companions are the best generation. The Messenger of Allah said: "The best people are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them. Then there will come people whose testimony precedes their oath and whose oath precedes their testimony." [R158]

They supported the Prophet, fought with him, learned from him, prayed behind him, said amin to his supplication, heard the Qur'an from his mouth, believed what he conveyed from his Lord, and transmitted it to those after them. It is enough that the Lord of the worlds praised them.

It is therefore not permissible to hunt for their slips, pursue their faults, or abuse them. The Messenger of Allah said: "Do not insult my Companions. If one of you spent gold equal to Mount Uhud, it would not reach a mudd spent by one of them, nor half of it." [R159]

References

[R157] Al-Lalaka'i, Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah, 1/197, report 321.

[R158] Sahih al-Bukhari 2652; Sahih Muslim 2533.

[R159] Sahih al-Bukhari 3673; Sahih Muslim 2541.

Conclusion: The Obligation of Holding Firmly to the Qur'an and Sunnah and Returning to Them in Disagreement

The Conditions for an Accepted Deed

277-278

For an effort to be accepted, two things must come together: correctness and sincerity - for Allah, Lord of the Throne, alone, and in conformity with the law He approved.

EXPLANATION

A deed must satisfy two conditions in order to be righteous.

The first is correctness: conformity to the revealed law. The deed must come from the Qur'an or Sunnah. Worship is obedience; whoever worships Allah with something Allah did not command has left obedience to Allah in that act and obeyed something else, whether his own desire or a person who told him to perform it. Allah says: "This is My path, straight, so follow it, and do not follow the other paths, for they will separate you from His path." [al-An'am 6:153] Every manner of worship that the Messenger did not bring is not from the straight path; it is from the paths that divide people away from Allah's religion.

The second is sincerity: the deed must be purely for Allah, unmixed with shirk. Allah says in the divine hadith: "I am the One most free of need from association. Whoever does a deed in which he associates another with Me, I leave him and his association. " [R160]

References

[R160] Sahih Muslim 2985.

Innovation

279

Everything that contradicts the two revelations is rejected, without doubt.

EXPLANATION

Every act introduced into Allah's religion that Allah did not reveal or command is an innovation and misguidance. The Messenger of Allah said: "Beware of newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance." [R161]

Whatever is invented as religion and was not the practice of the Messenger and his Companions is misguidance, even if it looks good and its practitioner thinks he is drawing near to Allah. A good intention does not change it into guidance, because it did not come from Allah.

The person who introduces such an act is asked: who legislated this worship? If he says Allah, then it must have come through the Messenger and been known among his Companions. If he names someone besides Allah, following that person as a religious legislator is not permissible.

Allah says: "Or do they have partners who have legislated for them in religion that for which Allah gave no permission?" [al-Shura 42:21]

Religious laws may only be established with Allah's permission.

Inventing a religious practice therefore carries the danger of taking a legislator besides Allah.

This concerns religious worship, not ordinary worldly matters such as phones, cars, electricity, clothing, or other tools. The Messenger said: "Whoever introduces into this matter of ours what is not from it, it is rejected." [R162] "This matter of ours" is the religion.

Every religious innovation is misguidance; there is no good religious innovation in the sense being rejected here. The hadith, "Whoever initiates in Islam a good sunnah will have its reward and the reward of those who act upon it after him," [R163] concerns beginning or reviving a

References

[R161] Sunan Abi Dawud 4607; Sunan Ibn Majah 42; Sunan al-Darimi 96. The editors authenticated it.

[R162] Sahih al-Bukhari 2697; Sahih Muslim 1718.

[R163] Sahih Muslim 1017.

good means or an already legislated good, not inventing a new worship. For example, a person who revives the Sunnah of praying in footwear and people follow him has initiated a good Sunnah in this sense. A person who tells people to pray specifically in red footwear as a religious practice has invented a restriction with no evidence. A person who devises a useful way to sponsor orphans, uses equipment to carry the caller to prayer's voice, makes a computer program to calculate zakah or inheritance, or produces a Qur'an application has developed a useful worldly means; he has not legislated a new act of worship. By contrast, adding words to the call to prayer, changing its prescribed time, inventing a special "supplication for provision," "supplication for Fajr," or "supplication for marriage," inventing a new prayer, or introducing a religious festival is legislation without permission.

The revealed law is complete and is not increased by invented acts.

Matters of Disagreement

280

Whatever matter becomes the subject of disagreement must be returned to the two revelations; doing so is obligatory.

EXPLANATION

Questions disputed among scholars must be returned to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah says: "If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day." [al-Nisa' 4:59] Not every disagreement becomes acceptable merely because people disagreed. What agrees with the Book and Sunnah, or is closest to them, is accepted and what contradicts them is rejected.

If the Qur'an or Sunnah has ruled clearly on a question, the contrary view is not accepted merely because the person holding it is a scholar. Al-Shafi'i said: "The people have agreed that whoever has a Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah made clear to him may not leave it for the statement of anyone." [R164]

References

[R164] Al-Shafi'i, al-Risalah, p. 425.

At the same time, a student should not rush to reject the view of a recognised scholar before knowing his proof and reasoning. It is not enough to hear a different view from a scholar one likes more. A person qualified to examine the evidence first studies the proofs, and if the scholar's evidence is not sound he still seeks an excuse for him, recognising that the scholar exerted effort in seeking the truth and reached the conclusion he thought correct. We ask Allah to reward him for that effort.

Some questions genuinely admit more than one view because each position has strong evidence and qualified scholars judge the proofs to be close in strength. These are matters in which disagreement is permissible. The fact that such a question is disputed does not prevent discussion of the evidence, but it does prevent treating the other qualified view as though it were a violation of an explicit text or consensus.

Religious questions can therefore be grouped broadly into two kinds. First: matters for which there is a clear text, established Companion practice, or consensus. A clear text includes, for example, the command to fast Ramadan when the month is witnessed. The Prophet said: "Any woman who marries without her guardian's permission, her marriage is invalid." [R165]

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri said: "We used to give one sa' of food as Zakat al-Fitr." [R166]

Established Companion practice also includes wiping over socks during ritual ablution (wudu), for which the prophetic reports discussed here are weak but the practice of the Companions is established without known objection. [R167]

References

[R165] Musnad Ahmad 24372, authenticated by the editors; Sunan al-Darimi 2230, whose chain Husayn Salim Asad graded good.

[R166] Sahih al-Bukhari 1506; Sahih Muslim 9805.

[R167] Ibn al-Mundhir, al-Awsat, 1/462.

Consensus is another decisive category. Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafî said: "Taking from the beard below a fistful - as some Maghribis and effeminate men do - was permitted by no one." [R168]

In matters of this kind, a contrary view is not accepted regardless of who holds it.

Second: matters without a decisive text, established Companion practice, or consensus. These include questions for which the evidence gives a general act but not a precise specification, such as where exactly the hands are placed while standing in prayer after the right is placed over the left; there was disagreement among the Companions themselves about the precise placement. They also include matters pulled by more than one strong proof; matters depending on hadiths whose authenticity qualified scholars dispute, such as moving the finger in prayer or wiping the face after supplication; and new questions that did not exist in the prophetic period and are not covered by a decisive text or consensus, such as whether someone inside an airport before boarding has left his city for the rulings of travel, and the ruling of photography [E14]

These are legitimate areas of disagreement. One does not condemn another simply for following a qualified view, though one may present and discuss the evidence.

Religion Is Learned from Revelation, Not Invented by Human Reason

281

The religion came only by transmitted revelation; it is not based on imaginings or the conjecture of reason.

EXPLANATION

Explanations

[E14] Calling photographs "images" does not by itself settle whether the hadiths about making images apply. The question is whether the photograph is like your image in a mirror, or whether the person holding the camera has done an act that resembles creating Allah's creation.

References

[R168] Tanqih al-Fatawa al-Hamidiyyah, 1/329.

Allah's religion came through transmission: Jibril conveyed from Allah to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him; Muhammad conveyed to his Companions; and trustworthy Muslims transmitted it generation after generation until it reached us. That is Allah's religion. What lies outside that chain of revelation is not made religion merely by opinion or human desire.

Allah says: "Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book in truth so that you may judge between the people by what Allah has shown you." [al-Nisa' 4:105] He said "by what Allah has shown you," not "by what you yourself see fit." Although the mind of the Messenger of Allah was among the most complete and excellent of human minds, Allah did not leave him to independent reason in the law. He sent revelation and taught His prophets how to judge.

Those who come after the Messenger have even greater reason to bind themselves to what was transmitted and abandon opinions and desires that contradict revelation. Allah says: "Hold firmly to what has been revealed to you. You are truly upon a straight path." [al-

Zukhruf 43:43] Whoever wants the straight path must hold to what Muhammad held to: the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Anyone who claims to use rational or logical thinking in order to reject what has been established in the Book and Sunnah is altering Allah's law and is not upon the straight path. The religion does not contradict sound reason. Rather, human minds are exposed to desires, whispers, and doubts. A person may imagine a revealed truth conflicts with reason because a doubt has affected his thinking; learning the religion removes that doubt. The religion comes from the Creator of reason and is preserved by Him.

If a person at the end of time rejects by his own mind a matter held by the Muslims generally, where is the scale by which his mind is shown to be sounder than theirs? The sound measure is conformity to Allah's Book and the authentic Sunnah.

'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud said: "No year comes upon you except that the one after it is worse. I do not mean a year more fertile than another or more rainy than another. Rather, your scholars and best people depart, then a people arise who measure matters by their own opinions, and Islam is demolished and breached. " [R169]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal said concerning the people of opinion and analogy: "They call the people of Sunnah newcomers. The people of opinion have lied; they are the enemies of Allah. Rather, they are the newcomers. They abandoned the reports of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, and his hadith, spoke by opinion, measured the religion by what they deemed good, judged contrary to the Book and Sunnah, and are people of innovation, ignorant, misguided, seekers of the world through lies and falsehood. " [R170]

The End of the Poem

282-289

Here I have reached the end of what I gathered and carefully compiled.

I named it Sullam al-Wusul - The Ladder of Arrival - to the lofty discussions of the foundations.

Praise belongs to Allah at my completion, just as I praised Allah at my beginning.

I ask Him to forgive all sins and to conceal faults.

Then may blessings and peace forever cover the Chosen Messenger, Muhammad,

References

[R169] Sunan al-Darimi 194; Ibn Abi Zamanin 10; Ibn Waddah 78. The chain is good. A similar report is transmitted as a marfu' report by al-Harawi, al-Bazzar, and others, but al-Bazzar said it was known only through Nu'aym ibn Hammad, and Nu'aym is closer to weakness.

[R170] Masa'il Harb, pp. 355-366.

then all his Companions and family, the noble leaders and righteous ones,

continuously and without end, as long as pens continue to flow with ink.

Then supplication is my instruction to all readers, without exception.

EXPLANATION

The poem closes by praising Allah for this good and for the completion of the poem, sending blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, and asking forgiveness. We ask Allah to forgive us, the one who composed it, the leaders of the Muslims, and all Muslims, to pardon us, and to grant us high ranks with Him.

In conclusion, I ask Allah to grant me the reward for what I have explained, to grant him the reward for what he wrote, and to grant you the reward for what you learned; to raise our ranks, protect our faces from the Fire, and gather us in the highest dwellings of His Paradise. Indeed, He is capable of that. Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all worlds.

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