

# مَجْمُوعَةُ الْفَتَاوَى

لِشَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ

تَقِيِّ الدِّينِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَنْبَلٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ

الْمُتَوَفَّى سَنَةَ ٧٢٨ هـ

# MAJMU'U' AL-FATAWA

Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 a.h.)

# MAJMU' AL-FATAWA

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The logo for Tmu Publishers, featuring a stylized signature 'Tmu' in black ink above the word 'PUBLISHERS' in a smaller, spaced-out, sans-serif font.

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P U B L I S H E R S



## Arabic Alphabet And Transliteration Guide

Arabic Letter	Transliteration with Diacritics	Notes
ا	ā (long vowel) / a (short vowel)	Alif
ب	b	Bā'
ت	t	Tā'
ث	th	Thā'
ج	j	Jīm
ح	ḥ	Ḥā'
خ	kh	Khā'
د	d	Dāl
ذ	dh	Dhāl
ر	r	Rā'
ز	z	Zāy
س	s	Sīn
ش	sh	Shīn
ص	ṣ	Ṣād
ض	ḍ	Ḍād
ط	ṭ	Ṭā'
ظ	ẓ	Ẓā'
ع	'	'Ayn
غ	gh	Ghayn
ف	f	Fā'
ق	q	Qāf

ك	k	Kāf
ل	l	Lām
م	m	Mīm
ن	n	Nūn
ه	h	Hā'
و	ū (long vowel) / w (consonant)	Wāw
ي	ī (long vowel) / y (consonant)	Yā'

### Additional Notes:

**Hamza (ء):** Represented as ' (e.g., سَأَلَ = sa'ala). Hamza can appear on its own or on a 'chair' (e.g., أ، إ، ؤ، ئ).

**Tā' Marbūṭah (ة):** Transliterated as—ah or—at depending on context (e.g., جَنَّةَ = jannah, سُنَّةَ = sunnah).

**Shadda (ّ):** Represents gemination (doubling of a consonant). It is marked by doubling the letter (e.g., رَسُول = rasūl, حَقَّق = ḥaqq).

**Sukūn (◌):** Indicates the absence of a vowel. It is not explicitly marked in transliteration unless necessary (e.g., مَكْتُوب = maktūb).

**Tanwīn (◌, ◌, ◌):** Represented as—an, —in, or—un (e.g., كِتَابًا = kitāban, رَسُولٌ = rasūlun).

**Alif Maqṣūrah (ى):** Transliterated as ā (e.g., مُوسَى = Mūsā).

**Tā' Marbūṭah at the End of Words:** Often pronounced as—ah in pausa (e.g., جَنَّةَ = jannah).



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## Ar-Risālah At-Tadmuriyyah (The Palmyran Treatise)

### The Verification of Affirmation for the Names and Attributes and the Clarification of the Reality of Reconciliation between the Sacred Law and the Divine Decree)

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh Alone, and may blessings and peace be upon him after whom there is no prophet.

The Shaykh, the Imām, the Scholar, the Erudite Luminary, Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Salām ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī—may Allāh be pleased with him and make him pleased—said:

All praise is for Allāh; we praise Him, seek His aid, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Him from the evils of our own souls and the wickedness of our deeds. Whomever Allāh guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He allows to stray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger, may Allāh send blessings and peace upon him, his family, and his companions. To proceed: Indeed, certain individuals, whose request it was incumbent upon me to answer, asked me to write down for them the substance of what they had heard from me in some gatherings concerning the discourse on Tawḥīd (Divine Oneness) and the Ṣifāt (Divine Attributes), as well as on the Shar' (Divine Law) and Qadar (Divine Decree). This was due to the pressing need for a thorough clarification and establishment (taḥqīq) of these two fundamental principles, and because of the widespread confusion and disturbance surrounding them.

For indeed, alongside the fact that everyone has a need for understanding these two principles, it is also the case that people of reflection, knowledge, will, and worship inevitably encounter thoughts and statements concerning them, which necessitate a clear distinction between guidance and misguidance. This is especially true given the multitude of those who have delved into these matters—sometimes correctly, but often falsely—and considering the doubts (shubuhāt) that afflict hearts regarding them, leading them into various forms of deviation. Thus, discourse concerning the domain of Tawḥīd and Attributes falls under the category of informative statements (khabar), revolving around negation (nafy) and affirmation (ithbāt). Conversely, discourse concerning Divine Law and Decree falls under the category of commands and volition (ṭalab wa al-irādah), revolving around will and love versus aversion and hatred, both in terms of negation and affirmation.

A person finds within himself the distinction between negation and affirmation, belief and disbelief, as well as between love and hatred, encouragement and prohibition. Indeed, the difference between these two types [of discourse] is recognized by both the common folk and the elite, and it is acknowledged among various groups of scholars who engage in knowledge, just as the jurists (fuqahā') have mentioned it in the Book of

Faith (Kitāb al-Īmān), and as those who categorize speech—from among the people of logic, grammar, and rhetoric—have mentioned it. They stated that speech is of two types: informative (khabar) and performative (inshā'). The informative revolves around negation and affirmation, while the performative involves command, prohibition, or permission. Given this, it is imperative for the servant [of Allāh] to affirm for Allāh those attributes of perfection that must be affirmed for Him, and to negate from Him anything contrary to this state that must be negated. Likewise, concerning His decrees, the servant must affirm both His creation (khalq) and His command (amr). Thus, one must believe in His creation, which entails [affirming] the perfection of His power and the universality of His will, and affirm His command, which entails clarifying what He loves and is pleased with in terms of speech and action. One must believe in His Divine Law (Shar') and His Divine Decree (Qadar) with a faith free from error. This latter aspect entails Tawḥīd in worshipping Him alone, without any partner—which is Tawḥīd in intention, will, and action. The former aspect [concerning Tawḥīd and Attributes] entails Tawḥīd in knowledge and statement. This distinction is indicated by Sūrah {Say, 'He is Allāh, [who is] One'} [Al-Ikhlās: 1], while the other aspect is indicated by Sūrah {Say, 'O disbelievers'} [Al-Kāfirūn: 1]. These are the two Sūrahs of Sincerity (Sūratā al-Ikhlās), and the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite them after Al-Fātiḥah in the two rak'ahs of the Fajr prayer, the two rak'ahs of Ṭawāf (circumambulation), and on other occasions.

As for the first aspect—namely, Tawḥīd concerning the Attributes (Tawḥīd fi aṣ-Ṣifāt)—the fundamental principle in this domain is that Allāh is to be described only as He has described Himself and as His Messengers have described Him, both in terms of negation and affirmation. Thus, one affirms for Allāh what He has affirmed for Himself and negates from Him what He has negated from Himself.

It is well-established that the way of the Salaf (pious predecessors) of this Ummah and its Imāms is to affirm the Attributes that He affirmed for Himself without inquiring into the modality (ghayr takyīf), without likening Him to creation (ghayr tamthīl), without distorting their meaning (ghayr taḥrīf), and without denying or negating them (ghayr ta'tīl).

Similarly, they negate from Him what He has negated from Himself, while simultaneously affirming the Attributes He has affirmed, without any deviation (ilhād)—neither concerning His Names nor His Signs (Āyāt). For Allāh, the Exalted, condemned those who deviate concerning His Names and Signs, as He stated: {And to Allāh belong the best names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.} [Al-A'rāf: 180]. And He, the Exalted, said: {Indeed, those who inject deviation into Our verses are not hidden from Us. So, is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do whatever you will...} [Fuṣṣilat: 40]. Thus, their way entails affirming the Names and Attributes while negating any resemblance to created beings: affirmation without anthropomorphism (tashbīh) and transcendence (tanzīh) without negation (ta'tīl). This is precisely as Allāh, the Exalted, stated: {There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. In His statement, {There is nothing like unto Him}, there is a refutation of anthropomorphism (tashbīh) and likening (tamthīl). And in His statement, {and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}, there is a refutation of deviation (ilhād) and negation (ta'tīl).

Allāh, Glorified is He, sent His Messengers with detailed affirmation and general negation. They affirmed Allāh's Attributes in detail, while negating from Him anything unfitting, such as resemblance (tashbīh) and likeness (tamthīl). As Allāh, the Exalted, said: {So worship Him and be steadfast in His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him

(samiyyā)?} [Maryam: 65]. The linguists state that {Do you know of any similarity to Him (samiyyā)?} means: any peer who deserves the same name as Him? It is also said: a namesake (musāmiyyan) who rivals Him. This aligns with the meaning reported from Ibn 'Abbās: '(Do you know of any similarity to Him) meaning, an equal or a likeness?' Allāh, the Exalted, also said: {He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent (kufuwan).} [Al-Ikhlās: 3-4]. And He said: {So do not attribute to Allāh equals (andād) while you know [that there are none].} [Al-Baqarah: 22]. And He said: {And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allāh as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allāh. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allāh.} [Al-Baqarah: 165]. And He said: {But they have attributed to Allāh partners - the jinn, while He created them - and have fabricated for Him sons and daughters without knowledge. Exalted is He and high above what they describe. [He is] Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He does not have a companion and He created all things? And He is, of all things, Knowing.} [Al-An'ām: 100-101]. And He said: {Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner - He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and who has not taken a son and has not had a partner in dominion...} [Al-Furqān: 1-2]. And He said: {So inquire of them, [O Muḥammad], 'Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons? Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses?' Unquestionably, it is out of their falsehood that they say, 'Allāh has begotten,' and indeed, they are liars. Has He chosen daughters over sons? What is [wrong] with you? How do you judge? Then will you not be reminded? Or do you have a clear authority? Then produce your scripture, if you should be truthful. And they have claimed between Him and the jinn a lineage, but the jinn have already known that they [who made such claims] will be brought [to punishment]. Exalted is Allāh above what they describe, Except the chosen servants of Allāh.} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 149-160], continuing until His statement: {Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe. And peace upon the messengers. And praise to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 180-182]. Thus, He glorified Himself, declaring Himself free from what the fabricating polytheists attribute to Him; He sent peace upon the Messengers because their statements were free from falsehood and polytheism; and He praised Himself, as He, Glorified is He, is the One deserving of all praise due to His Names, Attributes, and wondrous creations.

As for the detailed affirmation (al-ithbāt al-mufaṣṣal), He mentioned His Names and Attributes that He revealed in His decisive verses (āyāt), such as His statement: {Allāh - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living (Al-Ḥayy), the Sustainer of [all] existence (Al-Qayyūm)...} [Al-Baqarah: 255] – the entire verse. And His statement: {Say, 'He is Allāh, [who is] One. Allāh, the Eternal Refuge (Aṣ-Ṣamad).'} [Al-Ikhlās: 1-2] – the entire Sūrah. And His statements: {And He is the All-Knowing (Al-'Alīm), the All-Wise (Al-Ḥakīm)} [e.g., At-Taḥrīm: 2]; {And He is the All-Knowing (Al-'Alīm), the All-Powerful (Al-Qadīr)} [e.g., Ar-Rūm: 54]; {And He is the Hearing (As-Samī'), the Seeing (Al-Baṣīr)} [e.g., Ash-Shūrā: 11]; {And He is the Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), the All-Wise (Al-Ḥakīm)} [e.g., Al-Baqarah: 129]; {And He is the Forgiving (Al-Ghafūr), the Merciful (Ar-Raḥīm)} [e.g., Yūnus: 107]; {And He is the Forgiving (Al-Ghafūr), the Affectionate (Al-Wadūd), Lord of the Throne (Dhūl-'Arsh), the Glorious (Al-Majīd), Effector of what He intends (Fa'ālun limā yurīd).} [Al-Burūj: 14-16]; {He is the First (Al-Awwal) and the Last (Al-Ākhir), the Ascendant (Aẓ-Zāhir) and the Intimate (Al-Bāṭin), and He is, of all things, Knowing (Al-'Alīm).} [Al-Ḥadīd: 3]; {It is He who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne (istawā 'alal-'Arsh). He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you are. And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing (Baṣīr).} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4].

And His statement: {That is because they followed what angered Allāh and disliked [what earns] His pleasure, so He nullified their deeds.} [Muḥammad: 28]. And His statement: {Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him, [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers...} [Al-Mā'idah: 54]. And His statement: {Allāh being pleased with them and they pleased with Him. That is for whoever has feared his Lord.} [Al-Bayyinah: 8]. And His statement: {But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allāh has become angry with him and has cursed him...} [An-Nisā': 93]. And His statement: {Indeed, those who disbelieve will be addressed, 'The hatred (maqt) of Allāh is greater than your hatred of yourselves [now] when you were invited to faith, but you refused.'} [Ghāfir: 10]. And His statement: {Do they await but that Allāh should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well]...?} [Al-Baqarah: 210]. And His statement: {Then He directed Himself (istawā) to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, 'Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion.' They said, 'We have come willingly.'} [Fuṣṣilat: 11]. And His statement: {And Allāh spoke to Mūsā with [direct] speech (taklīmā).} [An-Nisā': 164]. And His statement: {And We called him from the right side of the Mount and brought him near, confiding (najiyyā) [in him].} [Maryam: 52]. And His statement: {And [mention] the Day He will call them and say, 'Where are My 'partners' whom you used to claim?'} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 62]. And His statement: {His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is.} [Yāsīn: 82]. And His statement: {He is Allāh, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Most Compassionate (Ar-Raḥmān), the Most Merciful (Ar-Raḥīm). He is Allāh, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign (Al-Malik), the Pure (Al-Quddūs), the Perfection (As-Salām), the Giver of Security (Al-Mu'min), the Overseer (Al-Muḥaymin), the Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), the Compeller (Al-Jabbār), the Superior (Al-Mutakabbir). Exalted is Allāh above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allāh, the Creator (Al-Khāliq), the Inventor (Al-Bāri'), the Fashioner (Al-Muṣawwir); to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), the All-Wise (Al-Ḥakīm).} [Al-Ḥashr: 22-24].

These are examples of such verses, alongside the authentic Aḥādīth from the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning the Names and Attributes of the Lord, Exalted is He. For within these texts lies the detailed affirmation of His Essence and Attributes, and the affirmation of His Oneness through the negation of any likeness (tamthīl), by which Allāh has guided His servants to the Straight Path. This, then, is the way of the Messengers, may Allāh's blessings and peace be upon them all.

However, as for those who deviated and strayed from their path—such as the disbelievers, the polytheists, those who were given the Scripture [but altered it], and those who entered among these groups like the Sabians (aṣ-Ṣābi'ah), the Philosophers (al-Mutafalsifah), the Jahmiyyah, the Qarmatians (al-Qarāmiṭah), the Esotericists (al-Bāṭiniyyah), and their ilk—they are the opposite of this. They describe Him using negative attributes (ṣifāt salbiyyah) in extensive detail, while affirming nothing but an absolute existence (wujūd muṭlaq) that, upon careful examination, has no reality. It ultimately reduces to an existence confined to the mind, the actualization of which is impossible in external reality. Their position necessitates the utmost negation (ghāyat at-ta'tīl) and the utmost likening (ghāyat at-tamthīl). For they liken Him to impossible concepts, non-existent things, and inanimate objects, while negating the Names and Attributes—a negation that ultimately implies the negation of the Divine Essence itself.

The extremists among them negate contradictory pairs from Him, saying: 'He is neither existent nor non-existent, neither living nor dead, neither knowing nor ignorant.' They claim this because, according to them, describing Him with affirmation likens Him to

existing things, while describing Him with negation likens Him to non-existent things. Thus, they negate both contradictories. This is impossible according to self-evident reason. They distorted what Allāh revealed in the Book and what the Messenger brought, thereby falling into something worse than what they sought to flee from. For they likened Him to impossible concepts, since negating two contradictories is like affirming two contradictories—both are impossibilities. It is known by necessity that existence requires an Originator Who is Necessary by His Essence (Wājib bi-dhātihī), independent of all else, Pre-eternal (Qadīm Azalī), upon Whom origination (ḥudūth) and non-existence ('adam) are impermissible. Yet, they described Him with attributes whose very existence is impossible, let alone being Necessary, Existent, or Pre-eternal.

Close to them is a group of philosophers and their followers who described Him using only negations (sulūb) and relations (iḍāfāt), without affirming positive attributes. They defined Him as Absolute Existence qualified by absoluteness (al-wujūd al-muṭlaq bi-shart al-iṭlāq). However, it is known by clear reason that such a concept can only exist in the mind, not among externally existing realities. They equated the attribute with the one described, making knowledge identical to the knower, in obstinate denial of self-evident truths. They also equated one attribute with another, failing to distinguish between knowledge, power, and will, thereby rejecting necessary truths.

Close to them also is a third group from the scholastic theologians (Ahl al-Kalām), namely the Mu'tazilah and their followers. They affirmed the Names of Allāh but denied the Attributes implied by them. Some among them treated names like Al-'Alīm (The All-Knowing), Al-Qadīr (The All-Powerful), As-Samī' (The Hearing), and Al-Baṣīr (The Seeing) as mere proper nouns, synonymous with each other. Others said: 'He is Knowing without knowledge, Powerful without power, Hearing and Seeing without hearing or sight.' Thus, they affirmed the Name while denying the Attribute it entails.

The discussion exposing the corruption of the positions of these groups and demonstrating their contradiction with clear reason, which corresponds to authentic revelation, is mentioned elsewhere beyond these brief words. All these groups flee from one perceived problem only to fall into its equivalent or something worse, alongside the distortion (taḥrīf) and negation (ta'ṭīl) that their views necessitate. Had they reflected deeply, they would have treated like things alike and differentiated between different things, as reason demands. They would then have been among those endowed with knowledge, who see that what was revealed to the Messenger is indeed the truth from his Lord and guides to the path of the Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), the Praiseworthy (Al-Ḥamīd). However, they belong to the people of obscurities disguised as rational concepts; they engage in sophistry regarding matters of reason (al-'aqliyyāt) and Qarmatian-like distortion regarding matters based on revelation (as-sam'iyyāt).

This is because it is known by rational necessity that there must be an Existent Being who is Pre-eternal (Qadīm) and independent of all else. This is evident as we witness the origination of created things, such as animals, minerals, and plants. An originated thing (ḥādīth) is contingent (mumkin), neither necessary (wājib) nor impossible (mumtani'). It is known by necessity that every originated thing must have an originator (muḥdīth), and every contingent thing must have an establisher (mūjjid). As Allāh, the Exalted, said: {Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]?} [Aṭ-Ṭūr: 35]. Since they were neither created by nothing nor were they their own creators, it is determined that they must have a Creator who created them.

Since it is necessarily known that within existence there is that which is Pre-eternal and Necessary by Himself (Qadīm Wājib bi-nafsihī), and that which is originated and contingent (Muḥdath Mumkin), accepting both existence and non-existence, it is clear

that both [types] exist. However, their agreement in sharing the designation 'existence' (wujūd) does not necessitate that the existence of the former is like the existence of the latter. Rather, the existence of the Necessary Being is unique to Him, and the existence of the contingent being is unique to it. Their agreement in a general term does not necessitate similarity in the specific reality denoted by that term when it is qualified, specified, or restricted, nor in any other aspect. No rational person would say, if told that the Throne ('Arsh) is an existing thing and a gnat is an existing thing, that the existence of the Throne is like the existence of the gnat merely because they share the designation of 'thing' (shay') and 'existence' (wujūd). This is because there is no external, independently existing entity called 'existence' in which they both partake. Rather, the mind abstracts a shared, universal meaning, which is what the absolute term denotes. When it is said, 'This exists' and 'That exists,' the existence of each is particular to it, not shared by anything else, even though the term 'existence' applies truly to both.

For this reason, Allāh named Himself with Names and named His Attributes with names. These Names, when attributed to Him, are unique to Him, and no other shares in them [in the same manner]. He also named some of His creatures with names specific to them and attributed to them, which correspond to His Names when considered in isolation, detached from attribution and specification. However, the agreement of the two names, and the similarity or identity of their meaning when taken absolutely and abstracted from attribution and specification, does not necessitate that the realities they denote are identical or similar when attributed and specified—let alone that the denoted reality itself becomes identical when attributed and specified.

For instance, Allāh named Himself Living (Ḥayy), saying: {Allāh - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living (Al-Ḥayy), the Sustainer of [all] existence (Al-Qayyūm)} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. And He named some of His servants living (ḥayy), saying: {He brings the living (al-ḥayy) out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living (al-ḥayy)} [Ar-Rūm: 19]. Yet, this living is not like that Living. For His Name 'Al-Ḥayy' is a Name of Allāh, unique to Him. His statement, {He brings the living (al-ḥayy) out of the dead}, refers to the created living being, a designation unique to it [in its context]. The two only agree [in meaning] when the term is used absolutely and stripped of specification. However, an absolute concept [like 'living' in the abstract] does not denote a specific entity existing externally. Rather, the intellect understands from the absolute term a shared conceptual measure between the two denoted realities. When specified [to Allāh or creation], this concept is qualified by that which distinguishes the Creator from the creature, and the creature from the Creator. This principle must be applied to all of Allāh's Names and Attributes: one understands from them the meaning indicated by the name through general agreement (muwāṭa'ah) and shared concept, and also the meaning indicated by attribution and specification, which precludes the creature from sharing with the Creator in any of His unique characteristics, Glorified and Exalted is He.

Likewise, Allāh named Himself Knowing ('Alīm) and Forbearing (Ḥalīm). He named one of His servants knowing ('alīm), saying: {And they gave him good tidings of a knowing ('alīm) boy} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 28], meaning Ishāq. He named another forbearing (ḥalīm), saying: {So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing (ḥalīm) boy} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 101], meaning Ismā'īl. Yet, the Knowing is not like the knowing, nor is the Forbearing like the forbearing. He named Himself Hearing (Samī') and Seeing (Baṣīr), saying: {Indeed, Allāh commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allāh instructs you. Indeed, Allāh is ever Hearing (Samī'an) and Seeing (Baṣīran).} [An-Nisā': 58]. And He named some of His servants hearing (samī') and seeing (baṣīr), saying: {Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing (samī'an) and

seeing (baṣīran).} [Al-Insān: 2]. Yet, the Hearing is not like the hearing, nor the Seeing like the seeing. He named Himself Kind (Ra'ūf) and Merciful (Raḥīm), saying: {Indeed, Allāh is, to the people, Kind (Ra'ūfun) and Merciful (Raḥīm).} [Al-Baqarah: 143]. And He described one of His servants as kind (ra'ūf) and merciful (raḥīm), saying: {There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind (ra'ūfun) and merciful (raḥīm).} [At-Tawbah: 128]. Yet, the Kind is not like the kind, nor the Merciful like the merciful. He named Himself the Sovereign (Al-Malik), saying: {The Sovereign (Al-Malik), the Pure (Al-Quddūs)} [Al-Ḥashr: 23]. And He named some of His servants king (malik), saying: {For behind them was a king (malikun) who seized every [good] ship by force.} [Al-Kahf: 79], and {And the king (al-maliku) said, 'Bring him to me.}' [Yūsuf: 50]. Yet, the Sovereign King is not like the king. He named Himself the Giver of Security (Al-Mu'min) and the Overseer (Al-Muḥaymin). He named some of His servants believer (mu'min), saying: {Then is one who was a believer (mu'minan) like one who was defiantly disobedient? They are not equal.} [As-Sajdah: 18]. Yet, the Giver of Security is not like the believer. He named Himself the Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), saying: {The Exalted in Might (Al-'Azīz), the Compeller (Al-Jabbār), the Superior (Al-Mutakabbir)} [Al-Ḥashr: 23]. And He referred to one of His creatures as 'Azīz, saying: {Said the wife of al-'Azīz...} [Yūsuf: 51]. Yet, the Exalted in Might is not like the 'Azīz [of Egypt]. He named Himself the Compeller (Al-Jabbār) and the Superior (Al-Mutakabbir). He described some of His creation as arrogant (mutakabbir) and tyrant (jabbār), saying: {Thus does Allāh seal over every heart [belonging to] an arrogant tyrant (mutakabbirin jabbār).} [Ghāfir: 35]. Yet, the Compeller is not like the tyrant, nor the Superior like the arrogant. Examples of this are numerous.

Similarly, He named His Attributes with names and named the attributes of His servants with corresponding names. He said [regarding His Knowledge]: {And they encompass not a thing of His knowledge ('ilmihī) except for what He wills} [Al-Baqarah: 255], and {He has sent it down with His knowledge (bi-'ilmihī)} [An-Nisā': 166]. He said [regarding His Power]: {Indeed, it is Allāh who is the [continual] Provider (Ar-Razzāq), the Possessor of Power (Dhul-Quwwah), the Firm (Al-Matīn).} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 58], and {Did they not see that Allāh, who created them, was greater than them in power (quwwatan)?} [Fuṣṣilat: 15]. He also named the attribute of the creature knowledge ('ilm) and power (quwwah). He said: {And you have not been given of knowledge ('ilm) except a little.} [Al-Isrā': 85], and {And above every possessor of knowledge ('ilm) is one more knowing.} [Yūsuf: 76], and {they rejoiced in what they had of knowledge ('ilm).} [Ghāfir: 83]. He said: {Allāh is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength (quwwatan), then made after strength (quwwatin) weakness and white hair.} [Ar-Rūm: 54], and {And add strength (quwwatan) to your strength (quwwatikum)} [Hūd: 52]. He said: {And the heaven We constructed with strength (bi-aydin)} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 47], meaning with power (quwwah). And He said: {And remember Our servant Dāwūd, the possessor of strength (dhal-ayd)} [Ṣād: 17], meaning the possessor of power (dhul-quwwah). Yet, the Knowledge [of Allāh] is not like the knowledge [of creation], nor is the Power [of Allāh] like the power [of creation].

He described Himself with Will (Mashī'ah) and described His servant with will (mashī'ah). He said: {For whoever wills (shā'a) among you to take a right course.} [At-Takwīr: 28], {And you do not will (wa mā tashā'ūna) except that Allāh wills (an yashā'a Allāh), Lord of the worlds.} [At-Takwīr: 29]. And He said: {Indeed, this is a reminder,} [Al-Insān: 29] {so whoever wills (fa-man shā'a) may take to his Lord a way.} [Al-Insān: 29] {And you do not will (wa mā tashā'ūna) except that Allāh wills (an yashā'a Allāh). Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise.} [Al-Insān: 30]. Likewise, He described Himself with Intention/Desire (Irādah) and His servant with intention/desire (irādah). He said: {You desire (turīdūna)

the commodities of this world, while Allāh desires (yurīdu) [for you] the Hereafter. And Allāh is Exalted in Might, Wise.} [Al-Anfāl: 67]. He described Himself with Love (Maḥabbah) and described His servant with love (maḥabbah). He said: {Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love (yuḥibbuhum) and who will love Him (yuḥibbūnahu)} [Al-Mā'idah: 54]. And He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'If you should love (tuḥibbūna) Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you (yuḥibbukumu Allāh)} [Āl 'Imrān: 31]. He described Himself with Pleasure (Riḍā) and described His servant with pleasure (riḍā). He said: {Allāh being pleased (raḍiya Allāhu) with them and they pleased (raḍū) with Him.} [Al-Mā'idah: 119]. It is well known that Allāh's Will is not like the servant's will, nor is His Intention like his intention, nor His Love like his love, nor His Pleasure like his pleasure.

Similarly, He described Himself as hating (yamqutu) the disbelievers and described them with hatred (maqt). He said: {Indeed, those who disbelieve will be addressed, 'The hatred of Allāh (la-maqtu Allāhi) is greater than your hatred of yourselves (min maqtikum anfasakum) [now] when you were invited to faith, but you refused.'} [Ghāfir: 10]. Yet, the hatred [of Allāh] is not like the hatred [of creation].

Likewise, He described Himself with plotting (Makr) and scheming (Kayd), just as He described His servant with these. He said: {But they plot (wa yamkurūna), and Allāh plots (wa yamkuru Allāh)} [Al-Anfāl: 30]. And He said: {Indeed, they are planning a plan (yakīdūna kaydā), But I am planning a plan (wa akīdu kaydā).} [Aṭ-Ṭāriq: 15-16]. Yet, the plotting [of Allāh] is not like the plotting [of creation], nor the scheming like the scheming. He described Himself with action/making ('Amal), saying: {Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands have made (mimmā 'amilat aydīnā) livestock of which they are owners?} [Yāsīn: 71]. And He described His servant with action ('amal), saying: {as reward for what they used to do (ya'malūn).} [Al-Wāqī'ah: 24]. Yet, the action [of Allāh] is not like the action [of creation]. He described Himself with calling out (Munādāh) and confiding (Munājāh). He said: {And We called him (wa nādāyṅahu) from the right side of the Mount and brought him near, confiding (najiyyā) [in him].} [Maryam: 52]. And He said: {And [mention] the Day He will call them (yunādīhim)} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 62]. And He said: {And their Lord called them (wa nādāhumā)} [Al-A'rāf: 22]. He described His servants with calling out (munādāh) and private consultation (munājāh). He said: {Indeed, those who call you (yunādūnaka) from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason.} [Al-Ḥujurāt: 4]. And He said: {When you privately consult (nājaytum) the Messenger...} [Al-Mujādilah: 12]. And He said: {when you converse privately (tanājaytum), do not converse privately (falā tatanājaw) about sin and aggression...} [Al-Mujādilah: 9]. Yet, the calling out [of Allāh] is not like the calling out [of creation], nor the confiding/private consultation like the confiding/private consultation. He described Himself with speaking (Taklīm) in His statement: {And Allāh spoke (wa kallama Allāhu) to Mūsā with [direct] speech (taklīmā).} [An-Nisā': 164], and His statement: {And when Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him (wa kallamahu rabbuhu)} [Al-A'rāf: 143], and His statement: {Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allāh spoke (man kallama Allāhu)} [Al-Baqarah: 253]. He described His servant with speaking (taklīm) in His statement: {And the king said, 'Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself.' And when he spoke to him (kallamahu), he said, 'Indeed, you are today established [in position] with us, trustworthy.'} [Yūsuf: 54]. Yet, the speaking [of Allāh] is not like the speaking [of creation]. He described Himself with informing (Tanbī'ah) and described some creation with informing (tanbī'ah). He said: {And [remember] when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a statement; and when she informed (nabba'at) [another] of it and Allāh showed it to him, he made known part of it and ignored a part.

And when he informed her (nabba'ahā) of it, she said, 'Who informed you (anba'aka) of this?' He said, 'I was informed (nabba'aniya) by the Knowing (Al-'Alīm), the Aware (Al-Khabīr).' [At-Taḥrīm: 3]. Yet, the informing [by Allāh] is not like the informing [by creation]. He described Himself with teaching (Ta'līm) and described His servant with teaching (ta'līm). He said: {The Most Compassionate (Ar-Raḥmān), Taught ('allama) the Qur'an, Created man, [And] taught him ('allamahu) eloquence.} [Ar-Raḥmān: 1-4]. And He said: {...teaching them (tu'allimūnahunna) from what Allāh has taught you ('allamakumu Allāh).} [Al-Mā'idah: 4]. And He said: {Certainly did Allāh confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them (wa yu'allimuhumu) the Book and wisdom...} [Āl 'Imrān: 164]. Yet, the teaching [by Allāh] is not like the teaching [by creation]. Likewise, He described Himself with Anger (Ghaḍab), saying: {and Allāh has become angry (wa ghaḍiba Allāhu) with them and has cursed them} [Al-Fath: 6]. And He described His servant with anger (ghaḍab) in His statement concerning Mūsā: {So Mūsā returned to his people angry (ghaḍbāna) and grieved.} [Tā-Hā: 86]. Yet, the Anger [of Allāh] is not like the anger [of creation]. He described Himself as having risen over His Throne (Istawā 'alā 'Arshihi), mentioning this in seven places in His Book, that He rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne. He described some of His creation with rising over or mounting (istiwā') upon something else, such as in His statement: {That you may mount (li-tastawū) firmly upon their backs} [Az-Zukhruf: 13], and His statement: {So when you have boarded (istawayta), you and whoever is with you, the ark...} [Al-Mu'minūn: 28], and His statement: {And it [the ark] came to rest (wa-stawat) upon [Mount] Jūdī} [Hūd: 44]. Yet, the Istiwā' [of Allāh] is not like the istiwā' [of creation]. He described Himself with having outstretched Hands (Baṣṭ al-Yadayn), saying: {And the Jews say, 'The hand (yadu) of Allāh is chained.' Chained are their hands (aydīhim) and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands (yadāhu) are outstretched (mabsūtātāni); He spends however He wills.} [Al-Mā'idah: 64]. He described some of His creation with stretching out the hand (baṣṭ al-yad) in His statement: {And do not make your hand (yadaka) chained to your neck or extend it (tabsut-hā) completely} [Al-Isrā': 29]. Yet, the Hand [of Allāh] is not like the hand [of creation], nor is the stretching out like the stretching out. And if the intended meaning of stretching out (baṣṭ) is giving and generosity, then Allāh's giving is not like the giving of His creation, nor is His generosity like their generosity. Examples of this are abundant.

Therefore, it is imperative to affirm what Allāh has affirmed for Himself while negating any likeness (mumāthalah) between Him and His creation. Whoever says: 'Allāh has no knowledge, no power, no mercy, no speech; He does not love, is not pleased, did not call out, did not confide, did not rise over (istawā)' is a negator (mu'aṭṭil), a denier (jāhid), likening Allāh to non-existent things and inanimate objects. And whoever says: 'He has knowledge like my knowledge, or power like my power, or love like my love, or pleasure like my pleasure, or two hands like my hands, or an Istiwā' (rising over) like my istiwā' (settling/mounting)' is an anthropomorphist (mushabbih), likening Allāh to living creatures (ḥayawānāt). Rather, there must be affirmation without likening (ithbātun bilā tamthīl) and transcendence without negation (tanzīhun bilā ta'tīl). This will be clarified by means of (two noble principles), two parables set forth—and for Allāh is the highest description—and (a comprehensive conclusion).

## Section

As for the two principles, the first of them is that it should be stated: The principle governing [the affirmation of] some Attributes is the same as the principle governing

[the affirmation of] others.

If the person being addressed is someone who affirms that Allāh is Living (Ḥayy) with Life (Ḥayāh), Knowing ('Alīm) with Knowledge ('Ilm), Powerful (Qadīr) with Power (Qudrah), Hearing (Samī') with Hearing (Sam'), Seeing (Baṣīr) with Sight (Baṣar), Speaking (Mutakallim) with Speech (Kalām), Willing (Murīd) with Will (Irādah), and considers all of these to be real attributes, yet disputes concerning His Love (Maḥabbah), Pleasure (Riḍā), Anger (Ghaḍab), and Dislike (Karāhah)—treating these as metaphorical (majāz) and interpreting them either as [aspects of His] Will or as referring to certain created things like blessings and punishments—then it should be said to him: There is no difference between what you have negated and what you have affirmed. Rather, the principle governing one set is the same as the principle governing the other. If you were to say that His Will is like the will of created beings, then likewise His Love, Pleasure, and Anger would be [like theirs], and this constitutes likening Him to creation (tamthīl). But if you say that He possesses a Will befitting Him, just as a creature possesses a will befitting it, then it must be said to you: Likewise, He possesses Love befitting Him, just as a creature possesses love befitting it; and He possesses Pleasure and Anger befitting Him, just as a creature possesses pleasure and anger befitting it.

If you were to argue, 'Anger is the boiling of the heart's blood seeking revenge,' it would be replied: And will is the inclination of the soul towards acquiring a benefit or repelling harm. If you then retort, 'But that is the will of the creature,' it will be said to you: And that [definition of anger] is the anger of the creature. The same reasoning applies necessarily to His Speech, Hearing, Sight, Knowledge, and Power. If Anger, Love, Pleasure, and the like are negated from Him on the grounds that these [definitions] pertain to the characteristics of created beings, then these [creatively characteristics] are equally inapplicable to Hearing, Sight, Speech, and all other Attributes [as affirmed for Allāh]. And if one claims, 'These attributes have no reality except that which is specific to created beings, therefore they must be negated from Him,' it must be said to him: The same applies to Hearing, Sight, Speech, Knowledge, and Power [as understood in creatures].

Thus, to this person who differentiates between some Attributes and others, the same argument he uses against his opponent regarding the attributes he affirms can be applied to the attributes he negates. For example, when a Mu'tazilī says, 'He does not possess Will or Speech subsisting in His Essence, because these attributes only subsist in created beings,' the one refuting him explains that the Pre-eternal (Al-Qadīm) can be described with these attributes, and they are not like the attributes of originated beings (muḥdathāt). Similarly, those who affirm all other Attributes, such as Love, Pleasure, and the like, say the same to him [who denies them].

If he [the one who differentiates] says: 'I affirm those attributes [like Power, Will, Knowledge] based on reason, because originated action indicates Power, specification [of actions] indicates Will, and perfection [in creation] indicates Knowledge. These attributes necessitate Life, and the Living cannot be devoid of Hearing, Sight, and Speech, or their opposites [i.e., deafness, blindness, muteness].'

The rest of the proponents of affirmation (Ahl al-lthbāt) would reply to him: You have two responses: (1) First, it can be said: The absence of a specific proof does not necessitate the absence of the specific thing to be proven. So, grant that the rational argument you employed does not prove [attributes like Love, Pleasure, Anger]; it certainly does not negate them. You have no right to negate them without proof, because the burden of proof lies upon the one who negates just as it lies upon the one who affirms. Revelation (as-sam') has indeed indicated these attributes, and there is no rational or scriptural counter-argument that opposes this. Therefore, it is obligatory to affirm what is

established by evidence that is sound and free from any overriding counter-argument.

(2) Second, it can be said: It is possible to establish these attributes [like Love, Pleasure, Anger, Mercy, Wisdom] using rational arguments similar to those by which you established the others. Thus, it can be argued: Benefiting servants through kindness towards them indicates Mercy, just as specification indicates Will. Honoring the obedient indicates love for them, and punishing the disbelievers indicates hatred for them, just as His honoring of His allies (awliyā') and punishment of His enemies is established through observation and reports. Furthermore, the praiseworthy purposes (ghāyāt maḥmūdah) evident in His actions and commands—meaning the beneficial outcomes to which His actions and commands lead—indicate His profound Wisdom (Ḥikmah), just as specification indicates Will, and indeed, this indication [of Wisdom] is even stronger due to the force of teleological reasoning (al-'illah al-ghā'iyah). This is why the Qur'an's exposition of the blessings and wisdom inherent in His creations is far more extensive than its exposition of the evidence for His mere Will within them.

If the person being addressed is one who denies the Attributes but affirms the Names, like the Mu'tazilī who says, 'He is Living, Knowing, Powerful,' but denies that He is characterized by Life, Knowledge, and Power, it should be said to him: There is no difference between affirming the Names and affirming the Attributes. If you argue: 'Affirming Life, Knowledge, and Power necessitates anthropomorphism (tashbīh) or corporealism (tajsīm), because in the observable world (ash-shāhid), we only find things characterized by attributes that are bodies (jism),' it will be replied to you: And in the observable world, we only find things named Living, Knowing, Powerful that are bodies. So, if you negate what you negate because you only find it associated with bodies in the observable world, then you must also negate the Names—indeed, negate everything [about Him]—because you only find these associated with bodies in the observable world! Thus, every argument used by one who negates the Attributes can equally be used by one who negates the Best Names (Al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā). Therefore, whatever serves as a valid response to the latter also serves as a valid response to those who affirm the Attributes.

If the person being addressed is one of the extremists who negate both Names and Attributes, saying: 'I do not say He is Existent, Living, Knowing, or Powerful; rather, these names belong to His creatures, and applying them to Him is metaphorical, because affirming them necessitates likening Him to an existent, living, knowing being,' it should be said to him: Likewise, if you say He is non-existent, non-living, non-knowing, and non-powerful, this constitutes likening Him to non-existent things (al-ma'dūmāt), which is even more repugnant than likening Him to existing things. If he then says: 'I negate both negation and affirmation,' it should be said to him: Then you inevitably liken Him to impossible concepts (al-mumtani'āt) wherein contradictories are combined. For it is impossible for something to be both existent and non-existent, or neither existent nor non-existent. It is impossible to describe something by combining existence and non-existence, or life and death, or knowledge and ignorance; just as it is impossible to describe it by negating both existence and non-existence, negating both life and death, and negating both knowledge and ignorance.

If you argue: 'Negating two contradictories is only impossible for something capable of possessing them. These pairs [like life/death, sight/blindness] are opposites of privation and possession (taqābul al-'adam wal-malakah), not opposites of negation and affirmation (taqābul as-salb wal-ijāb). For instance, a wall is described neither as blind nor as sighted, neither as living nor as dead, because it is incapable of possessing these qualities.' It would be replied to you: Firstly, this distinction does not hold true for

existence and non-existence, for they are opposites of negation and affirmation by the consensus of rational people; the negation of one necessitates the affirmation of the other. As for what you mentioned regarding life and death, knowledge and ignorance, this is a technical terminology adopted by the Peripatetic philosophers. Mere linguistic conventions are not proof against rational realities. Indeed, Allāh, the Exalted, said: {And those they invoke other than Allāh create nothing, while they are created. [They are] dead (amwātun), not living (ghayru aḥyā'), and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.} [An-Naḥl: 20-21]. Here, He called inanimate objects 'dead,' and this usage is well-known in the Arabic language and others.

Secondly, it would be said to you: That which is incapable of being described with life or death, blindness or sight, and similar opposites is more deficient than that which is capable of them. A blind person who is capable of possessing sight is more perfect than an inanimate object that is incapable of possessing either. Thus, you have fled from likening Him to living beings capable of attributes of perfection, only to describe Him with the characteristics of inanimate objects that are incapable of such attributes!

Furthermore, that which is incapable of [accepting] either existence or non-existence is even more impossible than that which is capable of [accepting] existence and non-existence. Indeed, it is more impossible than the combination of existence and non-existence, or the negation of both together. Therefore, that from which you negate the capacity for existence and non-existence is more impossible than that from which you [merely] negate existence and non-existence. Since negating both existence and non-existence is impossible according to clear reason, negating the capacity for them is even more impossible! You have thus rendered the Necessary Existent (Al-Wujūd al-Wājib)—Who cannot accept non-existence—the greatest of impossibilities. This is the height of contradiction and corruption.

Among these Esotericists (Bāṭiniyyah), some explicitly advocate negating the two contradictories: existence and non-existence. Negating them both is equivalent to affirming them both [in impossibility]. As for one who says, 'I affirm neither of them,' his refusal to affirm one of them in reality does not prevent the actualization of one of them in reality. His stance is merely like the ignorance of the ignorant or the silence of the silent, who fails to express the realities. Since that which accepts neither existence nor non-existence is more impossible than that which is conceived as accepting them (even while both are negated from it), then that which is conceived as accepting neither life nor death, neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither power nor incapacity, neither speech nor muteness, neither blindness nor sight, neither hearing nor deafness, is closer to the non-existent and impossible than that which is conceived as capable of them (even while both are negated from it). Consequently, negating these pairs from something capable of possessing them is closer to existence and possibility [than negating the capacity itself]. Furthermore, whatever is possible for the Necessary Existent (Wājib al-Wujūd)—in terms of capacity—is necessary for Him, because His attributes are not dependent on anything else. Therefore, if the capacity [for an attribute of perfection] is possible, it is necessary; and if the existence of the capacity is possible, it is necessary. This has been elaborated upon elsewhere, demonstrating the necessity of His being characterized by attributes of perfection that contain no deficiency whatsoever.

It should also be said to him [the negator]: The agreement of two denoted realities in sharing some names and attributes is not the anthropomorphism (tashbīh) and likening (tamthīl) negated by scriptural and rational proofs. Rather, what is negated is that which would necessitate their sharing in that which is unique to the Creator—pertaining to what is necessary, possible, or impossible for Him. It is impermissible for any creature to

share with Him in that, nor may any creature share in any of His unique characteristics, Glorified and Exalted is He. As for what you have negated [of His Names and Attributes], it is established by revelation and reason. Your labeling of this affirmation as 'anthropomorphism' and 'corporealism' is merely obfuscation aimed at the ignorant, who might assume that any concept given such a label by someone must be negated. If this were permissible, every purveyor of falsehood could label the truth with names that repel some people, thereby causing them to reject the truth known through revelation and reason. It is through this method that heretics (malāḥidah) have corrupted the intellect and religion of various groups of people, leading them into the greatest disbelief and ignorance, and the most profound error and deviation.

If the negators of Attributes argue: 'Affirming Knowledge, Power, and Will necessitates a multiplicity of attributes, and this implies composition (tarkīb), which is impossible [for Allāh],' it should be replied: And when you [philosophers] say: 'He is Existent, Necessary, Intellect, Intellector, Intelligible, Lover, Beloved, Delight, Delighting, and Delight itself'—is not the concept understood from each of these distinct from the others? These are multiple meanings, distinct in the intellect. This constitutes composition according to your own principles, yet you affirm it and call it Tawḥīd (Oneness)! If they respond: 'This is true oneness in reality, and this is not an impossible composition,' it should be said to them: Likewise, the Essence being characterized by the Attributes necessary for it is true oneness in reality, and it is not an impossible composition.

This is because it is known by clear reason that the meaning of something being 'knowing' is not the same as the meaning of its being 'powerful,' nor is its essence identical to its being knowing and powerful. Whoever permits the attribute to be identical to the described entity engages in the worst kind of sophistry. Furthermore, he contradicts himself. For if he permits this identity [between attribute and essence], he must permit the existence of this thing to be identical to the existence of that thing, meaning existence would be numerically one (wāḥid bil-'ayn), not just generically one (wāḥid bin-naw'). In that case, if the existence of the contingent were identical to the existence of the Necessary, then the existence of every creature—which ceases to exist when its existence ends and comes into being after non-existence—would be the very same existence as the True One (Al-Ḥaqq), the Pre-eternal, the Everlasting, the Abiding, Who cannot accept non-existence. If this were conceived, the Necessary Existent would be described with every form of anthropomorphism, corporealism, deficiency, and flaw, as explicitly stated by the proponents of Waḥdat al-Wujūd (Unity of Being), who consistently applied this corrupt principle. Therefore, the statements of the negators of Attributes are false under all considerations.

This principle is universally applicable. For every single negator of the Attributes reported by the Messenger, seeking to flee from a perceived problem [like anthropomorphism], inevitably affirms something that entails the very same problem he fled from. Ultimately, one must affirm an Existent Being Who is Necessary, Pre-eternal, characterized by attributes that distinguish Him from others, without these attributes rendering Him similar to His creation. It must then be said to him: The same principle applies to all the Attributes. Every Name and Attribute you affirm must indicate a shared conceptual measure (qadr) common to the things denoted by that name or attribute; otherwise, discourse would be incomprehensible. However, we know that that which Allāh is uniquely characterized by, distinguishing Him from His creation, is far greater than anything that can cross the mind or be conjured by the imagination.

This becomes clear through the second principle, which is to state: The principle governing [the affirmation of] the Attributes is the same as the principle governing [the

affirmation of] the Essence (Dhāt).

For indeed, {There is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]—not in His Essence (Dhāt), nor in His Attributes (Ṣifāt), nor in His Actions (Afāl). Therefore, if He possesses a real Essence that does not resemble other essences, then this Essence is characterized by real Attributes that do not resemble other attributes. So, if someone asks, 'How (kayfa) did He rise over (istawā) the Throne?' it should be said to him, as Rabī'ah, Mālik, and others (may Allāh be pleased with them) said: 'The Istiwā' is known, the 'how' (al-kayf) is unknown, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about the modality (kayfiyyah) is an innovation (bid'ah).' This is because it is asking about something humans do not know and cannot possibly answer. Likewise, if someone asks, 'How (kayfa) does our Lord descend (yanzilu) to the lowest heaven?' it should be asked of him, 'How (kayfa) is He?' If he replies, 'I do not know His modality (kayfiyyah),' it should be said to him, 'And we do not know the modality (kayfiyyah) of His descent.' This is because knowledge of the modality of the attribute necessitates knowledge of the modality of the one described; it is a branch of it and dependent upon it. How, then, can you demand from me knowledge of the modality of His Hearing, Sight, Speech, Istiwā', and Descent, when you yourself do not know the modality of His Essence?

Since you affirm that He has a reality, established in fact, necessitating attributes of perfection, which nothing resembles, then His Hearing, Sight, Speech, Descent, and Istiwā' are likewise established in fact. He is characterized by attributes of perfection in which the hearing, sight, speech, descent, and istiwā' (settling/mounting) of created beings bear no resemblance to Him. This line of reasoning is binding upon them [the negators] both in rational matters and in their interpretation (ta'wīl) of scriptural texts. For whoever affirms something and negates something else based on reason, when confronted regarding the attributes he negates (which are mentioned in the Book and Sunnah), will find that the same perceived problems apply to what he affirms. If asked to differentiate between the perceived difficulty in the former case and the latter, he will find no difference. This is why those who negate some attributes but not others—who mandate either consigning the meaning [of the negated attributes] to Allāh (tafwīd) or interpreting them in a way contrary to the apparent meaning of the text (ta'wīl)—possess no consistent principle. When asked, 'Why did you interpret this attribute but affirm that one, when the question [of modality] is the same for both?' they have no sound answer. This demonstrates their contradiction in negation.

Likewise, their contradiction appears in affirmation. For those who interpret the texts to mean one of the concepts they do affirm—when they divert the text from its apparent meaning to another meaning—the same perceived problems they sought to avoid in the original meaning arise in the meaning they divert it to. For instance, if someone says: 'The interpretation (ta'wīl) of His Love, Pleasure, Anger, and Displeasure is His Will for reward and punishment,' then the same perceived problems associated with Love, Hatred, Pleasure, and Displeasure apply equally to Will. Even if one interprets these attributes as referring to His actions (ma'ūlāt)—namely, the reward and punishment He creates—the same problem he fled from arises again. This is because an action must first subsist in the actor, and the created reward and punishment only occur based on the actions that the Rewarding and Punishing One loves, is pleased with, is displeased by, or hates. If they affirm His action in a manner similar to that understood for a servant in the observable world, they have committed anthropomorphism (tamthīl). And if they affirm it in a manner unlike that [of the servant], then the same applies to the Attributes [they initially denied].

## Section

As for the two parables set forth: [Parable 1:] Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, has informed us about the created things in Paradise, including various kinds of foods, garments, spouses, and dwellings. He informed us that therein are milk, honey, wine, water, meat, silk, gold, silver, fruits, beautiful companions (ḥūr), and palaces. Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both) said, ‘There is nothing in this world of what is in Paradise except the names.’ If these realities about which Allāh informed us agree in name with the realities existing in this world, yet are not similar to them—rather, the disparity between them is such that none knows it except Allāh, the Exalted—then the Creator, Glorified and Exalted is He, is even more greatly distinct from created beings than one created being is from another. His disparity from His creatures is greater than the disparity between the existents of the Hereafter and the existents of this world, since a creature is closer [in nature] to another creature that shares its name than the Creator is to a creature. This is clear and evident.

For this reason, people have divided into three groups regarding this matter: (a) The Salaf, the Imāms, and their followers: They believed in what Allāh informed concerning Himself and concerning the Last Day, while knowing the disparity between what is in this world and what is in the Hereafter, and knowing that Allāh’s disparity from His creation is even greater. (b) The second group: Those who affirmed what Allāh informed regarding reward and punishment in the Hereafter, but negated many of the Attributes He informed about Himself, such as various factions among the scholastic theologians (Ahl al-Kalām). (c) The third group: Those who negated both [the reality of the Attributes and the reality of the Hereafter], such as the Qarmatians, the Esotericists (Bāṭiniyyah), the Peripatetic philosophers, and similar heretics (malāḥidah) who deny the realities of what Allāh informed concerning Himself and concerning the Last Day.

Furthermore, many of them extend this approach to commands and prohibitions. They claim that the prescribed laws (sharā’i) and the forbidden acts have esoteric interpretations (ta’wīlāt bāṭinah) that contradict what Muslims understand from them. For example, they interpret the five daily prayers (ṣalawāt), the fast of the month of Ramaḍān (ṣiyām), and the pilgrimage to the House (Ḥajj al-Bayt) allegorically, saying: ‘The five prayers mean knowing their secrets; fasting Ramaḍān means concealing their secrets; and Ḥajj to the House means journeying to their shaykhs,’ and similar interpretations which are known by necessity to be lies and fabrications against the Messengers (may Allāh’s blessings be upon them), distortions (taḥrīf) of the words of Allāh and His Messenger from their proper contexts, and deviation (ilhād) concerning Allāh’s signs. They may also claim that the religious laws are binding only upon the common folk (al-‘āmmah), not the elite (al-khāṣṣah). Thus, when a man becomes one of their gnostics (‘ārifin), verifiers (muḥaqqiqīn), or unifiers (muwahḥidīn), they lift the obligations from him and permit forbidden things for him. Some who affiliate themselves with Sufism (Taṣawwuf) and the spiritual path (Sulūk) may fall into some of these doctrines. These Bāṭiniyyah are the heretics (malāḥidah) whom Muslims unanimously agree are more disbelieving than the Jews and Christians.

The arguments used by the people of faith and affirmation (Ahl al-Īmān wal-Ithbāt) against these heretics can be used by everyone among the people of faith and affirmation against anyone who shares with these heretics in some aspect of their deviation. Therefore, when one affirms the Attributes for Allāh, the Exalted, while negating any likeness to created beings—as indicated by the clear verses—this constitutes the truth that conforms to both reason (al-ma’qūl) and revelation (al-manqūl), and it demolishes the foundation of heresy and misguidance. Allāh, Glorified is He, is not to be described

using analogies (amthāl) that imply similarity to His creation, for Allāh has no equal (mathīl). Rather, to Him belongs the 'Highest Analogy' (Al-Mathal al-A'lā) [cf. Ar-Rūm: 27]. Therefore, it is impermissible to include Him and created beings together in an analogy of representation (qiyās tamthīl) or in a syllogism of inclusion (qiyās shumūl) where the individuals are treated as equal. However, the Highest Analogy is applicable to Him, which dictates that: every perfection with which a creature is described, the Creator is more entitled to it; and every imperfection from which a creature is deemed free, the Creator is more entitled to be deemed free from it. Thus, if a creature [like the realities of Paradise] is free from resembling another creature [in this world] despite sharing the same name, then the Creator is even more entitled to be deemed free from resembling any creature, even if there is agreement in name.

The same reasoning applies to the second parable: [Parable 2:] The soul (rūh) which is within us. It has been described with both affirmative and negative attributes. The texts inform us that it ascends and rises from one heaven to another, that it is seized from the body and drawn out from it like a hair being drawn from dough. Yet people are confused and divided concerning it. Among them are factions of scholastic theologians who consider it merely a part of the body or one of its properties, like those who say it is the breath or the wind circulating in the body, or those who say it is life itself, or the temperament (mizāj), or the body itself. Among them also are factions of philosophers who describe it using the same terms they use to describe the Necessary Existent according to their doctrine—terms describing things that can only characterize impossible non-existence. They say: 'It is neither inside the body nor outside it, neither separate from it nor intermingling with it, neither moving nor stationary, neither ascending nor descending; it is neither a body (jism) nor an accident ('araḍ).' They might also say: 'It does not perceive particular things or realities existing externally, but only perceives universal, absolute concepts.' They might claim: 'It is neither within the universe nor outside it, neither separate from it nor intermingling with it.' Perhaps they say it is neither inside the bodies of the universe nor outside them, while defining 'body' (jism) as that which cannot be indicated by sensory pointing. Thus, they describe the soul as something that cannot be pointed to, and employ similar negative attributes that relegate it to the realm of the non-existent and the impossible.

When it is said to them, 'Affirming such a thing [described only by negations] is impossible according to rational necessity,' they reply, 'Rather, it is possible, evidenced by the fact that universals (kulliyāt) are possible and existent, yet cannot be pointed to.' They have overlooked the fact that universals exist as universals only in the mind (adhhān), not in external reality ('iyān). Thus, in what they say about the Origin (Mabda') and the Return (Ma'ād), they rely on this kind of fantasy, the corruption of which is obvious even to most ignorant people. The confusion between negators and affirmers regarding the soul is widespread. The reason for this is that the soul—which philosophers call the 'rational soul' (an-nafs an-nāṭiqah)—is not of the same genus as this physical body, nor of the genus of the elements or the things generated from them. Rather, it is of another genus, different from these genera. Consequently, some [the philosophers] only define it through negations that emphasize its difference from observable bodies, while others [some theologians] make it of the same genus as observable bodies. Both positions are erroneous.

Applying the term 'body' (jism) or 'not a body' to the soul requires clarification, because people have multiple technical definitions for the term 'jism' besides its linguistic meaning. Linguists say: 'jism' means the physical frame (jasad) or body (badan). According to this definition, the soul is not a 'jism.' This is why people speak of 'the soul and the body (al-jism),' as Allāh, the Exalted, said: {And when you see them, their bodies

(ajsāmuhum) please you, and if they speak, you listen to their speech.} [Al-Munāfiqūn: 4], and He said: {and increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique (al-jism).} [Al-Baqarah: 247].

As for the scholastic theologians (Ahl al-Kalām): some say 'jism' means that which exists; some say it means that which subsists by itself (qā'im bi-nafsihī); some say it is that which is composed of indivisible atoms (jawāhir mufradah); and some say it is that which is composed of matter and form. All of these groups say that it can be indicated by sensory pointing. Others say: it is not composed of this or that, but it is something that can be pointed to, and about which it can be said, 'It is here' or 'It is there.' According to this last definition, if the soul is something that can be pointed to and followed by the gaze of the deceased—as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Indeed, when the soul departs, the sight follows it,' and that 'it is seized and ascended with to the heaven'—then the soul would be a 'jism' according to this technical definition.

The point is: If the soul—being existent, living, knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing; ascending and descending, going and coming, and possessing similar attributes—is something whose modality (kayfiyyah) and precise definition (taḥdīd) intellects are incapable of grasping, because they have not witnessed anything like it (for a thing's reality is only grasped by witnessing it or witnessing its like); if the soul is characterized by these attributes despite its lack of resemblance to observable creatures, then the Creator is even more entitled to be distinct from His creatures while being characterized by the Names and Attributes He deserves. And rational beings are even more incapable of defining or grasping the modality of the Creator than they are of defining or grasping the modality of the soul.

Therefore, if one who negates the attributes of the soul is a denier (jāhid) and negator (mu'atṭil) concerning it, and one who likens it to observable creatures is ignorant (jāhil) and misrepresents it (mumaththil) by likening it to something dissimilar—while the soul itself is nevertheless established with true affirmation, deserving the attributes it possesses—then the Creator, Glorified and Exalted is He, is even more worthy of [the judgment that] one who negates His Attributes is a denier and negator, and one who compares Him to His creation is ignorant of Him and an anthropomorphist (mumaththil). And He, Glorified and Exalted is He, is established with true affirmation, deserving the Names and Attributes that belong to Him.

## Section

As for the Comprehensive Conclusion, it contains beneficial rules:

Rule One: Allāh, Glorified is He, is described using both affirmation (ithbāt) and negation (nafy). Affirmation includes His informing us that He is {All-Knowing of everything} [e.g., Al-Baqarah: 29], {over all things Powerful} [e.g., Al-Baqarah: 20], and that He is Hearing (Samī'), Seeing (Baṣīr), and so forth. Negation includes His statement: {Neither drowsiness (sinah) overtakes Him nor sleep (nawm)} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. It should be understood that negation, in itself, contains no praise (maḍḥ) or perfection (kamāl) unless it implies an affirmation. Otherwise, mere negation holds no praise or perfection, because pure negation is pure non-existence ('adam maḥḍ). Pure non-existence is nothing, and that which is nothing is, as the saying goes, simply nothing—let alone being a source of praise or perfection. Furthermore, pure negation can be used to describe the non-existent (al-ma'dūm) and the impossible (al-mumtani'), and neither the non-existent nor the impossible can be described with praise or perfection.

For this reason, generally, the negations with which Allāh describes Himself imply an

affirmation of praise. For example, His statement: {Allāh - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living (Al-Ḥayy), the Sustainer of [all] existence (Al-Qayyūm). Neither drowsiness (sinah) overtakes Him nor sleep (nawm)...} until His statement {...and their preservation tires Him not (wa lā ya'ūduhu ḥifẓuhumā).} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. The negation of drowsiness and sleep implies the perfection of His Life and Self-Subsistence (Qayyūmiyyah); it thus clarifies the perfection of His being Al-Ḥayy, Al-Qayyūm. Likewise, His statement, {and their preservation tires Him not}, meaning it does not burden or weigh Him down, necessitates the perfection and completeness of His Power (Qudrah). This is unlike a capable creature who, when able to do something, does so with some degree of exertion and difficulty, which indicates a deficiency in its power and a flaw in its strength. Similarly, His statement: {Not absent from Him is an atom's weight within the heavens or within the earth} [Saba': 3]. The negation of absence ('uzūb) necessitates His knowledge of every single atom in the heavens and the earth. Likewise, His statement: {And We did certainly create the heavens and earth and what is between them in six days, and there touched Us no weariness (lughūb).} [Qāf: 38]. The negation of being touched by weariness—which is fatigue and exhaustion—indicates the perfection of His Power and the ultimate degree of His Strength, unlike the creature who is afflicted by fatigue and exhaustion.

Similarly, His statement: {Vision perceives Him not (lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār)} [Al-An'ām: 103]. Here, He only negated perception (idrāk) which means encompassment (iḥāṭah), as stated by the majority of scholars; He did not negate mere seeing (ru'yah). This is because the non-existent cannot be seen, and there is no praise in something being unseen; if there were, the non-existent would be praiseworthy. Rather, the praise lies in His not being encompassed, even if He is seen, just as He is not encompassed even when He is known. Just as when He is known, He is not encompassed by knowledge, likewise, when He is seen, He is not encompassed by vision. Thus, the negation of perception (idrāk) contains an affirmation of His Greatness ('Aẓamah) which constitutes praise and an attribute of perfection. This verse, therefore, serves as evidence for affirming sight, not negating it; however, it is evidence for affirming sight accompanied by the impossibility of encompassment. This is the truth upon which the Salaf of the Ummah and its Imāms agreed.

If you reflect upon this, you will find that every negation that does not imply an affirmation is something Allāh has not used to describe Himself. Those who describe Him only with negations (sulūb) have not, in reality, affirmed a praiseworthy God, nor even an existent one. The same applies to those who share with them in some of this, like those who say He does not speak, or does not see, or is not above the universe, or did not rise over (istawā) the Throne, and who say: 'He is neither inside the universe nor outside it, neither separate from the universe (mubāyin) nor contiguous with it (muḥāyith).' For these descriptions could equally apply to the non-existent, and they are not attributes that necessitate an affirmative attribute. This is why Maḥmūd ibn Subuktigīn reportedly said to someone who claimed such things about the Creator: 'Distinguish for us between this Lord you affirm and the non-existent.'

Likewise, His being non-speaking or non-descending contains no attribute of praise or perfection. Rather, these descriptions involve likening Him to deficient things or non-existent things. Some of these negated attributes apply only to the non-existent, while others apply only to inanimate objects and deficient things. Thus, one who says, 'He is neither separate from the universe nor intermingling with it,' is like one who says, 'He is neither self-subsisting nor subsisting through another; neither pre-eternal nor originated; neither preceding the universe nor contemporaneous with it.'

One who says, 'He is neither living nor dead, neither hearing nor seeing, neither speaking,' necessitates that He is dead, deaf, blind, and mute. If he argues, 'Blindness is the absence of sight in that which is capable of sight; something incapable of sight, like a wall, is called neither blind nor sighted,' it is replied: This is a technical definition you have adopted. Otherwise, that which is described by the absence of life, hearing, sight, and speech can indeed be described as dead, blind, mute, and non-speaking. Furthermore, every existent thing is capable of being described with these qualities and their opposites, for Allāh is capable of making an inanimate object living, just as He made the staff of Mūsā a living serpent that swallowed the ropes and staffs. Moreover, that which is incapable of being described with these attributes is more deficient than that which is [capable but] described with their opposites. An inanimate object that is described neither with sight nor blindness, neither with speech nor muteness, is more deficient than a living being who is blind and mute. Therefore, if it is said that the Creator cannot possibly be described with these [positive attributes], this description entails a greater deficiency than describing Him as mute, blind, deaf, and so forth. Additionally, rendering Him incapable of these attributes constitutes likening Him to inanimate objects, which are incapable of being described with either [the positive attribute or its opposite]. This is likening Him to inanimate objects, not living beings! How then can one who says this criticize others for what he claims is likening Him to the living?

Furthermore, the very negation of these attributes is a deficiency, just as their affirmation is perfection. Life, in and of itself, irrespective of the specific entity described by it, is an attribute of perfection. The same applies to Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, Speech, Action, and the like. Whatever is an attribute of perfection, He, Glorified is He, is more entitled to be described with it than created beings. If He were not described with it while a creature is, the creature would be more perfect than Him.

Know that the pure Jahmiyyah, like the Qarmatians and their sympathizers, negate His being described by either of two contradictories, to the extent that they say: 'He is neither existent nor non-existent; neither living nor non-living.' It is well-known that being devoid of two contradictories is impossible according to self-evident reason, just like combining two contradictories. Others described Him using only negation, saying: 'He is not living, nor hearing, nor seeing.' These are more disbelieving than the former group in one respect, while the former are more disbelieving than these in another respect. When it is said to these latter ones, 'This necessitates describing Him with the opposite, such as death, deafness, and muteness,' they reply, 'That would only follow if He were capable of possessing those attributes.' This excuse only increases the corruption of their position.

Similarly, those who resemble them—namely, those who say, 'He is neither inside the universe nor outside it'—when told, 'This is impossible according to rational necessity, just like saying, 'He is neither pre-eternal nor originated, neither necessary nor contingent, neither self-subsisting nor subsisting through another,' they reply, 'This [impossibility] only applies if He were capable of these states. Capability [of being inside or outside] only belongs to that which occupies space (mutaḥayyiz). If occupation of space (taḥayyuz) is negated, then the capacity for these two contradictories is negated.' It is replied to them: Mankind's knowledge of the impossibility of being devoid of these two contradictories [inside/outside] is absolute knowledge, from which no existent being is excluded. As for the mentioned 'occupation of space' (taḥayyuz): if what is meant is His being encompassed by existing spaces, then this is equivalent to being 'inside the universe.' If what is meant is His being separate from created beings (munḥāz 'an al-makhlūqāt), i.e., distinct (mubāyin) and separate from them, then this is equivalent to being 'outside.' Thus, 'occupying space' (mutaḥayyiz) is sometimes used to mean that which is inside the universe, and sometimes that which is outside the universe. Therefore,

when it is said, 'He does not occupy space (*laysa bi-mutaḥayyiz*),' its meaning is, 'He is neither inside the universe nor outside it.' They merely changed the terminology to deceive those who do not understand the reality of their position into thinking it is some other meaning, whereas it is the very meaning whose corruption is known by rational necessity—just as the other group did by saying, 'He is neither living nor dead, neither existent nor non-existent, neither knowing nor ignorant.'

Rule Two: Whatever the Messenger informed concerning his Lord, it is obligatory to believe in it, whether we know its meaning or not, because he is the truthful one whose truthfulness is confirmed (*aṣ-Ṣādiq al-Maṣḍūq*). Therefore, whatever comes in the Book and the Sunnah, every believer must believe in it, even if he does not [fully] understand its meaning. The same applies to whatever is established by the consensus of the Salaf of the Ummah and its Imāms. Furthermore, most of this subject [of Attributes] is found explicitly stated in the Book and the Sunnah and agreed upon by the Salaf of the Ummah. As for matters disputed by later generations, involving negation or affirmation [using terms not found in the primary texts], it is not incumbent upon anyone—rather, it is not permissible for him—to agree with anyone on affirming or negating a specific term until he knows what is intended by it. If the intended meaning is true, it is accepted; if it is false, it is rejected. If the statement contains both truth and falsehood, it is neither accepted absolutely nor is its entire meaning rejected; rather, judgment on the term itself is suspended, and the meaning is analyzed [accepting the true part and rejecting the false].

Examples include the disputes among people regarding [terms like] 'direction' (*jihah*) and 'occupying space' (*taḥayyuz*), and others. The term 'direction' (*jihah*) might be intended to mean something existent other than Allāh, which would thus be created, as when 'direction' is intended to mean the Throne itself or the heavens themselves. Alternatively, it might be intended to mean that which is not an existent entity other than Allāh, the Exalted, as when 'direction' is intended to mean what is above the universe. It is known that the texts neither affirm nor negate the specific term 'jihah,' although they do affirm Highness (*'uluww*), Rising Over (*istiwā'*), Aboveness (*fawqiyah*), ascension to Him (*'urūj ilayhi*), and the like. It is also known that nothing exists except the Creator and the created, and the Creator is distinct (*mubāyin*) from the created, Glorified and Exalted is He. Nothing of His Essence is within His creatures, and nothing of His creatures is within His Essence. Therefore, it should be said to one who negates 'direction': Do you mean by 'direction' something existent and created? If so, Allāh is not contained within created things. Or do you mean by 'direction' that which is beyond the universe? If so, there is no doubt that Allāh is above the universe, distinct from created beings. Likewise, it should be said to one who says, 'Allāh is in a direction': Do you mean by that that Allāh is above the universe? Or do you mean that Allāh is inside some created thing? If you intend the former, it is true. If you intend the latter, it is false.

Similarly, regarding the term 'occupying space' (*taḥayyuz*): If one means by it that Allāh is contained (*taḥūzuhu*) by created things, then Allāh is Greater and Mightier [than that]; indeed, {His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. Allāh, the Exalted, has said: {They have not appraised Allāh with true appraisal, while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand.} [Az-Zumar: 67]. It is established in the authentic collections (*Ṣiḥāh*) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: 'Allāh will grasp the earth and fold up the heavens in His Right Hand, then He will say: 'I am the King! Where are the kings of the earth?' [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. In another narration: 'And indeed He will roll them up as boys roll up a ball.' [Muslim]. And in the narration of Ibn 'Abbās: 'The seven heavens and the seven earths and all that is within them are not in the Hand of the Most Compassionate except like a mustard seed in the hand of one of you.' [Tafsīr

Aṭ-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim]. However, if one means by 'occupying space' (taḥayyuz) that He is separate (munḥāz) from created beings, i.e., distinct (mubāyin) from them, separate (munfaṣil) from them, not indwelling (ḥāll) within them, then He, Glorified is He, is as the Imāms of the Sunnah have said: above His heavens, upon His Throne, distinct (bā'in) from His creation.

Rule Three: When someone says, 'The apparent meaning (zāhir) of the texts is intended,' or 'Their apparent meaning is not intended,' it should be replied: The term 'apparent' (zāhir) involves ambiguity and shared meaning. If the speaker believes that their apparent meaning implies likening (tamthīl) to the attributes of created beings or implies characteristics unique to them, then there is no doubt that this [anthropomorphic meaning] is not intended. However, the Salaf and the Imāms did not call this anthropomorphic interpretation the 'apparent meaning,' nor did they accept that the apparent meaning of the Qur'an and Hadith could be disbelief (kufr) and falsehood. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, is far too Knowing and Wise for His speech, with which He described Himself, to yield nothing apparent except disbelief or misguidance. Those who consider anthropomorphism to be the apparent meaning err in two ways: Sometimes they impose a corrupt meaning onto the text, declaring it the 'apparent meaning,' thereby making it seem to require an interpretation (ta'wīl) that contradicts the apparent, when this is not the case. At other times, they reject the true meaning, which is indeed the apparent meaning of the text, because they wrongly believe it to be false [due to perceived anthropomorphism].

The first type of error [imposing a corrupt meaning as the apparent one] is exemplified by their claims regarding the Hadith: 'My servant, I was hungry, and you did not feed Me...' [Muslim, 2569], and the other report: 'The Black Stone is Allāh's right hand on earth; whoever shakes its hand or kisses it, it is as if he has shaken Allāh's hand and kissed His right hand,' and His statement: 'The hearts of the servants are between two Fingers of the Most Compassionate' [Muslim, 2654]. They argue: 'It is known that the Fingers of the True One are not inside our hearts.' It should be replied to them: Had you given the texts their due right in indication, you would have known that they indicate nothing but truth.

As for the first example [the Black Stone]: The statement, 'The Black Stone is Allāh's right hand on earth; whoever shakes its hand or kisses it, it is as if (fa-ka'annamā) he has shaken Allāh's hand and kissed His right hand,' is explicit that the Black Stone is not an attribute of Allāh, nor is it His actual Right Hand. This is because it says 'Allāh's right hand on earth,' and it says, 'whoever kisses it and shakes its hand, it is as if he has shaken Allāh's hand and kissed His right hand.' It is well-known that the thing likened (mushabbah) is not the thing to which it is likened (mushabbah bihi). The report itself clarifies that one who touches it is not actually shaking Allāh's hand, and that the stone is not His actual Right Hand. How then can its apparent meaning be deemed disbelief requiring interpretation? (Moreover, this report is primarily known as a statement from Ibn 'Abbās).

As for the other Hadith ['I was hungry...'], it is found in the Ṣaḥīḥ collection with its own explanation: 'Allāh will say: 'My servant, I was hungry, and you did not feed Me.' He will say: 'My Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' He will say: 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was hungry? Had you fed him, you would have found that [reward] with Me.' 'My servant, I was sick, and you did not visit Me.' He will say: 'My Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' He will say: 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was sick? Had you visited him, you would have found Me with him.' [Muslim, 2569]. This is explicit that Allāh, Glorified is He, does not get sick nor hungry; rather, His servant got sick and His servant got hungry. He attributed the servant's hunger to Himself and the servant's sickness to Himself,

explaining this by saying, 'Had you fed him, you would have found that [reward] with Me,' and 'Had you visited him, you would have found Me with him.' Thus, no word remains in the Hadith that requires interpretation [away from its clear context].

As for the statement, 'The hearts of the servants are between two Fingers (uṣbu'ayn) of the Most Compassionate,' its apparent meaning does not imply that the heart is connected to the Fingers, nor touching them, nor that they are inside it. Similarly, when someone says, 'This is before my hands (bayna yadayya),' it does not necessitate direct contact with his hands. When it is said, 'The clouds subjected between the sky and the earth,' it does not necessitate that they are touching the sky and the earth. Examples of this are numerous.

Similar to this [first type of error] is treating one expression as equivalent to another when it is not. For example, regarding His statement: {What prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My two Hands (bi-yadayya)?} [Ṣād: 75], it is claimed that this is like His statement: {Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands have made (mimmā 'amilat aydīnā) livestock?} [Yāsīn: 71]. However, the latter is not like the former. In the verse about livestock, He attributed the action ('amal) to the hands (amilat aydīnā), making it similar to the expression {for what your hands have earned} [Ash-Shūrā: 30]. But in the verse about Adam, He attributed the action [of creating] to Himself, saying {what I created (lima khalaqtu)}, then specified how by saying {with My two Hands (bi-yadayya)}. Furthermore, in the verse about Adam, He refers to His Sacred Self using the singular pronoun ('I created'), while mentioning the Hands using the dual form ('My two Hands'), just as in His statement: {Rather, both His Hands (yadāhu) are outstretched} [Al-Mā'idah: 64]. Conversely, in the verse about livestock, He attributed the hands using the plural form ('Our hands'), similar to His statement: {sailing under Our eyes (bi-a'yuninā)} [Al-Qamar: 14]. This usage of the plural [for hands] corresponds to His usage of the singular [for Hand] in statements like: {In His Hand (bi-yadihi) is the dominion} [Al-Mulk: 1] and 'In His Hand is the good.' Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, sometimes refers to Himself using the singular form (explicitly or implicitly) and sometimes using the plural form, as in His statement: {Indeed, We (Innā) have given you a clear conquest} [Al-Faḥ: 1] and similar verses. However, He never refers to Himself using the dual form, because the plural form denotes the Majesty He deserves and may indicate the meanings of His Names, whereas the dual form denotes a specific, limited number, and He is sanctified above that.

Therefore, His statement {what I created with My two Hands (bi-yadayya)} cannot be like His statement {from what Our hands have made (mimmā 'amilat aydīnā)}. The latter [plural form] is analogous to His statements {In His Hand (bi-yadihi) is the dominion} and 'In His Hand is the good' [which use the singular]. Even if He had said 'I created with My Hand' (using the singular), it would still be distinct [from amilat aydīnā]. How much more distinct is it, then, when He says {I created with My two Hands (bi-yadayya)} using the dual form? This is further supported by the indications of numerous, widely transmitted (mustafīḍah)—indeed, mass-transmitted (mutawātirah)—Ahadith, and the consensus (ijmā') of the Salaf affirming what the Qur'an indicates, as elaborated elsewhere. Examples include his [the Prophet's (peace be upon him)] statement: 'The just will be with Allāh on pulpits of light, at the right hand of the Most Compassionate—and both His Hands are right—those who are just in their judgment, their families, and what they rule over.' [Muslim, 1827] and similar narrations.

[The second type of error is rejecting the true apparent meaning:] If the speaker believes that the apparent meaning of the texts whose interpretation is disputed is of the same nature as the apparent meaning of the texts whose interpretation is agreed upon—and

that the apparent meaning is intended in all cases—[then the following applies]: When Allāh informed that He is {All-Knowing of everything} and {over all things Powerful}, and Ahl as-Sunnah and the Imāms of the Muslims agreed that this is taken according to its apparent meaning (zāhir) and that this apparent meaning is intended, it is well understood that they did not intend by this ‘apparent meaning’ that His knowledge is like our knowledge or His power like our power. Likewise, when they agreed that He is truly Living (Ḥayy ḥaqīqatan), truly Knowing (‘Ālim ḥaqīqatan), truly Powerful (Qādir ḥaqīqatan), their intention was not that He is like the created being who is living, knowing, and powerful. Similarly, when they say regarding His statements {He will love them and they will love Him} [Al-Mā’idah: 54], {Allāh being pleased with them and they pleased with Him} [Al-Mā’idah: 119], and His statement {Then He rose over (istawā ‘alā) the Throne} [e.g., Al-A’rāf: 54], that these are taken according to their apparent meaning, this does not necessitate that the apparent meaning implies an Istiwā’ like the istiwā’ (settling/mounting) of a creature, nor love like its love, nor pleasure like its pleasure.

Therefore, if the listener assumes that the apparent meaning of the Attributes implies resemblance to the attributes of created beings, it would follow for him that none of that apparent meaning is intended. However, if he believes that their apparent meaning is that which befits the Creator and is unique to Him, then he has no grounds to negate this apparent meaning or deny that it is intended, unless there is evidence proving such negation. Yet, there is nothing in reason or revelation that negates this [true apparent meaning], except arguments of the same type used [by others] to negate all other Attributes. Thus, the principle governing all Attributes is one and the same.

To clarify this: Our attributes include entities and bodies which are parts of us, like the face and hand, and they also include meanings and accidents subsisting in us, like hearing, sight, speech, knowledge, and power. It is well known that when the Lord described Himself as Living, Knowing, Powerful, Muslims did not say, ‘The apparent meaning of this is not intended because its concept in His case is like its concept in our case.’ Likewise, when He described Himself as having created Adam with His two Hands, this does not necessitate that its apparent meaning is unintended because its concept in His case is like its concept in our case. Rather, the attribute of the described entity is suitable to that entity. Since His Sacred Self is not like the essences of created beings, His Attributes, like His Essence, are not like the attributes of created beings. The relation of a creature’s attribute to the creature is like the relation of the Creator’s attribute to the Creator, yet the attribute related [in one case] is not like the attribute related [in the other], nor is the one to whom it is related like the other to whom it is related. This is similar to the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) saying: ‘You will see your Lord just as you see the sun and the moon’ [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. He likened the seeing to the seeing [in clarity], but did not liken the One seen to the thing seen.

This is clarified by: Rule Four: Many people imagine, regarding some, many, most, or all of the Attributes, that they resemble the attributes of created beings. Then, wanting to negate this [false] understanding, they fall into four types of pitfalls: (1) Misinterpretation as Resemblance: They understand the texts as implying resemblance to the attributes of created beings and assume that the indication of the texts is anthropomorphism (tamthīl). (2) Negation of True Meaning (Ta’ṭīl): Having assumed this [anthropomorphic] meaning, they negate it, leaving the texts devoid (mu’aṭṭalah) of the affirmation of Attributes befitting Allāh that they actually indicate. Thus, in addition to committing an offense against the texts and holding a negative assumption about Allāh and His Messenger—by thinking that what is understood from their words is false anthropomorphism—they have also negated the affirmation of Allāh’s Attributes and the divine meanings befitting Allāh’s Majesty that Allāh and His Messenger embedded in

their words. (3) Negation Without Knowledge: They negate these Attributes from Allāh, Mighty and Majestic is He, without knowledge, thereby becoming negators (mu'atṭīl) of what the Lord deserves. (4) Affirmation of Deficient Opposites: They describe the Lord with the opposite of those [perfect] Attributes, using attributes of the dead, inanimate objects, or non-existent things. Thus, they have negated the attributes of perfection the Lord deserves, likened Him to deficient and non-existent things, stripped the texts of the Attributes they indicate, and declared their indication to be anthropomorphism. They thus combine, concerning the Word of Allāh and concerning Allāh Himself, both negation (ta'tīl) and anthropomorphism (tamthīl), thereby committing deviation (ilḥād) regarding Allāh's Names and Signs.

An example of this: All the texts indicate that God is described with Highness ('Uluww) and Aboveness (Fawqiyah) over creation, and His Rising Over (Istiwā') the Throne. His Highness and distinction (mubāyanah) from creation are known through reason which conforms to revelation (sam'). As for the Istiwā' upon the Throne, the way to know it is through revelation. There is no description in the Book or Sunnah stating that He is neither inside the universe nor outside it, neither separate from it nor intermingling with it. The deluded person might assume that if He is described with Istiwā' upon the Throne, His Istiwā' must be like the istiwā' (mounting/settling) of a human upon the backs of ships and cattle, as in His statement: {And He made for you ships and animals on which you ride, That you may settle yourselves firmly (li-tastawū) upon their backs} [Az-Zukhruf: 12-13]. He imagines that if Allāh is mustawin upon the Throne, He must need it, just as one settling upon a ship or animal needs it. If the ship sank, the one upon it would fall; if the animal stumbled, the one upon it would fall off. The analogy, according to this reasoning, is that if the Throne ceased to exist, the Lord would fall—Glorified and Exalted is He! Then, wanting to negate this [false implication], according to his own assumption, he says: 'His Istiwā' is not a sitting (qu'ūd) nor a settling (istiqrār).'

He fails to realize that the same principles apply to the meaning of 'sitting' (qu'ūd) and 'settling' (istiqrār) as apply to the meaning of 'rising over' (istiwā'). If need [for the object] is inherent in the meaning, then there is no difference between istiwā', qu'ūd, and istiqrār, and according to this [anthropomorphic] meaning, He is neither mustawin, nor mustaqirr, nor qā'id. If, however, the meaning [of qu'ūd and istiqrār] includes only what is included in the meaning of Istiwā' [i.e., a meaning befitting Allāh without need], then affirming one and negating the other is arbitrary. It is known that there are recognized distinctions between the meanings of istiwā', istiqrār, and qu'ūd. However, the point here is to recognize the error of one who negates something while affirming its equivalent. This error stems from his mistake in understanding the concept of His Istiwā' upon the Throne, assuming it is like a human's settling upon the backs of animals and ships. Yet, there is nothing in the term [Istiwā'] itself that indicates this, because He attributed the Istiwā' to His Noble Self, just as He attributed all His other actions and attributes to Himself.

He mentioned that He created, then He rose over (istawā), just as He mentioned that He decreed and guided, and that He built the heaven with strength (bi-aydin), and just as He mentioned that He was with Mūsā and Hārūn, hearing and seeing, and similar examples. He did not mention an absolute istiwā' applicable to creatures, nor a general one encompassing creatures, just as He did not mention the like regarding His other attributes. Rather, He mentioned an Istiwā' attributed specifically to His Noble Self. If we were to suppose—as an impossible hypothesis—that He were like His creation (Exalted is He above that!), then His Istiwā' would be like the istiwā' of His creation. However, since He is not similar to His creation—rather, it is known that He is Independent (Al-Ghanī) of creation, that He is the Creator of the Throne and everything else, and that everything

besides Him is dependent upon Him while He is independent of everything besides Him—and since He only mentioned an *Istiawā'* unique to Him, not an *istiawā'* that encompasses or is suitable for others (just as He only mentioned Knowledge, Power, Sight, Hearing, and Creation unique to Him), how then is it permissible to imagine that if He is *mustawin* upon the Throne, He must need it, and that if the Throne were to fall, the One upon it would fall? Glorified and Exalted is He far above what the wrongdoers and deniers say! Is this anything but sheer ignorance and misguidance on the part of one who understands or imagines this, or thinks it is the apparent meaning and indication of the text, or deems such a thing possible for the Lord of the worlds, the One Independent of creation?

Indeed, even if we suppose an ignorant person understood and imagined such a thing, it should be explained to him that this is impermissible and that the text does not indicate it at all, just as it does not indicate similar [anthropomorphic meanings] regarding the other ways the Lord described Himself. When He, Glorified and Exalted is He, said: {And the heaven We constructed with strength (*bi-aydin*)} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 47], does anyone imagine that His construction is like the construction of a needy human who requires baskets, shovels, making bricks, mixing clay, and helpers? Furthermore, it is known that Allāh, the Exalted, created the universe with parts above other parts, and He did not make the higher dependent on the lower. The air is above the earth but does not need the earth to support it. The clouds are also above the earth and do not need it to support them. The heavens are above the earth and do not need the earth to support them. Therefore, the High, the Most High, the Lord and Sovereign of all things, when He is above all His creation, how could it be necessary for Him to need His creation or His Throne? How could His Highness above His creation necessitate this dependence, when such dependence is not even necessary among created things [i.e., higher things don't always need lower things for support]? And it is known that any independence from others established for a creature, the Creator, Glorified and Exalted is He, is more entitled to it and worthier of it.

Likewise, His statement: {Have you become secure from He who is in the heaven (*man fi as-samā'*) that He will not cause the earth to swallow you when suddenly it sways?} [Al-Mulk: 16]. Whoever imagines that the implication of this verse is that Allāh is inside the heavens is ignorant and misguided by consensus. Even if, when we say, 'The sun and moon are in the sky (*fi as-samā'*),' it implies containment, [this does not apply here because] the preposition '*fi*' (in/at/on/above) relates to what precedes and follows it—its meaning depends on what it refers to. This is why a distinction is made between something being in a place, a body being in space, an accident being in a substance, a face being in a mirror, and speech being in paper. Each of these types [of '*in-ness*'] has unique characteristics distinguishing it from the others, even though the preposition '*fi*' is used for all of them.

If someone were asked, 'Is the Throne in the heaven (*fi as-samā'*) or in the earth?' it would be said, 'In the heaven.' If asked, 'Is Paradise in the heaven or in the earth?' it would be said, 'Paradise is in the heaven.' This does not necessitate that the Throne is inside the [created] heavens, nor even Paradise. It is established in the Ṣaḥīḥ from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: 'When you ask Allāh for Paradise, ask Him for Al-Firdaws, for it is the highest part of Paradise and the middle part of Paradise, and its roof is the Throne of the Most Compassionate.' [Al-Bukhārī, 2790]. So this Paradise, whose roof is the Throne, is above the celestial spheres (*aflāk*). Yet, saying Paradise is 'in the heaven' (*fi as-samā'*) means highness/aboveness, whether it is above the spheres or below them. Allāh, the Exalted, said: {...let him extend a rope to the heaven (*ilā as-samā'*)...} [Al-Ḥajj: 15], and He said: {And We sent down from the sky (*min as-samā'*) pure

water} [Al-Furqān: 48]. Since it was established in the minds of the addressees that Allāh is the High, the Most High, and that He is above everything, the understanding derived from His statement that He is 'in the heaven' (fi as-samā') was that He is in Highness ('uluww) and that He is above everything. Likewise, when the Prophet asked the slave girl, 'Where is Allāh?' she replied, 'Fi as-samā' (In the heaven/sky) [Muslim, 537]. She only intended Highness, without specifying Him to created bodies or implying His indwelling within them. When 'highness' ('uluww) is mentioned, it encompasses what is above all created things. Thus, what is above all of them is 'in the heaven,' and this does not necessitate the existence of an existential container encompassing Him, since there is nothing existent above the universe except Allāh. This is similar to saying, 'The Throne is in the heaven,' which does not necessitate that the Throne is inside some other existing, created thing. Even if we assume that 'heaven' (as-samā') refers to the celestial spheres, the meaning [of 'fi as-samā'] would be that He is upon them, similar to the usage in: {And I will surely crucify you on (fi) the trunks of palm trees} [Ṭā-Hā: 71], and {So travel through (fi) the land} [Āl 'Imrān: 137], and {So move freely through (fi) the land} [At-Tawbah: 2]. It is also said, 'So-and-so is on (fi) the mountain' or 'on (fi) the roof,' even if he is on the very highest part of it.

Rule Five: We know what we have been informed about from one aspect but not from another. Allāh said: {Then do they not reflect upon (yatadabbarūna) the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allāh, they would have found within it much contradiction.} [An-Nisā': 82]. And He said: {Then have they not reflected upon (yaddabbarū) the Word...?} [Al-Mu'minūn: 68]. And He said: {[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon (li-yaddabbarū) its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.} [Ṣād: 29]. And He said: {Then do they not reflect upon (yatadabbarūna) the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?} [Muḥammad: 24]. Thus, He commanded reflecting upon the entire Book.

Yet, He, the Exalted, also said: {It is He who has sent down to you the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise (muḥkamāt) - they are the foundation of the Book - and others ambiguous (mutashābihāt). As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is ambiguous, seeking discord and seeking its interpretation (ta'wīl). And no one knows its interpretation (ta'wīlahu) except Allāh. And those firm in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.' And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.} [Āl 'Imrān: 7]. The majority of the Salaf and Khalaf [later scholars] hold that the pause (waqf) in recitation is upon His statement: {And no one knows its interpretation (ta'wīlahu) except Allāh}. This is what is transmitted from Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and others. It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: 'Tafsīr (interpretation) is of four types: interpretation that the Arabs know from their language; interpretation that no one is excused for being ignorant of; interpretation that the scholars know; and interpretation that none knows except Allāh—whoever claims knowledge of it is a liar.'

It has also been narrated from Mujāhid and a group [of scholars] that those firm in knowledge do know its interpretation (ta'wīl). Mujāhid said: 'I reviewed the Muṣḥaf with Ibn 'Abbās from beginning to end, stopping him at every verse and asking him about its interpretation (tafsīr).' Upon careful examination, there is no contradiction between these two positions, because the term 'ta'wīl' has come to be used, through various technical usages, in three distinct senses:

(1) Diverting Meaning (Later Usage): This is the technical definition used by many later scholars among the scholastic theologians involved in jurisprudence (Fiqh) and its principles (Uṣūl): Ta'wīl is diverting a word from its stronger, apparent meaning to a

weaker, less probable meaning based on accompanying evidence. This is what most later scholars meant when discussing the ta'wīl (interpretation) or lack thereof regarding the texts on Attributes, debating whether such interpretation is praiseworthy or blameworthy, true or false.

(2) Explanation/Interpretation (Tafsīr): Ta'wīl used in the sense of Tafsīr (explanation or commentary). This is the predominant usage among commentators (Mufasssīrūn) of the Qur'an. For example, Ibn Jarīr [aṭ-Ṭabarī] and similar authors of Tafsīr works often say, 'The scholars of ta'wīl differed...' Mujāhid is an Imām among the commentators; Ath-Thawrī said, 'If an interpretation comes to you from Mujāhid, it is sufficient for you.' Ash-Shāfi'i, Aḥmad, Al-Bukhārī, and others relied upon his Tafsīr. Therefore, when it is mentioned that he [or those firm in knowledge] knows the ta'wīl of the ambiguous verses, what is meant is knowing their explanation (tafsīr).

(3) Ultimate Reality/Fulfillment: Ta'wīl meaning the reality (ḥaqīqah) to which the statement ultimately refers or culminates. As Allāh, the Exalted, said: {Do they await except its result (ta'wīlahu)? The Day its result (ta'wīluhu) comes, those who had ignored it before will say, 'The messengers of our Lord had certainly brought the truth.'} [Al-A'rāf: 53]. Thus, the ta'wīl of the reports in the Qur'an about the Hereafter (al-ma'ād) is the actual occurrence of what Allāh informed about therein: the Resurrection, the Reckoning, the Recompense, Paradise, Hellfire, and the like. Similarly, Allāh, the Exalted, relates in the story of Yūsuf that when his parents and brothers prostrated to him, he said: {O my father, this is the interpretation (ta'wīlu) of my dream of before.} [Yūsuf: 100]. He considered the actual event that occurred externally to be the ta'wīl (fulfillment) of the dream.

[Contrasting the second and third meanings:] The second [meaning of ta'wīl] is the explanation (tafsīr) of the statement—the words used to explain the term so its meaning, rationale, or proof is understood. This third ta'wīl, however, is the actual entity existing externally. An example of this [third meaning] is the statement of 'Ā'ishah: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in his bowing (rukū') and prostration (sujūd): 'Subḥānaka Allāhumma Rabbanā wa bi-ḥamdika, Allāhumma-ghfir lī' [Glory be to You, O Allāh, our Lord, and praise be to You. O Allāh, forgive me], thereby interpreting (yata'awwalu) the Qur'an,' meaning [acting upon] His statement: {So exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him.} [An-Naṣr: 3] [Al-Bukhārī, 817; Muslim, 484]. Also, the statement of Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah: 'The Sunnah is the ta'wīl (fulfillment/application) of the command and prohibition.' For the actual deed commanded is the ta'wīl of the command to do it, and the actual existent thing reported is the ta'wīl of the report about it. Speech consists of reports and commands. This is why Abū 'Ubayd and others say: 'The jurists (fuqahā') are more knowledgeable of ta'wīl than the linguists,' as they mentioned regarding the interpretation of ishtimāl aṣ-ṣammā' (a prohibited way of wrapping oneself in a garment). This is because the jurists know the interpretation (tafsīr) of what is commanded and prohibited due to their knowledge of the objectives (maqāṣid) of the Messenger (peace be upon him), just as the followers of Hippocrates or Sībawayh know their objectives in ways not known merely through language. However, the ta'wīl (application/fulfillment) of commands and prohibitions must be known, unlike the ta'wīl (ultimate reality) of reports [about the unseen].

Based on this understanding: The ta'wīl (ultimate reality) of what Allāh, the Exalted, has informed about His Sacred Self, characterized by the realities of His Names and Attributes, is the reality of His Sacred Self characterized by the realities of those Attributes. The ta'wīl (fulfillment) of what Allāh, the Exalted, has informed regarding promise and threat is the actual occurrence of that promise and threat. This explains the saying often found in

narrations: 'We act upon its clear (muḥkam) verses and believe in its ambiguous (mutashābih) verses.' This is because what Allāh has informed about Himself and about the Last Day contains ambiguous terms whose meanings resemble things we know in this world. For example, He informed that in Paradise there is meat, milk, honey, wine, and so forth. These resemble what is in this world in name and general meaning, but they are not identical to them, nor is their reality the same. The Names and Attributes of Allāh, the Exalted, are even more entitled—despite the resemblance between them and the names and attributes of servants—not to render the Creator like the creature, nor His reality like its reality.

Information about the unseen (ghā'ib) cannot be understood unless it is expressed using names whose meanings are known from the observable world (shāhid). What exists in the unseen is known [conceptually] through knowledge of what exists in the observable world, combined with knowledge of the distinguishing difference, and the understanding that what Allāh has informed about the unseen is far greater than what is known in the observable world. In the unseen is {what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and has never occurred to the heart of man} [cf. Al-Bukhārī, 3244; Muslim, 2824]. Therefore, when Allāh informs us about the unseen that He alone knows—such as Paradise and Hellfire—we know the meaning of that, understand what we are intended to understand from that discourse, and we interpret (fassarnā) it [in the sense of Tafṣīr]. However, the actual reality (ḥaqīqah) being described, such as that which does not yet exist but will come about on the Day of Resurrection, that belongs to the ta'wīl (ultimate reality/fulfillment) which none knows except Allāh.

This is why when Mālik and other Salaf were asked about Allāh's statement {The Most Compassionate rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne} [Tā-Hā: 5], they said: 'The Istiwā' is known (ma'lūm), the modality (kayf) is unknown (majhūl), belief in it is obligatory (wājib), and asking about it [the modality] is an innovation (bid'ah).' Likewise, Rabī'ah, Mālik's teacher, said before him: 'The Istiwā' is known, the modality is unknown; from Allāh comes the clarification, upon the Messenger is the conveyance, and upon us is the belief.' Thus, he clarified that the Istiwā' [as a concept] is known, but its modality is unknown. Similar statements are found frequently in the words of the Salaf. The Imāms negate that servants can know the modality (kayfiyyah) of Allāh's Attributes, stating that none knows how Allāh is except Allāh; none knows what He is except He. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'I cannot enumerate Your praise; You are as You have praised Yourself.' [Muslim, 486]. This is in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and elsewhere. In another Hadith, he said: 'O Allāh, I ask You by every Name belonging to You which You named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or taught to any of Your creation, or kept hidden within the knowledge of the unseen with You...' [Musnad Aḥmad, 3712; Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 972]. This Hadith is in the Musnad and Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Ḥātim [Ibn Ḥibbān]. He informed therein that Allāh has Names which He has kept hidden within the knowledge of the unseen with Him.

The meanings of these Names which He has kept hidden in the knowledge of the unseen with Him, none knows them besides Him. Allāh, Glorified is He, has informed us that He is Knowing ('Alīm), Powerful (Qadīr), Hearing (Samī), Seeing (Baṣīr), Forgiving (Ghafūr), Merciful (Raḥīm), and so forth regarding His Names and Attributes. We understand the meaning of these and distinguish between Knowledge and Power, and between Mercy, Hearing, and Sight. We know that all the Names agree in their indication of Allāh's Essence, despite the diversity of their meanings. Thus, they are in agreement (muttafiqah) and univocal (mutawāṭi'ah) regarding the Essence, but distinct (mutabayinah) regarding the Attributes. The same applies to the names of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as Muḥammad, Aḥmad, Al-Māhī (The Eraser), Al-Ḥāshir (The Gatherer), and Al-'Āqib

(The Last). Likewise for the names of the Qur'an, such as Al-Qur'ān, Al-Furqān (The Criterion), Al-Hudā (The Guidance), An-Nūr (The Light), At-Tanzīl (The Revelation), Ash-Shifā' (The Cure), and others. People have disputed regarding such names: are they synonyms (mutarādifah)—due to the unity of the entity named—or distinct (mutabāyinah)—due to the multiplicity of attributes? This is similar to the words: As-Sayf (The Sword), Aṣ-Ṣārim (The Sharp/Cutting [Sword]), and Al-Muhannad (The Indian [Sword]), where 'Aṣ-Ṣārim' implies the meaning of sharpness/cutting, and 'Al-Muhannad' implies the origin from India. The correct view is that they are synonymous regarding the entity (dhāt) but distinct regarding the attributes (ṣifāt).

What clarifies this further is that Allāh described the entire Qur'an as being Muḥkam (perfected/precise) and as being Mutashābih (consistent/similar). Yet, in another place [Āl 'Imrān: 7], He stated that part of it is Muḥkam and part is Mutashābih. Therefore, one must understand the Iḥkām (precision) and Tashābuh (similarity/consistency) that apply to it generally, and the Iḥkām and Tashābuh that apply specifically to parts of it. Allāh, the Exalted, said: {Alif, Lām, Rā. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected (uḥkimat āyātuhu) and then presented in detail...} [Hūd: 1]. Here He informed that He perfected all its verses. And He, the Exalted, said: {Allāh has sent down the best statement: a Book consistent (mutashābihan), repeating [its verses]...} [Az-Zumar: 23]. Here He informed that all of it is consistent/similar.

Judgment (ḥukm) involves separating between two things; a judge (ḥākim) separates between two litigants. Judgment separates between similar things, in knowledge and action, by distinguishing truth from falsehood, honesty from lies, and benefit from harm. This implies doing what is beneficial and leaving what is harmful. It is said, 'ḥakamtu as-safiha wa aḥkamtuhu' (I restrained/controlled the foolish person) when you take him by the hands [prevent him]. And 'ḥakamtu ad-dābbata wa aḥkamtuhā' (I controlled the beast) when you put a ḥakamah (bit/bridle) on it, which is the part of the bridle surrounding the jaw. Iḥkām (perfecting) something means making it precise and sound (itqān). Thus, iḥkām al-kalām (perfecting speech) means making it sound by distinguishing truth from falsehood in its reports, and distinguishing right guidance from error in its commands. The entire Qur'an is muḥkam in the sense of being perfected and sound. Allāh called it Ḥakīm (Wise/Judge) in His statement: {Alif, Lām, Rā. These are the verses of the Wise (Al-Ḥakīm) Book.} [Yūnus: 1]. Al-Ḥakīm here can mean Al-Ḥākim (The Judge), just as He made it narrate (yaquṣṣu) in His statement: {Indeed, this Qur'an narrates (yaquṣṣu) to the Children of Israel most of that over which they differ} [An-Naml: 76], and made it give rulings (muftiyan) in His statement: {Say, 'Allāh instructs you concerning them, and what is recited to you in the Book'} [An-Nisā': 127]—meaning, what is recited to you gives you rulings concerning them. He also made it a guide (hādiyan) and bearer of glad tidings (mubashshiran) in His statement: {Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds} [Al-Isrā': 9].

As for the Tashābuh (similarity/consistency) that applies generally to the Qur'an, it is the opposite of the contradiction (ikhtilāf) negated from it in His statement: {If it had been from [any] other than Allāh, they would have found within it much contradiction (ikhtilāfan kathīrā).} [An-Nisā': 82]. This is the contradiction mentioned in His statement: {Indeed, you are in differing speech (qawlin mukhtalif), Averted from it is he who is averted.} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 8-9]. Tashābuh here means the similarity and harmony of the speech, such that one part confirms the other. When it commands something, it does not command its opposite elsewhere; rather, it commands it, or something similar, or its implications. When it prohibits something, it does not command it elsewhere; rather, it prohibits it, or something similar, or its implications (unless there is abrogation). Likewise,

when it reports the affirmation of something, it does not report its negation; rather, it reports its affirmation or the affirmation of its implications. When it reports the negation of something, it does not affirm it; rather, it negates it or negates its necessary consequences. This is contrary to contradictory speech, where one part nullifies another, affirming something at one time and negating it at another, or commanding and prohibiting it simultaneously, or differentiating between similar things, praising one and blaming the other. Contradictory statements here are those that are mutually exclusive. Consistent/similar (*mutashābihah*) statements are those that are harmonious (*mutawāfiqah*). This similarity exists in the meanings, even if the words differ. When the meanings agree with each other, support each other, harmonize with each other, bear witness to each other, and necessitate each other, the speech is consistent (*mutashābih*), unlike contradictory speech where parts oppose each other. This general Tashābuh (consistency) does not contradict the general *Iḥkām* (perfection); rather, it confirms it, for perfected, sound speech confirms itself and does not contradict itself.

This is unlike the specific *Iḥkām* [clarity], which is the opposite of the specific Tashābuh [ambiguity]. Specific Tashābuh is the resemblance of one thing to another in some aspect while differing from it in another aspect, such that some people are confused into thinking it is the same thing or identical to it, when it is not. *Iḥkām* [in this specific sense] is the clear distinction between them, such that one is not confused with the other. This [specific] Tashābuh arises due to a shared measure (*qadr mushtarak*) between two things, alongside the existence of a distinguishing factor between them. Some people are unable to discern the distinction, so the matter remains ambiguous (*mushtabih*) for them, while others are guided to it. Thus, ambiguity where distinction is lacking can be relative and contextual, being ambiguous for some people but not others. In such cases, the people of knowledge know what removes this ambiguity for them. An example is when some people confuse what they are promised in the Hereafter with what they witness in this world, thinking it is identical. The scholars, however, know it is not identical, even though it resembles it in some aspects.

From this category arise the specious arguments (*shubuhāt*) by which some people are led astray. These are matters where truth and falsehood resemble each other, causing confusion for some. But one who is given knowledge of the distinction between them will not confuse truth with falsehood. False analogy (*al-qiyās al-fāsid*) belongs to the category of specious arguments because it involves likening something in certain aspects to that which it does not resemble [in the relevant aspect]. One who knows the distinction between the two things is guided to the difference that removes the ambiguity and the false analogy. There are no two things except that they share something in common and differ in something else; there is resemblance between them in one aspect and difference in another. This is why the misguidance of the children of Adam often stems from ambiguity (*tashābuh*) and false analogy, which are boundless. As *Imām Aḥmad* said: 'Most of people's errors come from interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and analogy (*qiyās*).' *Ta'wīl* relates to scriptural evidence (*adillah sam'iyyah*), and *Qiyās* relates to rational evidence (*adillah 'aqliyyah*). He spoke the truth. Erroneous interpretation occurs with ambiguous terms, and erroneous analogy occurs with ambiguous meanings.

The children of Adam have fallen into most types of misguidance encompassed by this discussion, to the extent that the matter reached those among them claiming verification (*taḥqīq*), unification (*tawḥīd*), and gnosis (*'irfān*), such that the existence of the Lord became confused for them with the existence of every existing thing. They thought He was it, making the existence of creatures identical to the existence of the Creator. This is despite the fact that nothing is further from resembling something else, or being identical to it, or united with it, or indwelling within it, than the Creator with the creature. Those

for whom the existence of the Creator became confused with the existence of all creatures, to the point that they thought the creatures' existence was His existence, are the most misguided of people due to ambiguity. This happened because existing things share the designation 'existence.' They perceived existence as one, failing to differentiate between numerical oneness (wāḥid bil-'ayn) and generic oneness (wāḥid bin-naw').

Others imagined that if it is said that existing things share the designation 'existence,' it necessitates resemblance (tashbīh) and composition (tarkīb). So they claimed that the term 'existence' is predicated equivocally (bil-ishtirāk al-lafẓi) [i.e., it means completely different things when applied to God and creation]. In doing so, they contradicted the consensus of rational people, despite their different schools of thought, that existence is divided into Pre-eternal (Qadīm) and originated (Muḥdath), and similar divisions of existing things. Another group thought that if existing things share the designation 'existence,' there must be an externally existing entity, outside the mind, called 'existence' in which they all partake. They claimed that absolute universals exist externally, outside the mind, such as absolute existence, absolute animality, absolute body-ness, and the like. In doing so, they contradicted sense perception, reason, and revelation, making what exists only in the mind established in external reality. All of this stems from ambiguity (ishtibāh).

Whoever Allāh guides distinguishes between things, even if they share some aspects, knowing what they have in common and what differentiates them, their similarities and differences. Such people are not led astray by ambiguous speech (mutashābih) because they combine it with the clear, distinguishing (muḥkam) speech that clarifies the separation and distinction between them. This is similar to how the words 'Innā' (Indeed We) and 'Naḥnu' (We), and other plural forms, can be used by one who has partners in an action, but also by a single, great individual who possesses attributes, each of which stands in place of an individual, and who has helpers subordinate to him, not partners. Thus, if a Christian clings to Allāh's statement {Indeed, it is We (Innā Naḥnu) who sent down the reminder} [Al-Hijr: 9] and similar verses as proof for a plurality of gods, the clear (muḥkam) verses like His statement {And your god is one God (Ilāhun Wāḥid)} [Al-Baqarah: 163] and others which admit only one meaning remove the ambiguity present there. The usage of the plural form indicates the Majesty He deserves, His Names and Attributes, and the obedience of created beings like the angels and others.

However, the reality indicated by that [plural form] concerning the realities of the Names and Attributes, and the forces (junūd) He employs in His actions—none knows them except Him: {And none knows the forces of your Lord except Him.} [Al-Muddaththir: 31]. This belongs to the ta'wīl (ultimate reality) of the ambiguous which none knows except Allāh. This is unlike a human king who says, 'We have ordered a gift for you.' It is known that he and his helpers—like his scribe, chamberlain, servant, etc.—ordered it. One might even know the beliefs, intentions, and so forth from which that action stemmed. But Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, does not inform His servants of the [full] realities He has reported concerning His Attributes and the attributes of the Last Day. Nor do they know the [full] realities of the wisdom He intended through His creation and command, nor the [full] realities of the Will and Power from which they issued.

From this, it becomes clear that ambiguity (tashābuh) can occur with univocal terms (alfāz mutawāṭi'ah) [terms having a single, shared core meaning, like 'water' or 'knowledge'] just as it occurs with equivocal terms (alfāz mushtarakah) [terms having multiple distinct meanings] that are not univocal. The ambiguity [with univocal terms] is removed by what distinguishes one instance from another, such as attribution or definition. For example, when it is said: {wherein are rivers of water} [Muḥammad: 15],

this water is specified as belonging to Paradise, so the difference between it and worldly water becomes apparent. However, the reality of what distinguishes that water is unknown to us. This, along with what Allāh has prepared for His righteous servants—{what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and has never occurred to the heart of man}—belongs to the ta'wīl (ultimate reality) which none knows except Allāh. Likewise, the specific indication of His Names and Attributes—that which is unique to Him, which constitutes their reality—none knows it except Him.

This is why the Imāms, like Imām Aḥmad and others, condemned the Jahmiyyah and their ilk—those who distort the words from their proper contexts—for their ta'wīl (misinterpretation) of the ambiguous parts of the Qur'an that confused them, interpreting them contrary to their true interpretation (ta'wīl). As Aḥmad said in his book refuting the Heretics (Zanādiqah) and Jahmiyyah, regarding what they doubted from the ambiguous parts of the Qur'an and interpreted contrary to its [true] interpretation (ta'wīl). He only condemned them because they interpreted it contrary to its [true] interpretation. He mentioned therein matters whose meaning was ambiguous to them, even if not ambiguous to others, and condemned them for interpreting it contrary to its [true] interpretation. He did not negate the term ta'wīl absolutely, because, as mentioned earlier, the term ta'wīl can mean the Tafsīr (explanation) that clarifies Allāh's intended meaning, which is not blameworthy but praiseworthy. It can also mean the ultimate reality whose knowledge Allāh has kept to Himself, which none knows except Him.

We have elaborated on this elsewhere. Whoever does not understand this will have contradictory statements, like a group who say that ta'wīl [in the sense of diverting meaning] is false and that one must take the text according to its apparent meaning (ẓāhir), yet they argue using Allāh's statement: {And no one knows its interpretation (ta'wīlahu) except Allāh}. They use this verse to invalidate ta'wīl, which is a contradiction on their part, because this verse necessitates that there is a ta'wīl which none knows except Allāh, whereas they negate ta'wīl absolutely. The source of their error is that the ta'wīl whose knowledge Allāh has kept to Himself is the ultimate reality (ḥaqīqah) which none knows except Him [not the linguistic meaning or Tafsīr].

As for blameworthy and invalid interpretation (ta'wīl), it is the interpretation employed by the people of distortion (taḥrīf) and heretical innovation (bid'ah). These individuals interpret the text in ways contrary to its intended meaning, claiming to divert a word from its primary indication to another meaning without any valid evidence necessitating such a diversion. They allege that the apparent meaning (ẓāhir) contains problematic implications analogous to the problematic implications necessitated by what they themselves affirm through reason. Consequently, they divert the text towards meanings that are, in fact, analogous to the very meanings they initially negated concerning it. Thus, what they negate ends up being of the same category as what they affirm. If what they affirm [through their rationalistic interpretation] is true and possible, then what they negated [from the apparent meaning] must be likewise. Conversely, if what they negated [from the apparent meaning] is false and impossible, then what they affirmed [through their interpretation] must also be likewise.

Furthermore, those who reject ta'wīl absolutely, citing the statement of Allāh, Exalted is He: {And none knows its interpretation except Allāh} [Āl 'Imrān: 7], may mistakenly assume that we have been addressed in the Qur'an with words that no one can understand, or that have no meaning whatsoever, or from which nothing can be comprehended. This notion, besides being inherently false, is self-contradictory. For if we understand nothing from a particular text, it is impermissible for us to claim it possesses a ta'wīl (a non-apparent meaning) that either contradicts or conforms to the apparent

meaning. It is possible that the text has a correct meaning, and that correct meaning might not contradict the apparent meaning known to us. Indeed, according to their premise [of utter incomprehensibility], the text has no apparent meaning (zāhir) in the first place. Therefore, its indication towards that [supposed hidden] meaning would not constitute an indication contrary to the apparent meaning (since none exists), and thus it would not qualify as ta'wīl. Consequently, on this assumption [of incomprehensibility], it is unjustified to deny its potential indication towards meanings we do not currently know.

For it is possible that we are simply unaware of the meanings towards which the text indicates. Moreover, if we do not understand the word and its primary indication (madlūl), it is even more likely that we would not know the meanings the word does not indicate. This is because a word's capacity to convey its intended meaning is stronger than its capacity to suggest an unintended one. Therefore, if a word conveys no meaning whatsoever and nothing can be understood from it, it cannot be indicative of its intended meaning. Consequently, it is even less likely to be indicative of an unintended meaning. Thus, it is impermissible to claim that such a word is subject to ta'wīl in the sense of being diverted from a stronger potential meaning to a weaker one, let alone to claim that this specific ta'wīl is known only to Allāh.

The only exception is if by ta'wīl one means a meaning that differs from an apparent sense (zāhir) which pertains specifically to creation. In that case, there is no doubt that anyone who understands the apparent meaning in this limited, creature-specific sense must acknowledge that the text possesses a ta'wīl (a true meaning befitting Allāh) which differs from that apparent sense. However, if these same individuals [who reject ta'wīl absolutely] claim that these texts have no ta'wīl differing from the apparent meaning, or that they are to be taken according to their apparent meanings, they fall into contradiction. If they intend one meaning by 'apparent' here and another meaning there within the same context without clarification, this constitutes obfuscation (talbīs). And if by 'apparent' they mean merely the word itself – that is, the texts are taken according to the mere words that appear, without understanding their meaning – then their negation or affirmation of ta'wīl becomes contradictory, because anyone who affirms or denies ta'wīl must necessarily have understood some meaning from the text. Through this categorization [of ta'wīl], the contradictions of many people concerning this subject – both those who negate the Divine Attributes (nufāt aṣ-ṣifāt) and those who affirm them (muthbitihā) – become evident.

The Sixth Rule: One might rightly argue: There must be, concerning this subject [of Divine Attributes], a governing principle (ḍābiṭ) by which one can discern what is permissible to affirm or negate regarding Allāh.

For relying, in this matter, merely on negating resemblance (tashbīh – anthropomorphism or comparison) or on absolute affirmation without resemblance is unsound. This is because no two things exist except that there is between them some shared aspect (qadr mushtarak – a common conceptual ground) and some distinguishing aspect (qadr mumayyiz). If someone negating an attribute relies solely on the claim, 'This constitutes tashbīh,' it should be said to him: If you mean that affirming this attribute makes Allāh identical (mumāthil) to the creation in every respect, this is patently false [and no one claims this]. But if you mean He becomes similar (mushābih) to it in some respect but not others, or shares a name with it, then this applies equally to everything else you do affirm about Him! Furthermore, the proofs you [negators] have established only invalidate tashbīh and tamthīl (likeness/identity) when defined as meaning that whatever is permissible, impermissible, or necessary for one is exactly the

same for the other. It is well-known that affirming tashbīh according to this definition is something no rational person who understands what he is saying would ever claim; its impossibility is known by rational necessity. However, negating this type of absolute identity does not necessitate negating similarity in some respects, such as occurs with univocally predicated names and attributes (i.e., terms sharing a core meaning). Yet, some people define tashbīh according to a specific meaning they designate, and then label anyone who affirms that meaning a Mushabbih (one who engages in tashbīh). Their opponents, however, argue that the meaning in question does not constitute tashbīh at all.

A distinction is sometimes made between the terms tashbīh (resemblance) and tamthīl (positing likeness/identity). The Mu'tazilah and similar groups who negate the Divine Attributes assert: Anyone who affirms an eternal attribute (ṣifāh qadīmāh) for Allāh is guilty of both tashbīh and tamthīl. Thus, whoever says Allāh possesses eternal knowledge or eternal power is, according to them, a Mushabbih Mumaththil. Their reasoning is that, for the majority of them, 'Eternal' (Al-Qadīm) is the most specific description of the Divine Being. Therefore, affirming an eternal attribute for Him amounts to affirming an eternal peer (mathal) alongside Allāh. Based on this consideration, they label such a person a Mumaththil (one who posits a peer). However, those who affirm the Attributes (Muthbitat aṣ-Ṣifāt) disagree with this entirely. They argue that Allāh's most specific descriptions are those by which nothing else can be described, such as His being the Lord of the Worlds (Rabb al-'Ālamīn), His being All-Knowing of everything, His being All-Powerful over everything, His being the One True God (Ilāh Wāḥid), and so forth. An attribute, they contend, cannot itself be described by any of these uniquely Divine characteristics.

Furthermore, among these affirmers of Attributes (Ṣifātiyyah), some do not explicitly state that the attributes themselves are eternal (qadīmāh). Instead, they say: 'The Lord, with His attributes, is eternal.' Others say: 'He is eternal, and His attribute is eternal,' but they refrain from saying: 'He and His attributes are two eternals (qadīmān).' Yet others do say: 'He and His attributes are two eternals,' but they argue that this does not necessitate the attribute sharing in any of His unique characteristics (khaṣā'is). They maintain that eternity (qidam) is not a characteristic exclusive to the abstract Essence (Dhāt mujarradah), but rather belongs to the Essence as described by its attributes. Otherwise, an abstract, unqualified Essence has no existence according to them, let alone possessing the exclusive characteristic of eternity. They might also say: The Essence is described by eternity, and the attributes are described by eternity, yet the attributes are not God (Ilāh) or Lord (Rabb), just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) is created (muḥdath) and his attributes are created, but his attributes are not themselves a prophet.

Therefore, when these groups [like the Mu'tazilah] apply the labels of tashbīh and tamthīl to the Ṣifātiyyah (affirmers of attributes), it is based on their own particular belief system, which the Ṣifātiyyah dispute. The Ṣifātiyyah then respond to them: Granting, for the sake of argument, that this meaning [affirming eternal attributes] might be termed tashbīh in the terminology (iṣṭilāḥ) of some people, this meaning itself has not been negated by either reason ('aql) or revelation (sam'). What is obligatory is only to negate that which is negated by definitive proofs from revelation (adillah shar'iyyah) and reason (adillah 'aqliyyah). The Qur'ān has indeed negated anything denoted by terms like mithl (like), kuf (equal, peer), nidd (rival), and similar expressions. However, the Ṣifātiyyah argue that, according to the Arabic language, an attribute is not considered a mithl, kuf, or nidd of the entity it describes. Therefore, affirming attributes does not fall under the prohibition indicated by the sacred texts (naṣṣ). As for reason, it has not negated the concept designated as tashbīh according to the specific terminology of the Mu'tazilah.

Likewise, the negators also argue: Attributes can only subsist in a delimited body (jism mutaḥayyiz), and all bodies (ajsām) are fundamentally uniform (mutamāthilah – i.e., sharing the same basic nature). Therefore, if attributes were to subsist in Allāh, it would necessitate that He be similar (mumāthil) to all other bodies, and this constitutes tashbīh. Ironically, this same line of reasoning is employed by many Şifāṭiyyah (attribute-affirmers, particularly Ash'arīs) who, while affirming certain attributes, negate His Highness ('uluww) above the Throne ('Arsh) and the subsistence of volitional actions (aḥl ikhtiyāriyyah) in Him, and similar attributes. They argue: Attributes like Hearing and Sight can subsist in something that is not a body (jism). However, Highness ('uluww) above the creation is only conceivable if the entity possessing it is a body. Thus, if we were to affirm His Highness, it would necessitate that He is a body. Since all bodies are uniform (mutamāthilah), affirming Highness would inevitably lead to tashbīh. This is why you find these thinkers (such as the author of Al-Irshād [Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī] and his followers) labeling those who affirm Allāh's Highness and similar attributes as Mushabbihah (anthropomorphists), while they do not apply this label to those who affirm attributes like Hearing (Sam'), Sight (Başar), and Speech (Kalām).

Similarly, agreeing with them [the Ash'arīs] on the principle of the uniformity of bodies (tamāthul al-ajsām) are figures like Al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā [a Hanbalī scholar] and similar thinkers who affirm both the Attributes and Allāh's Highness. However, these latter scholars sometimes treat Highness as a purely revelational attribute (şifah khabariyyah), understood solely based on the text without delving into its modality, as was one of Al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā's two positions. In this case, the discussion regarding Highness becomes analogous to the discussion regarding attributes like the Face (Wajh). Alternatively, they might argue that the attributes they affirm do not necessitate corporeality (jism), just as they argue concerning other attributes. Yet, a discerning person, upon reflection, will find that the situation regarding the attributes they negate (like Highness, based on the tajsīm argument) is fundamentally the same as the situation regarding the attributes they affirm – there is no essential difference in the underlying logic. The foundational premise underlying the arguments of all these groups is that affirming attributes necessitates tajsīm (corporealism), and that all bodies are uniform (mutamāthilah).

The affirmers [of attributes in line with the Salaf] respond to this line of argument sometimes by rejecting the first premise (i.e., denying that affirming attributes necessitates tajsīm), sometimes by rejecting the second premise (i.e., denying that all bodies are uniform), sometimes by rejecting both premises, and sometimes by demanding clarification and distinction (istişfāl). There is no doubt that their assertion of the uniformity of bodies (tamāthul al-ajsām) is an invalid claim, regardless of whether they define jism (body) as that which can be pointed to, or as that which is self-subsisting (qā'im bi-nafsihi), or simply as that which exists (mawjūd), or as that which is composed of matter (hayūlā) and form (şūrah), or according to similar definitions. As for defining jism as that which is composed of indivisible particles (jawāhir mufradah or atoms) and asserting that these particles are uniform, this entire position rests upon the validity of that atomic theory, upon proving the existence of the indivisible particle (jawhar fard), and upon proving its uniformity – all points on which the majority of rational thinkers (jumhūr al-'uqalā') disagree with them.

(The point here is that these groups apply the term tashbīh to whatever they believe constitutes tajsīm, based on their premise of the uniformity of bodies. The affirmers [following the Salaf] dispute the validity of their underlying belief.) This is analogous to the Rāfiḍah applying the label of Naşb (hatred towards the Prophet's family, Ahl al-Bayt) to anyone who shows loyalty (tawallā) to Abū Bakr and 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both). Their reasoning is built upon the premise that whoever loves Abū Bakr

and 'Umar must necessarily hate 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him), and whoever hates 'Alī is deemed a Nāṣibī. Ahlus Sunnah (the mainstream Sunni community), however, fundamentally dispute the first premise of this argument. This relates to why these negators often claim that two things cannot be similar in one aspect while differing in another, a view contrary to the position held by the majority of rational thinkers. We have elaborated on this matter elsewhere...

...where we presented the arguments of those who affirm the uniformity of bodies and the arguments of those who deny it, demonstrating the invalidity of the claim of uniformity. Furthermore, relying on the negation of tashbīh through this particular method [i.e., via the premise of tamāthul al-ajsām] is fundamentally flawed. This is because even if they were to establish the uniformity of bodies, they ultimately negate the attribute in question using the very same argument by which they negate corporeality (jism) itself. If it is established that affirming a certain attribute necessitates corporeality (jism), and the impossibility of corporeality [for Allāh] is also established, then this alone is sufficient grounds to negate that attribute. Negating the attribute does not additionally require negating the concept labeled tashbīh. However, the negation of tajsīm itself might be constructed upon the negation of this specific type of tashbīh, by arguing: 'If such-and-such were affirmed for Him, He would be a jism.' Then it is added: 'And all ajsām (bodies) are uniform (mutamāthilah), therefore they must share in all that is necessary, possible, and impossible for them. But this [sharing creaturely limitations] is impossible for Him.' In this scenario, however, the one employing this line of reasoning is actually relying on the negation of tajsīm as the basis for negating tashbīh. Thus, the ultimate foundation of their negation is the negation of corporeality (jism). This represents a different approach, which we shall discuss later, Allāh willing (in shā' Allāh).

Rather, the intended point here is this: Merely relying on the negation of tashbīh (resemblance) as the sole criterion for determining which attributes to negate is ultimately unhelpful and inconclusive. This is because any two things inevitably share some similarity in one aspect while differing in another. This approach contrasts sharply with the sound and correct methodology, which relies on negating any imperfection (naqṣ), flaw ('ayb), or deficiency – attributes from which He, Glorified is He, is absolutely transcendent (muqaddās). Likewise, the correct approach involves affirming for Him the attributes of perfection (ṣifāt al-kamāl) while simultaneously negating any likeness (mumāthalah) of anything else to Him concerning these perfections. This negation of likeness pertains specifically to that which He rightfully possesses. This constitutes the very reality of Tawhīd (the doctrine of Divine Oneness): that absolutely nothing shares with Him in any of His unique characteristics (khaṣā'iṣ). Every attribute of perfection He possesses is characterized by a modality unique to Him, in which nothing can resemble Him. It is for this reason that the established way (madhhab) of the pious predecessors (Salaf) of this Ummah and its leading scholars (A'immah) was to affirm the attributes with which Allāh described Himself, while categorically negating any resemblance between Him and any created being.

Now, if an objection is raised: 'If something resembles another thing in a particular aspect, then whatever is permissible, necessary, or impossible for the second thing from that specific aspect must also apply to the first.' The response is: Let us grant, for argument's sake, that this principle holds. However, if the shared aspect (qadr mushtarak) between the Creator and creation does not necessitate affirming anything impossible for the Lord, Glorified is He, nor does it necessitate negating anything He rightfully deserves, then affirming this shared aspect is not impossible or problematic. Consider the example: Allāh is described as Existing (Mawjūd), Living (Ḥayy), Knowing ('Alīm), Hearing (Samī'), Seeing (Baṣīr). Some created beings are also described as living, knowing, hearing, and seeing. If

someone then argues: 'This necessitates that whatever applies to the creature by virtue of its being existing, living, knowing, hearing, and seeing must also apply to Allāh,' the reply is: The necessary consequence (lāzim) stemming from this shared conceptual aspect (qadr mushtarak) is not something impossible for the Lord, Exalted is He. This shared concept, in itself, does not necessitate createdness (ḥudūth), contingency (imkān), imperfection (naqs), or anything else that contradicts the attributes of Lordship (ṣifāt ar-Rubūbiyyah).

This is because the shared aspect (qadr mushtarak) is simply the abstract concept (musammā) denoted by terms like Existence (Wujūd) or the Existent (Mawjūd), Life (Ḥayāh) or the Living (Ḥayy), Knowledge ('Ilm) or the Knowing ('Alīm), Hearing (Sam') or Sight (Baṣar), the Hearing (Samī') or the Seeing (Baṣīr), Power (Qudrah) or the Powerful (Qadīr). This shared aspect is an absolute, universal concept (muṭlaq kullī) that is not specific to either the Creator or the created being. Therefore, no actual sharing occurs between them concerning that which is specific to the contingent, created being (mumkin muḥdath), nor concerning that which is specific to the Necessary, Eternal Being (Wājib al-Qadīm). For whatever is specific to one of them cannot possibly be shared by the other. Consequently, if the shared aspect in which they participate is an attribute of perfection – such as Existence, Life, Knowledge, and Power – and if this shared concept itself contains nothing indicative of the specific characteristics of created beings (just as it indicates nothing specific to the Creator), then affirming this shared conceptual ground poses no problem whatsoever. Indeed, affirming this level of shared meaning is a necessary prerequisite for acknowledging existence itself. Any two existing entities must inevitably share some common conceptual ground like this. Whoever denies this absolute shared aspect falls into ta'tīl (absolute negation) regarding the existence of every existent being. This is precisely why, when the leading scholars (A'imma) recognized that this was the true implication of the Jahmiyyah's doctrine, they labeled them Mu'aṭṭilah (Negators). Jahm [ibn Ṣafwān, the founder of the Jahmiyyah] even denied that Allāh could be called a 'thing' (shay'). While the Jahmiyyah might sometimes concede, 'He is a thing, but not like other things,' if one negates the shared conceptual aspect absolutely, the necessary consequence is universal negation (ta'tīl 'āmm).

The meanings by which the Lord, Exalted is He, is described – such as Life, Knowledge, and Power, and indeed even Existence (Wujūd), Establishment (Thubūt), Reality (Ḥaqīqah), and the like – necessitate their own proper implications (lawāzim). For affirming the antecedent (malzūm, the attribute itself) logically requires affirming its necessary consequent (lāzim, its implications). However, the specific characteristics (khaṣā'is) of the created being, from which the Lord must absolutely be declared transcendent (tanzīh), are not at all necessary implications of that shared conceptual aspect. Rather, those creaturely characteristics are necessary implications only of that which is specific to the creature's mode of existence, life, knowledge, and so forth.

Allāh, Glorified is He, is utterly transcendent above the specific characteristics of created beings and transcendent above the necessary implications (malzūmāt) of those specific characteristics. Whoever grasps this crucial point with deep understanding and reflects upon it carefully will find that most of the specious arguments (shubuhāt) surrounding this topic dissolve, and the errors committed by many intelligent thinkers in this domain will become manifest to him.

This principle has been elaborated upon in numerous places, where it was explained that the universal shared aspect (qadr mushtarak kullī) does not exist in external reality except in a specified and qualified form (mu'ayyan muqayyad). The meaning of different existents 'sharing' in some matter is simply their conceptual similarity (tashābuh) in that

particular aspect. That general, abstract meaning is applied to this specific instance and that specific instance. This is because externally existing entities do not literally share any existing component within one another; rather, every existent being is distinct (mutamayyiz) from every other by its own unique essence (dhāt), attributes (ṣifāt), and actions (afāl). Since this is the reality of the matter, many people fall into contradiction (tanāquḍ) regarding this issue. At times, they assume that affirming the shared conceptual aspect necessitates the invalid form of tashbīh (anthropomorphism/likeness). They then use this assumption as a proof (ḥujjah) to negate attributes they believe should be negated, out of fear of the perceived implications of tashbīh. At other times, however, they realize that affirming this shared conceptual aspect is unavoidable under certain conditions. They then employ this realization as a response when defending the attributes they do affirm against the objections raised by negators who use the same argument [about shared aspects implying tashbīh].

Due to the prevalence of confusion (ishtibāh) surrounding this matter, various related philosophical doubts (shubḥah) have arisen, such as: Is the Existence (Wujūd) of the Lord identical to His Essence (Māhiyyah – quiddity or 'whatness') or is it something additional to His Essence? And is the term 'Existence' predicated upon different subjects purely equivocally (ishtirāk lafẓī – same word, unrelated meanings), univocally (tawāṭu' – same word, same core meaning), or analogically (tashkīk – same word, related meanings with gradation)? Similar confusion has also arisen regarding the affirmation or negation of 'states' (aḥwāl – theoretical ontological modes between existence and non-existence proposed by some theologians).

Confusion also exists regarding whether the non-existent (ma'dūm) can be considered a 'thing' (shay') in some sense or not, and whether the existence of created existents is additional to their essence (māhiyyah) or identical to it. Indeed, among the leading speculative theologians and philosophers (a'immat an-nuzzār), much vacillation (iḍṭirāb) and contradiction (tanāquḍ) can be found concerning these issues. At times, a single thinker might hold two contradictory positions or attribute statements to others that they never actually made. At other times, they remain trapped in doubt (shakk) and perplexity (taḥayyur).

We have previously elaborated extensively on these topics, detailing the confusion, errors, and perplexity encountered by leading figures in speculative theology (Kalām) and philosophy regarding them – discussions far too extensive for these brief summary sentences. We clarified therein that the correct position (ṣawāb) is that the existence of anything in external reality (fil-khārij) is identical to its essence (māhiyyah) as it exists externally. This contrasts with the essence conceived in the mind (fidh-dhihn), which is distinct from the actual existent in external reality. We also explained that terms like Essence (Dhāt), Thing (Shay'), Quiddity (Māhiyyah), Reality (Ḥaqīqah), and similar words are all fundamentally univocal (mutawāṭi'ah – sharing a common core meaning). If they are sometimes described as analogical (mushakkikah) due to the gradation (tafāḍul) observed in their referents (e.g., existence is stronger in the Creator than in creation), then the analogical predication is merely a specific type within the broader category of the univocal (mutawāṭi' al-'āmm). In both cases, what is considered is the word's indication of the shared conceptual aspect (qadr mushtarak), regardless of whether the meaning itself admits gradation across its instances or applies uniformly (mutamāthil).

Furthermore, we explained that the non-existent (ma'dūm) can also be considered a 'thing' (shay') within the realms of knowledge ('ilm) and the mind (dhihn), but not in external reality. In this mental context, there is no fundamental difference between 'establishment' (thubūt) and 'existence' (wujūd). However, a crucial distinction does exist

between mental or cognitive existence (wujūd 'ilmī) and objective, external existence (wujūd 'aynī). It must be understood that what exists in the mind [as a concept] is not the actual existing reality itself, but rather the knowledge which belongs to and subsists in the knower. Similarly, the 'states' (aḥwāl) through which existents are said to be similar or different possess existence only in the mind (adhḥān). In external reality (a'yān), there exist only the actual entities (a'yān mawjūdah) and their specific, subsisting attributes (ṣifātuhā al-qā'imah bihā al-mu'ayyanah).

It is through these real, specific attributes that entities exhibit conceptual similarity (tashābuh) and actual difference (ikhtilāf). As for the present concise summary, its purpose is to draw attention to brief yet comprehensive principles (jumal mukhtaṣarah jāmi'ah). Whoever understands them correctly will recognize their immense benefit, finding the door to guidance (hudā) opened and gaining the capacity to close the door to misguidance (ḍalāl). Further elaboration and detailed explanation belong to another context, for indeed, 'for every situation, there is a [fitting] discourse' (li-kulli maqāmin maqāl). The essential point intended here is that relying on arguments like the one critiqued [i.e., negating attributes based on tashbīh derived from the flawed premise of tamāthul al-ajsām] to determine what should be negated concerning the Lord and what He should be declared transcendent from – a practice common among many authors – is a profound error for anyone who reflects deeply upon the matter. This constitutes one of the invalid methods of negation (ṭuruq an-nafy al-bāṭilah).

## Section

Even more detrimental than this is the approach taken by those who negate some or all of Allāh's Attributes (Nufāt aṣ-Ṣifāt), when, in their attempt to declare Him free (tanzīh) from attributes utterly unbecoming of Him—attributes constituting grave disbelief (kufr) if ascribed to Him, such as attempting to negate sadness, weeping, and the like—they seek to refute the Jews who claim that Allāh wept over the Flood until His eyes became sore and the angels visited Him, or to refute those who claim the divinity of certain humans, asserting that such a human is Allāh. Many people argue against these groups by resorting to the negation of corporeality (tajsīm) and spatial confinement (taḥayyuz) and similar concepts. They argue, 'If He were described with such imperfections and defects, He would necessarily be a body (jism) or spatially confined (mutaḥayyiz), and that is impossible.' However, by adopting such a method, these individuals inadvertently empower the heretics who negate Allāh's Names and Attributes. This approach fails to achieve the intended objective for several reasons:

First: Attributing such imperfections and defects to Allāh, Most High, is far more evidently corrupt according to both reason ('aql) and religion (dīn) than the concepts of negating spatial confinement (taḥayyuz) and corporeality (tajsīm). The latter concepts involve a degree of ambiguity, dispute, and obscurity that is absent in the former. The disbelief (kufr) of one who attributes such imperfections to Allāh is known by necessity from the religion of Islām. Evidence is meant to identify and clarify that which is being proven; therefore, it is impermissible to use a more obscure matter as evidence for something that is clearer and more evident, just as such a method is not employed in establishing legal definitions (ḥudūd).

Second: Those who describe Him with these [anthropomorphic] attributes can simply retort, 'We do not affirm corporeality (tajsīm) or spatial confinement (taḥayyuz),' just as those who affirm [other] Attributes while negating tajsīm say. Consequently, the dispute with them becomes analogous to the dispute with those who affirm Allāh's Speech and other Attributes of Perfection. This effectively equates the position of those who describe

Allāh with Attributes of Perfection with the position of those who describe Him with attributes of imperfection, allowing the Negators (Nufāt) to refute both groups using the same flawed methodology. This outcome is exceedingly corrupt.

Third: These same Negators employ this very methodology (negating tajsīm and taḥayyuz) to deny Allāh's Attributes of Perfection (Ṣifāt al-Kamāl). However, His being described with Attributes of Perfection is necessary and established by both reason ('aql) and revelation (sam' - scriptural proof). This fact itself serves as evidence for the invalidity of this methodology.

Fourth: Those who follow this path are inherently contradictory. Among them, whoever affirms something is compelled by another (using the same logic) concerning what he agrees with him in affirming, just as whoever negates something is compelled by another concerning what he agrees with him in negating. For instance, when those who affirm Attributes (Muthbitat aṣ-Ṣifāt)—such as Life, Knowledge, Power, Speech, Hearing, and Sight—are told by the Negators (Nufāt), like the Mu'tazilah: 'This implies corporeality (tajsīm), because these attributes are accidents (a'rād), and an accident can only subsist in a body (jism),' or, 'because we only know of things described with attributes as being bodies,' the Affirmers retort: 'But you yourselves have said He is Living, Knowing, Powerful, while also saying He is not a body. Yet, you know of no existing thing that is living, knowing, and powerful except that it is a body. Thus, you have affirmed something about Him contrary to your empirical knowledge, and so do we.' They also tell them: 'You affirm Him as Living, Knowing, Powerful, yet without [affirming the attributes of] Life, Knowledge, and Power. This is a contradiction known by rational necessity.'

Then, these same Affirmers [who affirm Life, Knowledge, Power, etc.], when they address those who affirm that Allāh is pleased (Yarḍā), becomes angry (Yaghḍab), loves (Yuḥibb), and hates (Yubghid), or those who describe Him with Istiwā' (Ascending Above [the Throne]), Nuzūl (Descending), Ityān (Coming), Majī' (Coming), or with a Face (Wajh), Hand (Yad), and the like—if the former group says [to the latter], 'This necessitates corporeality (tajsīm), because we only know of things described with such attributes as being bodies,' the latter group [who affirm these additional attributes] replies: 'But you yourselves have described Him with Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, and Speech, and the same objection applies; if these attributes can only describe a body, then so too must the others [like Face and Hand]. And if it is possible for something that is not a body to be described with one set of attributes [Life, Knowledge, etc.], then it is likewise possible for the other set [Face, Hand, etc.]. Therefore, differentiating between them is differentiating between analogous things (mutamāthilayn):' This is why, since refuting those who describe Allāh, Most High, with imperfections using this method [of negating tajsīm] is a flawed approach, none of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) or the A'imma (leading scholars) ever employed it. None of them spoke regarding Allāh in terms of Jism (body/corporeality), neither affirming nor negating it, nor did they use terms like Jawhar (substance), Taḥayyuz (spatial confinement), and the like. This is because these are ambiguous expressions ('ibārāt mujmalah) that neither establish truth nor invalidate falsehood. For this reason, Allāh, in His Book, when censuring the Jews and other disbelievers, did not mention anything of this sort [i.e., He did not refute them by denying tajsīm]. Rather, this type of discourse is innovated theological rhetoric (kalām muḩtada') which the Salaf and A'imma condemned.

## Section

Regarding the methods of affirmation (ithbāt), it is also well-known that for affirming an attribute, the mere negation of resemblance (tashbīh) is insufficient. If simply negating

resemblance were enough, it would become permissible to describe Him, Glorified is He, with innumerable limbs and actions that are impossible for Him—while still negating resemblance. It would also become permissible to describe Him with imperfections that are inadmissible for Him, while negating resemblance. For example, a slanderer might describe Him with weeping, sadness, hunger, and thirst, while claiming ‘without resemblance.’ Or the slanderer might say: ‘He eats, but not like the eating of creatures; He drinks, but not like their drinking; He weeps and grieves, but not like their weeping or grief—just as it is [correctly] said, ‘He laughs, but not like their laughing; He rejoices, but not like their rejoicing; He speaks, but not like their speech.’ It would then be permissible [by this flawed logic] to say: ‘He has numerous organs, but not like their organs,’ just as it is [correctly] said: ‘He has a Face, but not like their faces; and Two Hands, but not like their hands.’ This could extend to mentioning the stomach, intestines, reproductive organs, and other things from which Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, is utterly transcendent. Glorified and Exalted is He, far above what the wrongdoers say! For indeed, it must be asked of one who negates these latter things [stomach, etc.] while affirming the Attributes established by revelation (aṣ-Ṣifāt al-Khabariyyah) and other Attributes: What is the difference between these [impermissible attributes] and what you have affirmed, if you merely negate resemblance and consider the negation of resemblance sufficient grounds for affirmation? There must be a real, substantive difference established.

If such a person says: ‘The decisive factor in differentiating is revelation (sam’). Whatever is established by revelation, I affirm, unlike that which is not established by revelation,’ it is replied to him: Firstly, revelation is the report of the Truthful One [Allāh or His Messenger (peace be upon him)] about reality as it truly is. Whatever the Truthful One reports, whether negation or affirmation, is true. However, the report is evidence (dalīl) for what is reported (mukhbir ‘anh), and evidence does not imply its converse; the absence of evidence does not necessitate the absence of the thing it would indicate. Therefore, something not mentioned in revelation might still be true in reality, as long as revelation has not explicitly negated it. It is known that revelation has not negated these specific things [like stomach, intestines] by their particular names. Thus, one must cite something from revelation that does negate them; otherwise, it is impermissible to negate them, just as it is impermissible to affirm them [without proof]. Furthermore, there must be a real, substantive difference between what is affirmed for Him and what is negated. For it is impossible for some things that are analogous in terms of possibility, necessity, or impossibility to be singled out for possibility, necessity, or impossibility apart from their analogues. Therefore, that which is negated must possess a characteristic distinguishing it for negation from that which is affirmed, and that which is affirmed must possess a characteristic distinguishing it for affirmation from that which is negated. This can also be expressed by saying: There must be a reason necessitating the negation of what must be negated concerning Allāh, just as there must be a reason establishing what is established for Him. Even if revelation is sufficient [as proof], it informs us of reality as it is. So, what is the real difference between this [affirmed attribute] and that [negated attribute]?

It is said [in response]: Everything that negates the Attributes of Perfection established for Allāh is something He is transcendent above. This is because the establishment of one of two opposites necessitates the negation of the other. Thus, when it is known that He is Existent, Necessary Being in Himself (Wājib al-Wujūd bi-naḥsihi), and that He is Pre-eternal, Necessarily Pre-eternal (Qadīm Wājib al-Qidam), it is known that non-existence (‘adam) and origination (hudūth) are impossible for Him. It is also known that He is Self-Sufficient, free of need from all else (Ghanī ‘ammā siwāh). Anything dependent on

something else for some aspect of its own needs is not existent in itself; rather, its existence depends on itself and that other thing which provides what it needs, so it cannot exist without it. But He, Glorified is He, is Self-Sufficient, free of need from everything other than Himself. Therefore, everything that contradicts His Self-Sufficiency (Ghinā) is something He is transcendent above. He, Glorified is He, is All-Powerful (Qadīr), Strong (Qawī); therefore, everything that contradicts His Power (Qudrah) and Strength (Quwwah) is something He is transcendent above. He, Glorified is He, is Ever-Living (Ḥayy), Self-Subsisting (Qayyūm); therefore, everything that contradicts His Life (Ḥayāh) and Self-Subsistence (Qayyūmiyyah) is something He is transcendent above. In summary, revelation (sam') has affirmed for Him the Most Beautiful Names (Al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā) and Attributes of Perfection (Ṣifāt al-Kamāl) that have been transmitted. Consequently, everything that opposes these perfections is negated by revelation, just as revelation negates any equal (mithl) or peer (kufu') for Him. For affirming something necessitates negating its opposite and whatever its opposite entails. Reason ('aql) also recognizes the negation of these imperfections just as it recognizes the affirmation of their opposites [i.e., perfections]. Thus, affirming one of two opposites is a negation of the other and its necessary implications. Therefore, the ways of knowing what imperfections the Lord is to be declared free from are vast and do not require restricting oneself merely to negating resemblance (tashbīh) and corporeality (tajsīm), as done by those deficient in understanding and negligent in methodology, who contradicted themselves and differentiated between analogous things. This reached the point where anyone who affirmed anything was countered by those who negated it with the argument that it necessitates resemblance. Similarly, the Qarāmiṭah (an extreme Bāṭinī sect) argued for the negation of all things, even negating negation itself, saying: 'It cannot be said He is 'existent' nor 'non-existent,' nor 'living' nor 'not living,' because that constitutes resemblance to the existent or the non-existent.' This necessitates the negation of two contradictories, which is the most obviously impossible position. Furthermore, these [Negators] inevitably fall into resembling Allāh to non-existent things, impossible concepts, and inanimate objects, which is far worse than the resemblance to perfect, living beings they sought to avoid. The paths to declaring His transcendence (tanzīh) and sanctity (taqḍīs) above all that He is free from are expansive and do not require resorting to this [flawed methodology]. It has already been established that the negation applied to Him, Glorified is He, must be a negation that implies affirmation [of the opposite perfection], since mere negation contains no praise or perfection. Non-existence itself is described by negations, and the non-existent does not resemble existing things, yet this is no praise for it. Resembling something deficient in its attributes of deficiency is absolute deficiency, just as resembling creation in any of its attributes constitutes anthropomorphism (tamthīl) and resemblance (tashbīh) from which the Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, is transcendent.

Imperfection (naqṣ) is the opposite of perfection (kamāl). For example, it is known that He is Living (Ḥayy), and death is its opposite; therefore, He is transcendent above death. Likewise, sleep (nawm) and slumber (sinah) contradict the perfection of life, for sleep is the brother of death. Similarly, fatigue (lughūb) is a deficiency in power and strength. Eating, drinking, and similar actions entail dependence (iftiqār) on another existent being. Likewise, seeking help from another (isti'ānah), relying on another for support (i'tīdād), and similar actions imply dependence and need. Anyone who needs another to sustain him or assist him in his existence and actions is dependent on that other, not self-sufficient. How much more so for one who eats and drinks? The eater and drinker are hollow (ajwaf), whereas the solid, eternally Besought of all (Al-Muṣmat Aṣ-Ṣamad) is more perfect than the eater and drinker. This is why the angels are ṣamad (solid, self-

contained, without need for food), neither eating nor drinking. It has already been mentioned that every perfection established for a creature, the Creator is more entitled to it, and every imperfection from which a creature is free, the Creator is even more worthy of being declared free from it. Revelation (sam') has negated such needs in several places, such as His statement, Most High: {Allāh, Aṣ-Ṣamad (the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks)} [Al-Ikhlās: 2]. Aṣ-Ṣamad is the one who has no internal cavity and does not eat or drink. This Sūrah is the lineage of the Most Merciful (nasab Ar-Raḥmān) or the foundational text in this subject. Regarding the Messiah (ʿĪsā) and his mother, Allāh said: {The Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a ṣiddīqah (truthful woman). They both used to eat food.} [Al-Mā'idah: 75]. Allāh made their eating food evidence against their divinity (ulūhiyyah). This indicates, a fortiori, that He (Allāh) is transcendent above such needs. The liver, spleen, and similar organs are the apparatus for eating and drinking. Therefore, the Self-Sufficient One (Al-Ghanī), who is transcendent above eating and drinking, is also transcendent above the instruments associated with them. This is unlike the Hand (Yad), for it is associated with action and doing, and He, Glorified is He, is described with action and doing, as these are attributes of perfection. One who is able to act is more perfect than one unable to act. He, Glorified is He, is transcendent above having a consort (ṣāhibah) or offspring (walad), and above the means and causes associated with that. Likewise, weeping (bukā') and sadness (ḥuzn) necessarily imply weakness and incapacity, from which He, Glorified is He, is transcendent. This contrasts with joy (farah) and anger (ghaḍab), which are attributes of perfection [when ascribed to Allāh in a manner befitting His Majesty]. Just as He is described with Power (Qudrah) rather than incapacity ('ajz), with Knowledge ('Ilm) rather than ignorance (jahl), with Life (Ḥayāh) rather than death (mawt), with Hearing (Sam') rather than deafness (ṣamam), with Sight (Baṣar) rather than blindness ('amā), and with Speech (Kalām) rather than muteness (bukm), so too is He described with Joy (Farah) rather than sadness (ḥuzn), and with Laughter (Daḥik) rather than weeping (bukā'), and so forth.

Furthermore, reason ('aql) confirms what revelation (sam') establishes: that He, Glorified is He, has no peer (kufu'), no namesake (samī), and {There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. Therefore, it is impossible for His essential reality (ḥaqīqah) to be like the essential reality of any created thing, nor for the reality of any of His Attributes to be like the reality of any attribute of created things. Thus, it is known with certainty that He is not of the same kind (jins) as created beings—not angels, nor heavens, nor stars, nor air, nor water, nor earth, nor humans, neither their bodies nor their souls, nor anything else. Rather, it is known that His reality is further removed from resembling any existing thing than any other reality is from another. His resemblance to anything is more remote than the resemblance of the reality of one created thing to the reality of another created thing. This is because if two realities were similar, whatever is possible for one would be possible for the other, and whatever is necessary for one would be necessary for the other. This would imply that the Creator—the Pre-eternal, Necessary Being in Himself—could be subject to what is possible for the originated, created being, such as non-existence and need. It would also imply affirming for the created being what is affirmed for the Creator, such as necessary existence and eternity [or impossibility of annihilation]. This would lead to the same thing being simultaneously necessary in itself and not necessary in itself, existent and non-existent—a conjunction of contradictories. This demonstrates the falsehood of the statement of the Anthropomorphists (Mushabbihah) who say, '[His] Sight is like my sight,' or '[His] Hand is like my hand,' and similar claims. Exalted is Allāh, far above their assertions!

The purpose here is not to exhaustively enumerate all that is affirmed for Him or all that He is declared transcendent above, nor to detail all the methods for establishing this, as these matters are elaborated upon elsewhere. Rather, the aim here is to highlight the comprehensive principles and methodologies involved. Regarding matters about which revelation (sam') is silent, neither affirming nor negating, and for which reason ('aql) provides no basis for affirmation or negation, we too remain silent. We neither affirm nor negate them. Thus, we affirm what we know to be established, we negate what we know must be negated, and we remain silent about that which we have no knowledge of its negation or affirmation. And Allāh knows best.

The Seventh Rule: It should be stated that much of what is indicated by revelation (as-sam', scriptural evidence) is also knowable through reason (al-'aql). Furthermore, the Qur'an elucidates that which reason can deduce, guides towards it, and draws attention to it, as Allah has mentioned this in numerous places. For He, Glorified and Exalted is He, has clarified the signs demonstrating His existence, His Oneness (Waḥdāniyyah), His Power (Qudrah), His Knowledge ('ilm), and other such realities, thereby guiding His servants towards this understanding and indicating it to them. Similarly, He has also clarified the proofs for the prophethood of His messengers and the evidence for the Resurrection (al-Ma'ād) and its possibility. Therefore, these fundamental truths are matters established by divine law (shar'iyyah) from two perspectives: firstly, because the Lawgiver (Allah) has informed us of them, and secondly, because He has elucidated the rational proofs (al-adillah al-'aqliyyah) by which they can be deduced. The parables presented in the Qur'an are, in essence, rational arguments (aqiyasah 'aqliyyah), a point elaborated upon elsewhere. These truths are also rational in the sense that they are independently knowable through reason. However, many practitioners of kalām (speculative theology) label these as purely 'rational principles' (al-uṣūl al-'aqliyyah) based on their belief that they can only be known through reason alone.

They argue that revelation (as-sam') is merely the report of a truthful informant (the Prophet), and the veracity of this informant cannot be established until after these foundational principles are known through reason. Subsequently, they often dispute among themselves regarding the specific rational principles upon which the proof of prophethood depends. One group (tā'ifah) contends that the rational determination of good and evil (taḥsīn al-'aql wa taqbiḥuhu) is among these essential principles, and that prophethood cannot be proven without it; they also consider the denial of divine decree (al-qadar) to be something reason necessitates negating. Another group contends that the createdness of the universe (ḥudūth al-'ālam) is among these principles, arguing that knowledge of the Creator (aṣ-Ṣāni') is only possible by proving the universe's createdness. They further argue that proving the universe's createdness is only possible by demonstrating the createdness of physical bodies (al-ajsām), which in turn is known either through the createdness of their attributes (aṣ-ṣifāt) or the createdness of the actions (al-af'āl) inherent in them. Consequently, they make the negation of the Lord's actions and the negation of His attributes foundational principles, without which, they claim, prophethood cannot be established. Then, these groups refuse to accept evidence from the Book (Qur'an) and the Sunnah that contradicts their positions, based on their assumption that reason conflicts with revelation—despite reason being its foundation [in their view]—and therefore must be given precedence over it. Revelation, according to them, must either be subjected to figurative interpretation (ta'wīl, often distorting the meaning) or its meaning must be consigned to unknowability (tafwīḍ). Upon careful examination, it becomes clear that they do not truly accept evidence from the Book and Sunnah even when it aligns with their views, for the reasons previously mentioned. These groups fall into error from several perspectives:

(1) Firstly: Their assumption that revelation (as-sam') functions solely as a report at times. This is incorrect. Rather, the Qur'an itself elucidates rational proofs (dalā'il 'aqliyyah)—by which religious truths (al-maṭālib ad-dīniyyah) are known—in a manner unparalleled in the discourse of leading rationalist thinkers (a'immat an-naẓar). Thus, these truths are simultaneously established by divine law (shar'iyyah) and reason ('aqliyyah). (2) Secondly: Their assumption that the Prophet's veracity can only be known through the specific method they have adopted. They are definitively mistaken in restricting the ways of verifying his truthfulness to what they have mentioned. Indeed, the paths to knowing the Prophet's veracity are numerous, as has been detailed elsewhere. (3) Thirdly: Their assumption that the method they have adopted is sound, when it may actually be invalid (bāṭilah). (4) Fourthly: Their assumption that the arguments with which they oppose revelation (as-sam') are established facts of reason (ma'lūm bil-'aql). In this, they are mistaken. For when weighed on the correct scale, that which they use to oppose the Book and the Sunnah is found to consist of conjectures and unknowns (majhūlāt), not established rational truths (ma'qūlāt). This point has also been elaborated upon elsewhere. The objective here is to clarify that among the Attributes of Allah Almighty (Ṣifāt Allāh Ta'ālā) are those which can indeed be known through reason. For instance, it can be known rationally that He is All-Knowing ('Ālim), All-Powerful (Qādir), and Ever-Living (Ḥayy), as indicated by His statement: {Does He who created not know?} [Al-Mulk: 14]. The scholars among those who affirm the Attributes (muthbitat aṣ-ṣifāt) have agreed that it is known through reason—according to the meticulous researchers (al-muḥaqqiqīn)—that He is Ever-Living (Ḥayy), All-Knowing ('Ālim), All-Powerful (Qādir), and Possessing Will (Murīd). Likewise, Hearing (as-Sam'), Sight (al-Baṣar), and Speech (al-Kalām) are established through reason according to the meticulous researchers.

Indeed, even Love (al-Ḥubb), Pleasure (ar-Riḍā), and Anger (al-Ghaḍab) can potentially be established through reason. Similarly, His Highness ('Uluww) above His creation and His distinctness (Mubāyanah) from them are matters knowable through reason, as affirmed through rational proofs by the Imāms, such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and others, and figures like 'Abd al-'Ālī al-Makkī and 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'īd ibn Kullāb. Furthermore, even the possibility of seeing Allah (Imkān ar-Ru'yah) is demonstrable through reason. However, some establish this by arguing that every existing entity (mawjūd) can potentially be seen, while others argue that everything that subsists in itself (qā'im bi-nafsihi) can potentially be seen. This latter approach is sounder than the former. It may also be possible to establish the possibility of vision through methods other than these two, using a comprehensive dichotomy between negation and affirmation. For example, it can be argued that vision depends only on existential factors (umūr wujūdiyyah). Since that which depends only on existential factors is more befittingly attributed to the Necessary, Eternal Existent (al-Mawjūd al-Wājib al-Qadīm) than to the contingent, created being (al-mumkin al-muḥdath). The detailed discussion of these matters is found elsewhere. The point here is that one of the methods employed by the Imāms and the Sunni theologians (nuzzār as-Sunnah) who follow them in this domain is this: if He were not described by one of two opposing attributes (ṣifatayn mutaḡābilatayn), He would necessarily be described by the other. Thus, if He were not described with Life (al-Ḥayāh), He would be described with death (al-mawt); and if He were not described with Power (al-Qudrah), He would be described with incapacity (al-'ajz); and if He were not described with Hearing (as-Sam'), Sight (al-Baṣar), and Speech (al-Kalām), He would be described with deafness (aṣ-ṣamam), muteness (al-kharas), and speechlessness (al-bukm).

Extending this principle, if He were not described as distinct from the universe (mubāyin lil-'ālam), He would be within it. Therefore, negating one of two opposing attributes necessitates the affirmation of the other. Since the latter attribute (death, incapacity,

deafness, etc.) is an attribute of imperfection (*ṣifat naqṣ*) from which even the most perfect of creatures are considered free, then the Creator is all the more worthy of being free from it (*tanzih*). This method is distinct from arguing that since these are attributes of perfection (*ṣifāt kamāl*) found in creation, the Creator possesses them to a more perfect degree (*awlā*). The method of establishing attributes of perfection in themselves is different from the method of establishing them by negating their opposites. A group among the negators of attributes (*an-Nufāh*) has raised a well-known objection against this method, using it to confuse people, to the extent that many proponents of affirming attributes (*Ahl al-Ithbāt*) have come to think it is valid and have weakened their reliance on this proof, as done by certain theologians (*an-nuzzār*), even figures like *al-Āmidī*<sup>1</sup> and his ilk. This objection, however, is rooted in the discourse of the esoteric Qarmatians (*al-Qarāmiṭah al-Bāṭiniyyah*) and similar Jahmite groups (*al-Jahmiyyah*). They argue against the premise that if He were not attributed with these qualities—like Hearing, Sight, and Speech, while being Living—He would necessarily be attributed with their opposites. A thorough investigation of this matter depends on clarifying the reality of opposites (*al-mutāqābilayn*) and their categories. We say:

As for opposites (*al-mutāqābilān*), they cannot coexist in a single subject from the same aspect. This relationship means either that they cannot both be true nor both be false simultaneously, or that this simultaneous truth/falsehood is possible for one of the pair [but not both]. This is because they are opposites by way of negation (*as-salb*) and affirmation (*al-ijāb*), which constitutes the opposition of contradiction (*taqābul at-tanāquḍ*). Contradiction (*at-tanāquḍ*) is the difference between two propositions in terms of negation and affirmation such that they cannot, in themselves, both be true nor both be false. For example, 'Zayd is an animal' and 'Zayd is not an animal.' A defining characteristic of the impossibility of both contradictories being true or false simultaneously is that there is no middle ground (*wāsiṭah*) between the two, and neither proposition is impossible in itself from a single aspect. They cannot both be true, nor can they both be false. Consider the case of an existent being either necessary in itself (*wājiban bi-nafsihi*) or possible in itself (*mumkinan bi-nafsihi*). These two states cannot coexist, nor can both be absent [for any given existent]. If you adopt this classification, where contradictories (*an-naqīḍān*) are defined as 'that which cannot coexist nor both be absent,' then these two states (necessary/possible) fit the definition, yet they are not simple negation and affirmation. Therefore, it is incorrect to limit contradictories—those things which cannot coexist nor both be absent—strictly to negation and affirmation. Consequently, we have established two attributes—two states—that cannot coexist nor both be absent, yet fall outside the standard four categories [of opposition, if defined strictly]. Based on this, one who considers death to be a positive existential state (*ma'nan wujūdiyyan*) might argue that the fact that a thing cannot be devoid of both life and death falls under this category [of non-negation/affirmation contradictories]. The same could apply to knowledge and ignorance, deafness and hearing, muteness and speech, and so forth.

Second Argument: It can be argued that this classification [of opposites] involves overlap. For instance, privation and possession (*al-'adam wa al-malakah*, e.g., blindness and sight) fall under the broader category of negation and affirmation; at most, it is a specific type thereof. Similarly, correlatives (*al-mutaḍāyifān*, e.g., father and son) fall under contraries (*al-mutaḍāddān*, e.g., black and white); they are merely a type of contrary. If an objector says: 'By negation and affirmation, I mean the type that does not include privation and

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<sup>1</sup> Printed text reads: *Al-Āmidī Amsā*. The editors commented: Thus in the original manuscript; corrected based on: *Ṣiyānat Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, p. 254.

possession—that is, negating something from a subject incapable of possessing it [like negating sight from a rock]—and this is why one of its characteristics is that neither of its terms is impossible,' and so forth. To this, there are two responses: Firstly: The most this implies is that negation (*as-salb*) can be divided into two types: (1) Negating something that the subject could possibly possess. (2) Negating something that the subject cannot possibly possess. Correspondingly, affirmation (*al-ijāb*) could be divided into: (1) Affirming something the subject can possess but does not necessarily possess. (2) Affirming something the subject must possess. In this framework, the second type of negation refers to an impossible negation (e.g., 'Zayd is not a stone,' which negates an impossibility), and the second type of affirmation refers to affirming a necessity (e.g., 'Zayd is an animal,' affirming a necessary attribute for Zayd). According to this interpretation, contingent beings (*al-mumkināt*) which can accept both existence and non-existence—like saying, 'A triangle is either existent or non-existent'—would fall under the category of privation and possession. However, this is incorrect, because in the category of privation/possession, the subject itself might be devoid of both opposites [e.g., a wall is neither sighted nor blind in the relevant sense], whereas no contingent being (*mumkin*) can be devoid of both existence and non-existence.

Furthermore, according to this interpretation, since all of the Lord's Attributes are necessary for Him (*wājibah lahu*), then stating, 'He is either Living, or Knowing, or Hearing, or Seeing, or Speaking, or He is not,' would be analogous to saying, 'He is either Existent, or He is not.' This latter statement clearly represents an opposition of negation and affirmation (*taqābul as-salb wa al-ijāb*). Therefore, the former statement (regarding attributes like Life, Knowledge, etc.) must also be of the same type. This achieves the intended purpose [of showing that negating the attribute necessitates affirming its opposite imperfection]. If it is objected: 'This is not valid until it is known that He is capable of possessing these attributes,' the response is: This condition [of knowing possibility] applies only to attributes that can potentially be present or absent in a subject, like [certain traits in] an animal. As for the Lord Almighty, if these attributes are affirmed for Him, they are necessarily affirmed (*wājibah ḍarūran*). For it is inconceivable, by the consensus of rational people (*ittifāq al-'uqalā'*), that He could possess them at one time and lack them at another. Such a scenario would imply that He is sometimes Living and sometimes dead, sometimes Hearing and sometimes deaf, which necessitates attributing imperfections (*naqā'is*) to Him, and this is definitively precluded. This contrasts with the position of those who negate these attributes, claiming their negation is not an imperfection because they assume He is incapable of possessing them. Even someone holding this view cannot claim that if He were capable of possessing them, their negation would not be an imperfection. The fallacy of such a claim is self-evidently known (*ma'lūm biḍ-ḍarūrah*). It can also be said to the objector: Regarding the opposition of negation and affirmation, if you stipulate knowledge of the possibility of both terms, then it would be incorrect to say, 'The Necessary Existent (*Wājib al-Wujūd*) is either existent or non-existent,' or 'The Impossible Existent (*Mumtani' al-Wujūd*) is either existent or non-existent.'

This is because in these cases, one term (existence for the Necessary, non-existence for the Impossible) is known to be necessary, and the other (non-existence for the Necessary, existence for the Impossible) is known to be impossible. However, if you only stipulate knowledge of the possibility of one of the terms, then it is perfectly valid to say, 'He is either Living or He is not,' and 'He is either Hearing and Seeing or He is not.' This is because if the negation (not Living, not Hearing, etc.) is possible, the dichotomy holds. And if the negation is impossible (*mumtani'*), then the affirmation (Living, Hearing, etc.) becomes necessary (*wājib*), and the intended conclusion is reached. If it is then argued:

'This reasoning shows that this interpretation involves the opposition of negation and affirmation, which we concede, as mentioned in the objection. However, the most this proves is: He is either Hearing or not Hearing; He is either Seeing or not Seeing. The opponent simply chooses the negation.' The response is: According to this premise [that the attributes are either necessary or impossible for Him], the affirmed attribute is necessary (wājib), and the negated attribute is impossible (mumtani'). Thus, these attributes are either necessary for Him or impossible for Him. The claim that they are impossible has no basis whatsoever, as there is absolutely no evidence (dalīl) for it. Indeed, it can be argued that we know intuitively (bil-idṭirār) the falsehood of their impossibility. For any argument used to demonstrate the impossibility of these specific attributes (Hearing, Sight, etc.) would inevitably be the same type of argument used to deny the Attributes (aṣl aṣ-ṣifāt) altogether, the invalidity of which is already established. Therefore, it becomes necessary to affirm the necessity (wujūb) of these attributes for Him. Know that this line of reasoning can itself constitute an independent method for establishing His attributes of perfection (ṣifāt al-kamāl): they are either necessary for Him or impossible for Him. The second option (impossibility) is invalid; therefore, the first (necessity) is determined. This is because the notion of Him being capable of possessing them yet being devoid of them would imply contingency (mumkinan), which is impossible (mumtani') in His case. This is a recognized method among those theologians (an-nuẓẓār) who employ it.

Secondly (to the original objection in g): According to the objector's narrow definition of negation/affirmation opposition [requiring possibility of both terms, or excluding privation/possession], if we say, 'Zayd is either rational or not rational,' 'He is either knowledgeable or not knowledgeable,' 'He is either living or not living,' 'He is either speaking or not speaking,' and similar statements involving the negation of an attribute from a subject capable of possessing it, these would not fall under the category of negation/affirmation opposition. It is well-known that this contradicts self-evident knowledge (al-ma'lūm biḍ-ḍarūrah), the consensus of rational people (ittifāq al-'uqalā'), and what logicians and others have stated. It is also well-known that such propositions contradict each other through negation and affirmation in such a way that the truth of one necessitates the falsehood of the other; they cannot both be true or both be false. Thus, the conditions of contradiction (at-tanāquḍ) are met here. The most the objectors can differentiate is to say: If we state, 'He is either Seeing (Baṣīr) or not Seeing (laysa bi-Baṣīr),' it is affirmation and negation. If we state, 'He is either Seeing (Baṣīr) or blind (A'mā),' it is possession and privation (malakah wa 'adam). This is merely a semantic dispute (munāza'ah lafẓiyyah); otherwise, the meaning in both cases is the same. Therefore, it is clear that this [privation/possession] is a type of negation/affirmation opposition. This invalidates their definition of that opposition which stipulates 'no impossibility of either term,' because impossibility [of one term, e.g., God being blind] is indeed relevant here, just as it is when using the explicit term for the privation (e.g., 'blindness' - al-'amā).

Third Argument: A comprehensive classification of opposites (al-mutāqābilān) is as follows: Opposites either differ by negation and affirmation, or they do not, instead being both affirmative or both negative. The first type constitutes contradictories (an-naqīḍān). The second type (non-contradictories) are either such that the subject can be devoid of both, or such that it cannot. The former are contraries (aḍ-ḍiddān), like black and white. The latter function like contradictories, even if both are positive states (thubūtiyyayn), such as necessity (al-wujūb) and possibility (al-imkān), createdness (al-ḥudūth) and eternity (al-qīdam), self-subsistence (al-qiyām bin-nafs) and dependence on another (al-qiyām bil-ghayr), or distinctness (al-mubāyanah) and adjacency/immanence (al-

mujānabah), and so forth. It is known that Life and death, deafness and hearing, muteness and speech are not attributes such that if the subject lacks both, it can be described by a third, intermediate state (like redness between black and white). Therefore, it is established that the subject cannot be devoid of one of them. Thus, if one is negated, the other is necessarily affirmed.

Fourth Argument: A subject (maḥall) that is incapable of possessing attributes like Life, Knowledge, Power, Speech, etc., is inherently more deficient (anqas) than a subject that is capable of possessing them but happens to lack them [at a given time]. This is why a stone or similar inanimate object is considered more deficient than a living being that is blind. Consequently, if the Creator (al-Bāri) is free (munazzah) from the negation of these attributes (i.e., free from lacking them) given His capability to possess them, then He is even more worthy (awlā wa aḥrā) of being free from the impossibility of possessing them altogether. This is because, assuming He is capable of possessing them, the absence of both opposites is precluded, and being described with imperfections (an-naqā'is) is impossible for Him; therefore, He must be described with attributes of perfection (ṣifāt al-kamāl).

Conversely, assuming He is incapable of possessing them, He could be described neither with attributes of perfection nor with attributes of imperfection. This latter scenario is even more profoundly impossible. Thus, it is established that His possession of these attributes is possible and, indeed, necessary for Him, which is the required conclusion. This argument is exceedingly sound.

Fifth Argument: It can be said [to the objectors]: You define the opposition of privation and possession (al-'adam wa al-malakah) in terms of a subject being capable of possessing the attribute. If by 'capability' (imkān) you mean external possibility (al-imkān al-khārijī)—that is, knowing that the attribute exists in external reality [in some subject]—then this definition is flawed for two reasons: Firstly: It would require you to assert that inanimate objects (al-jāmidāt) cannot be described as either living or dead, nor as speaking or silent. This is indeed your position, but it is merely a technical convention (iṣṭilāḥ maḥḍ). It would also mean you cannot describe these inanimate objects with death (mawt) or silence (ṣamt). Yet, the Qur'an does precisely this. Allah Almighty says: {And those they invoke besides Allah create nothing, but are themselves created. (They are) dead, not alive, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.} [An-Naḥl: 20-21]. This refers to idols (al-aṣnām), which are inanimate objects, yet they are described as 'dead' (amwāt). Furthermore, the Arabs classify property into ḥayawān (living beings) and mawatān (non-living things). Lexicographers state: Al-Mawatān (with vowels) is the opposite of al-ḥayawān. It is said: 'Buy mawatān, not ḥayawān,' meaning, 'Buy land and houses, not slaves and livestock.' They also said: Al-mawāt is that which has no soul (rūḥ). If it is argued that land is called mawāt (dead) only in relation to its potential for iḥyā' (revival, cultivation), the response is: This implies that 'life' (al-ḥayāh) is broader than just animal life, and that inanimate objects can be described with a form of life if they are capable of cultivation and development. Similarly, muteness (al-kharas) is the opposite of speech (an-nuṭq), yet the Arabs say:

'Laban akhras' (mute milk), meaning thick yogurt that makes no sound in the container; 'saḥābah kharsā' (a mute cloud), one without thunder or lightning; 'alam akhras' (a mute mountain peak) if no echo is heard from it. It is also said, 'katībah kharsā' (a mute battalion). Abū 'Ubaydah explained this as one that is silent due to the abundance of armor, lacking the usual clatter (faḳāqi'). Even more pertinent are silence (aṣ-ṣamt) and quietness (as-sukūt), which describe one capable of speech who refrains from it, unlike muteness (al-kharas), which is an inability to speak. Despite this distinction, the Arabs

say, 'Mā lahu ṣāmit wa lā nāṭiq' (He has neither silent nor speaking [possessions]), where ṣāmit (silent) refers to gold and silver, and nāṭiq (speaking) refers to camels and sheep. Ṣāmit milk is thick yogurt. Ṣamūt refers to armor that becomes silent when no sound is heard from it. They also refer to an animal as 'ajmā' (non-Arab/non-articulate) and kharsā' (mute) for that which does not speak and is not normally capable of speech, hence the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: {Injury caused by an animal (al-'ajmā') entails no liability (jubār)}. Likewise, regarding blindness (al-'amyā'), the Arabs say: 'amā al-mawju ya'mī aman' (the wave became blind) when it casts forth debris and foam. 'Al-A'mayān' (the two blind ones) refers to a torrent of floodwater and a rampaging camel. 'Amā 'alayhi al-amr' means the matter became obscure/confused for him, hence Allah's statement: {But the relevant reports will be obscured (fa-'amiyat) for them that Day} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 66]. While some of these examples might be interpreted as the absence of something the subject is capable of possessing (like sound), others clearly involve subjects incapable [of the positive attribute], such as the 'death' of idols. Secondly: Inanimate objects (al-jāmidāt) are indeed capable of possessing these attributes [like life], for Allah, Glorified is He, is able to create life in inanimate objects, just as He transformed the staff of Mūsā into a serpent that swallowed the ropes and staffs [of the magicians].

Since this is within the realm of possibility (imkān al-'ādāt, possibility according to customary norms, contrasted with logical impossibility), and indeed known through mass transmission (tawātur), and you yourselves [the objectors] affirm such possibilities in many instances. If inanimate objects can possibly possess life and its corollaries, it is established that all existent beings (al-mawjūdāt) can potentially possess these attributes. Therefore, the Creator is even more worthy (awlā) of this potentiality. If, however, by 'capability' you mean conceptual possibility (al-imkān adh-dhihni)—which is the absence of knowledge of impossibility—then this certainly applies to Allah, for there is no known reason why His possession of Hearing, Sight, and Speech would be impossible.

Sixth Argument: Let us grant, for argument's sake, that knowledge of external possibility is required. The possibility of an attribute for a subject can be known sometimes through its existence in that subject, or through its existence in a similar subject (naẓīr), or through its existence in something less worthy of it than the subject in question. It is well-known that Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, and Speech are established attributes for created existent beings and are possible for them. Therefore, their possibility for the Creator Almighty is even more fitting and appropriate (awlā wa aḥrā), especially since they are attributes of perfection (ṣifāt kamāl), and He is capable of possessing attributes. Since these attributes are possible for Him, if He did not possess them, He would necessarily possess their opposites (imperfections).

Seventh Argument: The mere negation (salb) of these attributes (Hearing, Sight, Speech) constitutes an intrinsic imperfection (naqṣ li-dhātihi), regardless of whether this negation is explicitly termed blindness, deafness, and muteness or not. Knowledge of this is self-evident (ḍarūrī). If we imagine two existent beings, one of whom hears, sees, and speaks, while the other does not, the first is undoubtedly more perfect (akmal) than the second. This is why Allah, Glorified is He, condemned those who worship entities devoid of these attributes. He relates concerning Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (peace be upon him): {Why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and cannot benefit you at all?} [Maryam: 42].

Also regarding his story: {So ask them, if they are able to speak!} [Al-Anbiyā': 63]. And Allah relates his words: {'Do they hear you when you call?' Or do they benefit you, or do

they harm?' They said, 'Rather, we found our fathers doing thus.' He said, 'Then do you see what you have been worshipping, You and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds.} [Ash-Shu'arā': 72-77]. Similarly, in the story of Mūsā (peace be upon him) regarding the calf: {Did they not see that it could not speak to them or guide them to a way? They took it [for worship] and were wrongdoers.} [Al-A'rāf: 148]. And Allah Almighty states: {And Allah presents an example: two men, one of them mute (abkam), unable to do anything, and he is a burden upon his master; wherever he directs him, he brings no good. Is he equal to one who commands justice and is on a straight path?} [An-Naḥl: 76]. Here, He contrasts the mute, incapable one with the one who commands justice and is on a straight path.

## Section

As for the second fundamental principle – which is Tawḥīd (Oneness) in acts of worship, encompassing belief in both the Divine Law (Shar') and the Divine Decree (Qadar) together – we say: It is imperative to believe in Allāh's creation and His command. Thus, it is obligatory to believe that Allāh is the Creator of all things, its Lord, and its Sovereign; that He has power over all things; that whatever He wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be; and that there is no power and no strength except through Allāh. He knew what would be before it came to be, He decreed all measures (Maqādir), and He wrote them down as He willed. As Allāh Almighty says: {Do you not know that Allāh knows whatever is in the heaven and the earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed, that is easy for Allāh.} [Al-Ḥajj: 70]. And it is related in the Ṣaḥīḥ (authentic collection) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {Indeed, Allāh decreed the measures of all creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was upon the water.} [Muslim, The Book of Divine Decree, 2653].

It is also obligatory to believe that Allāh commanded that He alone be worshipped, associating no partner with Him, just as He created the Jinn and humankind for His worship. It is for this purpose that He sent His Messengers and revealed His Books. His worship entails perfect humility and love for Him, and that, in turn, entails perfect obedience to Him. {Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allāh.} [An-Nisā': 80]. And Allāh Almighty has said: {And We sent no Messenger except to be obeyed by Allāh's permission.} [An-Nisā': 64]. And He said: {Say [O Muḥammad], 'If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins.} [Āl 'Imrān: 31]. And He said: {And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers: Did We ever appoint deities to be worshipped besides the Most Merciful?} [Az-Zukhruf: 45]. {And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me.} [Al-Anbiyā': 25]. And Allāh Almighty said: {He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you [O Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'īsā – to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allāh is that to which you invite them.} [Ash-Shūrā: 13]. And He said: {O messengers, eat from the good foods and work righteousness. Indeed, I, of what you do, am Knowing. And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me.} [Al-Mu'minūn: 51-52].

Thus, He commanded the Messengers to establish the Dīn (religion, way of life) and not be divided therein. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in the authentic Hadith: {'Indeed, we assembly of Prophets, our religion is one. The Prophets are paternal brothers (sharing the same father but having different mothers, signifying one core religion with varying specific laws). And indeed, I am the closest of people to the son of

Maryam (ʿĪsā), for there was no prophet between me and him.} [Agreed upon: Al-Bukhārī, 3443; Muslim, 2365]. This religion is the Dīn of Islām, besides which Allāh accepts no other religion, neither from the earlier peoples nor from the later ones. For indeed, all the Prophets were upon the religion of Islām. Allāh Almighty said concerning Nūh: {And recite to them the news of Nūh, when he said to his people, 'O my people, if my standing here and my reminding you of the signs of Allāh has become difficult for you, then upon Allāh I have relied. So resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates...' until His words: {...and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims (those who submit).} [Yūnus: 71-72].

And He said concerning Ibrāhīm: {And who would be averse to the religion of Ibrāhīm except one who makes a fool of himself?} until His words: {When his Lord said to him, 'Submit (Aslim),' he said, 'I have submitted (aslamtu) to the Lord of the worlds.'} until His words: {...so do not die except while you are Muslims.} [Al-Baqarah: 130-133]. And He said concerning Mūsā: {'O my people, if you have believed in Allāh, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims.} [Yūnus: 84]. And He said regarding the account of the Messiah (ʿĪsā): {And [remember] when I inspired to the disciples, 'Believe in Me and in My Messenger [ʿĪsā]. They said, 'We have believed, and bear witness that indeed we are Muslims.} [Al-Mā'idah: 111]. And He said concerning the Prophets who came before: {...by which the Prophets who submitted themselves (aslamū) judged for those who were Jews...} [Al-Mā'idah: 44]. And He said concerning Bilqīs (the Queen of Sheba) that she said: {'My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Sulaymān to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.} [An-Naml: 44].

Thus, Islām entails submission (Istislām) to Allāh alone. Whoever submits to Him and to another alongside Him is a Mushrik (polytheist). And whoever does not submit to Him is arrogant (Mustakbir) towards His worship. Both the one who associates partners with Him (Mushrik) and the one who is arrogant towards His worship (Mustakbir) is a Kāfir (disbeliever). Submission to Him alone entails worshipping Him alone and obeying Him alone. This, then, is the religion of Islām, besides which Allāh accepts no other. This submission is actualized by obeying Him at all times through performing what He has commanded at that specific time. For instance, when He commanded at the beginning [of Islām in Madīnah] to face the Rock [in Jerusalem for prayer], and then later commanded us to face the Ka'bah: each of these actions, when it was commanded, was part of Islām. The Dīn (religion) is obedience and worship directed towards Him in both actions; it was merely a variation in some forms of the action, namely the direction faced by the one praying (Wajh al-Muṣallā). Likewise, the religion of the Messengers is one, even if their specific Law (Shir'ah), Methodology (Minhāj), direction (Wajh), and rites (Mansak) varied. Such variation does not preclude the religion from being one, just as changes within the Sharī'ah of a single Messenger (like the change of Qiblah) did not preclude his religion from being one.

Allāh Almighty made it part of the religion of the Messengers that the earlier among them would give glad tidings of the later among them and believe in him, and the later among them would confirm the earlier among them and believe in him. Allāh Almighty said: {And [mention, O Muḥammad], when Allāh took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.' [Allāh] said, 'Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?' They said, 'We have acknowledged.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.} [Āl 'Imrān: 81]. Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'Allāh never sent a prophet except that He took a covenant from him that if Muḥammad were sent while he [the prophet] was alive, he would surely believe in him and support him. And

He commanded him [the prophet] to take a covenant from his nation that if Muḥammad were sent while they were alive, they would surely believe in him and support him.'

Allāh Almighty said: {And We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a guardian (muhaymin) over it. So judge between them by what Allāh has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law (shir'ah) and a method (minhāj).} [Al-Mā'idah: 48]. And He made faith indivisible and declared disbelief (Kufr) upon anyone who says they believe in some [Prophets or Books] and disbelieve in others. Allāh Almighty said: {Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allāh and His messengers and say, 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others,' and wish to adopt a way in between – Those are the disbelievers, truly.} [An-Nisā': 150-151]. And He said: {So, do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment...} until His words: {...what you do.} [Al-Baqarah: 85].

And He has told us: {Say, [O believers], 'We have believed in Allāh and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Ishāq and Ya'qūb and the Descendants [al-Asbāṭ], and what was given to Mūsā and 'Īsā and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.' So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allāh will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.} [Al-Baqarah: 136-137]. Thus, He commanded us to say: 'We believe in all of this, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him.' Therefore, whoever receives the message of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and does not affirm what he came with is neither a Muslim nor a believer; rather, he is a Kāfir (disbeliever), even if he claims to be a Muslim or a believer.

As it is mentioned that when Allāh Almighty revealed: {And whoever desires other than Islām as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 85], the Jews and Christians said: 'Then we are Muslims.' So Allāh revealed: {And [due] to Allāh from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way.} [Āl 'Imrān: 97]. They said: 'We will not perform Hajj.' So Allāh Almighty said: {But whoever disbelieves – then indeed, Allāh is free from need of the worlds.} [Āl 'Imrān: 97]. For submission (Istislām) to Allāh is not complete except by acknowledging what is due to Him from His servants, such as the pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House. Just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: '{Islām is built upon five [pillars]: the testimony that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh (Shahādah an lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa anna Muḥammadan Rasūlullāh), establishing the prayer (Iqām aṣ-Ṣalāh), giving the Zakāh (obligatory charity), fasting Ramaḍān (Ṣawm Ramaḍān), and pilgrimage to the House (Ḥajj al-Bayt).}' [Agreed upon: Al-Bukhārī, 8; Muslim, 16]. This is why when the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood at 'Arafah [during his farewell pilgrimage], Allāh Almighty revealed: {This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islām as religion.} [Al-Mā'idah: 3].

People have disputed regarding the previous followers of Mūsā and 'Īsā – were they Muslims or not? This is a semantic dispute. For the specific Islām which Allāh sent Muḥammad (peace be upon him) with, which includes the Sharī'ah of the Qur'ān, is followed only by the Ummah (nation) of Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Today, when used without qualification, 'Islām' refers to this specific religion. However, the general

Islām, which encompasses every Sharī'ah (divine law) that Allāh sent a Prophet with, includes the Islām (submission) of every nation that followed a Prophet among the Prophets.

The absolute foundation of Islām is the testimony that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh). All Messengers were sent with this. As Allāh Almighty said: {And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allāh and avoid Ṭāghūt (false deities).'} [An-Naḥl: 36]. And He said: {And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me.'} [Al-Anbiyā': 25]. And He said concerning Al-Khalīl (the intimate friend of Allāh, Ibrāhīm): {And [mention, O Muḥammad], when Ibrāhīm said to his father and his people, 'Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship, Except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.' And he made it a word remaining among his descendants that perhaps they might return [to it].} [Az-Zukhruf: 26-28]. And Allāh Almighty said concerning him: {'Then do you see what you have been worshipping, You and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds.'} [Ash-Shu'arā': 75-77].

Allāh Almighty said: {There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allāh. We have rejected you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allāh alone.'} [Al-Mumtaḥanah: 4]. And He said: {And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers: Did We ever appoint deities to be worshipped besides the Most Merciful?} [Az-Zukhruf: 45]. And He mentioned concerning His Messengers, such as Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and others, that they said to their people: {Worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him.} [e.g., Al-A'rāf: 59, 65, 73]. And He said concerning the People of the Cave: {Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. And We bound their hearts firmly when they stood up and said, 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never will we invoke besides Him any deity. We would have certainly spoken, then, an excessive transgression.'} until His words: {...So who is more unjust than one who invents about Allāh a lie?} [Al-Kahf: 13-15].

And He, the Glorified, has said: {Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association with Him [Shirk], but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.} [An-Nisā': 48, 116]. He mentioned this in two places in His Book. And He has explained in His Book Shirk (polytheism) involving angels, Shirk involving Prophets, Shirk involving celestial bodies, and Shirk involving idols – and the root of Shirk is associating partners through the agency of Shayṭān (Satan). He said concerning the Christians: {They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allāh, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Maryam. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him.} [At-Tawbah: 31].

And Allāh Almighty said: {And [beware the Day] when Allāh will say, 'O 'Īsā, Son of Maryam, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allāh?' He will say, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me – to worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord.'} [Al-Mā'idah: 116-117]. And Allāh Almighty said: {It is not for a human [prophet] that Allāh should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, 'Be servants to me rather than Allāh.'} until His words: {Nor could he order

you to take the angels and prophets as lords. Would he order you to disbelief after you had been Muslims?} [Āl 'Imrān: 79-80].

Thus, He clarified that taking angels and prophets as lords constitutes Kufr (disbelief). It is well-known that no one among creation has ever claimed that the Prophets, scholars, monks, or the Messiah son of Maryam participated with Allāh in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Indeed, no human has ever claimed that the universe has two creators equal in attributes and actions. Nor has any human being ever affirmed a deity equal to Allāh in all His attributes. Rather, the vast majority of those who associate partners with Allāh (Mushrikīn) acknowledge that His 'partner' is not like Him. In fact, most of them acknowledge that the 'partner' – whether an angel, a prophet, a celestial body, or an idol – is owned by Him. This is exemplified by the polytheistic Arabs who used to say in their Talbiyah (chant during pilgrimage): 'Labbayka lā sharīka lak, illā sharīkan huwa lak, tamlikuhu wa mā malak' [Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, except a partner that belongs to You; You own him and whatever he owns]. In contrast, the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) proclaimed the Talbiyah of pure Tawhīd, saying: '{Labbayk Allāhumma Labbayk, Labbayka lā sharīka laka Labbayk, Innal-ḥamda wan-ni'mata laka wal-mulk, lā sharīka lak}' [Here I am at Your service, O Allāh, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Indeed, all praise, grace, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner]. [Agreed upon: Al-Bukhārī, 1549; Muslim, 1184].

The authors who compiled the doctrines (Maqālāt) of earlier and later peoples regarding religious groups (Milal), sects (Niḥal), opinions (Ārā'), and religions (Diyānāt) did not report anyone affirming a partner who participated with Allāh in the creation of all creatures, nor one who was similar to Him in all attributes. Indeed, the most significant example they reported in this regard is the view of the Thanawīyyah (Dualists), who posit two principles: 'Light' and 'Darkness,' claiming that Light created good and Darkness created evil. They then mentioned two views regarding Darkness: first, that it is originated, thus being part of His creation; second, that it is eternal, but it only produces evil, making it deficient in its essence, attributes, and effects compared to Light.

He, the Glorified, has informed us about the polytheists' acknowledgment that Allāh is the Creator of all creatures, as He clarified in His Book. He said: {And if you asked them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they would surely say, 'Allāh.' Say, 'Then have you considered what you invoke besides Allāh? If Allāh intended me harm, are they removers of His harm; or if He intended me mercy, are they withholders of His mercy?' Say, 'Sufficient for me is Allāh; upon Him rely the reliant.'} [Az-Zumar: 38]. And He Almighty said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?' They will say, 'To Allāh.' Say, 'Then will you not remember?' Say, 'Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say, '[They belong] to Allāh.' Say, 'Then will you not fear Him?'} until His words: {...Then how are you deluded?} continuing to His words: {Allāh has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought supremacy over others. Exalted is Allāh above what they describe!} [Al-Mu'minūn: 84-89, 91]. And He said: {And most of them believe not in Allāh except while they associate others with Him.} [Yūsuf: 106].

Through this and other evidence, the error that has occurred regarding the concept designated as Tawhīd becomes known. For the majority of the Mutakallimūn (scholastic theologians) who establish Tawhīd in their books of Kalām (theological rhetoric) and rational inquiry, their utmost achievement is to define Tawhīd under three categories. They say: He is One in His Essence, having no division; One in His Attributes, having no

resemblance; and One in His Actions, having no partner. The most prominent of these three categories for them is the third: the Tawḥīd of Actions (Tawḥīd al-Af'āl), meaning that the Creator of the universe is One. They argue for this using proofs they mention, such as the argument from mutual prevention (Dalālat at-Tamānu') and others. They assume that this is the required Tawḥīd, and that this is the meaning of our statement *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh), to the extent that they may define the meaning of *Ilāhiyyah* (Divinity) as simply the power to originate creation (al-Qudrah 'alā al-Ikhtirā').

It is well-known that the polytheistic Arabs to whom Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was first sent did not disagree with him on this point. Rather, they affirmed that Allāh is the Creator of all things; they even affirmed the Divine Decree (Qadar) as well. Despite this, they were still *Mushrikūn* (polytheists). Thus, it is clear that there is essentially no one in the world who disputes the core of this type [of Tawḥīd, i.e., *Rubūbiyyah*]. The most that can be said is that some people attribute the creation of certain existing things to other than Allāh, like the *Qadariyyah* (those who deny the Divine Decree regarding human actions) and others. However, even these groups affirm that Allāh is the Creator of His servants and the Creator of their abilities, even if they say that the servants create their own actions. Likewise, the philosophers, naturalists, and astrologers who claim that some created things originate certain phenomena, while affirming the existence of the Maker, still consider these active agents to be crafted and created; they do not claim they are independent of the Creator or partners with Him in creation.

As for one who denies the Maker altogether, that person is a denier (*Jāḥid*), a negator (*Mu'aṭṭil*) of the Maker, like the position outwardly proclaimed by Fir'awn (Pharaoh). Our discussion now, however, is with those who associate partners with Allāh (*Mushrikīn*) while still affirming His existence. For this Tawḥīd that they [the *Mutakallimūn*] have established [i.e., *Tawḥīd ar-Rubūbiyyah*] is not disputed by these polytheists; rather, they affirm it, while remaining polytheists, as established by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and scholarly consensus (*Ijmā'*), and as is necessarily known from the religion of Islām.

Likewise, regarding the second category – their statement: 'He has no resemblance in His Attributes' – there is no nation that affirmed an eternal being identical to Him in essence, whether they claimed it shared [in creation] or claimed it had no action. Rather, whoever likened anything from His creation to Him only likened it in some aspects. It is known through reason that it is impossible for Him to have a likeness among created beings that shares with Him in what is necessary, permissible, or impossible for Him, as that would necessitate combining contradictories, as previously discussed. It is also known through reason that for any two self-subsisting existent beings, there must be some shared aspect between them, such as their agreement in the concept of existence, self-subsistence, essence, and the like. Denying this necessitates pure negation (*Ta'ṭil al-Maḥḍ*). It is essential to affirm the unique characteristics of Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah*), and this has been discussed previously.

Then, the *Jahmiyyah* – from the *Mu'tazilah* and others – incorporated the negation of Attributes (*Nafy aṣ-Ṣifāt*) into the concept designated as Tawḥīd. Consequently, concerning one who says that Allāh possesses Knowledge or Power, or that He will be seen in the Hereafter, or that the Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh, revealed and uncreated, they [the *Jahmiyyah*/*Mu'tazilah*] declare: 'He is a *Mushabbih* (one who commits anthropomorphism), not a *Muwaḥḥid* (one who affirms Tawḥīd).' The extremist philosophers and the *Qarāmiṭah* (an *Ismā'īlī* sect) went further than them, negating His Beautiful Names (*Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*) and saying: 'Whoever says Allāh is All-Knowing (*'Alīm*), All-Powerful (*Qadīr*), Almighty (*'Azīz*), All-Wise (*Ḥakīm*) is a *Mushabbih*, not a

Muwaḥḥid.' And the extremists among extremists (Ghulāt al-Ghulāt) went even further and said: 'He cannot be described with either negation or affirmation, because in both lies a form of likening (Tashbīh) Him [to something].' All of these groups fell into a type of Tashbīh that is worse than what they fled from. For they likened Him to impossible things, non-existent things, and inanimate objects, fleeing – according to their claim – from likening Him to living beings.

It is well-known that these Attributes affirmed for Allāh are not affirmed for Him in the same manner that they are affirmed for any created being whatsoever. He, Glorified and Exalted, {There is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11] – neither in His Essence, nor in His Attributes, nor in His Actions. Therefore, there is no difference between affirming the Essence and affirming the Attributes. If affirming the Essence does not necessitate affirming similarity to other essences, then affirming the Attributes does not necessitate affirming similarity to Him in that regard. Thus, these Jahmiyyah Mu'aṭṭilah (negators) designate this [negation] as Tawḥīd, label its opposite as Tashbīh (anthropomorphism), and call themselves Al-Muwaḥḥidūn (The Monotheists).

Likewise, the third category – their statement: 'He is One, having no division (lā qasīma lah) in His Essence,' or 'no parts (lā juz'a lah),' or 'no portions (lā ba'da lah)' – is an ambiguous expression (lafz mujmal). For Allāh, the Glorified, is Aḥad (One), Ṣamad (The Eternal Refuge), He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent [Al-Ikhlāṣ: 1-4]. Thus, it is impossible for Him to be divided, fragmented, or composed of parts. However, under this expression, they [the Mutakallimūn, particularly the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah] include the negation of His Highness ('Uluww) above His Throne, His distinctness (Mubāyanah) from His creation, His separation from them, and similar concepts that necessitate His negation and denial (Ta'ṭīl). And they designate this [negation] as part of Tawḥīd.

It has thus become clear that what they designate as Tawḥīd contains elements that are true and elements that are false. Even if all of it were true, if the polytheists were to affirm all of that, they would still not exit from the Shirk (polytheism) with which they are described in the Qur'ān and on account of which the Messenger (peace be upon him) fought them. Rather, they must acknowledge that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh). The intended meaning of Al-Ilāh (the Deity) is not merely 'the one capable of originating creation,' as assumed by some leading Mutakallimūn, who thought that Ilāhiyyah (Divinity) is solely the power to originate creation and nothing else, and that whoever affirms that Allāh alone is the One capable of originating creation has thereby testified that Lā ilāha illā Huwa (There is no god worthy of worship except Him). For the polytheists used to affirm this, yet they remained polytheists, as previously explained.

Rather, the true Ilāh (Deity) is the One who alone deserves to be worshipped. Thus, He is an Ilāh in the sense of being a Ma'lūh (One who is worshipped), not an Ilāh merely in the sense of being an Ālih (One who has the power [to create]). Tawḥīd is that Allāh alone is worshipped, without any partner. And Shirk (polytheism) is to set up another ilāh (object of worship) alongside Allāh.

Since it is clear that the utmost that these rational theologians (Nuzzār) – those who affirm Qadar and attribute themselves to the Sunnah – establish is merely the Tawḥīd of Lordship (Tawḥīd ar-Rubūbiyyah), meaning that Allāh is the Lord, Sovereign, and Creator of everything, and despite this, the polytheists affirmed this while remaining polytheists; likewise, for various groups among the people of Taṣawwuf (Sufism) and those who claim Ma'rīfah (gnosis), Taḥqīq (realization), and Tawḥīd: the pinnacle of Tawḥīd for them is the witnessing (Shuhūd) of this very Tawḥīd [of Lordship]. It is to witness that

Allāh is the Lord of all things, its Sovereign, and its Creator. This is especially so when the gnostic ('Ārif) becomes absent from his own existence through awareness of the One Who Exists, absent from his own witnessing through awareness of the One Witnessed, absent from his own knowing through awareness of the One Known, and enters into the state of annihilation (Fanā') within the Tawḥīd of Lordship, such that what is transient perishes and He Who is Eternal remains. This, for them, is the ultimate goal beyond which there is no other.

It is well-known that this is merely the realization of the Tawḥīd that the polytheists already affirmed. A person does not become a Muslim merely by affirming this Tawḥīd, let alone become a Walī (friend) of Allāh or one of the masters among the Awliyā' (plural of Walī). One group among the people of Taṣawwuf and Ma'rifah establishes this Tawḥīd [of Lordship] while also affirming the Attributes, thus experiencing Fanā' (annihilation) in the Tawḥīd of Lordship while affirming the Creator of the universe who is distinct (Mubāyin) from His creation. Others combine this [witnessing of Rubūbiyyah] with the negation of Attributes, thereby falling into Ta'tīl (negation/denial) alongside this state; this is worse than the condition of many polytheists. Jahm [ibn Ṣafwān, founder of the Jahmiyyah] used to negate the Attributes and uphold Jabr (fatalism/compulsion). This [Sufi state combined with negation] is thus a realization of Jahm's view. However, if one affirms the Command (Amr), Prohibition (Nahy), Reward (Thawāb), and Punishment ('Iqāb), they differ from the polytheists in this respect. But Jahm and his followers upheld Irjā' (the doctrine that faith excludes deeds), so the significance of Command, Prohibition, Reward, and Punishment is weakened in their view.

The Najjāriyyah, the Ḍirāriyyah, and others approach Jahm's views on the issues of Qadar and Īmān (Faith), while also being close to him in negating Attributes. The Kullābiyyah and the Ashā'irah are better than these groups regarding the chapter on Attributes, for they affirm the rational Attributes (aṣ-Ṣifāt al-'Aqliyyah) for Allāh, and their leading scholars generally affirm the textual Attributes (aṣ-Ṣifāt al-Khabariyyah), as their views are detailed elsewhere. However, regarding the chapter on Qadar and the issues of Names and Rulings (Al-Asmā' wal-Aḥkām), their views are similar [to the Jahmiyyah]. The Kullābiyyah are the followers of Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'īd ibn Kullāb, whose path Al-Ash'arī followed. The companions of Ibn Kullāb, like Al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, Abul-'Abbās al-Qalānīsī, and their likes, are better than the [later] Ashā'irah in both these aspects [Attributes and Qadar/Names/Rulings]. Thus, the closer a person is to the Salaf (pious predecessors) and the Imāms, the higher and more excellent his view will be.

As for the Karrāmiyyah, their view on Īmān (Faith) is a reprehensible innovation, unprecedented before them, as they defined Īmān as merely the statement of the tongue, even if accompanied by the heart's lack of affirmation. Thus, they consider the hypocrite (Munāfiq) a believer (Mu'min), although they say he will abide eternally in the Fire. They thus differed with the consensus (Jamā'ah) regarding the name (Ism - i.e., calling a hypocrite a believer) but not the ruling (Ḥukm - i.e., his fate in the Hereafter). However, regarding Attributes, Qadar, and the Divine Threat (Wa'īd), they are closer [to the Sunnah] than most Kalām factions whose views oppose the Sunnah.

As for the Mu'tazilah, they negate the Attributes and approach the view of Jahm, but they deny Qadar. Although they emphasize the Command, Prohibition, Promise (Wa'd), and Threat (Wa'īd), and go to extremes therein, they deny the Divine Decree (Qadar). Thus, they possess a type of Shirk from this angle [by attributing creative power over actions to humans]. Affirming the Command, Prohibition, Promise, and Threat while denying Qadar is better than affirming Qadar while denying the Command, Prohibition, Promise, and Threat. This is why during the time of the Companions (Ṣaḥābah) and their successors

(Tābi'in), there was no one who denied the Command, Prohibition, Promise, and Threat, whereas the Qadariyyah had emerged among them, just as the Khawārij (specifically the Ḥarūriyyah) had emerged. Innovations (Bida') initially appear in their subtler forms, and whenever those who uphold the light of Prophethood weaken, innovation strengthens.

Therefore, those Sufis who witness the Cosmic Reality (Al-Ḥaqīqah al-Kawniyyah, i.e., focus solely on Allāh's Lordship and Decree) while disregarding the Command and Prohibition are worse than the Qadariyyah Mu'tazilah and their likes. The latter [Mu'tazilah] resemble the Majūs (Zoroastrians, perhaps due to the dualistic implication of denying Allāh's creation of evil actions), while the former [Sufis disregarding the Sharī'ah] resemble the polytheists who said: {Had Allāh willed, we would not have associated partners [with Him], nor would our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything.} [Al-An'ām: 148]. And the polytheists (Mushrikūn) are worse than the Majūs. This is a tremendous principle that a Muslim must know, for it is the foundation of Islām by which the essence of faith (Aṣl al-Īmān) is distinguished from the people of disbelief (Ahl al-Kufr). It is the belief in the Oneness (Waḥdāniyyah) and the Messengership (Risālah): the testimony that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh) and that Muḥammadun Rasūlullāh (Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh). Many people have fallen into deficiency regarding the reality of these two principles, or one of them, while assuming they have reached the pinnacle of realization (Taḥqīq), Tawḥīd, knowledge ('Ilm), and gnosis (Ma'rifah).

Thus, a polytheist's affirmation that Allāh is the Lord of all things, its Sovereign, and its Creator will not save him from Allāh's punishment if it is not coupled with his affirmation that Lā ilāha illā Allāh – meaning none deserves worship except Him – and that Muḥammadun Rasūlullāh – which necessitates believing him in what he reported and obeying him in what he commanded. Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate on these two fundamental principles:

The First Principle: Tawḥīd of Divinity (Tawḥīd al-Ilāhiyyah): For He, the Glorified, informed about the polytheists, as mentioned earlier, that they affirmed intermediaries (Wasā'it) between themselves and Allāh, invoking them and taking them as intercessors (Shufa'ā') without Allāh's permission. Allāh Almighty said: {And they worship other than Allāh that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allāh.' Say, 'Do you inform Allāh of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?' Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him!} [Yūnus: 18]. Thus, He informed that those who took these [beings] as intercessors are polytheists (Mushrikūn).

Allāh Almighty related concerning the believer mentioned in Sūrah Yāsīn: {And why should I not worship He who created me and to whom you will be returned? Should I take other than Him deities [whose] intercession will not avail me at all if the Most Merciful intends for me some adversity, nor can they save me? Indeed, I would then be in manifest error. Indeed, I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me.} [Yāsīn: 22-25]. And Allāh Almighty said: {And you have certainly come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you. And We do not see with you your 'intercessors' whom you claimed that they were partners [with Allāh] among you. It has [all] been severed between you, and lost from you is what you used to claim.} [Al-An'ām: 94]. Thus, He, the Glorified, informed concerning their intercessors that they [the polytheists] claimed they were partners [with Allāh] regarding them.

Allāh Almighty said: {Or have they taken other than Allāh as intercessors? Say, 'Even though they do not possess [power over] anything, nor do they reason?' Say, 'To Allāh

belongs [all] intercession entirely. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned.'} [Az-Zumar: 43-44]. And He said: {...you have not besides Him any protector or intercessor.} [As-Sajdah: 4]. And He said: {And warn by it [the Qur'ān] those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord – for them besides Him will be no protector and no intercessor...} [Al-An'ām: 51]. And He said: {...Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?...} [Al-Baqarah: 255].

Allāh Almighty said: {And they say, 'The Most Merciful has taken a son.' Exalted is He! Rather, they [those they attribute as offspring, like angels] are [but] honored servants. They cannot precede Him in speech, and they act by His command. He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they cannot intercede except for one whom He approves, and they, from fear of Him, are apprehensive.} [Al-Anbiyā': 26-28]. And He said: {And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except after Allāh has given permission for whom He wills and approves.} [An-Najm: 26]. And He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allāh.' They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they have therein no share [of partnership], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant. And intercession does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits.} [Saba': 22-23].

Allāh Almighty said: {Say, 'Invoke those whom you claim [as deities] besides Him, for they do not possess the ability to remove adversity from you or to transfer it.' Those whom they invoke seek means of access (Wasīlah) to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.} [Al-Isrā': 56-57]. A group among the Salaf (pious predecessors) said: 'There were people who used to invoke 'Uzayr, the Messiah, and the angels, so Allāh revealed this verse,' clarifying therein that the angels and Prophets themselves seek nearness to Allāh, hope for His mercy, and fear His punishment.

Part of realizing Tawḥīd is to know that Allāh Almighty has affirmed rights exclusively for Himself, in which no created being shares, such as worship ('Ibādah), reliance (Tawakkul), fear (Khawf), awe (Khashyah), and piety (Taqwá). As Allāh Almighty said: {Do not make [as equal] with Allāh another deity and [thereby] become censured and forsaken.} [Al-Isrā': 22]. And He said: {Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book in truth. So worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion.} [Az-Zumar: 2]. And He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'Indeed, I have been commanded to worship Allāh, sincere to Him in religion.'} [Az-Zumar: 11]. And He said: {Say, 'Then is it other than Allāh that you order me to worship, O ignorant ones?'} until His words: {...be among the grateful.} [Az-Zumar: 64-66]. And every Messenger says to his people: {Worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him.} [e.g., Al-A'rāf: 59].

Allāh Almighty said regarding reliance (Tawakkul): {And upon Allāh rely, if you should be believers.} [Al-Mā'idah: 23]. {And upon Allāh let the believers rely.} [e.g., Āl 'Imrān: 122]. And He said: {Say, 'Sufficient for me is Allāh; upon Him rely the reliant.'} [Az-Zumar: 38]. And Allāh Almighty said: {If only they had been satisfied with what Allāh and His Messenger gave them and said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh; Allāh will give us of His bounty, and [so will] His Messenger. Indeed, we are desirous toward Allāh.} [At-Tawbah: 59]. Notice that regarding the giving (Al-Itiān), He said: {what Allāh and His Messenger gave them}, but regarding sufficiency (Tawakkul), He said: {and said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh (Ḥasbunā Allāh)}, and did not add 'and His Messenger.' This is because the giving refers to the legislative bestowal, which entails the permissibility and lawfulness conveyed by the Messenger – for the lawful (Ḥalāl) is what He permitted, the unlawful (Ḥarām) is

what He forbade, and the religion (Dīn) is what He legislated. Allāh Almighty said: {And whatever the Messenger has given you – take it; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from.} [Al-Ḥashr: 7].

As for Al-Ḥasb, it means the Sufficient (Al-Kāfi), and Allāh alone is sufficient for His servant. As Allāh Almighty said: {Those to whom people said, 'Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.' But it [only] increased them in faith, and they said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.'} [Āl 'Imrān: 173]. Thus, He alone is sufficient for all of them. And Allāh Almighty said: {O Prophet, sufficient for you is Allāh and for whoever follows you of the believers.} [Al-Anfāl: 64]. This means: Sufficient for you, and sufficient for those believers who follow you, is Allāh. He is sufficient for all of you. The meaning is not that Allāh and the believers together are sufficient for you, as some mistaken individuals assume, since He alone is sufficient for His Prophet; He is his Sufficiency (Ḥasb), and there is no one alongside Him who, together with Him, constitutes sufficiency for the Messenger. This linguistic structure is like the poet's saying: 'Fa-ḥasbuka waḍ-Ḍaḥḥāka sayfun muḥannadu' [Sufficient for you and Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk is a fine Indian sword], meaning the sword is sufficient for both. And the Arabs say: 'Ḥasbuka wa Zaydan dirhamun' [Sufficient for you and Zayd is a dirham], meaning a dirham is sufficient for both you and Zayd together.

Regarding fear (Khawf), awe (Khashyah), and piety (Taqwá), He said: {And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger and fears Allāh (yakhsha Allāh) and is mindful of Him (yattaqhi) – it is those who are the attainers.} [An-Nūr: 52]. Here, He affirmed obedience for Allāh and the Messenger, but affirmed awe (Khashyah) and piety (Taqwá) for Allāh alone. Similarly, Nūḥ (peace be upon him) said: {'Indeed, I am to you a clear warner, [Saying], 'Worship Allāh, fear Him (wattaqūhu), and obey me.'} [Nūḥ: 2-3]. He designated worship ('Ibādah) and piety (Taqwá) for Allāh alone, and designated obedience (Ṭā'ah) for the Messenger; for indeed, whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh.

Allāh Almighty has said: {...so fear not the people but fear Me (wakhshawnī).} [Al-Mā'idah: 44]. And He said: {...so fear them not, but fear Me (wa khāfunī), if you are [indeed] believers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 175]. And Al-Khalīl (Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him) said: {And how should I fear what you associate while you do not fear that you have associated with Allāh that for which He has not sent down to you any authority? So which of the two parties is more worthy of security, if you should know? They who believe and do not mix their belief with wrongdoing (zulm) – those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided.} [Al-An'ām: 81-82]. It is reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥs from Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) that he said: When this verse was revealed, it distressed the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), and they said: 'Which of us has not wronged himself?' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'It is only Shirk. Have you not heard the saying of the righteous servant [Luqmān]: {Indeed, Shirk is a great wrongdoing (zulm)} [Luqmān: 13]?} [Al-Bukhārī, 32; Muslim, 124]. And Allāh Almighty said: {...then fear Me alone (farhabūnī).} [An-Naḥl: 51]. {...and fear Me alone (fattaqūnī).} [Al-Baqarah: 41].

Related to this principle is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in his sermon (Khutbah): {'Whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has indeed been guided aright, and whoever disobeys them both harms only himself and will not harm Allāh at all.} [Muslim, 870]. And he (peace be upon him) said: {'Do not say, 'What Allāh wills and Muḥammad wills' (Mā shā'a Allāhu wa shā'a Muḥammadun), but rather say, 'What Allāh wills, then what Muḥammad wills' (Mā shā'a Allāhu thumma shā'a Muḥammadun).} [Aḥmad, 23448; classed as Ṣaḥīḥ]. Thus, regarding obedience, he joined the Messenger's name with His [Allāh's] name using the conjunction 'and' (wāw). But regarding the will

(Mashī'ah), he commanded that it be joined using the conjunction 'then' (thumma). This is because obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allāh; whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh, and obedience to Allāh entails obedience to the Messenger. This is unlike the will; the will of any servant is not the will of Allāh, nor does Allāh's will necessitate the will of the servants. Rather, whatever Allāh wills comes to be, even if people do not will it; and whatever people will does not come to be, if Allāh does not will it.

The Second Principle: The Right of the Messenger (peace be upon him): It is incumbent upon us to believe in him, obey him, follow him, please him, love him, submit to his judgment, and similar obligations. Allāh Almighty said: {Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allāh.} [An-Nisā': 80]. And He said: {...while Allāh and His Messenger are more worthy that they should please Him...} [At-Tawbah: 62]. And He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and Jihād in His cause, then wait until Allāh executes His command.'} [At-Tawbah: 24]. And He said: {But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.} [An-Nisā': 65]. And He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you...'} [Āl 'Imrān: 31]. And other similar verses.

## Section

Now that this principle is established, it is fundamentally understood that one must have faith (imān) in both Allāh's creation (khalq) and His command (amr), encompassing both His decree (qaḍā') and His sacred law (shar'). The deviant groups who delve into the matter of Divine Decree (al-qadar) have divided into three factions: the Majūsiyyah (Magian-like), the Mushrikiyyah (Polytheist-like), and the Iblīsiyyah (Satanic). (1) The Majūsiyyah are those who deny Allāh's Decree (qadar), even if they affirm His commands and prohibitions. Their extremists deny Allāh's foreknowledge ('ilm) and the Preserved Tablet (al-kitāb), while their moderates deny the universality of His Will (mashī'ah), His creation (khalq), and His power (qudrah). These latter are the Mu'tazilah and those who concur with them. (2) The second faction, the Mushrikiyyah, are those who affirm the Divine Ordainment (al-qaḍā') and Decree (al-qadar) but deny the commands and prohibitions (al-amr wa al-nahy). Allāh Almighty says: {Those who associated partners with Allāh will say, 'If Allāh had willed, we would not have associated partners, nor would our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything.'} [Al-An'ām: 148]. Therefore, whoever uses the Divine Decree as a pretext to nullify the commands and prohibitions belongs to this group. This approach has become widespread among certain Sufis who lay claim to understanding the Ultimate Reality (al-ḥaqīqah). (3) The third faction, the Iblīsiyyah, are those who affirm both aspects (Decree and Law) but perceive this as a contradiction on the part of the Lord, Glorified and Exalted is He. They thus impugn His wisdom (ḥikmah) and justice ('adl), just as is reported about their progenitor, Iblīs, according to the accounts of heresiographers and narrations from the People of the Book.

The point is that these are fabrications of the people of misguidance. As for the people of guidance and success (ahl al-hudā wa al-falāḥ), they believe in both this (Allāh's Decree) and that (Allāh's Law). They believe that Allāh is the Creator of all things, its Lord (Rabb), and its Sovereign (Malīk); that whatever He wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be; that He has power over all things; that His knowledge

encompasses all things; and that He has enumerated all things in a clear register (imām mubīn). This fundamental principle affirms Allāh's knowledge, power, will, oneness (waḥdāniyyah), and Lordship (rubūbiyyah), and that He is the Creator, Lord, and Sovereign of all things – matters which are among the core tenets of faith (uṣūl al-imān). Despite this comprehensive affirmation of Allāh's power and decree, they do not deny the means (asbāb) that Allāh has created, through which He brings about effects (musabbabāt). As Allāh Almighty states: {until, when they [the clouds] carry heavy rainclouds, We drive them to a dead land, then We send down water thereby, and We bring forth thereby [some] of all the fruits.} [Al-A'rāf: 57]. And He says: {By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace} [Al-Mā'idah: 16]. And He says: {He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby.} [Al-Baqarah: 26]. Thus, He informs us that He acts through means. Whoever claims that He acts merely at the time of the means, not by them, has contradicted what the Qur'an brought and denied the faculties and natures that Allāh has created. This is akin to denying the faculties Allāh created in animals, by which the animal acts, similar to the capacity (qudrah) of the servant. Conversely, whoever attributes the power of origination (ibdā') to these means themselves has committed Shirk (associating partners with Allāh) and ascribed His action to other than Him. This is because every single cause (sabab) is itself dependent on another cause for its effect (musabbab) to occur, and there must also be an absence of any impediment (māni') that would prevent its effect, unless Allāh removes that impediment. Therefore, there is nothing in existence that independently brings about any effect whenever it wills, except Allāh alone. Allāh Almighty says: {And of everything We created pairs, that perhaps you may remember.} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 49] – meaning, so that you may know that the Creator of pairs is One. For this reason, anyone who claims – based on the philosophical axiom that 'from one, only one can proceed' – that only one thing can issue forth from Allāh, is ignorant. For there is no single entity in existence from which anything has issued forth solely by itself – neither one thing nor two – except Allāh, Who {created all the pairs of what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know.} [Yā-Sin: 36]. Consider fire, in which Allāh created heat; burning only occurs through it and a locus susceptible to burning. If fire touches salamander skin, ruby, or similar substances, it does not burn them. A body might also be coated with something that prevents it from being burned. Likewise, the sun, from which rays emanate, requires a body capable of reflecting the light upon it. If a barrier like a cloud or a roof intervenes, the rays do not reach beneath it. This has been elaborated elsewhere. The point here is that belief in the Divine Decree (al-qadar) is indispensable. Indeed, faith in al-qadar is integral to the perfection of Tawḥīd (the affirmation of Allāh's Oneness). As Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'It is the organizing principle (niẓām) of Tawḥīd.' Whoever affirms Allāh's Oneness and believes in al-qadar has perfected his Tawḥīd. But whoever affirms Allāh's Oneness yet denies al-qadar has nullified his Tawḥīd. Furthermore, it is essential to have faith in the Sacred Law (ash-shar'), which entails believing in the commands, prohibitions, promises, and threats, just as Allāh sent His Messengers and revealed His Books with them.

Mankind is inherently in need of a Sacred Law (shar') in this worldly life. This is because man inevitably engages in actions to secure benefits and actions to repel harm. The Shar' is what distinguishes between actions that benefit him and actions that harm him. It is Allāh's justice ('adl) among His creation and His light (nūr) among His servants. It is impossible for human beings to live without a Shar' by which they distinguish between what they should do and what they should refrain from. The scope of Shar' is not merely confined to ensuring justice between people in their transactions; rather, even an individual living in isolation inevitably faces choices between acting and refraining.

Indeed, man is inherently purposeful (hammām) and striving (hārith), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘The truest names are Hārith (cultivator, earner) and Hammām (one who resolves, intends).’} This reflects the concept that man is moved by intentions (irādāt). Since he possesses intention, he is moved by it, and he inevitably needs to know whether what he intends is beneficial or harmful to him, whether it leads to his well-being or corruption. Some of this knowledge people grasp through their innate disposition (fiṭrah), just as they know the benefit of eating and drinking, and other self-evident truths known innately. Some knowledge they acquire through inference (istidlāl), guided by their intellects (‘uqūl). And some knowledge they can only acquire through the definition (ta’rīf), clarification (bayān), and guidance (hidāyah) provided by the Messengers. In this context, people have debated whether the goodness (ḥusn) and badness/ugliness (qubḥ) of actions can be known through reason (‘aql), or whether actions possess no intrinsic good or bad quality discernible by reason. This has been discussed elsewhere, where we clarified the confusion surrounding this issue.

For they (the scholars of Ahlus Sunnah) agree that whether an action is suitable (mulā’im) or unsuitable (munāfir) for the doer can be known by reason. This suitability/unsuitability refers to whether the action leads to what the doer loves and finds pleasurable, or leads to what he detests and finds harmful. This aspect can sometimes be known through reason, sometimes through the Sacred Law (Shar’), and sometimes through both. However, detailed knowledge of this, and knowledge of the ultimate end (ghāyah) and consequence (‘āqibah) of actions – namely, happiness (sa’ādah) or misery (shaqāwah) in the Hereafter – can only be known through the Shar’. The details of the Last Day reported by the Messengers, and the specifics of the divine laws they commanded, cannot be known by people through their intellects alone. Similarly, the details of Allāh’s Names and Attributes reported by the Messengers cannot be known by people through their intellects, although they might grasp general aspects of them through reason. This detailed knowledge, through which faith (īmān) is attained and which the Book brought, is indicated by Allāh Almighty’s words: {And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants.} [Ash-Shūrā: 52]. And His words: {Say, ‘If I should err, I would only err against myself. But if I am guided, it is by what my Lord reveals to me. Indeed, He is Hearing and near.’} [Saba’: 50]. And His words: {Say, ‘I only warn you by revelation.’} [Al-Anbiyā’: 45].

However, one group mistakenly imagined that good (ḥusn) and bad/ugly (qubḥ) have a meaning beyond this suitability/unsuitability, and that this other meaning is knowable by reason. They were opposed by another group who wrongly thought that the good and bad defined by the Shar’ fall outside this category of suitability/unsuitability. Both groups – those who affirmed rational or legislative good and bad but disconnected it from this category (of suitability/unsuitability leading to benefit/harm) – were mistaken.

Furthermore, both of these groups tended to deny that Allāh can be described with attributes such as love (maḥabbah), pleasure (riḍā), anger (sukḥt), joy (farah), and the like, which are established by divine texts and supported by rational evidence. Consequently, despite agreeing that Allāh does not do anything that is intrinsically ugly (qabīḥ) in relation to Him, they disputed whether such an action is intrinsically impossible for Him – such that His having power over something ugly is inconceivable – or whether He, Glorified is He, is merely free from such actions and does not perform them simply due to the supposed rational ugliness they affirmed. Both positions represent deviations similar to the previously mentioned ones. One group (like the extreme Jabriyyah) failed to differentiate, within His creation and command, between guidance and misguidance, obedience and disobedience, the righteous and the wicked,

the people of Paradise and the people of Hell, mercy and punishment. Thus, they did not consider Him praiseworthy for the justice He enacts or the injustice He refrains from, nor for the benevolence and blessings He bestows or the torment and retribution He withholds. The other group (like the Mu'tazilah) declared Him free [from perceived 'ugly' actions] based on the concept of rational ugliness they affirmed, which lacks true substance, thereby equating Him with His creation in terms of what is considered good or ugly, and drawing analogies between Him and His servants regarding what He commands and prohibits (tashbīh). Therefore, whoever focuses solely on the Divine Decree (al-qadar), magnifies the concept of annihilation (fanā') within the Oneness of Lordship (Tawhīd al-Rubūbiyyah), and stops at the level of cosmic reality (al-ḥaqīqah al-kawniyyah), fails to distinguish between knowledge and ignorance, truth and falsehood, righteousness (birr) and wickedness (fujūr), justice ('adl) and oppression (ẓulm), obedience and disobedience, guidance and misguidance, right conduct (rashād) and error (ghayy), the allies of Allāh (awliyā' Allāh) and His enemies (a'dā' Allāh), and the inhabitants of Paradise and the inhabitants of Hell. Such people, besides necessarily contradicting Allāh's Books, His religion, and His laws, also contradict the necessities of sensory perception (ḥiss), experience (dhawq), reason ('aql), and analogy (qiyās). For inevitably, every one of them experiences pleasure from certain things and pain from others; they distinguish between what they eat and drink and what they do not, and between harmful heat or cold and that which is not. This very act of distinguishing between what benefits and harms is the essence of the religious and legislative reality (al-ḥaqīqah ash-shar'iyyah ad-dīniyyah).

Anyone who imagines that a human being can reach a state where opposing matters are permanently equal in his perception has fabricated a lie and contradicted the necessity of sensory experience. It is true that a person may occasionally experience temporary states, such as intoxication (sukr), fainting (ighmā'), or the like, which distract him from perceiving certain things. However, the complete cessation of all sensation while life remains is impossible. Even a sleeping person does not lose self-awareness entirely; rather, he sees in his dreams things that distress him at times and things that please him at others. Therefore, states described using terms like iṣṭilām (overwhelming absorption), fanā' (effacement, annihilation), sukr (spiritual intoxication), and similar expressions, only entail a lack of sensation regarding some things, not all. These states, while indicating a deficiency (naqṣ) in the person experiencing them due to weakened discernment (tamyīz), do not reach a point where discernment is absolutely lost. Whoever denies discernment absolutely in this context and glorifies such a state has erred concerning both the cosmic reality (al-ḥaqīqah al-kawniyyah) and the religious reality (al-ḥaqīqah ad-dīniyyah) – regarding both Divine Decree (qadar) and Sacred Law (shar'). He has erred concerning Allāh's creation and His command, by imagining that such a state [of total non-discernment] exists when it does not, and by deeming it praiseworthy when there is no praise in lacking discernment, reason, and knowledge. When you hear some spiritual guides (Shuyūkh) say things like, 'I want not to want,' or 'The gnostic ('ārif) has no personal portion (ḥazz),' or that he becomes 'like a corpse in the hands of the washer,' this is praiseworthy only if it refers to the relinquishing of desires that oppose what one is commanded, the absence of personal inclinations one is not commanded to pursue, and being passive like a corpse regarding seeking what one is not commanded to seek and repelling what one is not commanded to repel. However, anyone who intends by this that one's will (irādah) ceases entirely, or that one no longer senses pleasure and pain, or benefit and harm, holds a view that contradicts the necessity of sense and reason. And anyone who praises this state [of total non-discernment] contradicts the necessity of religion and reason.

The term *fanā'* (effacement, annihilation) is used to refer to three distinct concepts: (1) First: The religious, legislative *fanā'* (*al-fanā' ad-dīnī ash-sharī*) which the Messengers brought and the Books revealed. This is to be effaced from preoccupation with what Allāh has not commanded by engaging in what Allāh has commanded. Thus, one is effaced from the worship of other than Him through exclusive worship of Him; from obedience to other than Him through obedience to Him and His Messenger (peace be upon him); from reliance (*tawakkul*) upon other than Him through reliance upon Him; from love of anything besides Him through love of Him and His Messenger (peace be upon him); and from fear of other than Him through fear of Him. This entails that the servant does not follow his own desires (*hawā*) without guidance from Allāh, and that Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) become more beloved to him than anything else. As Allāh Almighty says: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have acquired, the commerce in which you fear decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and *jihād* in His cause, then wait until Allāh executes His command.'} [At-Tawbah: 24]. All of this falls under what Allāh and His Messenger have commanded. (2) Second: The *fanā'* mentioned by some Sufis, which is to be effaced from witnessing anything other than Allāh Almighty. One becomes so absorbed in the Worshipped One (*Ma'būd*) as to be unaware of one's own worship (*'ibādah*); absorbed in the Remembered One (*Madhkūr*) as to be unaware of one's own remembrance (*dhikr*); absorbed in the Known One (*Ma'rūf*) as to be unaware of one's own knowledge (*ma'rifah*), potentially even losing awareness of one's own self in the presence of other than Allāh Almighty. This is a deficient state (*ḥāl nāqis*) that may occur for some wayfarers (*sālikīn*), but it is not an essential requirement of the path to Allāh. For this reason, such a state was not known to occur for the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the first forerunners (*as-Sābiqūn al-Awwalūn*). Whoever considers this state the ultimate goal for wayfarers is in manifest error (*ḍalāl mubīn*). Likewise, whoever considers it an essential requirement of the path to Allāh is mistaken. Rather, it is one of the incidental occurrences (*'awāriḍ*) on the path to Allāh that happens to some people but not others; it is not among the necessary experiences (*lawāzim*) that every wayfarer undergoes. (3) Third: The *fanā'* concerning the existence of created beings (*al-siwā*), whereby one perceives the existence of the created (*makhluq*) as being identical to the existence of the Creator (*Khāliq*), and believes that existence is numerically one (*al-wujūd wāḥid bil-'ayn*). This is the doctrine of the proponents of heresy (*ilhād*) and unificationism (*ittihād*), who are among the most misguided of servants.

As for how their view (of using *Qadar* as an excuse) contradicts the necessity of reason and analogy: one of these individuals cannot consistently apply his own principle. If someone claims to witness only the Divine Decree without distinguishing between the commanded (*ma'mūr*) and the prohibited (*maḥzūr*), and is then treated accordingly – for instance, being beaten and starved until afflicted with severe hardships and pains – if he then blames or finds fault with the one who did this to him, he has contradicted his own statement and abandoned the foundation of his doctrine. It would be said to him: 'What this person did was ordained (*maqḍī*) and decreed (*maqḍūr*). Allāh's creation, decree, and will encompass both you and him; it applies equally to you both. If the Decree is a valid excuse for you, it is equally valid for him. Otherwise, it is not an excuse for either of you.' Thus, the corruption of the view that focuses on the Decree while disregarding the command and prohibition is evident through the necessity of reason. The believer (*mu'min*) is commanded to perform what is enjoined (*al-ma'mūr*), abstain from what is forbidden (*al-maḥzūr*), and exercise patience (*ṣabr*) regarding what is decreed (*al-maqḍūr*). As Allāh Almighty says: {But if you are patient and fear Allāh, their

plot will not harm you at all.} [Āl 'Imrān: 120]. And He relates concerning the story of Yūsuf (peace be upon him): {Indeed, he who fears Allāh and is patient – then indeed, Allāh does not allow to be lost the reward of the doers of good.} [Yūsuf: 90]. Thus, taqwā (piety, fear of Allāh) involves doing what Allāh has commanded and leaving what He has forbidden. This is why Allāh Almighty said: {So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth. And ask forgiveness for your sin and exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning.} [Ghāfir: 55]. Here, He commanded patience alongside seeking forgiveness (istighfār). Indeed, servants, from the first to the last, are inevitably in need of seeking forgiveness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in an authentic hadith: {‘O people, repent to your Lord! By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, I indeed seek Allāh’s forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times a day.’} [Al-Bukhārī]. He also said: {‘Verily, at times there is a covering over my heart, and verily I seek Allāh’s forgiveness and repent to Him one hundred times a day.’} [Muslim]. And he used to supplicate: {‘Allāhumma ighfir lī khaṭā’atī wa jahli wa isrāfi fi amrī wa mā Anta a’lamu bihi minnī. Allāhumma ighfir lī khaṭā’atī wa ‘amdī wa hazlī wa jiddī wa kullu dhālika ‘indī. Allāhumma ighfir lī mā qaddamtu wa mā akkhartu wa mā asrartu wa mā a’lantu wa mā Anta a’lamu bihi minnī. Anta al-Muqaddimu wa Anta al-Mu’akhhiru’} [O Allāh, forgive me my mistakes, my ignorance, my extravagance in my affairs, and whatever You know better about me than I do. O Allāh, forgive me my errors and my deliberate acts, my jesting and my seriousness – and all of that is present in me. O Allāh, forgive me what I have sent forth and what I have left behind, what I have concealed and what I have declared, and what You know better about me than I do. You are the One Who brings forward, and You are the One Who puts back.] [Agreed upon]. It is mentioned regarding Ādam, the father of mankind, that he sought his Lord’s forgiveness and repented to Him, so his Lord chose him, accepted his repentance, and guided him. Conversely, it is mentioned regarding Iblīs, the father of the Jinn – may Allāh curse him – that he persisted [in disobedience], clinging to the Decree as an excuse, so Allāh cursed him and cast him away. Therefore, whoever sins, then repents and feels remorse, has resembled his father (Ādam). And whoever resembles his father has done no wrong [in resembling him].

Allāh Almighty says: {...and man undertook it [the Trust]. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant. [It was] so that Allāh may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and the polytheist men and polytheist women, and Allāh may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful.} [Al-Aḥzāb: 72-73]. For this reason, Allāh, Glorified is He, has paired Tawḥīd (Oneness) with Istighfār (seeking forgiveness) in more than one verse. For example, He says: {So know that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh), and seek forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women.} [Muḥammad: 19]. And He says: {So take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness.} [Fuṣṣilat: 6]. And He says: {Alif, Lām, Rā. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted. [Through a messenger, saying], ‘Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings.’ And [saying], ‘Seek forgiveness of your Lord and repent to Him, [and] He will let you enjoy a good provision for a specified term...’} [Hūd: 1-3]. In a hadith narrated by Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim and others, it is reported: {‘Shayṭān says: ‘I destroyed mankind with sins, and they destroyed me with Lā ilāha illā Allāh and Istighfār.’ When I saw that, I infused desires (ahwā’) among them, so they sin but do not repent, because they think they are doing good.’. Allāh, Glorified is He, mentions regarding Dhū an-Nūn (Prophet Yūnus, peace be upon him) that he called out within the darknesses: {‘Lā ilāha illā Anta Subḥānaka innī kuntu min aẓ-ẓālimīn’} [There is no god worthy of worship except You; exalted are You! Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.] [Al-Anbiyā’: 87]. Allāh Almighty

then says: {So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers.} [Al-Anbiyā': 88]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {The supplication of my brother Dhū an-Nūn – no distressed person supplicates with it except that Allāh relieves his distress.} [At-Tirmidhī]. The summary of all this is that the servant requires two fundamental principles regarding the Divine Command (al-amr), and two fundamental principles regarding the Divine Decree (al-qadar).

.(1) Regarding the Command (al-amr): (a) He must strive diligently (ijtihād) in compliance, both in knowledge and action. He should continuously strive to learn what Allāh has commanded and to act upon it. (b) He must seek forgiveness (istighfār) and repent (tawbah) for his shortcomings (tafrīt) regarding what was commanded and for transgressing the limits (ḥudūd). This is why it is prescribed (mashrū') to conclude all actions with istighfār. The Prophet (peace be upon him), upon finishing his prayer, would seek forgiveness three times. Allāh Almighty praises {those who seek forgiveness before dawn} [Āl 'Imrān: 17]; they stand in prayer at night and conclude it with istighfār. The last Sūrah revealed was Allāh Almighty's statement: {When the victory of Allāh has come and the conquest, And you see the people entering into the religion of Allāh in multitudes, Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.} [An-Naṣr: 1-3]. It is reported in the Saḥīḥ that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to frequently say in his bowing (rukū') and prostration (sujūd): {Subḥānaka Allāhumma Rabbanā wa bi-ḥamdika, Allāhumma ighfir lī} [Glory be to You, O Allāh, our Lord, and praise be to You. O Allāh, forgive me], thereby implementing the Qur'an. [Agreed upon]. (2) Regarding the Decree (al-qadar): (a) He must seek Allāh's help (isti'ānah) in performing what He has commanded, rely upon Him (tawakkul), supplicate to Him (du'ā'), turn to Him with hope and desire (raghbah), seek refuge in Him (isti'ādḥah), and be utterly dependent (muftaqir) upon Him in seeking good and avoiding evil. (b) He must exercise patience (ṣabr) regarding what is decreed, knowing that what afflicted him could not have missed him, and what missed him could not have afflicted him. If people harm him, he should recognize that this was decreed for him. Relevant to this is the debate between Ādam and Mūsā (peace be upon them both). Mūsā said: 'O Ādam, you are the father of mankind; Allāh created you with His Hand, breathed into you from His Spirit, and made His angels prostrate to you. Why did you expel us and yourself from Paradise?' Ādam replied: 'You are Mūsā, whom Allāh chose for His speech. How long before I was created did you find written concerning me: {And Ādam disobeyed his Lord and erred.} [Tā-Hā: 121]?' Mūsā replied: 'By such-and-such a period.' Thus, Ādam prevailed over Mūsā in the argument. This is because Mūsā was not reproaching Ādam for the sin itself, as Ādam had already repented from it – and the one who repents from a sin is like one who has no sin. Rather, Mūsā was lamenting the calamity (muṣībah) that befell them as a result. We are commanded to look towards the Decree (qadar) when facing calamities, and to seek forgiveness (istighfār) for our faults (ma'āyib), as Allāh Almighty says: {So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth. And ask forgiveness for your sin...} [Ghāfir: 55]. Therefore, whoever observes both the Command and the Decree as mentioned is a true worshipper of Allāh, obedient to Him, seeking His help, and relying upon Him. He is among those whom Allāh has favored – the Prophets, the Truthful (ṣiddīqīn), the Martyrs (shuhadā'), and the Righteous (ṣāliḥīn). And excellent are those as companions! [cf. An-Nisā': 69].

Allāh, Glorified is He, has combined these two fundamental principles (observing the Command and acknowledging the Decree) in numerous places, such as His statement: {You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.} [Al-Fātiḥah: 5]. And His statement: {So worship Him and rely upon Him.} [Hūd: 123]. And His statement: {Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return.} [Hūd: 88]. And His statement: {And whoever fears

Allāh – He will make for him a way out And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allāh – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allāh will accomplish His purpose. Allāh has already set for everything a [decreed] extent (qadar).} [Aṭ-Ṭalāq: 2-3]. Thus, worship (al-'ibādah) is directed to Allāh (lillāh), and seeking help (al-isti'ānah) is done through Allāh (billāh). The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say when offering the sacrifice (uḍḥiyah): {'Allāhumma minka wa laka'} [O Allāh, [this is] from You and for You]. Whatever is not accomplished by Allāh cannot come into being, for indeed, Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh (There is no might nor power except by Allāh). And whatever is not done for Allāh will neither benefit nor endure. Furthermore, His worship must be based on two foundations: (1) Sincerity of the religion purely for Him (ikh-lāṣ ad-dīn lahu). (2) Conformity (muwāfaqah) to His command with which He sent His Messengers. This is why 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to supplicate: 'O Allāh, make all my deeds righteous (ṣāliḥ), make them purely for Your Face (khālīṣ), and do not let anyone have any share in them.' Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ (may Allāh have mercy on him), commenting on Allāh Almighty's statement {that He may test you [as to] which of you is best in deed} [Al-Mulk: 2], said: 'It means the most sincere (akh-lāṣ) and the most correct (aṣwab).' They asked, 'O Abū 'Alī, what is the most sincere and most correct?' He replied: 'If a deed is sincere but not correct, it is not accepted. And if it is correct but not sincere, it is not accepted. It must be both sincere and correct. Sincere means it is done for Allāh, and correct means it is according to the Sunnah.' For this reason, Allāh condemned the polytheists (mushrikīn) in the Qur'an for following the religious practices legislated for them by their partners – practices Allāh did not authorize, such as worshipping other than Him and performing religious acts He did not prescribe. As He Almighty says: {Or have they partners who have ordained for them a religion to which Allāh has not consented?} [Ash-Shūrā: 21]. He also condemned them for prohibiting what Allāh did not prohibit. The true religion (ad-dīn al-ḥaqq) dictates that nothing is forbidden (ḥarām) except what Allāh has forbidden, and no religious practice is valid except what He has legislated.

Regarding His worship and seeking His help, people fall into four categories: (1) The Pious Believers (al-mu'minūn al-muttaqūn): They act for Him (lahu) and by Him (bihi); they worship Him and seek His help. (2) A group that worships Him without adequate seeking of help or patience: You find such individuals striving for obedience, piety (wara'), and adherence to the Sunnah, but they lack reliance (tawakkul), seeking help (isti'ānah), and patience (ṣabr). Instead, they exhibit weakness ('ajz) and anxiety (jaza'). (3) A group possessing seeking of help, reliance, and patience, but without steadfastness upon the Command or adherence to the Sunnah: Such individuals might be granted empowerment and experience certain spiritual states (ḥāl), both inwardly and outwardly. They might be given unveilings (mukāshafāt) and spiritual effects (ta'thīrāt) not granted to the first type [the pious believers], but they have no good final outcome ('āqibah), for they are not among the muttaqīn (the pious), and the ultimate success belongs to taqwā. The religion of the second group [worshippers lacking reliance] is weak, but it may persist and endure if its possessor does not corrupt it through anxiety and weakness. Those in this third group may possess spiritual states and power, but nothing of it will remain except what aligns with the Command and follows the Sunnah. (3) The worst category consists of those who neither worship Him nor seek His help: They neither acknowledge that their actions should be for Allāh, nor that they are accomplished by Allāh. Comparing deviant groups: The Mu'tazilah and similar Qadariyyah who deny the Divine Decree are better, regarding their emphasis on the command, prohibition, promise, and threat, than those fatalistic Jabriyyah (also sometimes called Qadariyyah in a different sense) who disregard the Sacred Law, command, and prohibition. Conversely, the Sufis are generally

better than the Mu'tazilah regarding affirming the Decree and witnessing the Oneness of Lordship (Tawhīd ar-Rubūbiyyah). However, among them are those who engage in various innovations (bida') while disregarding parts of the command, prohibition, promise, and threat, to the extent that they make the ultimate goal the mere witnessing of Tawhīd ar-Rubūbiyyah and achieving fanā' (annihilation) therein. They thus also become mu'tazilah (seceders) from the main body (jamā'ah) of the Muslims and their Sunnah; they are 'Mu'tazilah' in this respect. The innovation they fall into might even be worse than the innovation of the original Mu'tazilah. Both of these trends (Mu'tazilism and certain Sufi deviations) originated in Basra.

Indeed, the true religion of Allāh (dīn Allāh) is that with which He sent His Messengers and revealed His Books. It is the Straight Path (aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm), the way (ṭarīqah) of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) – the best of generations (khayr al-qurūn), the most excellent of this Ummah, and the most honored of creation unto Allāh Almighty after the Prophets. Allāh Almighty says: {And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct – Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him...} [At-Tawbah: 100]. He expressed His pleasure with the first forerunners unconditionally, and He expressed His pleasure with those who follow them bi-iḥsān (with excellence/in the best way). The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in authentic hadiths: {‘The best of generations is the generation in which I was sent, then those who follow them, then those who follow them.’} [Agreed upon]. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to say: ‘Whoever among you seeks to follow an example, let him follow the example of those who have passed away, for the living are not safe from trials (fitnah). Those were the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) – the purest in heart of this Ummah, the deepest in knowledge, and the least in affectation (takalluf). They were a people whom Allāh chose for the companionship of His Prophet (peace be upon him) and the establishment of His religion. So recognize their due right, and hold fast to their guidance, for indeed they were upon the Straight Guidance (al-hudā al-mustaqīm).’

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān (may Allāh be pleased with them both) said: ‘O assembly of Reciters (Qurra’)! Be steadfast, and take the path of those who came before you. By Allāh, if you follow them, you will surely advance far ahead. But if you deviate right or left, you will surely go far astray.’ ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) also said: {The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) drew a line for us, then drew lines around it to its right and left. Then he said: ‘This is the path of Allāh (sabīl Allāh), and these are other paths (subul). Upon every one of these paths, there is a devil calling towards it.’ Then he recited: {And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] paths, for you will be separated from His path.}} [Al-An’ām: 153]. [Narrated by Aḥmad, An-Nasā’ī, Ad-Dārimī]. Allāh, Glorified is He, has commanded us to say in our prayers: {Guide us to the straight path – The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.} [Al-Fātiḥah: 6-7]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained: {‘The Jews are those who incurred anger (maghḍūb ‘alayhim), and the Christians are those who are astray (ḍāllūn).’} [At-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad]. This is because the Jews knew the truth but did not follow it, while the Christians worshipped Allāh without knowledge. For this reason, it used to be said: ‘Seek refuge in Allāh from the trial (fitnah) of the corrupt scholar (‘ālim fājir) and the ignorant worshipper (‘ābid jāhil), for the trial posed by these two is a trial for everyone susceptible to temptation.’ Allāh Almighty has said: {And if there should come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in this world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. But whoever turns away from My

remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed life...} [Ṭā-Hā: 123-124]. Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both) commented: 'Allāh has guaranteed for whoever reads the Qur'an and acts upon what is in it that he will not go astray in this world nor suffer misery in the Hereafter,' and then he recited this verse.

Likewise is His statement, Almighty is He: {Alif, Lām, Mīm. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for the righteous (muttaqīn) – Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them, And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]. Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful (muflīḥūn).} [Al-Baqarah: 1-5]. Thus, He informs us that these individuals are guided (muhtadūn) and successful (muflīḥūn), which is the opposite of those who have incurred wrath (al-maghḍūb 'alayhim) and those who are astray (aḍ-ḍāllīn). Therefore, we ask Allāh, the Magnificent, to guide us and all our brethren to His Straight Path; the path of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor – the Prophets, the Truthful (ṣiddīqīn), the Martyrs (shuhadā'), and the Righteous (ṣāliḥīn). And excellent are those as companions! Allāh is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs (Ḥasbunā Allāhu wa ni'ma al-Wakīl). All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allāh send blessings and abundant peace upon our Master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions.



## Al-'Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyah (The Wasitiyah Creed)

Shaykh al-Islām (may Allāh have mercy on him) was asked by one of the judges of Wāsit to write for him a statement of creed ('aqīdah) that could serve as an authoritative guide for him and his household. He responded:

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh, Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all other ways of life, and Sufficient is Allāh as a Witness. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone, having no partner—an affirmation of Him and a declaration of His absolute Oneness (Tawḥīd). And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger, may Allāh bestow His prayers and abundant peace upon him, his family, and his Companions.

To proceed: This is the creed of the Saved Group, the one aided [by Allāh] until the establishment of the Hour—Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community). It consists of: Faith (īmān) in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Resurrection after death, and faith in the Divine Decree (Qadar), encompassing both its good and its evil aspects.

Included in faith in Allāh is faith in what He has described Himself with in His Book, and what His Messenger Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has described Him with—without distortion (taḥrīf: altering the wording or meaning), nor denial (ta'tīl: negating the Attributes), nor specifying how (takyīf: asking or explaining the modality of the Attributes), nor likening [Him to creation] (tamthīl: drawing parallels between Allāh's Attributes and those of His creation). Rather, they [Ahlus Sunnah] believe that Allāh, Glorified is He, {There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. Thus, they do not negate what He has described Himself with, nor do they distort the words from their proper contexts. They do not engage in deviation (ilhād) concerning Allāh's Names and His Signs (Āyāt). They do not specify the modality (kayfiyyah) of His Attributes, nor do they liken His Attributes to the attributes of His creation. This is because He, Glorified is He, has no namesake (samī), no peer (kufu'), and no rival (nidd). He cannot be measured by or compared to His creation, Glorified and Exalted is He. For indeed He, Glorified is He, knows Himself and others better [than creation], is most truthful in speech, and relates the best of narratives compared to His creation. Furthermore, His Messengers are truthful and confirmed as truthful, unlike those who speak about Him without knowledge. This is why He, Glorified and Exalted is He, said: {Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honor, above what they attribute [unto Him]! And peace be upon the Messengers. And all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 180-182]. Thus, He declared Himself transcendent above the descriptions made by those who oppose the Messengers, and He bestowed peace upon the Messengers because their statements were sound, free from deficiency and defect. He, Glorified is He, has combined, in what He has described and named Himself with, both negation [of imperfections] and affirmation [of perfections]. Therefore, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah do not deviate from what the Messengers brought, for indeed, that is the Straight Path (Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ Al-Mustaqīm): the path of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favor—the

Prophets (Nabiyyīn), the sincerely truthful (Ṣiddīqīn), the martyrs (Shuhadā'), and the righteous (Ṣāliḥīn).

Included within this general principle is what He described Himself with in Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ, which is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'ān, where He says: {Say: He is Allāh, the One (Aḥad). Allāh, the Self-Sufficient Master, upon Whom all depend (Aṣ-Ṣamad). He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable (kufuwan) unto Him} [Al-Ikhlāṣ: 1-4]. And [also included is] what He described Himself with in the greatest verse in His Book (Āyat al-Kursī), where He says: {Allāh! There is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living (Al-Ḥayy), the Sustainer of [all] existence (Al-Qayyūm). Neither drowsiness (sinah) nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High (Al-'Alī), the Most Great (Al-'Azīm)} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. This is why whoever recites this verse at night, a guardian from Allāh remains over him, and no devil (shayṭān) comes near him until morning.

And His statement, Glorified is He: {And rely upon the Ever-Living Who does not die} [Al-Furqān: 58]. And His statement, Glorified is He: {He is the First and the Last, the Manifest (Az-Zāhir) and the Innermost (Al-Bāṭin), and He is, of all things, Knowing} [Al-Ḥadīd: 3]. And His statement: {And He is the All-Wise (Al-Ḥakīm), the All-Aware (Al-Khabīr)} [cf. Saba': 1]. {He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges therefrom, and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4]. {And with Him are the keys of the unseen (ghayb); none knows them except Him. And He knows whatever is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it, nor a grain within the darknesses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, but that it is [recorded] in a clear Record (Kitāb Mubīn)} [Al-An'ām: 59]. And His statement: {And no female conceives or gives birth except with His knowledge} [Fāṭir: 11]. And His statement: {That you may know that Allāh is over all things competent and that Allāh has encompassed all things in knowledge} [At-Talāq: 12].

And His statement: {Indeed, it is Allāh Who is the Great Provider (Ar-Razzāq), the Possessor of Strength, the Steadfast (Al-Matīn)} [Adh-Dhāriyāt: 58]. And His statement: {There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. And His statement: {Excellent is that which Allāh instructs you. Indeed, Allāh is ever Hearing and Seeing} [An-Nisā': 58].

And His statement: {And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'Mā shā' Allāh, lā quwwata illā billāh' (What Allāh willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allāh)?} [Al-Kahf: 39]. And His statement: {And if Allāh had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allāh does what He intends (yurīd)} [Al-Baqarah: 253]. And His statement: {Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you—not violating the prohibition against hunting while you are in the state of iḥrām (pilgrim sanctity). Indeed, Allāh decrees what He intends (yaḥkumu mā yurīd)} [Al-Mā'idah: 1]. And His statement: {So whoever Allāh intends (yurīd) to guide, He expands his breast to Islām; and whoever He intends to send astray, He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky} [Al-An'ām: 125].

And His statement: {And do good; indeed, Allāh loves the doers of good (Al-Muḥsinīn)}

[Al-Baqarah: 195]. {And act justly; indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly (Al-Muqsiṭīn)} [Al-Hujurat: 9]. {So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him] (Al-Muttaqīn)} [At-Tawbah: 7]. {Indeed, Allāh loves those who are constantly repentant (At-Tawwābīn) and loves those who purify themselves (Al-Mutaṭahhirīn)} [Al-Baqarah: 222]. And His statement: {Say [O Muḥammad]: If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you} [Āl 'Imrān: 31]. And His statement: {Allāh will bring forth a people He loves and who love Him} [Al-Mā'idah: 54]. And His statement: {Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in rows as though they are a structure cemented firmly} [Aṣ-Ṣaff: 4].

And His statement: {And He is the Forgiving (Al-Ghafūr), the Affectionate (Al-Wadūd)} [Al-Burūj: 14]. And His statement: {Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge} [Ghāfir: 7]. {And ever is He, to the believers, Merciful (Raḥīm)} [Al-Aḥzāb: 43]. {But My mercy encompasses all things} [Al-A'rāf: 156]. {Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy} [Al-An'ām: 54]. {Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving (Ghafūr) and Merciful (Raḥīm)} [cf. Al-Baqarah: 173]. {But Allāh is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful (Arḥam ar-Rāḥimīn)} [Yūsuf: 64].

And His statement: {Allāh is pleased (Raḍiya) with them, and they are pleased with Him} [Al-Bayyinah: 8]. And His statement: {But whoever kills a believer intentionally—his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allāh has become angry (ghaḍiba) with him and has cursed him} [An-Nisā': 93]. And His statement: {That is because they followed what angered (askhaṭa) Allāh and disliked His pleasure} [Muḥammad: 28]. And His statement: {So when they provoked Our anger (āsafunā), We took vengeance on them} [Az-Zukhruf: 55]. And His statement: {But Allāh disliked (kariha) their being sent forth, so He held them back} [At-Tawbah: 46]. And His statement: {Great is hatred (maqtan) in the sight of Allāh that you say what you do not do} [Aṣ-Ṣaff: 3].

And His statement: {Do they await but that Allāh should come to them (ya'tiyahum) in covers of clouds and the angels? And the matter is [then] decided} [Al-Baqarah: 210]. And His statement: {Do they await but that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come (ya'tiya Rabbuk) or that there come some of the signs of your Lord? The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come...} [Al-An'ām: 158]. {Nay! When the earth is pounded, crushing upon crushing,} {And your Lord comes (jā'a Rabbuk) and the angels, rank upon rank} [Al-Fajr: 21-22]. {And [mention] the Day when the heaven shall split open with clouds, and the angels will be sent down in successive descent} [Al-Furqān: 25].

And His statement: {And there will remain the Face (Wajh) of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor} [Ar-Raḥmān: 27]. {Everything will be destroyed except His Face (Wajh)} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 88]. And His statement: {[Allāh said to Iblīs:] What prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My two Hands (bi-Yadayya)}?} [Ṣād: 75]. {And the Jews say, 'The Hand (Yad) of Allāh is chained.' Chained are their hands, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His Hands (Yadāhu) are extended wide; He spends however He wills} [Al-Mā'idah: 64].

And His statement: {And be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are under Our Eyes (bi-A'yūninā)} [Aṭ-Ṭūr: 48]. {And We carried him [Nūh] on a [ship] made of planks and nails,} {Sailing under Our Eyes (bi-A'yūninā) as a reward for him who had been denied} [Al-Qamar: 13-14]. {And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My Eye ('alā 'Aynī)} [Ṭāhā: 39].

And His statement: {Certainly has Allāh heard (samī'a) the speech of the one who argues

with you concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allāh. And Allāh hears (yasma') your dialogue; indeed, Allāh is Hearing (Samī') and Seeing (Baṣīr)} [Al-Mujādilah: 1]. {Allāh has certainly heard (sami'a) the statement of those [Jews] who said, 'Indeed, Allāh is poor, while we are rich'} [Āl 'Imrān: 181]. {Or do they think that We hear not (lā nasma') their secrets and their private conversations? Yes [We do], and Our messengers [angels] are with them recording} [Az-Zukhruf: 80]. And His statement: {Indeed, I am with you both [Mūsā and Hārūn]; I hear (Asma') and I see (Arā)} [Ṭāhā: 46]. And His statement: {Does he not know that Allāh sees (Yarā)?} [Al-'Alaq: 14]. {Who sees you (Yarāka) when you stand [to pray],} {And your movement among those who prostrate.} {Indeed, He is the Hearing (As-Samī'), the Knowing (Al-'Alīm)} [Ash-Shu'arā': 218-220]. {And say, 'Do [as you will], for Allāh will see (sayarā) your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers'} [At-Tawbah: 105].

And His statement: {And He is severe in assault (Shadīd al-Mihāl)} [Ar-Ra'd: 13]. And His statement: {And they plotted (makarū), and Allāh plotted (makara Allāh); and Allāh is the best of plotters (khayr al-mākiriin)} [Āl 'Imrān: 54]. And His statement: {And they plotted a plot (makarū makran), and We plotted a plot (makarnā makran), while they perceived not} [An-Naml: 50]. And His statement: {Indeed, they are planning a plan (yakīdūna kaydā),} {But I am planning a plan (wa akīdu kaydā)} [At-Ṭāriq: 15-16].

And His statement: {Whether you reveal a good act or conceal it or pardon ('afū) an offense—indeed, Allāh is ever Pardoning ('Afuww) and Competent (Qadīr)} [An-Nisā': 149]. {And let them pardon (wal-ya'fū) and overlook. Would you not like that Allāh should forgive you? And Allāh is Forgiving (Ghafūr) and Merciful (Raḥīm)} [An-Nūr: 22]. And His statement: {And to Allāh belongs [all] honor/might ('izzah), and to His Messenger...} [Al-Munāfiqūn: 8]. And His statement concerning Iblīs: {[Iblīs] said, 'By Your might ('Izzatika), I will surely mislead them all'} [Ṣād: 82]. And His statement: {Blessed is the Name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty (Dhul-Jalāl) and Honor (wal-Ikrām)} [Ar-Raḥmān: 78].

And His statement: {So worship Him and be steadfast in His worship. Do you know of any namesake (samī) for Him?} [Maryam: 65]. {And there is none comparable (kufuwān) unto Him} [Al-Ikhlās: 4]. {So do not attribute to Allāh equals (andād) while you know} [Al-Baqarah: 22]. {And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allāh as equals (andād) [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allāh. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allāh} [Al-Baqarah: 165]. {And say, 'All praise is due to Allāh, Who has not taken a son and has had no partner in [His] dominion and has no [need of a] protector out of weakness.' And glorify Him with [great] glorification (takbīrā)} [Al-Isrā': 111].

{Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allāh. To Him belongs the dominion (Al-Mulk), and to Him belongs all praise (Al-Ḥamd), and He is over all things competent (Qadīr)} [At-Taghābun: 1]. {Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion (Al-Furqān) upon His slave that he may be to the worlds a warner—} {He to Whom belongs the dominion (mulk) of the heavens and the earth and Who has not taken a son and has had no partner in the dominion and Who created all things and determined them with [precise] determination (qaddarahū taqdirā)} [Al-Furqān: 1-2]. {Allāh has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would surely have overcome others. Glorified is Allāh above what they attribute [unto Him]!} {[He is] Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, so high is He exalted above what they associate [with Him]} [Al-Mu'minūn: 91-92]. {So do not assert parallels (amthāl) for Allāh. Indeed, Allāh knows, and you do not know} [An-Naḥl: 74]. {Say, 'My Lord has only forbidden immoralities

(fawāhish)—what is apparent of them and what is concealed—and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allāh what you do not know} [Al-A'rāf: 33].

And His statement: {The Most Compassionate (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Tāhā: 5]. And His statement: {Then He rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} occurs in six places: In Sūrah Al-A'rāf, His statement: {Indeed, your Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Al-A'rāf: 54]. And He said in Sūrah Yūnus (peace be upon him): {Indeed, your Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Yūnus: 3]. And He said in Sūrah Ar-Ra'd: {It is Allāh Who raised the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then He rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Ar-Ra'd: 2]. And He said in Sūrah Tāhā: {The Most Compassionate (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Tāhā: 5]. And He said in Sūrah Al-Furqān: {Then the Most Compassionate (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Al-Furqān: 59]. And He said in Sūrah As-Sajdah: {It is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days; then He rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [As-Sajdah: 4]. And He said in Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd: {It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh)} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4].

And His statement: {O 'Īsā, indeed I will take you and raise you (rāfi'uka) to Myself} [Āl 'Imrān: 55]. {Rather, Allāh raised him (rafā'ahu) to Himself} [An-Nisā': 158]. {To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it} [Fāṭir: 10]. {[Fir'awn said:] 'O Hāmān, construct for me a tower that I might reach the ways—} {The ways into the heavens— so that I may look at the God of Mūsā; but indeed, I think he is a liar'} [Ghāfir: 36-37]. {Do you feel secure that He Who is above the heaven (man fi as-samā') will not cause the earth to swallow you? Then behold, it shakes!} {Or do you feel secure that He Who is above the heaven (man fi as-samā') will not send against you a storm of stones? Then you will know how [severe] was My warning} [Al-Mulk: 16-17].

And His statement: {It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over (istawá) the Throne ('Arsh). He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges therefrom and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you (wa Huwa ma'akum) wherever you are. And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4]. {There is in no private conversation (najwá) of three but that He is the fourth of them, nor of five but that He is the sixth of them—and no fewer than that nor more but that He is with them (Huwa ma'ahum) wherever they may be. Then He will inform them of what they did on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allāh is, of all things, Knowing} [Al-Mujādilah: 7]. And His statement: {Do not grieve; indeed Allāh is with us (inna Allāh ma'anā)} [At-Tawbah: 40]. {Indeed, I am with you both (ma'akumā); I hear and I see} [Tāhā: 46]. {Indeed, Allāh is with those who fear Him (ma'a alladhīna ittaqaw) and those who are doers of good (muḥsinūn)} [An-Naḥl: 128]. {And be patient; indeed, Allāh is with the patient (ma'a aṣ-ṣābirīn)} [Al-Anfāl: 46]. {How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allāh. And Allāh is with the patient (wa Allāhu ma'a aṣ-ṣābirīn)} [Al-Baqarah: 249].

And His statement: {And who is more truthful than Allāh in statement (ḥadīthā)?} [An-Nisā': 87]. {And who is more truthful than Allāh in speech (qīlā)?} [An-Nisā': 122]. {And [mention] when Allāh will say (qāla), 'O 'Īsā, Son of Maryam...' } [Al-Mā'idah: 116]. {And the Word (Kalimah) of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice} [Al-An'am: 115]. {And Allāh spoke (kallama) to Mūsā directly (taklīmā)} [An-Nisā': 164]. {Among them [Messengers] were those to whom Allāh spoke (kallama)} [Al-Baqarah: 253]. {And when

Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke (kallamahū) to him...} [Al-A'rāf: 143]. {And We called him (nādaynāhu) from the right side of the Mount [Ṭūr] and brought him near, confiding [in him]} [Maryam: 52]. {And [mention] when your Lord called (nādā) Mūsā, 'Go to the wrongdoing people...'} [Ash-Shu'arā': 10]. {And their Lord called them (nādāhumā), 'Did I not forbid you from that tree...?'} [Al-A'rāf: 22]. {And [mention] the Day He will call them (yunādīhim) and say, 'Where are My 'partners' whom you used to claim?'} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 62]. {And [mention] the Day He will call them (yunādīhim) and say, 'What did you answer the messengers?'} [Al-Qaṣaṣ: 65].

{And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh)} [At-Tawbah: 6]. {And a party of them used to hear the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh) and then distort it after they had understood it while they knew} [Al-Baqarah: 75]. {They wish to change the Words of Allāh (Kalām Allāh). Say, 'Never will you follow us. Thus did Allāh say before'} [Al-Faḥ: 15]. {And recite what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His Words (li-Kalimātihī)} [Al-Kahf: 27]. {Indeed, this Qur'ān relates to the Children of Israel most of that over which they disagree} [An-Naml: 76]. {And this is a Book We have sent down, blessed...} [Al-An'ām: 92]. {If We had sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allāh} [Al-Ḥaṣhr: 21]. {And when We substitute a verse in place of a verse—and Allāh is most knowing of what He sends down—they say, 'You are but an inventor [of lies].' But most of them do not know.} {Say, 'The Holy Spirit [Jibrīl] has brought it down from your Lord in truth to make firm those who believe and as guidance and good tidings for the Muslims.}' {And We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches him.' The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this [Qur'ān] is clear Arabic speech (lisānun 'arabiyyun mubīn)} [An-Naḥl: 101-103].

And His statement: {[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant (nādirah),} {Looking (nāzirah) at their Lord} [Al-Qiyāmah: 22-23]. {On adorned couches, observing (yanzurūn)} [Al-Muṭaffifin: 23]. {For those who do good is the best [reward] (Al-Ḥusnā, i.e., Paradise) and even more (ziyādah)} [Yūnus: 26]. {They will have whatever they wish therein [in Paradise], and with Us is even more (mazīd)} [Qāf: 35].

This subject [related to Allāh's Attributes] is extensively addressed in the Book of Allāh, the Exalted. Whoever contemplates the Qur'ān, seeking guidance from it, will find the path of truth made clear to him.

## **Section: On the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him)**

The Sunnah serves to explicate the Qur'ān, clarify its meanings, provide guidance based upon it, and give expression to its principles. Furthermore, whatever descriptions of his Lord (the Mighty and Majestic) the Messenger (peace be upon him) provided in the authentic narrations (aḥādīth ṣaḥīḥah)—those which the scholars of insight (Ahl al-Ma'rīfah) have accepted and transmitted—it is equally obligatory to affirm faith in them.

This includes narrations such as his (peace be upon him) saying: {Our Lord descends (yanzilu) to the lowest heaven every night when the final third of the night remains, and He asks: 'Who is supplicating to Me that I may respond to him? Who is asking of Me that I may grant him? Who is seeking My forgiveness that I may forgive him?'} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {'Indeed, Allāh rejoices (yafraḥu) more intensely over the repentance of His servant than one of you would upon finding your lost riding

camel...} (The full narration continues). [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Allāh laughs (yaḍḥaku) at two men, one of whom kills the other, yet both enter Paradise.’} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Our Lord wonders (‘ajiba) at the despair of His servants, while the prospect of changing their state for the better is near. He looks at you while you are in severe distress, despairing, and He continues to laugh (yaḍḥaku), knowing that your relief is close at hand.’} [A ḥasan (good) narration].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Hellfire will continue to have people thrown into it, while it says, ‘Are there any more?’ until the Lord of Might places His Foot (Rijl) upon it – and in another narration, His Qadam (Foot) – whereupon its sides will draw close together and it will say, ‘Enough, enough!’} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Allāh, the Exalted, will say: ‘O Ādam!’ And he will reply: ‘Labbayka wa sa’dayk’ [At Your service and disposal]. Then He will call out with a Voice (Ṣawt): ‘Indeed, Allāh commands you to bring forth from your descendants a contingent for the Fire.’} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘There is not one among you except that his Lord will speak to him directly, with no interpreter between them.’} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying in the ruqyah (supplication for healing) for the sick: {‘Our Lord is Allāh Who is above the heaven (fī as-samā’). Hallowed be Your Name. Your command prevails in the heaven and the earth. Just as Your mercy is in the heaven, bestow Your mercy upon the earth. Forgive us our sins and our errors. You are the Lord of the righteous. Send down mercy from Your Mercy and healing from Your Healing upon this ailment, that it may recover.’} [A ḥasan (good) narration, reported by Abū Dāwūd and others].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Will you not trust me, when I am the trustee of the One Who is above the heaven (fī as-samā’)?’} [A ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) narration].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘And the Throne is above the water, and Allāh is above the Throne (fawqa al-‘Arsh), and He knows all that you are upon.’} [A ḥasan (good) narration, reported by Abū Dāwūd and others].

And his (peace be upon him) asking the slave-girl: {‘Where is Allāh?’ She replied: ‘Above the heaven (fī as-samā’)’. He asked: ‘Who am I?’ She replied: ‘You are the Messenger of Allāh.’ He then said: ‘Free her, for indeed she is a believer.’} [Reported by Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘The best of faith is to know that Allāh is with you (ma’aka) wherever you may be.’} [A ḥasan (good) narration].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘When one of you stands for prayer, let him not spit directly in front of him, nor to his right, for indeed Allāh is before his face (qibala wajhihi); rather, let him spit to his left or under his foot.’} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) supplication: {‘O Allāh, Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Mighty Throne! Our Lord and the Lord of all things, Splitter of the seed-grain and the date-stone, Revealer of the Tawrāh (Torah), the Injīl (Gospel), and the Qur’ān! I seek refuge in You from the evil of my own soul and from the evil of every creature You grasp firmly by its forelock. You are the First (Al-Awwal), so there is nothing before You; You are the Last (Al-Ākhir), so there is nothing after You; You are the Manifest (Az-Zāhir), so there is nothing above You; and You are the Immanent (Al-Bāṭin), so there is nothing

beyond You (closer than You). Settle my debt for me and enrich me against poverty.} [Reported by Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying when his Companions raised their voices in remembrance (dhikr): {‘O people, be gentle with yourselves! For indeed, you are not calling upon one who is deaf or absent. Rather, you are calling upon One Who is All-Hearing (Samī’), Ever-Near (Qarīb). Truly, the One Whom you call upon is closer to each of you than the neck of his own riding camel.} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And his (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Indeed, you shall see your Lord just as you see the moon on the night when it is full; you will have no difficulty in seeing Him. So, if you are able to avoid missing a prayer before sunrise (Fajr) and a prayer before sunset (‘Aṣr), then do so.} [Agreed upon by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

And other such narrations in which the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) informs about his Lord with that which he informs. Indeed, the Saved Group (Al-Firqah an-Nājiyah)—the People of the Sunnah and the Community (Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā’ah)—believe in all of this, just as they believe in what Allāh has informed of in His Mighty Book, without distortion (taḥrīf) or denial (ta’ṭīl), and without asking ‘how’ (takyīf) or claiming likeness (tamthīl). Rather, they are the justly balanced middle path (al-wasaṭ) among the sects of the Ummah (Muslim community), just as this Ummah is the justly balanced middle path among all nations.

Thus, they hold the middle course in the chapter concerning the Attributes of Allāh, Glorified and Exalted be He, between the deniers of Attributes, the Jahmiyyah (Ahl at-Ta’ṭīl), and those who claim likeness to creation, the Anthropomorphists (Ahl at-Tamthīl al-Mushabbihah). They hold the middle course in the chapter concerning the Actions of Allāh, the Exalted, between the Qadariyyah (who deny Allāh’s Decree or Power over actions) and the Jabriyyah (fatalists who deny human will). In the chapter concerning Allāh’s Threat (Wa’id), they are between the Murji’ah (who exclude actions from faith) and the Wa’idiyyah (those, like the Qadariyyah and others, who assert eternal punishment for major sins). In the chapter concerning the Names of Faith and Religion, they are between the Ḥarūriyyah (an early branch of the Khawārij) and the Mu’tazilah on one hand, and the Murji’ah and the Jahmiyyah on the other. And concerning the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), they are between the Rāwāfiq (Rejectors) and the Khawārij (Seceders).

## Section

Included within what we have mentioned regarding faith in Allāh is the belief in what Allāh has stated in His Book, what has been transmitted with conclusive frequency (tawātur) from His Messenger (peace be upon him), and upon which the predecessors (Salaf) of this Ummah have reached consensus (ijmā’): namely, that He, the Glorified, is above His heavens, established over His Throne (‘alá ‘Arshihi), High above His creation (‘Aliyyun ‘alá khalqihī). And He, the Glorified, is also with them (ma’ahum) wherever they may be, knowing all that they do. He combined both aspects in His statement: {He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He established Himself over the Throne (istawā ‘alá al-‘Arsh). He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it, and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allāh is All-Seeing of what you do.} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4].

The meaning of His statement {And He is with you} does not imply that He is intermingled (mukhtalī) with the creation. Such an interpretation is not necessitated by the Arabic language, it contradicts the consensus (ijmā’) of the Ummah’s predecessors

(Salaf), and it opposes the natural disposition (fiṭrah) upon which Allāh created mankind. Consider the moon, one of Allāh's signs and among His smaller creations: it is positioned in the sky, yet it is 'with' the traveler and the non-traveler wherever they may be. Likewise, He, the Glorified, is above the Throne (fawqa al-'Arsh), yet He is ever-watchful (Raḳīb) over His creation, overseeing them (Muhaymin), fully aware of them, along with other meanings entailed by His Lordship (Rubūbiyyah).

All of this speech that Allāh, the Glorified, has mentioned—that He is above the Throne and that He is with us—is true according to its real meaning (ḥaqq 'alá ḥaḳīqatīhi) and requires no distortion (taḥrīf). However, it must be safeguarded from false assumptions, such as supposing that the apparent meaning (ẓāhir) of His saying {fi as-samā'} (above/in the heaven) implies that the heaven contains Him or bears Him up. This is utterly false by the consensus (ijmā') of the people of knowledge and faith. For indeed, Allāh's Kursī (Footstool/Chair) encompasses the heavens and the earth [Al-Baqarah: 255], and it is He Who holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease to exist [Fāṭir: 41], and He holds the heaven back from falling upon the earth, except by His permission [Al-Ḥajj: 65]. {And among His Signs is that the heaven and the earth stand firm by His command.} [Ar-Rūm: 25].

## Section

Also included within this is the belief that He is Near (Qarīb) to His creation, Responsive (Mujīb), as He combined these aspects in His statement: {And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then indeed I am Near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.} [Al-Baqarah: 186]. And as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his Companions when they raised their voices in remembrance (dhikr): {O people, be gentle with yourselves! For indeed, you are not calling upon one who is deaf or absent... Truly, the One Whom you call upon is closer to each of you than the neck of his own riding camel.}

What is mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah regarding His Nearness (Qurb) and His Being With (Ma'iyah) His creation does not contradict what is mentioned regarding His Highness ('Uluww) and His Being Above (Fawḳiyyah). For He, the Glorified, {there is nothing whatsoever like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11] in all of His Attributes. He is High in His Nearness, and Near in His Highness.

## Section

Part of faith in Allāh and His Books is the belief that the Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh), revealed, not created. It originated from Him, and to Him it shall return. And [belief] that Allāh, the Exalted, spoke it in reality (ḥaḳīqatan), and that this Qur'ān which He revealed upon Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is truly the Speech of Allāh, not the speech of another. It is impermissible to state unrestrictedly that it is a mere narration (ḥikāyah) of Allāh's Speech or an expression ('ibārah) thereof. Rather, when people recite it or write it in the codices (maṣāḥif), this does not remove it from being, in reality, the Speech of Allāh, the Exalted. For speech is properly attributed only to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who merely conveys it as a messenger. It is the Speech of Allāh—its letters (ḥurūf) and its meanings (ma'ānī) together. The Speech of Allāh is not the letters without the meanings, nor the meanings without the letters.

## Section

Also included in what we have mentioned regarding faith in Him, His Books, and His Messengers is the belief that the believers will see Him (yarawnahu) on the Day of Resurrection directly with their own eyes (‘iyānan bi-abṣārihim), just as they see the sun clearly when there are no clouds beneath it, and just as they see the moon on the night when it is full, having no difficulty (lā yuḍāmūn) in seeing it. They will see Him, the Glorified, while they are in the gathering places of the Resurrection, and then they will see Him after entering Paradise, in the manner that Allāh, Glorified and Exalted be He, wills.

## Section

Part of faith in the Last Day is belief in everything the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed of concerning what occurs after death. Thus, believers affirm the Trial of the Grave (Fitnat al-Qabr), its Punishment (‘Adhāb al-Qabr), and its Bliss (Na‘īm). As for the Trial: people will indeed be tested in their graves. A person will be asked: {‘Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?’} Allāh keeps firm those who believe with the Firm Statement (al-qawl ath-thābit) in the life of this world and in the Hereafter [cf. Ibrāhīm: 27]. The believer will reply: ‘Allāh is my Lord, Islām is my religion, and Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is my Prophet.’ But as for the doubter (al-murtāb), he will say: ‘Hāh, hāh? I do not know. I heard the people saying something, so I said it too.’ He will then be struck with an iron hammer (mirzabbah), letting out a scream that everything except humankind will hear; were a human to hear it, they would fall down dead (or unconscious).

Then, after this trial, there will be either bliss or punishment until the Great Resurrection (Al-Qiyāmah al-Kubrā) takes place. Souls will be returned to their bodies, and the Resurrection, of which Allāh informed in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger, and upon which the Muslims have reached consensus, will commence. People will rise from their graves before the Lord of the Worlds—barefoot (ḥufātan), naked (‘urātan), and uncircumcised (ghurlan). The sun will draw near to them, and sweat will engulf them (reaching up to their mouths like a bridle).

The Scales (Al-Mawāzin) will be set up, wherein the deeds of the servants will be weighed. {Then those whose scales are heavy [with good deeds]—it is they who are the successful.} [Al-Mu‘minūn: 102]. {But those whose scales are light—those are they who have lost their souls; in Hellfire will they abide eternally.} [Al-Mu‘minūn: 103].

The Scrolls (Ad-Dawāwīn)—which are the records of deeds (ṣaḥā‘if al-a‘māl)—will be laid open. One will take his book in his right hand, and another will take his book in his left hand or from behind his back, just as He, Glorified and Exalted be He, has said: {And We have fastened every human’s destiny to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open.} [Al-Isrā’: 13]. {(It will be said,) ‘Read your book! Sufficient is your own soul this Day as a reckoner against you.’} [Al-Isrā’: 14].

Allāh will hold the creation to account. He will privately address His believing servant and make him acknowledge his sins, as has been described in the Book and the Sunnah. As for the disbelievers (kuffār), they will not be subjected to the accounting wherein good deeds are weighed against evil deeds, for they possess no good deeds. Rather, their deeds will be counted and enumerated, they will be confronted with them, made to acknowledge them, and recompensed accordingly.

In the plains of the Resurrection is the Visited Pool (Al-Ḥawḍ al-Mawrūd) belonging to Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey.

Its vessels are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Its length is a month's journey and its width is a month's journey. Whoever drinks from it once will never thirst again thereafter.

The Bridge (Aṣ-Ṣirāt) is laid across the back of Hellfire (Jahannam)—it is the causeway between Paradise and the Fire. People will pass over it according to the measure of their deeds. Some will pass like the blinking of an eye; some will pass like a flash of lightning; some will pass like the wind; some will pass like swift horses; some will pass like riders on camels; some will run; some will walk; some will crawl; and some will be snatched and cast into Hellfire. For indeed, upon the Bridge are hooks (kalālīb) that seize people according to their deeds.

Whoever successfully crosses the Ṣirāt enters Paradise. When they have crossed it, they will be stopped at an archway (qaṭarah) between Paradise and the Fire, where scores between them will be settled. Once they have been refined and purified, they will be granted permission to enter Paradise. The first to request the opening of the gate of Paradise will be Muḥammad (peace be upon him), and the first nation to enter Paradise will be his Ummah.

And he (peace be upon him) will have three intercessions (shafā'āt) on the Day of Resurrection: (1) As for the first intercession: He will intercede for the people gathered at the Standing Place (Ahl al-Mawqif) so that judgment may be passed among them, after the Prophets—Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, and 'Īsā son of Maryam—decline to intercede, until the request finally comes to him. (2) As for the second intercession: He will intercede for the people of Paradise that they may enter Paradise. These two intercessions are exclusive to him (peace be upon him). (3) As for the third intercession: He will intercede for those who deserved the Fire.

This third intercession is granted to him (peace be upon him) and to the rest of the Prophets, the truthful saints (ṣiddīqīn), and others. He will intercede for those who deserved the Fire, that they may not enter it, and he will intercede for those who have entered it, that they may be brought out of it. Allāh, the Exalted, will also bring forth groups of people from the Fire without any intercession, solely by His Grace and Mercy. And there will remain surplus space in Paradise after those inhabitants of the world destined for it have entered, so Allāh will originate a new creation for it and admit them into Paradise.

The various aspects encompassed by the Final Abode—including the Reckoning, Reward, Punishment, Paradise, and Hellfire—and their intricate details are mentioned in the Books revealed from heaven, in the transmitted reports of knowledge passed down from the Prophets, and in the knowledge inherited from Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Within this inherited knowledge is that which heals and suffices; whoever seeks it will find it.

The Saved Group—Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah—believe in the Divine Decree (Al-Qadar): its good and its bad. Faith in the Divine Decree comprises two levels (darajatayn), each encompassing two aspects:

The First Level: Belief that Allāh, the Exalted, knew what the creation would do, by virtue of His Eternal Knowledge ('Ilmihi al-Qadīm) with which He is described eternally (azalan). He knew all their states—their acts of obedience and disobedience, their provisions (arzāq), and their lifespans (ājal). Then, Allāh wrote the decreed measures (maqādīr) of the creation in the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz).

{The first thing Allāh created was the Pen. He said to it: 'Write.' It asked: 'What shall I write?' He said: 'Write all that will be until the Day of Resurrection.' So, whatever afflicts a person could never have missed him, and whatever misses him could never have

afflicted him. The Pens have dried, and the Scrolls have been rolled up.} As He, Glorified and Exalted be He, said: {Do you not know that Allāh knows what is in the heaven and the earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed, that, for Allāh, is easy.} [Al-Ḥajj: 70]. And He said: {No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a Record before We bring it into being—indeed that, for Allāh, is easy.} [Al-Ḥadīd: 22].

This preordainment (taqḍīr)—which is based upon His Knowledge, Glorified be He—occurs in various instances, both in general outline and in specific detail. He has written in the Preserved Tablet whatever He willed. And when He creates the body of the fetus before breathing the soul into it, He sends an angel to it, who is commanded concerning four matters. He is told: 'Write down his provision, his lifespan, his deeds, and whether he will be wretched (shaqī) or felicitous (saʿīd),' and similar matters. This aspect of the Divine Decree used to be denied by the extremists among the Qadariyyah in the past, though those who deny it today are few.

As for the Second Level: It is Allāh's Executed Will (Mashīʿat Allāh an-Nāfidhah) and His Comprehensive Power (Qudratuhu ash-Shāmilah). This is the belief that whatever Allāh wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be; that there is no movement nor stillness in the heavens or the earth except by the Will of Allāh, Glorified be He; nothing occurs in His dominion except what He intends; and that He, Glorified and Exalted be He, has Power over all things (Qaḍīr)—both existent and non-existent. There is no creature in the earth or in the heaven except that Allāh is its Creator (Khāliq), Glorified be He. There is no creator other than Him, and no lord besides Him.

Despite this [absolute power and decree], He has commanded the servants to obey Him and obey His Messengers, and He has forbidden them from disobeying Him. He, the Glorified, loves the God-fearing (Al-Muttaqīn), the performers of good (Al-Muḥsinīn), and the upholders of justice (Al-Muqsiṭīn). He is pleased with those who believe and do righteous deeds. He does not love the disbelievers (Al-Kāfirīn), nor is He pleased with the defiantly disobedient people (Al-Fāsiqīn). He does not command indecency (Al-Faḥshā'), nor is He pleased with disbelief (kufr) from His servants, nor does He love corruption (Al-Fasād).

The servants are real actors (fā'ilūn ḥaqīqatan), and Allāh is the Creator of their actions. The servant is the one who is the believer or the disbeliever, the righteous (barr) or the wicked (fājir), the one who prays or the one who fasts. The servants possess capacity (qudrah) over their actions and they possess will (irādah). Yet Allāh is their Creator and the Creator of their capacity and their will, as the Exalted said: {For whoever wills among you to take a straight path.} [At-Takwīr: 28] {And you do not will except as Allāh wills, the Lord of the Worlds.} [At-Takwīr: 29].

This level of the Divine Decree is denied by the generality of the Qadariyyah, whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) called the Magians (Majūs) of this Ummah. Conversely, some from among the People of Affirmation (Ahl al-Ithbāt) go to extremes regarding it, to the point that they strip the servant of his capacity (qudrah) and choice (ikhtiyār), and they negate the wisdom (ḥikam) and beneficial purposes (maṣāliḥ) underlying Allāh's Actions and Rulings.

## Section

Among the foundational principles (Uṣūl) of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community) is that the Religion (ad-Dīn) and Faith (al-Imān) comprise both speech (qawl) and action ('amal). This includes: the speech of the heart (inner conviction and affirmation) and the tongue (verbal declaration); and the action of

the heart (intention, sincerity, love, submission), the tongue (remembrance, recitation, supplication), and the limbs (jawāriḥ - physical acts of worship and obedience). Furthermore, a core principle is that Faith (Īmān) increases through acts of obedience (ṭā'ah) and decreases through acts of disobedience (ma'ṣiyah).

Yet, alongside this understanding, Ahlus Sunnah do not declare the People of the Qiblah (Ahl al-Qiblah – i.e., Muslims who pray towards Makkah) disbelievers merely on account of general disobedience or major sins (kabā'ir), unlike the practice of the Khawārij (a deviant sect known for extreme positions on takfīr, declaring Muslims disbelievers). On the contrary, the bond of brotherhood in faith (al-ukhuwwah al-īmāniyyah) persists even in the presence of sin, as Allāh Subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā (Glorified and Exalted is He) stated in the verse concerning retribution (qiṣās): {But if the offender is pardoned by his brother [the victim's heir] in any way, then settlement should be pursued according to what is right [Al-Baqarah: 178]}. And He stated: {And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between them. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the one that transgresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.} {The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers [Al-Ḥujurāt: 9-10]}.

Furthermore, Ahlus Sunnah do not completely strip a Muslim who commits open sin (al-fāsiq al-millī) of the name of Faith, nor do they condemn him to eternity in the Hellfire, as the Mu'tazilah (a rationalist theological school) assert. Rather, such a sinner (fāsiq) is still encompassed by the general designation of 'believer' (mu'min) in certain contexts, such as the statement of Allāh Ta'ālā: {...then [the penalty is] the freeing of a believing slave... [An-Nisā': 92]}. However, he may not be included under the designation of absolute or perfect Faith (al-īmān al-muṭlaq), as indicated in the statement of Allāh Ta'ālā: {The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when His verses are recited to them, they increase them in faith... [Al-Anfāl: 2]}, and the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): {The adulterer is not a believer while he is committing adultery; the thief is not a believer while he is stealing; the drinker of intoxicants is not a believer while drinking them; and the plunderer who commits robbery of something valuable, attracting people's attention, is not a believer while he is plundering it} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Therefore, Ahlus Sunnah maintain: He is a believer with deficient faith (mu'min nāqiṣ al-īmān), or a believer by virtue of his underlying faith, yet a sinner (fāsiq) on account of his major sin. Consequently, he is neither accorded the absolute, unqualified name (al-ism al-muṭlaq) of Faith, nor is he entirely stripped of the basic designation (muṭlaq al-ism) of Faith.

## Section

Among the foundational principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah is the purity (salāmah) of their hearts and tongues towards the Companions (Aṣḥāb) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). This reflects how Allāh described those who follow them faithfully in His statement: {And [also for] those who came after them, saying, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful!' [Al-Ḥashr: 10]}. It also involves obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his command: {Do not revile my Companions! By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, if one of you were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uḥud in gold, it would not reach the measure of one mudd (a small measure of volume) spent by one of them, nor even half of it} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim].

They accept what has come in the Book (the Qur'an), the Sunnah, and the scholarly consensus (Ijmā') regarding the virtues (faḍā'il) and ranks (marātib) of the Companions. They give precedence to those who spent [in Allāh's cause] and fought before the Victory (al-Faṭḥ) – which here refers to the Truce of Al-Ḥudaybiyah – over those who spent and fought afterwards. They give precedence to the Emigrants (Muhājirīn) over the Helpers (Anṣār). They believe that Allāh said to the participants of the Battle of Badr – and they numbered three hundred and some odd men – 'Do as you wish, for I have forgiven you' [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. They also believe that no one who pledged allegiance under the Tree (referring to the Pledge of Riḍwān at Al-Ḥudaybiyah) will enter the Hellfire, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed; rather, Allāh was pleased with them, and they were pleased with Him, and they numbered more than fourteen hundred [Muslim].

They bear witness that Paradise is assured for those Companions whom the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) explicitly named as dwellers of Paradise, such as the Ten (al-'Asharah al-Mubashsharūn bil-Jannah), Thābit ibn Qays ibn Shammās, and others among the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them all). They affirm what has been established through mass-transmitted reports (tawātur) from the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Mu'minīn), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhu), and others, that the best of this Ummah (Muslim nation) after its Prophet (peace be upon him) is Abū Bakr, then 'Umar. They rank 'Uthmān third and 'Alī fourth (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhum). This ranking is indicated by the transmitted reports (āthār) and reflects the consensus of the Companions (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhum) on giving precedence to 'Uthmān in the pledge of allegiance (bay'ah) for the Caliphate.

This established ranking holds despite the fact that some scholars among Ahlus Sunnah historically differed regarding 'Uthmān and 'Alī (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhumā) – after agreeing on the precedence of Abū Bakr and 'Umar – as to which of the two ('Uthmān or 'Alī) was superior. Some gave precedence to 'Uthmān and then either remained silent or ranked 'Alī fourth; others gave precedence to 'Alī; and still others withheld judgment (tawaqquf). However, the position of Ahlus Sunnah eventually settled upon giving precedence to 'Uthmān. Nevertheless, this specific issue – the comparison between 'Uthmān and 'Alī – is not considered among the foundational principles (Uṣūl) where disagreement leads to being declared misguided (ḍalāl) according to the majority of Ahlus Sunnah. The issue wherein disagreement does lead to being declared misguided is the matter of the Caliphate (mas'alat al-khilāfah) itself. This is because Ahlus Sunnah firmly believe that the rightful Caliph (successor) after the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) was Abū Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān, then 'Alī. Anyone who disputes the legitimacy of the Caliphate of any one of these leaders (Imāms) is considered more astray than his family's donkey (an idiom expressing profound misguidance).

They love the members of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), maintain allegiance (yatawallawnahum) to them, and uphold the Prophet's (peace be upon him) final instructions concerning them. He stated on the day of Ghadīr Khumm: {I remind you of Allāh concerning my Household! I remind you of Allāh concerning my Household!} [Muslim]. He also said to his uncle Al-'Abbās – who had complained to him that some members of the Quraysh were treating Banū Hāshim coldly – {By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! They will not truly believe until they love you for Allāh's sake and for my kinship} [At-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad]. And he (peace be upon him) said: {Indeed, Allāh chose the descendants of Ismā'īl; and from the descendants of Ismā'īl, He chose Kinānah; and from Kinānah, He chose Quraysh; and from Quraysh, He chose Banū Hāshim; and He chose me from Banū Hāshim} [Muslim].

They maintain allegiance to the wives of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him),

the Mothers of the Believers (Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn), and believe that they will be his wives in the Hereafter. This applies especially to Khadījah (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā), the mother of most of his children, the first person to believe in him and support him in his mission, who held a position of great esteem with him; and to Aṣ-Ṣiddīqah bint Aṣ-Ṣiddīq (the Truthful, daughter of the Truthful – referring to 'Ā'ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr) (raḍiya Allāhu 'anhumā), concerning whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {The superiority of 'Ā'ishah over other women is like the superiority of Tharīd (a meat and bread dish) over all other foods} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim].

They disavow themselves (yatabarra'ūn) from the way of the Rāfiḍah (a branch of Shī'ism known for rejecting and often reviling the first three Caliphs and many Companions) who hate the Companions and insult them. They also disavow themselves from the way of the Nawāshib (those who harbor hatred and enmity towards the Ahl al-Bayt) who harm the Ahl al-Bayt through word or deed. Ahlus Sunnah refrain from delving into (yumsikūn 'ammā shajara) the disputes that arose among the Companions.

Regarding the reports (āthār) narrated about the Companions' faults (masāwīhim), Ahlus Sunnah maintain that some of these reports are outright falsehoods, while others have suffered additions, deletions, or distortions from their original context. Concerning the authentic reports among them, the Companions involved are considered excused (ma'dhūrūn): they were either exercising independent reasoning (mujtahidūn) and were correct (muṣībūn), or they were exercising independent reasoning and erred (mukhtā'ūn). Despite their high status, Ahlus Sunnah do not believe that every individual Companion was infallible (ma'ṣūm) regarding major or minor sins. Rather, it is possible for them, generally speaking, to have committed sins. However, they possess such precedence in faith (sawābiq) and virtues (faḍā'il) that these necessitate forgiveness for any wrong actions that may have occurred, if indeed they occurred. To such an extent that misdeeds committed by them may be forgiven under circumstances where similar misdeeds by those who came after them would not be, because the Companions possess a wealth of good deeds (ḥasanāt) that erase misdeeds (sayyi'āt) – a wealth not possessed by those who came after them.

It is established by the statement of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) that they are {the best of generations} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim], and that {a mudd (small measure) given in charity by one of them is better than the equivalent of Mount Uḥud in gold given by anyone who comes after them} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Furthermore, if a sin was indeed committed by one of them, it is possible that he subsequently repented from it, or performed good deeds that erased it, or was forgiven due to the merit of his precedence in faith, or through the intercession (shafā'ah) of Muḥammad (peace be upon him), whose intercession they are the most deserving people to receive, or he was afflicted with a trial (balā) in this world which served as expiation (kaffārah) for him. If this is the case concerning confirmed sins, then how much more lenient should the view be regarding matters in which they were exercising ijtihād (scholarly reasoning)? In such cases, if they were correct, they receive two rewards, and if they erred, they receive one reward, and the error itself is forgiven.

Moreover, the extent of actions attributed to some of them that might be deemed objectionable is minuscule and insignificant (qalīlun nazrun maghmūr) when compared to the vast ocean of their virtues (faḍā'il) and merits (maḥāsīn), such as their faith in Allāh and His Messenger, their Jihād (struggle) in His cause, their Hijrah (emigration), their Nuṣrah (support to the Prophet and the Muhājirīn), their beneficial knowledge ('ilm nāfi'), and their righteous deeds ('amal ṣāliḥ).

Whoever studies the lives (sīrah) of the Companions with knowledge ('ilm) and insight

(baṣīrah), reflecting upon the virtues Allāh bestowed upon them, will know with certainty (yaqīnan) that they are the best of creation after the Prophets. There has never been, nor will there ever be, anyone like them. They are the elite (aṣ-ṣaḥwah) among the generations of this Ummah, which itself is the best of nations and the most honored by Allāh Ta'ālā.

## Section

Among the foundational principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah is the affirmation (taṣḍīq) of the miracles of the Awliyā' (Karāmāt al-Awliyā' – literally, 'honors of the close friends of Allāh'). These are extraordinary events (khawāriq al-'ādāt – breaches of the natural order) that Allāh causes to occur at their hands, encompassing various forms of inspired knowledge ('ulūm), spiritual unveilings (mukāshafāt), and demonstrations of power (qudrah) and influence (ta'thīrāt). Such miracles are reported from previous nations, as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Kahf and elsewhere, and from the early generations (ṣadr) of this Ummah, including the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), the Successors (Tābi'īn), and subsequent generations. These karāmāt continue to exist within the Ummah and will do so until the Day of Resurrection (Yawm al-Qiyāmah).

## Section

Furthermore, the path (ṭarīqah) of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah involves following the legacy (āthār) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) both inwardly (bāṭinan) and outwardly (ẓāhiran). It entails adhering to the way (ṣabīl) of the first and foremost (as-Sābiqīn al-Awwalīn) among the Emigrants (Muhājirīn) and the Helpers (Anṣār). It also involves following the counsel (waṣīyah) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), when he said: {Adhere to my Sunnah (way) and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn al-Mahdiyyīn) after me. Hold fast to it and bite onto it with your molar teeth (i.e., cling firmly). Beware of newly invented matters (muḥdathāt al-umūr), for every newly invented matter is an innovation (bid'ah), and every innovation is misguidance (ḍalālah)} [Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī].

They know that the truest speech is the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh), and the best guidance (hady) is the guidance of Muḥammad (peace be upon him). They give precedence to the Speech of Allāh over the speech of any category of human beings, and they prioritize the guidance of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) over the guidance of anyone else. It is for this reason they are called Ahl al-Kitāb wa as-Sunnah (the People of the Book and the Sunnah).

They are also called Ahl al-Jamā'ah (the People of the Community/Group) because 'al-Jamā'ah' signifies unity (ijtimā'), the opposite of which is division (furqah), even though the term 'al-Jamā'ah' has also come to denote the unified body of people itself. Consensus (al-Ijmā') is the third foundational principle (aṣl) relied upon in matters of knowledge ('ilm) and religion (dīn). Ahlus Sunnah weigh all beliefs and actions of people – whether internal or external, related to the religion – against these three foundational principles (the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and Ijmā'). The reliable and binding consensus (al-Ijmā' alladhī yandabīṭ) is that which was held by the Pious Predecessors (as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ), because after their time, differences increased significantly, and the Ummah became geographically widespread.

## Section

Then, alongside adherence to these principles, Ahlus Sunnah enjoin what is right (al-ma'rūf) and forbid what is wrong (al-munkar) according to the requirements of the Sharī'ah (Islāmic Law). They uphold the performance of Hajj (pilgrimage), Jihād (struggle in Allāh's cause), the Friday congregational prayers (Jumu'ah), and the Eid prayers ('Ayd) under the leadership of the rulers (umarā'), whether those rulers are righteous (abrār) or sinful (fujjār). They diligently maintain congregational prayers (jamā'āt).

They hold that offering sincere counsel (naṣīḥah) to the Ummah is a religious duty. They believe in the meaning of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: {A believer to another believer is like a building; each part strengthens the other} – and he interlaced his fingers (peace be upon him) [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. And his saying: {The parable of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is that of a single body; when one limb suffers, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim].

They enjoin patience (ṣabr) during times of trial (balā'), gratitude (shukr) during times of ease (rakhā'), and contentment (riḍā) with the bitterness of divine decree (murr al-qaḍā'). They call towards noble character traits (makārim al-akhlāq) and excellent deeds (maḥāsīn al-a'māl). They believe in the meaning of his (peace be upon him) saying: {The most complete of believers in faith are those with the best character (khuluq)} [Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī].

They encourage maintaining ties with those who sever them from you, giving to those who withhold from you, and forgiving those who wrong you. They command kindness (birr) to parents, upholding ties of kinship (ṣilat al-arḥām), good treatment of neighbors (ḥsun al-jiwār), kindness (iḥsān) to orphans, the needy (masākīn), and the wayfarer (ibn as-sabīl), and gentleness towards slaves (al-mamlūk). They forbid boasting (fakhr), arrogance (khuyalā'), transgression (baghy), and insolence (istiṭālah) towards creation, whether with right or without right. They command lofty morals (ma'ālī al-akhlāq) and forbid base ones (safsāfihā).

Everything they say or do, concerning these matters or others, is based solely on their adherence to the Book and the Sunnah. Their way (ṭarīqatuhum) is the religion of Islām itself, with which Allāh sent Muḥammad (peace be upon him). However, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that {his Ummah would split into seventy-three sects, all of them in the Fire except one – and that is the Jamā'ah (the main body united upon the truth)} [Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah], and in another narration, when asked about the saved group, he said: {They are those who are upon what I and my Companions are upon today} [At-Tirmidhī], therefore, those who adhere firmly to pure Islām (al-Islām al-maḥḍ), unadulterated by innovations (al-khālīṣ 'an ash-shawb), are indeed Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah.

Among them are the supremely truthful (aṣ-Ṣiddīqūn), the martyrs (ash-Shuhadā'), and the righteous (aṣ-Ṣāliḥūn). From them arise the beacons of guidance (a'lām al-hudā) and the lamps in darkness (maṣābiḥ ad-dujā), possessors of renowned virtues (manāqib ma'thūrah) and celebrated merits (faḍā'il madhkūrah). Among them are the Abdāl (the 'Substitutes' – a category of righteous individuals believed to uphold the world) and the Imāms (leaders in knowledge and piety) upon whose guidance (hidāyah) and understanding (dirāyah) the Muslims have reached consensus. They constitute the Victorious Group (aṭ-Ṭā'ifah al-Manṣūrah) about whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {There will not cease to be a group from my Ummah manifestly upon the truth; they will not be harmed by those who forsake them nor by those who oppose them, until the Hour is established} [Muslim].

We ask Allāh, the Magnificent, to make us among them, not to cause our hearts to deviate after He has guided us, and to grant us mercy from Himself. Indeed, He is the Bestower (Al-Wahhāb). And Allāh knows best. May Allāh exalt the mention of Muḥammad, his family (Āl), and his Companions (Ṣaḥb), and grant them abundant peace (ṣallā Allāhu ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallama taslīman kathīrā).



## A Debate Concerning the 'Aqīdah Wāsiṭiyyah

He (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him) said: In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. {All praise is for Allāh, Lord of the worlds.} {The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.} {Master of the Day of Judgment.} [Al-Fātiḥah: 1-4] I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone, having no partner, no supporter, and no helper. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger, whom He sent to all creation. May Allāh send prayers and abundant peace upon him, his family, and his companions, and upon all the righteous servants of Allāh. To proceed:

I have been asked more than once to write down what I recall of the proceedings during the three sessions convened for the debate concerning the matter of creed ('aqīdah). This was pursuant to a letter received from the Sultan in the Egyptian lands addressed to his deputy, the Amīr (governor) of the region. This came about because a group from the Jahmiyyah (a theological sect denying many of Allāh's attributes), the Ittiḥādiyyah (pantheists), the Rāfiḍah (a Shi'ite group rejecting the first three Caliphs), and others among those harboring malice, had lodged complaints against me with him.

Consequently, the Amīr ordered the assembly of the four chief judges—the judges representing the four schools of law (madhāhib)—along with their deputies, the Muftis (those qualified to issue legal opinions), and the Mashāyikh (respected scholars and elders) who held positions of honor and were held in high regard. They were unaware of the reason for their summons at this appointed time.

This took place on Monday, the 8th of the blessed month of Rajab, in the year 705 AH. [The Amīr] said to me, 'This council has been convened because of you. A decree has arrived from the Sultan instructing me to question you about your creed and about the writings you sent to the Egyptian lands, through which you call people to [this] creed.' I believe he also said, 'And [I was instructed] to gather the judges and jurists (fuqahā') so that you may discuss this matter together.'

I replied: 'As for the creed, it is not to be taken from me, nor from anyone greater than me. Rather, it is taken from Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and from that upon which the Salaf (pious predecessors) of the Ummah (Muslim community) reached consensus (ijmā'). Whatever is in the Qur'an, it is obligatory to believe in it, and likewise, whatever is established in the authentic Aḥādīth (prophetic traditions), such as those found in Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.'

'As for the writings, I have never initiated correspondence with anyone, calling them to any aspect of this [creed]. Rather, I have written responses answering those who asked me questions, whether from the Egyptian lands or elsewhere. It had reached my attention that a letter had been forged under my name, addressed to the Amīr Rukn al-Dīn al-Jāshankīr, the Ustādh Dār (Major-domo) of the Sultan, containing a distorted creed. I did not know its exact contents, but I knew it was fabricated. People from Egypt and other places would come to me asking about matters of creed and other issues, and I would answer them based on the Book (the Qur'an), the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition), and the way of the Salaf of the Ummah.'

He then said, 'We want you to write down your creed for us.' I replied, 'Write [it down].'  
So he instructed Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn [ibn al-Zamalkānī] to write. I then dictated to him the main points of the creed concerning the chapters on the Attributes [of Allāh], Qadar (Divine Decree), issues of Īmān (Faith), the Wa'īd (Divine Threat of Punishment), the Imāmah (Caliphate/Leadership), and Tafḍīl (Order of Virtue among the Companions).

This [creed] is that the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah (the People of the Prophetic Way and the Community) entails: belief in what Allāh has described Himself with and what His Messenger (peace be upon him) has described Him with, without taḥrīf (distortion of meaning), ta'tīl (denial/negation of attributes), takyīf (asking 'how'/specifying modality), or tamthīl (making comparisons/likening to creation). [It includes belief] that the Qur'an is the uncreated Speech of Allāh; from Him it originated, and to Him it shall return. [It includes] belief that Allāh is the Creator of all things, including the actions of His servants and everything else; that whatever Allāh wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be; that He commanded obedience, loves it, and is pleased with it; and He forbade disobedience and detests it. The servant is a real actor, and Allāh is the Creator of his actions. [It includes belief] that Īmān (faith) and Dīn (religion) consist of speech and action, increasing and decreasing. [It includes the principle] that we do not declare anyone from the Ahl al-Qiblah (people who pray towards Makkah, i.e., Muslims) a disbeliever (kāfir) due to sins, nor do we declare that any person of faith will remain eternally in the Fire. [It includes belief] that the Caliphs after the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) are Abū Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān, then 'Alī, and that their rank in virtue corresponds to their order in the Caliphate. Whoever places 'Alī before 'Uthmān has disparaged the Muhājirīn (Emigrants) and the Anṣār (Helpers).

I mentioned this or something similar, for indeed, much time has passed since then, and I do not recall the exact wording I dictated, but it was written down at that time. Then I said to the Amīr and those present: 'I know that some people fabricate lies against me, just as they have lied about me on numerous occasions. If I were to dictate the creed from memory, they might claim that I concealed parts of it, or that I compromised or dissimulated. Therefore, I shall present a written creed, composed about seven years ago, before the arrival of the Tatars (Mongols) in Shām (Greater Syria).'

Before presenting it, I said some things which I no longer recall precisely, and I became intensely angry. However, I remember saying: 'I know that certain groups have lied about me and told the Sultan various things.' I spoke words that I felt compelled to say, such as: 'Who else stood up for Islām in times of need besides me? Who clarified its proofs and expounded upon them? Who fought against its enemies and upheld it when it faltered, at a time when everyone else abandoned it, when no one would articulate its arguments, and no one would strive in its defense? Yet I stood, manifesting its proofs, striving for its cause, and encouraging adherence to it. If these people feel emboldened to speak against me, how will they treat others? Even if a Jew sought justice from the Sultan, it would be incumbent upon him to grant it. As for me, I might forgive my personal right, or I might not forgive. Indeed, I might demand justice from him [the Amīr] and demand that these liars be brought forth to confirm their fabrications.' I said more along these lines, but much time has passed. The Amīr then signaled to the Kātib al-Daraj (Secretary of the Chancery), Muḥyī al-Dīn, to write this down.

I also said—and I do not recall whether this was before or after presenting the creed—'Anyone who disagrees with me on anything I have written, I know his own school of thought better than he does.' However, I definitely said after presenting and reading it: 'There is not a single section I mentioned in it except that there is someone affiliated with

the Qiblah who opposes it, and every statement within it is opposed by one group or another.'

Then I sent someone to bring it [the written creed] from my house, along with some notebooks in my handwriting. Thus, the 'Aqīdah Wāsiṭiyyah was brought forth. I told them: 'The reason for writing this was that a judge from the region of Wāsiṭ—a Shaykh named Raḍī al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī, who followed the Shāfi'ī school—came to us while on his way for Hajj. He was a man of virtue and piety. He complained about the condition of the people in those lands under the rule of the Tatars: the prevalence of ignorance and oppression, and the decline of religion and knowledge. He asked me to write a creed for him that could serve as a foundation for him and his household. I initially excused myself, saying, 'People have written numerous creeds; take one of the creeds of the Imāms of the Sunnah.' But he insisted, saying, 'I only want a creed that you yourself write.' So I wrote this creed for him while sitting one afternoon after the 'Aṣr prayer. Many copies of it have since spread in Egypt, Iraq, and elsewhere.'

The Amīr then indicated that I should not read it myself, to avoid any suspicion, and handed it to his scribe, Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn. He read it to those present, word by word. The assembled group listened, with individuals raising points or objections as they wished. The Amīr also asked about certain passages within it. People were aware of the disagreement and personal inclinations harbored by a faction among those present—some of which was known publicly, some related to the creed itself, and some stemming from other reasons.

It is impossible to recount all the discussions and debates that took place in these sessions, as they were extensive and cannot be precisely recorded; moreover, there were instances of raised voices and clamor that defy exact documentation. However, I will write a summary of what I recall, despite the passage of time.

One of the objections raised by some concerned the statement at the beginning [of the creed]: 'Part of faith in Allāh is: belief in what He has described Himself with and what His Messenger has described Him with, without taḥrīf (distortion), ta'tīl (denial), takyīf (specifying modality), or tamthīl (comparison).' Someone asked, 'What is meant by taḥrīf and ta'tīl?' His intention was [to argue] that this negates ta'wīl (figurative interpretation) which the proponents of ta'wīl affirm, defining it as diverting a word from its apparent meaning, either obligatorily or permissibly.

I replied: 'Taḥrīf is distorting words from their contexts (taḥrīf al-kalim 'an mawāḍi'ih), as Allāh the Exalted condemned in His Book. It means altering the meaning indicated by the wording. Examples include the interpretation (ta'wīl) by some Jahmiyyah of Allāh's statement, {And Allāh spoke to Mūsā directly (taklīmā)} [An-Nisā': 164], claiming it means 'He wounded him severely with the claws of wisdom,' deriving it from al-kalm (wound). Similar examples are the interpretations of the Qarāmiṭah, the Bāṭiniyyah, and others among the Jahmiyyah, Rāfiḍah, Qadariyyah, etc.' He fell silent, though inwardly he harbored objections.

I mentioned outside this council that I deliberately used the term taḥrīf instead of ta'wīl because taḥrīf is a term explicitly condemned in the Qur'an. In this creed, I strove to strictly follow the Book and the Sunnah. Therefore, I negated what Allāh condemned, namely taḥrīf. I did not mention the term ta'wīl in this creed, neither affirming nor negating it, because it is a term with multiple meanings, as I have explained elsewhere in Al-Qawā'id (The Principles).

Indeed, the meaning of the term ta'wīl in the Book of Allāh is different from the meaning of ta'wīl in the terminology of later scholars (muta'akhhirīn) among the specialists in

Uṣūl (Principles of Jurisprudence) and Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and also different from the meaning of ta'wīl in the terminology of many scholars of Tafsīr (Qur'anic Exegesis) and the Salaf. This is because some meanings that might be termed ta'wīl are sound and transmitted from some of the Salaf. Therefore, I did not negate something whose validity could be established by proof. If its validity is established by proof and it is transmitted from the Salaf, then it is not taḥrīf.

I also told him: 'In the negation, I mentioned tamthīl (making comparisons/likening) and did not mention tashbīh (anthropomorphism/comparison). This is because tamthīl is explicitly negated by Allāh in the text of His Book, where He says: {There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11], and He says: {Do you know of any similarity to Him?} [Maryam: 65]. This term [tamthīl] was preferable to me over a term [tashbīh] that is not found [in this specific context of negation] in the Book of Allāh or the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him), even though negating [tashbīh] can sometimes intend a correct meaning, just as it can also intend a corrupt one.'

When I mentioned [regarding Ahlus Sunnah] that they do not negate the attributes with which He described Himself, nor do they distort the words from their contexts, nor do they commit ilḥād (deviation/heresy) concerning Allāh's Names and Signs, one of those present began to show discomfort, sensing the explicit refutation of his own position contained therein. However, he could not formulate a response. He wanted to resort to asking certain questions [typical of his school], which I anticipated, but he refrained, knowing the answer he would receive.

When I mentioned Āyat al-Kursī [Al-Baqarah: 255], I believe the Amīr asked about our statement [regarding its virtue]: 'No Shayṭān (devil) will come near him until morning.' I then cited the Hadith of Abū Hurayrah concerning the one who was stealing from the Ṣadaqat al-Fiṭr (charity given at the end of Ramaḍān), mentioning that Al-Bukhārī narrated it in his Ṣaḥīḥ. At this point, [my opponents] began discussing the negation of tashbīh (anthropomorphism) and tajسیم (corporealism), elaborating extensively on this and alluding to the accusations some people level against us in this regard.

I responded: 'My statement 'without takyīf (specifying modality) or tamthīl (comparison) negates every falsehood. I chose these two terms specifically because the negation of takyīf is transmitted from the Salaf. For example, Rabī'ah, Mālik, Ibn 'Uyaynah, and others stated—in the saying widely accepted by scholars—'The istiwā' (Allāh's rising over the Throne) is known, the kayf (how/modality) is unknown, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about it is an innovation (bid'ah).' Thus, these Salaf agreed that the takyīf (modality) is unknown to us. Therefore, I negated it in adherence to the Salaf of the Ummah.'

'It [takyīf] is also negated by textual evidence (naṣṣ), for the ta'wīl (ultimate reality/interpretation) of the verses concerning attributes includes the reality of the One described (Allāh) and the reality of His attributes. This falls under the ta'wīl which none knows except Allāh, as I have established in a dedicated principle (qā'idah) where I discussed ta'wīl, meaning, and the distinction between our knowledge of the meaning of speech and our knowledge of its ta'wīl (ultimate reality).'

'Likewise, tamthīl (comparison) is negated by textual evidence (naṣṣ) and early consensus (ijmā'), alongside rational proof for its negation and the negation of takyīf, since the true nature (kunnah) of the Creator is unknowable to humans. In this context, I mentioned the statement of Al-Khaṭṭābī, who transmitted that the methodology of the Salaf is to take the verses and Aḥādīth concerning attributes according to their apparent meaning (zāhir), while negating any specific modality (kayfiyyah) or comparison

(tashbīh) from them. This is because discussion regarding the Attributes is subsidiary to discussion regarding the Essence (Dhāt). The approach to the Attributes follows the pattern and example set for the Essence. Therefore, just as affirming the Essence is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality, likewise, affirming the Attributes is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality.'

One of the senior opponents then said: 'In that case, is it permissible to say: 'He is a body (jism), but not like [other] bodies?'' Myself and some of the virtuous scholars present replied to him: 'It has only been stated that Allāh is described with what He described Himself with and what His Messenger (peace be upon him) described Him with. Nowhere in the Book or the Sunnah does it state that Allāh is a jism (body/corporeal entity) for this question to even arise.'

One of the judges present, known for his piety, wanting to publicly clear us of the accusations some were making, began to excessively emphasize the negation of tashbīh and tajsīm.

I interjected: 'I have stated in the creed, in more than one place, 'without taḥrīf or ta'tīl, and without takyīf or tamthīl.' I stated at the beginning: 'Part of faith in Allāh is belief in what He has described Himself with in His Book and what His Messenger Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has described Him with, without taḥrīf or ta'tīl, and without takyīf or tamthīl.' Then I stated: 'And whatever the Messenger described his Lord with in the authentic Aḥādīth which the people of knowledge have accepted, belief in it is likewise obligatory...' continuing until I said: '...and similar authentic Aḥādīth in which the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) informs [us] about his Lord. Indeed, the Saved Sect (Al-Firqah An-Nājiyah)—Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah—believe in that just as they believe in what Allāh has informed [us] of in His Book, without taḥrīf or ta'tīl, and without takyīf or tamthīl. Rather, they are the middle path (wasat) among the sects of the Ummah, just as the Ummah is the middle nation (wasat) among the nations.'

'Thus, they are the middle path in the chapter of Allāh's attributes, between the people of ta'tīl (negation), the Jahmiyyah, and the people of tamthīl (comparison), the Mushabbihah (anthropomorphists).'

When this just judge saw their [the opponents'] collusion and partisanship, observed the scarcity of knowledgeable supporters [for my position], and feared them, he said: 'You have authored the creed of Imām Aḥmad, so you should say, 'This is the creed of Aḥmad.' He meant that a man composes according to his madhhab (school of thought) and should not be objected to for it, as this [madhhab] is one that is followed. His aim in saying this was to put an end to the opponents' arguments.

I replied: 'I have only compiled the creed of the Righteous Salaf, all of them. Imām Aḥmad has no exclusive claim to this. Imām Aḥmad was merely a conveyor of the knowledge that the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. If Aḥmad had said something from himself that the Messenger did not bring, we would not accept it. This is the creed of Muḥammad (peace be upon him).'

I stated repeatedly: 'I grant anyone who disagrees with anything in this creed a period of three years. If he brings forth a single letter from anyone belonging to the first three generations—those praised by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he said: 'The best of generations is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them'—that contradicts what I have mentioned, I will retract it. And I take it upon myself to produce transmissions from all groups—from the first three generations—that concur with what I have mentioned, including from the Ḥanafīyyah, Mālikīyyah, Shāfi'īyyah, Ḥanbaliyyah, Ash'ariyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, the Ṣūfiyyah, and others.'

I also stated outside this council: 'Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him), because more of the Sunnah and the texts from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) reached him than reached others, and because he was tested with the Miḥnah (inquisition) and engaged in refuting the people of innovation (ahl al-bida') more than others, his words and knowledge in this field were more extensive than others. Thus, he became a more prominent Imām in the Sunnah than others. Otherwise, the matter is as one of the righteous scholars among the Shaykhs of the Maghrib (North Africa) said: 'The madhhab (doctrine) belongs to Mālik and Ash-Shāfi'i, but the prominence belongs to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.' Meaning, what Aḥmad adhered to is what all the Imāms of Islām adhered to, even if some possessed greater knowledge, clarity, manifestation of truth, and refutation of falsehood than others.'

When the creed mentioned: 'And what the Prophet (peace be upon him) described his Lord with in the authentic Aḥādīth which the people of knowledge have accepted,' and when the Hadith of Abū Sa'īd [al-Khudrī]—agreed upon in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]—was reached, wherein the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that Allāh will say on the Day of Resurrection: {'O Ādam! He will reply, 'Labbayka wa Sa'dayk' [Here I am at Your service and Your command]. Then a voice will call out: 'Indeed, Allāh commands you to dispatch a contingent to the Fire...'} [the rest of the Hadith]—the Amīr asked them, 'Is this Hadith authentic?' I replied, 'Yes, it is in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections, and no one disagrees about that.' The disputant was compelled to acknowledge it, and the assembly agreed on this.

The Amīr requested discussion on the issue of the Ḥarf (letters) and Ṣawt (voice/sound) [of the Qur'an], as this had been requested of him.

I said: 'What many people attribute to Imām Aḥmad and his companions—that the voices of the reciters and the ink in the Maṣāḥif (copies of the Qur'an) are eternal and pre-existent (qadīm azalī), as transmitted by Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb<sup>1</sup> and others—is a fabricated lie. Neither Aḥmad nor any of the Muslim scholars ever said this, neither Aḥmad's companions nor others.'

'I then produced a booklet I had brought along with the creed, containing the exact statements of Aḥmad as recorded by Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Khallāl in his book Kitāb as-Sunnah from Imām Aḥmad, and what his companion Abū Bakr al-Marwadhī compiled of Imām Aḥmad's words and the words of the Imāms of his time and his other companions: that whoever says, 'My utterance (lafẓ) of the Qur'an is created,' is a Jahmī, and whoever says, '[My utterance is] uncreated,' is an innovator (mubtadī).'

'I added: 'This is precisely what [Abū al-Ḥasan] al-Ash'arī transmitted in his book Al-Maqālāt (The Discourses [of the Islāmic Sects]) from Ahl al-Sunnah and Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth (the People of Hadith), stating that this was his own position.' I continued: 'So what about someone who says, 'My utterance is eternal (qadīm)'? What about someone who says, 'My voice (ṣawt) is uncreated'? What about someone who says, 'My voice is eternal (qadīm)'? The explicit texts from Imām Aḥmad differentiate between Allāh speaking with a voice and the voice of the servant, as transmitted by Al-Bukhārī, author of the Ṣaḥīḥ, in his book Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād (The Creation of the Servants' Actions), and by other Imāms of the Sunnah.'

'I also presented the answer to a question I had been asked previously concerning someone who swore an oath of divorce (ṭalāq) regarding the issue of 'the letter and the voice' (al-ḥarf waṣ-ṣawt) and the issue of 'the apparent meaning concerning the Throne' (aẓ-ẓāhir fil-'arsh). I mentioned from that previous answer the detailed position on this

<sup>1</sup> Printed as Majd al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, corrected from Ṣiḡānat Majmū' al-Fatāwā, p. 255.

matter, stating that making the unqualified assertion that the Qur'an is the letters and the voice, or that it is not letters and voice—both are innovations (bid'ah) that emerged after the third century [AH]. I said: 'This is my answer.'

'This particular question had been sent by a group of obstinate individuals inclined towards Jahmī views, some of whom were present in the council. When the answer reached them, it silenced them. They had assumed that if I answered with what they thought Ahl al-Sunnah believed, they would achieve their goal of defamation. And if I answered according to their own view, they would achieve their goal of claiming agreement. But when they were answered with the decisive criterion (furqān) upheld by Ahl al-Sunnah—which was neither what they themselves said, nor what they attributed to Ahl al-Sunnah (though some ignorant people might say it)—they were dumbfounded.'

'[The answer stated] therein: that the Qur'an, in its entirety, is the Speech of Allāh—its letters (ḥurūf) and its meanings (ma'ānī). The Qur'an is not merely a name for the letters alone, nor for the meanings alone.'

'During the discussion, addressing Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn al-Wakīl—to expose his frequent contradictions, his inability to adhere to a single position, and his efforts to stir up discord (fitan) and division among Muslims—I said: 'I possess a creed written by Shaykh Abū al-Bayān, which states that whoever says a single letter (ḥarf) of the Qur'an is created has committed disbelief (kufr). And you yourself wrote upon it, in your own handwriting, that this is the madhhab of Ash-Shāfi'ī and the leading scholars of his school, and that you adhere to this belief before Allāh.' He acknowledged this. Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Zamalkānī objected to this statement [attributed to Ash-Shāfi'ī]. Ibn al-Wakīl retorted, 'This is the explicit statement (naṣṣ) of Ash-Shāfi'ī,' and he argued back and forth with him [Kamāl al-Dīn] about it several times.'

'When we convened for the second session, it was mentioned to Ibn al-Wakīl that Ibn Dirbās had transmitted a similar statement from Ash-Shāfi'ī in his book Al-Intiṣār. Then, during the third session, Ibn al-Wakīl brought up the matter again. Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn said to Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn al-Wakīl: 'You stated in that [previous] session, addressing Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn [Ibn Taymiyyah], that whoever says a letter of the Qur'an is created is a disbeliever (kāfir).' He repeated this assertion several times.'

'At this, Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn became intensely angry, raised his voice, and exclaimed: 'This constitutes takfīr (declaring someone a disbeliever) of our colleagues, the Ash'arī theologians (mutakallimīn), who say that the letters of the Qur'an are created, such as Imām al-Ḥaramayn [al-Juwaynī] and others! We will not tolerate the takfīr of our colleagues!' Ibn al-Wakīl then denied having said that, claiming, 'I did not say that. I only said that whoever denies a single letter of the Qur'an has committed disbelief.' Those present refuted him, saying, 'You said exactly such-and-such!' They added, 'It is unbecoming of you to make a statement and then retract it.' Some others claimed, 'He did not say this.' When they distorted [what was said], he said, 'We did not hear him say this,' until the Sultan's deputy remarked, 'One person lies, and another bears witness [to the lie]!'

'Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn remained furious and turned to the Chief Judge (Qādī al-Quḍāh), Najm al-Dīn al-Shāfi'ī, appealing for his support against Ibn al-Wakīl for having declared his colleagues disbelievers. Judge Najm al-Dīn replied, 'I did not hear this.' Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn became even angrier and said something—the exact wording of which I did not catch, but the meaning was—that this was a slight against [the school of] Ash-Shāfi'ī and a disgrace upon them that their Imāms were being declared disbelievers without anyone

defending them.'

'I did not hear what Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn said regarding Judge Najm al-Dīn specifically. I asked others who were present if they heard him say anything against him, and they said no. However, the Judge believed the reproach was directed at him, because he was the judge of the [Shāfi'ī] madhhab and had not defended its scholars, and that Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn intended this. Consequently, Chief Judge Najm al-Dīn became angry and declared, 'Bear witness against me that I have resigned from my position!' He then began listing his qualifications, his entitlement [to the position], and his restraint from speaking ill of others, calling upon the Sultan's deputy to witness this. I said some words to him, the gist of which was to express respect for him and affirm his suitability to continue in his role under the circumstances.'

'When the issue of the Qur'an was reached [in the reading of the creed]: 'And part of faith in it [Allāh] is the belief that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh, uncreated; from Him it originated (minhu bada'a) and to Him it shall return (wa ilayhi ya'ūd)', some disputed the phrase 'from Him it originated and to Him it shall return,' demanding an explanation.'

'I replied: 'As for this statement, it is authentically transmitted from the Salaf. For example, 'Amr ibn Dīnār reported: 'I met people seventy years ago saying: Allāh is the Creator, and everything besides Him is created, except for the Qur'an, for it is the Speech of Allāh, uncreated; from Him it originated, and to Him it shall return.' More than one scholar has compiled the reports (āthār) concerning this from the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), and the Successors (Tābi'in), such as Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Faḍl ibn Nāṣir and Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Maqdisī.'

'As for its meaning: their statement 'from Him it originated' means that He is the One Who spoke it, and He is the One Who sent it down from His presence. It is not as the Jahmiyyah claim, that it was created in the air or elsewhere, or that it originated from other than Him. As for 'to Him it shall return,' it means that at the end of time, it will be lifted (yusrā bihi) from the Maṣāḥif and the hearts, such that not a single word will remain in the hearts, nor a single letter in the Maṣāḥif.' The majority of those present agreed with this explanation, and the disputants fell silent.'

'Outside this council, I addressed one of them by showing him the creed compiled by the Caliph Al-Qādir [bi-Allāh], which states that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh that 'came forth from Him' (kharaja minhu). He hesitated at this wording. I said: 'This is similar to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The servants do not draw near to Allāh with anything like that which came forth from Him,' meaning the Qur'an. Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt said: 'O so-and-so! Draw near to Allāh as much as you can, for you will never draw near to Him with anything more beloved to Him than that which came forth from Him.' And Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, upon hearing the [false] 'Qur'an' of Musaylimah the Liar, remarked, 'Indeed, this speech did not come forth from an Ill! —meaning a Lord.'

'It was also stated in the creed: 'And part of faith in Him is the belief that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh, revealed (munazzal), uncreated; from Him it originated and to Him it shall return. And that Allāh spoke it in reality (ḥaqīqatan). And that this Qur'an—which Allāh revealed to Muḥammad (peace be upon him)—is the Speech of Allāh in reality, not the speech of anyone else. It is impermissible to make the unqualified statement that it is a 'narration' (ḥikāyah) of Allāh's Speech or an 'expression' ('ibārah) of it. Rather, when people recite it or write it in the Maṣāḥif, it does not cease thereby to be the Speech of Allāh. For speech is only truly attributed to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who conveyed it as a messenger.'

'Some showed discomfort at the affirmation that it is the Speech of Allāh in reality, even

after conceding that Allāh the Exalted spoke it in reality. However, he [the objector] eventually conceded this point when it was explained to him that metaphorical speech (majāz) can validly be negated [i.e., one can say 'this is not really X'], whereas this [attribution of the Qur'an to Allāh] cannot validly be negated. It was also explained to him that the transmitted sayings of past scholars and the poetry attributed to poets are considered their speech in reality. Therefore, the attribution of the Qur'an to Allāh cannot be less real than that.'

.'Consequently, the entire assembly agreed on what was mentioned regarding the issue of the Qur'an: that Allāh spoke it in reality, and that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh in reality, not the speech of anyone else. When the creed mentioned: 'For speech is only truly attributed to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who conveyed it as a messenger,' they approved of this statement and held it in high regard. The leading opponents, like Ibn al-Wakīl and others, began to outwardly express admiration for this statement. He [Ibn al-Wakīl] expressed joy at this summary, saying, 'You have removed this doubt from us and healed the hearts,' and uttered similar sentiments.'

'Similarly, when the section on belief in the Last Day, with its details and structure, was read, they approved of it and held it in high regard. Likewise, when the mention of belief in Qadar (Divine Decree), and its division into two levels, and other profound principles contained therein were discussed. The same occurred when the discussion on the Fāsiq Millī (sinful Muslim) and on Īmān (faith) was reached, although an objection was raised regarding this, which I will mention.'

'The sum total of objections raised by the obstinate disputants, after the entire creed had been read and discussed, amounted to four questions: (1) The First: Our statement, 'Among the principles (uṣūl) of the Saved Sect (Al-Firqah An-Nājiyah) is that Īmān (faith) and Dīn (religion) consist of speech and action, increasing and decreasing: the speech of the heart and the tongue, and the action of the heart, the tongue, and the limbs.' They argued: 'If it is said that this is among the principles of the Saved Sect, then those who do not hold this view are excluded from the Saved Sect, such as our colleagues, the theologians (mutakallimīn), who say that Īmān is [only] affirmation (taṣḍīq), or those who say Īmān is affirmation and acknowledgement (iqrār). If they are not among the saved (nājiin), it necessitates that they are among the damned (hālikīn).'

'As for the [remaining] three questions, which formed the core of their objections, they raised them concerning our statement: 'Included in what we have mentioned regarding faith in Allāh is: belief in what Allāh has informed [us] of in His Book, what has been transmitted from His Messenger (peace be upon him) through tawātur (mass transmission), and upon which the Salaf of the Ummah reached consensus (ijmā'): that He, Glorified is He, is above His heavens, upon His Throne ('alā 'Arshihi), high above His creation ('Aliyyun 'alā khalqihī). Yet He is with them wherever they may be, knowing what they do. As He combined these concepts in His statement: {He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it, and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein. And He is with you wherever you are. And Allāh is Seeing of what you do.} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4].'

'The meaning of His statement {And He is with you} is not that He is intermingled with creation, for this is not necessitated by the language, it contradicts the consensus of the Salaf of the Ummah, and it contradicts the natural disposition (fiṭrah) upon which Allāh created mankind. Rather, the moon, one of Allāh's signs and among His smaller creations, is positioned in the sky, yet it is 'with' the traveler wherever he may be, and also with the non-traveler. And He, Glorified is He, is above the Throne, watchful over His creation,

overseeing them, observing them, and [this encompasses] other meanings related to His Lordship (Rubūbiyyah). All of this speech that Allāh the Exalted mentioned—that He is above the Throne and that He is with us—is true according to its reality (ḥaqq ‘alā ḥaқиқatih), requiring no distortion (taḥrīf). However, it must be safeguarded from false assumptions.’

(2) ‘The Second Question: Some of them said: ‘We affirm the exact wording that has been transmitted, such as in the Hadith of Al-‘Abbās, the Hadith of the Wild Goats (Ḥadīth al-Aw‘āl), [which states] ‘And Allāh is above the Throne (fawqa al-‘arsh).’ But we do not say ‘[He is] above the heavens (fawqa as-samāwāt),’ nor do we say ‘[He is] upon the Throne (‘alā al-‘arsh).’ They also said: ‘We say: {The Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā ‘alā) the Throne} [Ṭāhā: 5], but we do not say ‘Allāh rose over (istawā ‘alā) the Throne,’ nor do we say ‘[He is] risen over (mustawīn).’ They repeated this point several times, meaning that only the exact wording that was transmitted should be uttered, without substituting synonymous terms, and without understanding any meaning from it whatsoever, nor saying that it indicates any attribute of Allāh at all. We will elaborate on this in the second session, as we shall mention, if Allāh wills.’

(3) ‘The Third Question: They said: ‘The analogy (tashbīh) with the moon involves likening Allāh’s being in the heaven (fis-samā‘) to the moon’s being in the heaven.’

(4) ‘The Fourth Question: They said: ‘Your statement ‘true according to its reality (ḥaqq ‘alā ḥaқиқatih)’—reality (ḥaқиқah) refers to the literal linguistic meaning. And nothing is understood from the literal linguistic meaning [of istiwā’ and fawқиyyah (aboveness)] except the rising over and aboveness pertaining to physical bodies (ajsām). The Arabs only coined these terms for such meanings. Therefore, affirming the reality (ḥaқиқah) is pure corporealism (tajsīm). Negating tajsīm alongside this affirmation is either a contradiction or dissimulation (muṣāna‘ah).’

‘I answered their questions [starting with the first one]: My statement ‘the creed of the Saved Sect’ refers to the sect described by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saved when he said: {‘My Ummah will split into seventy-three sects; seventy-two will be in the Fire, and one will be in Paradise. It is the one that adheres to that which I and my Companions are upon today.’} This creed, therefore, is that which is transmitted from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them). They and those who follow them constitute the Saved Sect. Indeed, it is established from more than one Companion that they said, ‘Īmān increases and decreases.’ Everything I mentioned regarding that [definition of Īmān] is transmitted from the Companions with established chains of narration (asānīd), both its wording and meaning. If those who came after them disagreed, how does that detract from this [original position]?’

‘Then I told them: ‘However, it is not necessary that everyone who disagrees with some aspect of this creed is doomed (hālik). For the disputant might be a mujtahid (one exercising independent reasoning) who has erred, and Allāh may forgive his error. Or perhaps sufficient knowledge to establish the proof (ḥujjah) against him in that matter did not reach him. Or he may possess good deeds (ḥasanāt) through which Allāh erases his misdeeds (sayyi‘āt). If it is the case that the texts of Divine threat (wa‘īd) directed towards such a person do not necessarily apply to one who interprets figuratively (muta‘awwil), one who is devout (qānit), one whose good deeds erase [his sins], one who is forgiven, and so forth, then this [case of differing in creed] is even more likely [to be excused]. Rather, the implication of this statement [about the Saved Sect] is that whoever believes this creed is saved with regard to this belief. As for one who believes its opposite, he may or may not be saved, just as it is said, ‘Whoever remains silent is saved.’

'As for the second question, I initially answered them by stating that every term I used is transmitted from the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as the term 'above the heavens' (fawqa as-samāwāt), and the terms 'upon the Throne' ('alā al-'arsh) and 'above the Throne' (fawqa al-'arsh). I said, 'Write down the answer.' The scribe began writing it.'

'Then someone from the group said, 'The session has gone on long today. Let this be postponed to another session. You [Ibn Taymiyyah] can write the answer and bring it to that session.' Some of those who agreed [with my position] signaled that the discussion should be completed by writing the answer [immediately], lest their [the opponents'] questions and objections spread [without the rebuttal]. The opponents had an interest in delaying the writing of the answer so they could prepare themselves, consult sources, bring colleagues who were absent, and scrutinize the creed amongst themselves to better enable them to criticize and object. However, agreement was reached that the discussion would be completed on Friday, and we adjourned on that basis.'

'Allāh manifested the establishment of the proof (ḥujjah) and the clarification of the clear path (maḥajjah) in a way that honored the Sunnah and the Jamā'ah, and humbled the people of innovation (bid'ah) and misguidance (ḍalālah). Many people were anticipating what would happen in the second session. During those intervening days, they [the opponents] began examining the creed and reflecting on the answers I had previously given on matters related to creed, such as in the Mas'alah Ḥamawiyyah (The Question from Hamah) concerning istiḥā'ah and the Attributes known through revelation (aṣ-ṣifāt al-khabariyyah), and other issues.'

## Section

When the second session convened on Friday, the 12th of Rajab, they [the opponents] had brought most of their senior figures (shuyūkh) who had not been present at the first session. They additionally brought with them Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hindī, saying, 'This is the most distinguished among the group and their Shaykh in the science of Kalām (speculative theology).' They had conferred amongst themselves, reached an agreement, and colluded. They arrived with a forcefulness and preparedness unlike before, because the first session had caught them by surprise—although it had also been unexpected for the one being addressed, who was the one questioned, the respondent, and the debater [i.e., Ibn Taymiyyah himself].

When we assembled—and I had brought the written response to their previous questions, the delivery of which they had requested be postponed until today—I praised Allāh with the Khuṭbat al-Ḥājah (the Sermon of Need), the sermon transmitted from Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him). Then I said: 'Indeed, Allāh the Exalted has commanded us to maintain unity (jamā'ah) and harmony (i'tilāf), and He has forbidden us from division (furqah) and discord (ikhtilāf). He said to us in the Qur'an: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided.} [Āl 'Imrān: 103]. And He said: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects—you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.} [Al-An'am: 159]. And He said: {And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them.} [Āl 'Imrān: 105].'

'Our Lord is One, our Book is one, and our Prophet is one. The fundamentals (uṣūl) of the religion cannot tolerate division and disagreement. I am stating that which necessitates unity among the Muslims, and it is that which was agreed upon among the Salaf. If the assembly agrees, then all praise is due to Allāh. Otherwise, whoever opposes me after this, I shall expose the secrets, tear down the veils, and clarify the corrupt doctrines

(madhāhib) that have ruined nations and states. I will [even] travel by post-horse to the Sultan of the time and inform him of matters I will not mention in this council, for speech in times of peace differs from speech in times of war.'

I continued: 'There is no doubt that people dispute; one says, 'I am a Ḥanbalī,' and another says, 'I am an Ash'arī,' leading to division, discord (fitan), and disagreement among them over matters whose reality they do not truly understand. I have brought forth that which demonstrates the agreement of the schools of thought (madhāhib) regarding what I have mentioned.' I presented the book *Tabyīn Kadhīb al-Muftarī fimā Yunsabu ilā ash-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī* (Clarifying the Lie of the Fabricator Regarding What is Attributed to Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī), may Allāh have mercy upon him, authored by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim ibn 'Asākir, may Allāh have mercy upon him. I said: 'No book like this has been compiled concerning the praiseworthy reports about Al-Ash'arī. He [Ibn 'Asākir] mentioned in it Al-Ash'arī's own words as stated in his book *Al-Ibānah* (The Clarification).'

When I reached the mention of the Mu'tazilah, the Amīr asked about the meaning of [the name] Mu'tazilah. I replied: 'In earlier times, people differed regarding the Fāsiq Millī (the Muslim grave sinner)—and this was the first disagreement that arose in the religion—as to whether he is a disbeliever (kāfir) or a believer (mu'min). The Khawārij said he is a disbeliever. The Jamā'ah (main body of Muslims) said he is a believer. Then a group said: 'We say he is a fāsiq (grave sinner), neither a believer nor a disbeliever; we place him in a station between the two stations (manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn).' They also held that he would abide eternally in the Fire. They withdrew (i'tazalū) from the circle of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and his companions (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him), and thus they were named Mu'tazilah (those who withdraw/separate).'

The senior Shaykh [Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hindī], in his jubbah (outer robe) and ridā' (cloak), interjected: 'It is not as you said. Rather, the first issue Muslims differed upon was the issue of Kalām (Speech [of Allāh]). The Mutakallimūn (theologians) were named such because of their speech (takallum) concerning that. The first to state it was 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, then after his death, he was succeeded by 'Aṭā' ibn Wāṣil.' This, or something similar, is what he said.

I became angry with him and said: 'You are mistaken! This is a falsehood that contradicts the consensus (ijmā'). I told him: 'Neither manners nor merit! You showed no proper etiquette (adāb) in addressing me, nor were you correct in your answer.' Then I stated: 'People differed on the issue of the Speech [of Allāh] during the Caliphate of Al-Ma'mūn and afterwards, towards the end of the second century [AH]. As for the Mu'tazilah, they existed long before that, in the time of 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, after the death of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in the early second century [AH]. Those early figures had not discussed the issue of the Speech [of Allāh], nor did they dispute about it. Rather, the beginning of their innovation (bid'ah) was their discourse on the issues of Names and Rulings (al-asmā' wal-aḥkām) and the Divine Threat (al-wa'd).'

He retorted: 'Al-Shahrestānī mentioned this in his book *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (The Books of Religions and Sects).' I replied: 'Al-Shahrestānī mentioned that concerning the name Mutakallimūn—why they were called Mutakallimūn. He did not mention it concerning the name Mu'tazilah. The Amīr only asked about the name Mu'tazilah.' Those present objected to him [Al-Hindī] and said, 'You have erred.'

During my speech, I said: 'I am knowledgeable about every innovation that has arisen in Islām, who first introduced it, and what caused its introduction. Furthermore, what Al-Shahrestānī mentioned regarding the name Mutakallimūn is not correct either.

Theologians were called by this name before their dispute over the issue of the Speech [of Allāh]. They used to say about Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' that he was a mutakallim (theologian/speaker) and described him with kalām (theology/speech), even though people had not yet differed on the issue of the Speech [of Allāh].'

Myself and others pointed out: 'It is Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā', not 'Aṭā' ibn Wāṣil as the objector mentioned.' I added: 'And Wāṣil did not come after the death of 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd; rather, he was his contemporary. It is narrated that Wāṣil once delivered a speech, about which 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd remarked, 'If a prophet were sent, he would not speak better than this.' His eloquence was renowned, even though it is said he had a lisp (althagh) and would avoid [using words with] the letter Rā'. It was said that when told, 'The Amīr ordered (amara) a well (bi'r) to be dug (yuhfara),' he replied [avoiding the Rā'], 'The leader (al-qā'id) instructed (aw'aza) that a pit (qalīb) be turned (yuqlaba) on the main road (al-jāddah).'

When the discussion reached what Al-Ash'arī had stated [in Al-Ibānah], the leading Shaykh among them [Al-Hindī] said: 'There is no doubt that Imām Aḥmad is an Imām of immense stature and one of the greatest Imāms of Islām. However, some people who affiliated themselves with him introduced innovations (ibtada'ū ashyā').'

I replied: 'As for this, it is true. But this is not unique to Aḥmad. Rather, there is no Imām except that groups have affiliated themselves with him, from whom he is innocent. People affiliated themselves with Mālik from whom Mālik is innocent; people affiliated themselves with Ash-Shāfi'ī from whom he is innocent; and people affiliated themselves with Abū Ḥanīfah from whom he is innocent. People affiliated themselves with Mūsā (peace be upon him) from whom he is innocent, and people affiliated themselves with 'Īsā (peace be upon him) from whom he is innocent. People affiliated themselves with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib from whom he is innocent. And indeed, affiliated with our Prophet (peace be upon him) are the Qarāmiṭah, the Bāṭiniyyah, and other types of heretics (malāḥidah) and hypocrites (munāfiqīn) from whom he is innocent.'

He [Al-Hindī] mentioned in his speech that people from the Ḥashwiyyah (a derogatory term, lit. 'stuffers' or 'vulgar literalists') and the Mushabbihah (anthropomorphists) had affiliated themselves with Aḥmad, and similar remarks. I responded: 'The Mushabbihah and Mujassimah (corporealists) are more numerous among groups other than the companions of Imām Aḥmad than they are among them. Look at the various groups of Kurds; they are all Shāfi'īs, yet among them exists a degree of anthropomorphism (tashbīh) and corporealism (tajsīm) not found in other groups. The people of Jīlān include both Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalīs.' I added: 'As for the pure Ḥanbalīs, such [beliefs] are not found among them to the extent they are found among others.' (Part of the complete answer would be that the Karrāmiyyah, who are corporealists, are all Ḥanafīs).

I spoke about the term Ḥashwiyyah—I don't recall if it was in response to a question from the Amīr or someone else, or unprompted—saying: 'This term was first coined by the Mu'tazilah. They used to call the Jamā'ah (main body) and the Sawād al-Aẓam (vast majority) Ḥashw (stuffing/padding/common folk), just as the Rāfiḍah call them the Jumhūr (the masses). The ḥashw of the people are the common folk and the masses, those who are not distinguished notables. They would say, 'This person is from the ḥashw of the people,' just as one might say, 'This person is from the jumhūr.' The first to use this term was 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, who said, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him) was a Ḥashwī.' So, the Mu'tazilah called the Jamā'ah Ḥashw, just as the Rāfiḍah call them Jumhūr.'

I also stated—I don't recall if it was in the first or second session—'The first person to say

that Allāh is a jism (body) was Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, the Rāfiḍī.' I then addressed this Shaykh [Al-Hindī]: 'Who among the companions of Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) is a Ḥashwī in the sense you intend? Al-Athram? Abū Dāwūd? Al-Marwadhī? Al-Khallāl? Abū Bakr 'Abd al-'Azīz? Abū al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī? Ibn Ḥamid? Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā? Abū al-Khaṭṭāb? Ibn 'Aqīl?' I raised my voice and said: 'Name them! Tell me who among them? Who are they?'

'Is it through the lies of Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb [Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī] and his fabrications against people regarding their beliefs that the Sharī'ah (Islāmic Law) is nullified and the landmarks of the religion are obliterated? Just as he and others transmitted from them [the Ḥanbalīs] that they say the eternal Qur'an is the voices of the reciters and the ink of the scribes, and that the voice and the ink are eternal and pre-existent! Who said this? In which book is this found attributed to them? Tell me! And just as it was transmitted from them [as a supposed necessary consequence] that Allāh will not be seen in the Hereafter, based on the implication he claimed and the premise he attributed to them! I then began mentioning the respect due to this Shaykh [Al-Hindī], that he was the senior figure of the group and their Shaykh, and that he possessed intellect and piety deserving of appropriate treatment.

I ordered that the entire creed be read to him, as he had not been present in the first session; they had only brought him in the second session seeking his support. A trustworthy source later related to me concerning him [Al-Hindī], after he left the council, that he [the source] met with him and asked him, 'Tell me about this council.' He [Al-Hindī] replied, 'Neither so-and-so [Ibn Taymiyyah] nor I are at fault. The Amīr asked about something, and he [Ibn Taymiyyah] answered him regarding it, but I thought he [the Amīr] had asked about something else.' He [Al-Hindī] also said [to his companions], 'I told them, 'You have no [valid] objection against the man [Ibn Taymiyyah], for he supported abandoning ta'wīl (figurative interpretation), while you support the position of ta'wīl. Both are positions attributed to Al-Ash'arī.' He [Al-Hindī] added, 'I myself choose the position of abandoning ta'wīl,' and he produced his will (waṣīyyah) that he had written, which contained the position of abandoning ta'wīl.

The narrator told me: 'I then said to him [Al-Hindī], 'It reached me that you said at the end of the council—when the assembly was called to witness their agreement—'Do not record anything from me, neither negation nor affirmation.' Why was that?' He replied, 'For two reasons: Firstly, I was not present for the reading of the entire creed in the first session. Secondly, because my companions summoned me so they could gain support through me, it would not have been appropriate for me to openly disagree with them. So I remained silent regarding both sides.'

I ordered more than once that the entire creed be reread for this Shaykh [Al-Hindī]. However, some in the assembly felt this would take too long and that only the passage they had questions about should be read to him, the most significant being the term ḥaqīqah (reality). So they read it to him. He then presented a fine discussion related to the signification of words, which I commended and praised him for.

I said: 'There is no doubt that Allāh is Living (Ḥayy) in reality (ḥaqīqatan), Knowing ('Alīm) in reality, Hearing (Samī) in reality, Seeing (Baṣīr) in reality. This is agreed upon among Ahl al-Sunnah and the Ṣifātiyyah (affirmers of attributes) from all groups, even if some people of innovation dispute some aspect of this. There is no doubt that Allāh exists (mawjūd) and the creation exists (mawjūd). The term 'existence' (wujūd)—whether it is predicated of them both merely by way of lexical equivocation (ishtirāk lafẓī), or by way of univocity (tawāṭu') which entails sharing in both word and meaning, or by analogy/gradation (tashkīk) which is a type of univocity—according to all positions, Allāh

exists in reality and the creation exists in reality. Applying the name [e.g., 'existent'] to both the Creator and the creation in a real sense (bi-ṭarīq al-ḥaqīqah) does not entail any prohibited consequence.' In that setting, I did not favor one of these three positions over the others, because my objective was achieved according to all of them.

My objective was to establish what I had stated based on the positions of all groups, and to demonstrate the agreement of the Salaf and their followers on what I mentioned, and that the leading figures of the four madhāhib, Al-Ash'arī himself, and the major figures among his companions held the views I mentioned. This was because before the second session, some senior scholars from the Shāfi'iyyah, those affiliated with the Ash'ariyyah, the Ḥanafiyah, and others met with me. They were greatly apprehensive about this council, fearing the victory of the opponents therein, and also fearing for themselves due to the potential division of ranks (tafaruq al-kalimah).

If the proof supporting what I mentioned was presented, and if there were no Imāms from their own schools who agreed with it, it would lead to division. It would then be difficult for them to publicly deviate from the positions of their respective groups, which would, in turn, empower their enemies to achieve their aims. However, if it could be shown that Imāms from their own madhāhib held this view, and the proof for it was established, and it became clear that it was the way of the Salaf, then they could openly profess this view, aligning with what they believed inwardly to be the truth. To the extent that one of the senior Ḥanafīs, who met with me, said, 'If you just said, 'This is the madhhab of Aḥmad,' and stuck to that, the dispute would end.'

His intention was that the opponents could be deflected from attacking me by stating it was a followed madhhab, and both the supporter and the disputant would be relieved from having to openly declare agreement. I replied: 'No, by Allāh! Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has no exclusive claim to this. This is the creed of the Salaf of the Ummah and the Imāms of Ahl al-Ḥadīth.' I also said: 'This is the creed of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). For every word I have mentioned, I can cite a verse [from the Qur'an], a Hadīth, or a consensus (ijmā') of the Salaf. And I can name those who transmit the consensus from the Salaf from all Muslim groups: the four jurists (fuqahā'), the theologians (mutakallimīn), the people of Hadīth (ahl al-ḥadīth), and the Ṣūfīs.'

To the senior Shāfi'īs who spoke with me, I said—in order to clarify that what I mentioned is the position of the Salaf and the position of the Imāms of Ash-Shāfi'īs companions, and to cite the statements of Al-Ash'arī and his leading companions which refute these opponents, so that every Shāfi'ī and everyone who follows Al-Ash'arī's position that aligns with the way of the Salaf could find support—I will demonstrate that the position attributed to him [Al-Ash'arī] regarding the ta'wīl of the Attributes known through revelation (aṣ-ṣifāt al-khabariyyah) has no basis in his own words, but is rather the view of a faction among his followers. Thus, the Ash'ariyyah [as a school] have two positions, but Al-Ash'arī [himself] does not have two positions [on this].'

When I mentioned in the council that all of Allāh's names which are also used for creation—like the term 'existence' (wujūd), which is predicated in reality (ḥaqīqatan) of both the Necessary Existent (al-Wājib, i.e., Allāh) and the contingent existent (al-mumkin, i.e., creation) according to the three aforementioned views [equivocation, univocity, analogy]—two senior figures began disputing whether it [existence] is predicated equivocally (ishtirāk) or univocally (tawāṭu'). One said it is univocal, while the other said it is equivocal, lest it imply composition (tarkīb) [in Allāh]. The latter then said: 'Fakhr al-Dīn [al-Rāzī] mentioned that this dispute is based on whether His existence is identical to His essence (māhiyyah) or not. Whoever says that the existence of everything is identical to its essence holds that ['existence'] is predicated equivocally. Whoever says

that its existence is something additional to its essence holds that it is predicated univocally.' The first speaker then began arguing in favor of the view that existence is additional to essence, in order to support the position that ['existence'] is predicated univocally. The second speaker retorted: 'It is not the position of Al-Ash'arī and Ahl al-Sunnah that His existence is identical to His essence.' The first speaker denied this.

I intervened: 'As for the theologians (mutakallimūn) of Ahl al-Sunnah, their view is that the existence of everything is identical to its essence. The other view—that the existence of everything is something additional to its essence—is the position of the Mu'tazilah. Both [positions regarding essence/existence] are correct in one aspect. However, the correct view [regarding predication] is that these names [like 'existent'] are predicated univocally (bi-t-tawāṭu'), as I have established elsewhere, and I have answered the objection regarding composition (tarkīb) with the two well-known responses.'

'As for basing this [dispute about univocity/equivocation] on whether a thing's existence is identical to its essence or not, this is one of the errors attributed to Ibn al-Khaṭīb [Al-Rāzī]. For even if we say that a thing's existence is identical to its essence, it does not necessitate that the name ['existent'] is predicated of it and its counterpart merely through lexical equivocation (ishtirāk lafẓī), as is the case with all generic nouns (asmā' al-ajnās). For instance, the name 'blackness' (sawād) is predicated of this particular blackness and that particular blackness univocally (bi-t-tawāṭu'), yet the essence of this blackness is not identical to the essence of that blackness. The name signifies the shared quality between them, which is the absolute universal (al-muṭlaq al-kullī). However, this absolute, on the condition of its absoluteness, exists only in the mind. This does not necessitate negating the shared quality between the particulars existing externally. If it did, then univocal names (al-asmā' al-mutawāṭi'ah)—which constitute the majority of names found in language—would be negated. (These are the linguistic generic nouns: a name applied to a thing and to everything resembling it, whether it is the name of an entity or a quality, non-derived or derived, and whether it corresponds to a logical or juristic genus or not. Rather, the term 'generic noun' in language includes genera, classes, species, and the like. All of these are univocal names, while the particulars they denote in external reality are distinct).'

Some requested a rereading of the Aḥādīth mentioned in the creed, so they could criticize some of them. I understood their intention and said: 'It seems you have prepared to challenge the Hadith of the Wild Goats (Ḥadīth al-Aw'āl), the Hadith of Al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.' (They had exerted themselves until they found the statement made by Zakī al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Azīm, citing Al-Bukhārī's statement in his Tārīkh (History): 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amīrah: his hearing from Al-Aḥnaf is not known.'

I replied: 'This Hadith, besides being narrated by the compilers of the Sunan collections like Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, Al-Tirmidhī, and others, is transmitted through two well-known chains (ṭarīqayn). Criticizing one chain does not invalidate the other.' He asked: 'Doesn't its chain revolve around Ibn 'Amīrah, about whom Al-Bukhārī said, 'His hearing from Al-Aḥnaf is not known'? I responded: 'The Imām of Imāms, Ibn Khuzaymah, narrated it in his Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, in which he stipulated that he would only use as proof what was transmitted by a reliable narrator ('adl) from a reliable narrator, with a connected chain (mawṣūlan) back to the Prophet (peace be upon him).' I added: 'Affirmation takes precedence over negation. Al-Bukhārī only negated his own knowledge of Ibn 'Amīrah hearing from Al-Aḥnaf; he did not negate everyone's knowledge of this. If someone else—like the Imām of Imāms, Ibn Khuzaymah—knew that which establishes the chain (isnād), then his knowledge and affirmation take precedence over another's negation and lack of knowledge.' The assembly agreed with

this.

Some members of the assembly began offering praise [towards me] which is not appropriate for me to relate. They then started debating matters that were not explicitly in the creed but were related to answers I had given on other issues, or related to what they might infer from the creed.

One of their senior figures brought forth the *Kitāb al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt* (The Book of Names and Attributes) by Al-Bayhaqī (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him) and said: 'This contains an interpretation (ta'wīl) of the Wajh (Face) from the Salaf.' I replied: 'Perhaps you mean the statement of Allāh the Exalted: {And to Allāh belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn, there is the Wajh of Allāh} [Al-Baqarah: 115]?' He said: 'Yes. Mujāhid and Ash-Shāfi'ī said it means the Qiblah (direction of prayer) of Allāh.' I responded: 'Yes, this is authentically reported from Mujāhid, Ash-Shāfi'ī, and others, and it is correct. However, this verse is not one of the verses dealing with Attributes (āyāt aṣ-ṣifāt). Whoever counts it among the Attributes has erred, as a group has done. The context of the speech indicates the intended meaning, as He said: {And to Allāh belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn (tuwallū), there is the Wajh of Allāh}. The east and the west are directions (jihāt). And wajh here means direction (jihah). One asks, 'Ayyu wajhin turīd?' meaning, 'Which direction (jihah) do you intend?' And [one says], 'Urīdu hādhal-wajh,' meaning, 'I intend this direction (jihah).' As Allāh the Exalted said: {And for each [religious community] there is a direction (wijhah) toward which it faces (huwa muwallīhā)} [Al-Baqarah: 148]. This is why He said: {so wherever you turn (tuwallū), there is the Wajh of Allāh}, meaning, wherever you face (tastaqbilū) and direct yourselves (tatawajjahū). And Allāh knows best. May Allāh send prayers upon Muḥammad.'

## Section

[Shaykh 'Alam al-Dīn transmitted that the Shaykh (may Allāh sanctify his soul) said—in the council of the Sultan's deputy, Al-Afram—when asked about his creed, and the Shaykh had brought his 'Aqīdah Wāsiṭiyyah: 'I wrote this about seven years ago, before the arrival of the Tatars in Shām.' It was then read in the council. Then 'Alam al-Dīn transmitted from the Shaykh that he said: 'The reason for writing it was that a judge from Wāsiṭ, a man of virtue and piety, complained about the condition of the people in their lands under the rule of the Tatars—the prevalence of ignorance and oppression,<sup>1</sup> and the decline of religion and knowledge. 'He asked me to write a creed ('aqīdah) for him. I told him, 'People have written the creeds of the Imāms of the Sunnah.' But he insisted, saying, 'I only want a creed that you yourself write.' So I wrote this creed for him while sitting one afternoon after the 'Aṣr prayer.' The Amīr then signaled to his scribe, who read it to those present word by word. Some objected to my statement therein: 'And part of faith in Allāh is belief in what He has described Himself with and what His Messenger has described Him with, without taḥrīf (distortion), ta'ṭīl (denial), takyīf (specifying modality), or tamthīl (comparison).' His [the objector's] intention was that this negates ta'wīl (figurative interpretation), which is diverting a word from its apparent meaning, either obligatorily or permissibly.

[Ibn Taymiyyah continued, according to Al-Birzālī's transmission:] 'I replied: 'I deliberately used the term taḥrīf instead of ta'wīl because taḥrīf is a term explicitly condemned in the

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<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Nāsir ibn Ḥamad al-Fahd (p. 25) said: 'Alam al-Dīn is Al-Birzālī, Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim, the well-known Ḥāfiẓ (d. 739 AH). He has a well-known book on history from which Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī (may Allah have mercy on him) quotes in his biography of Shaykh al-Islām. Al-Dhahabī's final words [referring to the concluding sentence below] indicate that the original text [of Al-Birzālī's account] is transmitted from one of his history books, but I have not found it in the sources available to me.

Qur'an. In this creed, I strove to strictly follow the Book and the Sunnah. Therefore, I negated what Allāh condemned, namely taḥrīf. I did not mention the term ta'wīl in it because it is a term with multiple meanings, as I have explained elsewhere in Al-Qawā'id (The Principles). Indeed, the meaning of the term ta'wīl in the Book of Allāh is different from the term ta'wīl in the terminology of later scholars (muta'akkhiriin) among the specialists in Uṣūl (Principles of Jurisprudence) and Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and also different from the meaning of the term ta'wīl in the terminology of many scholars of Tafsīr (Qur'anic Exegesis) and the Salaf.'

'I told them: 'In the negation, I mentioned tamthīl (making comparisons/likening) and did not mention tashbīh (anthropomorphism/comparison). This is because tamthīl is explicitly negated by Allāh in the text of His Book, where He says: {There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11].' They [the opponents] began discussing the negation of tashbīh and tajsīm (corporealism), elaborating extensively on this and alluding to the accusations some people level against us in this regard. I responded: 'My statement 'without takyīf (specifying modality) or tamthīl (comparison)' negates every falsehood. I chose these two terms specifically because the negation of takyīf is transmitted from the Salaf. For example, Rabī'ah, Mālik, Ibn 'Uyaynah, and others stated—in the saying widely accepted by scholars—'The istiwā' (Allāh's rising over the Throne) is known, the kayf (how/modality) is unknown, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about it is an innovation (bid'ah).' Thus, these Salaf agreed that the kayf (modality) is unknown to us. Therefore, I negated it in adherence to the Salaf of the Ummah.'

'It [takyīf] is also negated by textual evidence (naṣṣ). For the ta'wīl (ultimate reality/interpretation) of the verses concerning attributes includes the reality of the One described (Allāh) and the reality of His attributes, which are unknown [to us]. This falls under the ta'wīl which none knows except Allāh, as I have established in a dedicated principle (qā'idah) mentioned in [Qā'idah fī] At-Ta'wīl wal-Ma'nā (A Principle Concerning Interpretation and Meaning) and the distinction between our knowledge of the meaning of speech and our knowledge of its ta'wīl (ultimate reality). Likewise, tamthīl (comparison) is negated by textual evidence (naṣṣ) and early consensus (ijmā'), alongside rational proof for its negation and the negation of takyīf, since the true nature (kunh) of the Creator is unknowable to humans.'

'In this context, I mentioned the statement of Al-Khaṭṭābī, who transmitted that the methodology of the Salaf is: 'To take the verses and Aḥādīth concerning attributes according to their apparent meaning (zāhir), while negating any specific modality (kayfiyyah) or comparison (tashbīh) from them. This is because discussion regarding the Attributes is subsidiary to discussion regarding the Essence (Dhāt). The approach to the Attributes follows the pattern and example set for the Essence. Therefore, just as affirming the Essence is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality, likewise, affirming the Attributes is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality.'

'One of the senior opponents then said: 'In that case, is it permissible to say: 'He is a body (jism), but not like [other] bodies?' Myself and some of the virtuous scholars present replied to him: 'It has only been stated that Allāh is described with what He described Himself with and what His Messenger (peace be upon him) described Him with. Nowhere in the Book or the Sunnah does it state that Allāh is a jism (body/corporeal entity) for this [question] to even arise. The first person to say that Allāh is a jism was Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, the Rāfiḍī.'

'As for our statement: 'They [Ahl al-Sunnah] are the middle path (wasat) among the sects of the Ummah, just as the Ummah is the middle nation (wasat) among the nations. Thus, they are the middle path in the chapter of Allāh's attributes, between the people of ta'ḥīl

(negation), the Jahmiyyah, and the people of tamthīl (comparison), the Mushabbihah (anthropomorphists).<sup>1</sup> I was told, 'You have authored the creed of Imām Aḥmad,' and they intended to end the dispute on the grounds that it was a followed madhhab. I replied: 'I have only produced the creed of the Righteous Salaf, all of them; Imām Aḥmad has no exclusive claim to this.'

'I said: 'I grant anyone who disagrees with anything in this creed a period of three years. If he brings forth a single letter from the first three generations that contradicts what I have mentioned, I will retract it. And I take it upon myself to produce transmissions from all groups—from the first three generations—that concur with what I have mentioned, including from the Ḥanafīyyah, Mālīkiyyah, Shāfi'iyyah, Ḥanbaliyyah, Ash'ariyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and others.'

'Then the disputant requested discussion on the issue of the Ḥarf (letters) and Ṣawṭ (voice/sound). I said: 'What is related about Aḥmad and his companions—that the voices of the reciters and the ink in the Maṣāḥif are eternal and pre-existent (qadīm azalī)—is a fabricated lie. Neither Aḥmad nor any of the Muslim scholars ever said this.' I produced a booklet containing what Abū Bakr al-Khallāl mentioned in Kitāb as-Sunnah from Imām Aḥmad, and what his companion Abū Bakr al-Marwadhī compiled of Aḥmad's words and the words of the Imāms of his time: that whoever says, 'My utterance (lafz) of the Qur'an is created,' is a Jahmī, and whoever says, '[My utterance is] uncreated,' is an innovator (mubtadi').<sup>2</sup> I added: 'So what about someone who says, 'My utterance is pre-existent (azalī)? What about someone who says, 'My voice is eternal (qadīm)?'

'The disputant said: 'People from the Ḥashwiyyah and the Mushabbihah affiliated themselves with Aḥmad,' and similar remarks. I replied: 'The Mushabbihah and Mujassimah are more numerous among groups other than the companions of Imām Aḥmad than they are among them. Look at the various groups of Kurds; they are all Shāfi'īs, yet among them exists a degree of anthropomorphism (tashbīh) and corporealism (tajsīm) not found in other groups. The people of Jīlān include both Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalīs. As for the pure Ḥanbalīs, such [beliefs] are not found among them to the extent they are found among others. And the Karrāmiyyah, who are corporealists, are all Ḥanafīs.'

'I said to him: 'Who among our companions is a Ḥashwī in the sense you intend? Al-Athram? Abū Dāwūd? Al-Marwadhī? Al-Khallāl? Abū Bakr 'Abd al-'Azīz? Abū al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī? Ibn Hāmid? Qādī Abū Ya'lā? Abū al-Khaṭṭāb? Ibn 'Aqīl?' I raised my voice and said: 'Name them! Tell me who among them?' Is it through the lies of Ibn al-Khaṭīb [Al-Rāzī] and his fabrications against people regarding their beliefs that the Sharī'ah is nullified and the landmarks of the religion are obliterated? Just as he and others transmitted from them that they say the eternal Qur'an is the voices of the reciters and the ink of the scribes, and that the voice and the ink are eternal and pre-existent! Who said this? In which book is this found attributed to them? Tell me! And just as it was transmitted from them [as a supposed necessary consequence] that Allāh will not be seen in the Hereafter, based on the implication he claimed and the premise he attributed to them!'

'When the issue of the Qur'an was reached—that it is the Speech of Allāh, uncreated; from Him it originated (minhu bada'a) and to Him it shall return (wa ilayhi ya'ūd)—some disputed the phrase 'from Him it originated and to Him it shall return,' demanding an explanation. I replied: 'As for this statement, it is transmitted and established from the Salaf. For example, 'Amr ibn Dīnār reported: 'I met people seventy years ago saying: Allāh is the Creator, and everything besides Him is created, except for the Qur'an, for it is the Speech of Allāh, uncreated; from Him it originated, and to Him it shall return.' The

meaning of 'from Him it originated' is that He is the One Who spoke it, and He is the One Who sent it down from His presence. It is not as the Jahmiyyah claim, that it was created in the air or elsewhere, or that it originated from other than Him. As for 'to Him it shall return,' it means that at the end of time, it will be lifted (yusrā bihi) from the Maṣāḥif and the hearts, such that not a single word will remain in the hearts, nor a single letter in the Maṣāḥif.' The majority of those present agreed with this.'

'I said: 'This is similar to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The servants do not draw near to Allāh with anything like that which came forth from Him (kharaja minhu),' meaning the Qur'an. And Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt said: 'O so-and-so! Draw near to Allāh as much as you can, for you will never draw near to Allāh with anything more beloved to Him than that which came forth from Him.'

'I said: 'And that Allāh spoke it in reality (ḥaqīqatan). And that this Qur'an—which Allāh revealed to Muḥammad (peace be upon him)—is the Speech of Allāh in reality, not the speech of anyone else. It is impermissible to make the unqualified statement that it is a 'narration' (ḥikāyah) of Allāh's Speech or an 'expression' ('ibārah) of it. Rather, when people recite the Qur'an or write it in the Maṣāḥif, it does not cease thereby to be the Speech of Allāh the Exalted in reality. For speech is only truly attributed to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who conveyed it as a messenger.'

'Some showed discomfort at the affirmation that it is the Speech of Allāh in reality, even after conceding that Allāh spoke it in reality. However, he eventually conceded this point when it was explained to him that metaphorical speech (majāz) can validly be negated, whereas this [attribution] cannot validly be negated, and that the transmitted sayings of past scholars and the poetry attributed to poets are considered their speech in reality. When I mentioned therein that speech is only truly attributed to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who conveyed it, they approved of this statement and held it in high regard.'

'I mentioned what the Salaf of the Ummah reached consensus (ijmā') upon: that He, Glorified is He, is above the Throne (fawqa al-'arsh), and that He is with us—this is true according to its reality (ḥaqq 'alā ḥaqīqatih), requiring no distortion (taḥrīf), but must be safeguarded from false assumptions. The meaning of His statement {And He is with you wherever you are} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4] is not that He is intermingled with creation, for this is not necessitated by the language, it contradicts the consensus of the Salaf of the Ummah, and it contradicts the natural disposition (fiṭrah) upon which Allāh created mankind. Rather, the moon, one of Allāh's signs and among His smaller creations, is positioned in the sky, yet it is 'with' the traveler wherever he may be.'

'When I mentioned that all of Allāh's names which are also used for creation—like the term 'existence' (wujūd), which is predicated in reality of both the Necessary Existent and the contingent existent—two senior figures disputed whether it is predicated equivocally (ishtirāk) or univocally (tawāṭu'). One said it is univocal. The other said it is equivocal, lest it imply composition (tarkīb). The latter then said: 'Fakhr al-Dīn [al-Rāzī] mentioned that this dispute is based on whether His existence is identical to His essence (māhiyyah) or not. Whoever says that the existence of everything is identical to its essence holds that ['existence'] is predicated equivocally. Whoever says that its existence is something additional to its essence holds that it is predicated univocally.' The first speaker then began arguing in favor of the view that existence is additional to essence, in order to support the position that ['existence'] is predicated univocally. The second speaker retorted: 'The position of Al-Ash'arī and Ahl al-Sunnah is that His existence is identical to His essence.' The first speaker denied this.'

'I said: 'As for the theologians (mutakallimūn) of Ahl al-Sunnah, their view is that the existence of everything is identical to its essence. The other view—that the existence of everything is something additional to its essence—is the position of the Mu'tazilah. Both [positions regarding essence/existence] are correct in one aspect. However, the correct view [regarding predication] is that these names [like 'existent'] are predicated univocally (bi-t-tawāṭu'), as I have established elsewhere. As for basing this [dispute about univocity/equivocation] on whether a thing's existence is identical to its essence or not identical to the existence of its essence [sic], this is one of the errors attributed to Ibn al-Khaṭīb [Al-Rāzī]. For even if we say that a thing's existence is identical to its essence, it does not necessitate that the name ['existent'] is predicated of it and others merely through lexical equivocation (ishtirāk lafzī), as is the case with all generic nouns (asmā' al-ajnās). For instance, the name 'blackness' (sawād) is predicated of this particular blackness and that particular blackness univocally (bi-t-tawāṭu'), yet the essence of this blackness is not identical to the essence of that blackness. The name signifies the shared quality between them, which is the absolute universal (al-muṭlaq al-kullī). However, this absolute, on the condition of its absoluteness, exists only in the mind. This does not necessitate negating the shared quality between the particulars existing externally. If it did, then 'univocal names' (al-asmā' al-mutawāṭi'ah)—which constitute the majority of names found in languages, namely the 'linguistic generic nouns' (asmā' al-ajnās al-lughawiyah), which is the name attached to a thing and whatever resembles it (whether it is the name of an entity or a quality, non-derived or derived, and whether it corresponds to a logical or juristic genus or not; rather, the term 'generic noun' in language includes genera, classes, species, and the like)—would be negated. All of these are univocal names, while the particulars they denote in external reality are distinct.' [End of Al-Birzālī's transmission]

Al-Dhahabī said: Then agreement was reached that this was a sound, Salafī creed.<sup>1</sup>

## Section

'Abd Allāh ibn Taymiyyah wrote to his brother Zayn al-Dīn:

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. From his brother, 'Abd Allāh ibn Taymiyyah, to the Shaykh, the Imām, the Scholar, the Virtuous, the Great Leader, Zayn al-Dīn—may Allāh the Exalted adorn him with the ornaments of His allies (awliyā'), honor him in this world and the Hereafter with the honor granted to His chosen ones (aṣfiyā'), grant him glad tidings of the greatest victory over his enemies, and inspire him to be grateful for [His] blessings, especially the best of His blessings: that which Allāh, Glorified is He, bestowed of the mighty victory for Islām, the Sunnah, and its people over the party of Shayṭān and his allies.

To proceed: I praise Allāh before you, the One other than Whom there is no god worthy of worship, and He is worthy of all praise. I send prayers upon His Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be the best of prayers and peace. I wish to inform him [Zayn al-Dīn] of the greatest victory and clear conquest (faṭḥ mubīn) that Allāh, Glorified is He, has bestowed upon us and upon all Muslims. Although minds are incapable of grasping it in detail and tongues fall short of describing it completely, we shall mention of it what Allāh, Glorified is He, has facilitated, summarized and free from excessive length.

It began when, on Monday the 8th of Rajab, the Sultan's deputy gathered the four chief judges, their deputies, the Muftīs, and the Mashāyikh: Najm al-Dīn, Shams al-Dīn, Taqī al-

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the commentary at the bottom of page 194 of this volume [of the original Arabic edition].

Dīn, and Jamāl al-Dīn [the chief judges]; Jalāl al-Dīn, deputy to Najm al-Dīn; Shams al-Dīn ibn al-'Izz, deputy to Shams al-Dīn; 'Izz al-Dīn, deputy to Taqī al-Dīn; Najm al-Dīn, deputy to Jamāl al-Dīn; Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Zamalkānī; Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Sharshī; Ibn al-Wakīl from the Shāfi'iyyah; Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq from the Ḥanafīyyah; Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥarīrī from the Mālikīyyah; Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Majd from the Shāfi'iyyah; Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Qawwām; and Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Urmawī.

Then the Sultan's deputy asked about the creed ('aḳidah). He [Ibn Taymiyyah] replied: 'The creed is not mine, nor that of anyone greater than me. Rather, the creed is taken from Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, His Messenger (peace be upon him), and that upon which the Salaf (pious predecessors) of the Ummah (Muslim community) reached consensus (ijmā'). It is taken from the Book of Allāh the Exalted, from the Aḥādīth (prophetic traditions) in Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and other known Aḥādīth collections, and from what is established from the Salaf of the Ummah.' The Amīr said, 'We want you to write down the form of the creed for us.' The Shaykh replied: 'If I state something now from memory, the liars might say, 'He concealed part of it' or 'He compromised.' Rather, I shall present what I wrote several years before this council, prior to the arrival of the Tatars.' He then brought forth the Wāsiṭīyyah. The reason for its name is that the one who requested it from the Shaykh was a man from the judges of Wāsiṭ—from the companions of Ash-Shāfi'ī—who came for Hajj about ten years ago. He possessed great righteousness and piety. He requested the Shaykh to write a creed for him. The Shaykh told him: 'People have written much in this field; take one of the creeds of Ahl al-Sunnah (the People of the Prophetic Way).' He replied: 'I would prefer that you write one for me.' So he wrote this 'Aḳidah for him while sitting in his gathering after the 'Aṣr prayer. The Shaykh related the gist of this account to the Amīr.

Then it was read to those present from beginning to end, word by word, and discussions took place regarding certain passages. Among them were those who harbored feelings towards the Shaykh known only to Allāh. Their assumption was that if they engaged him regarding this text, they could demonstrate that he opposed the position of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah (the People of the Prophetic Way and the Community). They raised three questions concerning three points: its designation as the 'Creed of the People of the Saved Sect' ('aḳidati ahl al-firqa an-nājiyah), the statement '[He] rose over (istawā) in reality (ḥaqīqatan)', and the statement '[He is] above the heavens' (fawqa as-samāwāt).

The Shaykh then said to the scribe whom the Sultan's deputy had seated—Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Zamalkānī—'Write down the answer to these.' As the session had lasted long, from mid-morning until nearly the 'Aṣr prayer, they signaled to postpone this until a second session, which was set for Friday, the 12th of Rajab. They [the opponents] gathered [again], and Ṣafī al-Hindī attended with them. I ['Abd Allāh, the author] attended the second session; I was unaware of the first session when they convened. During those intervening days, they had researched and consulted Al-Fuṣūṣ [likely referring to sections/chapters of theological works, or perhaps Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam] and agreed among themselves to leave no possible [argument unmade].

When I attended after the Jumu'ah prayer and the council was settled, people praised Ṣafī al-Hindī. A group among them said, 'He is the Shaykh of the group and their senior figure in this [field of Kalām (speculative theology)]; people have studied this discipline (fann) under him.' They agreed that he alone would speak with the Shaykh [Ibn Taymiyyah], and when he finished, others would speak one after another.

The Shaykh delivered a sermon (khaṭaba), praising Allāh and lauding Him with the sermon of Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him). Then he said: 'Indeed, Allāh the

Exalted has commanded us to maintain unity (jamā'ah) and harmony (i'tilāf), and forbidden us from division (furqah) and discord (ikhtilāf). Our Lord is One, our Messenger is one, our Book is one, and our religion (dīn) is one. There is no disagreement among the Salaf and the Imāms of Islām concerning the fundamentals (uṣūl) of the religion, and division regarding them is unlawful, for Allāh the Exalted says: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided.} [Āl 'Imrān: 103], and He says: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects—you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.} [Al-An'ām: 159]. People have disputed concerning this field; one says, 'I am a Ḥanbalī,' and another says, 'I am an Ash'arī.' I have brought the books of Al-Ash'arī and the books of his major companions, such as the books of Abū Bakr ibn al-Bāqillānī. I have also brought transmissions of the positions of the Salaf from the Mālikīyyah, Shāfi'īyyah, Ḥanbaliyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth (the People of Hadith), and the Shaykhs of the Ṣūfiyyah, [showing] that they all agree on a single creed. Likewise, [I have] brought transmissions from the Shaykhs of the companions of Abū Ḥanīfah, such as Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan [al-Shaybānī] and Al-Ṭaḥāwī, regarding what they mentioned about the Attributes and other fundamentals of the religion.' He read a section from what Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn 'Asākir mentioned in his book [Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī] about [Al-Ash'arī's book] Al-Ibānah, stating that he [Al-Ash'arī] held the same view as Imām Aḥmad. He presented Kitāb al-Tamhīd by Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-Bāqillānī. He presented transmissions (nuqūl) from Mālik and his major companions, such as Ibn Abī Zayd and Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Wahhāb and other senior companions of Mālik, explicitly stating that Allāh rose over (mustawin) the Throne with His Essence (bi-dhātih).

He said: 'As for what I mention, it is the way (madhhab) of the Salaf.' He presented their exact words and the words of those who transmitted their positions from the four schools, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, the theologians (mutakallimīn), and the Ṣūfiyyah. 'I will mention its concordance with the Book and the Sunnah, and that there is nothing in it negated by reason ('aql). If Allāh the Exalted unites the hearts of the assembly upon this, then praise be to Allāh, Lord of the worlds. But if anyone opposes this, then [my] subsequent speech will contain what I have to say: I will expose the secrets, tear down the veils, clarify what needs clarification, meet with the Sultan, and tell him other things.'

It was a great and momentous day, during which profound matters of research and transmission were clarified for those present. Discussions also touched upon matters outside the 'Aqīdah Wāsiṭiyyah, as he presented to them his answer concerning the issue of the Qur'an and the issue of Istiwā' (Allāh's rising over the Throne)—about which he had been asked previously, some twelve years prior—and read parts of that answer to them. They asked him about specific wordings in the Mas'alah Ḥamawiyyah (The Question from Hamah). They put forth all the points [or questions] they harbored, saying, 'These are our questions, and nothing remains in our minds.' When the Shaykh answered their questions, they agreed with him, and the council concluded on that note.

He had told them: 'Anyone who disagrees with anything I have said should write down his disagreement in his own hand and transmit evidence from the Salaf for his opposing view. Alternatively, let each person write his own creed, and these creeds can be presented to the authorities (wulāt al-umūr), and it can be determined which of them aligns with the Book and the Sunnah.' He also said: 'Whoever brings a single letter from the Salaf contradicting what I have mentioned, I will adopt his view. And I can present transmissions from all groups showing that they described the way of the Salaf just as I have laid it out. I am in agreement with the Salaf and will debate based on that. All the Imāms of the various groups—Ḥanafīyyah, Mālikīyyah, Shāfi'īyyah, Ḥanbaliyyah, Ash'ariyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and Ṣūfiyyah—agree with what I say.'

They asked him about the *zāhir* (apparent meaning): should it be affirmed or not? He replied: 'This is not [explicitly discussed] in the 'Aqidah [Wāsiṭiyyah], but I will volunteer an answer based on most of those who related the way of the Salaf—such as Al-Khaṭṭābī, Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb [al-Baghdādī], Al-Baghawī, Abū Bakr and Abū al-Qāsim al-Tamīmī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Ibn al-Bāqillānī, Abū 'Uthmān al-Ṣābūnī, Abū 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā, Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, and others—regarding the negation of modality (*kayfiyyah*) and comparison (*tashbīh*) from them [the attributes], and [their principle] that discussion regarding the Attributes is subsidiary to discussion regarding the Essence (*Dhāt*). The approach to the Attributes follows the pattern and example set for the Essence. Therefore, just as affirming the Essence is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality, likewise, affirming the Attributes is an affirmation of existence, not an affirmation of modality.'

'A group [of later scholars] has transmitted...<sup>1</sup> that the way of the Salaf is that the apparent meaning (*zāhir*) is not intended.' He [Ibn Taymiyyah] said: 'The reconciliation between these two transmissions is that 'zāhir' is an equivocal term (*lafẓ mushtarak*, a term with multiple meanings). The apparent meaning that is only appropriate for creation is not intended. However, the apparent meaning that befits the Majesty and Grandeur of Allāh the Exalted is intended. This [latter type] is what is intended regarding the Names and Attributes of Allāh the Exalted, such as the Living (*Al-Hayy*), the Knowing (*Al-'Alīm*), the Powerful (*Al-Qadīr*), the Hearing (*As-Samī'*), the Seeing (*Al-Baṣīr*).' Subtle discussions ensued that only a few people could comprehend.

It was clarified that Allāh the Exalted is above His Throne (*fawqa 'arshihi*) in a manner befitting His Majesty. 'I do not say He is above it like a creature is upon [another] creature, as the *Mushabbihah* (anthropomorphists) claim. Nor is it said that there is no Lord above the heavens or upon the Throne, as the negating (*mu'aṭṭilah*) *Jahmiyyah* claim. Rather, it is said that He is above His heavens, upon His Throne, distinct (*bā'in*) from His creation.' He spoke about the term *jihah* (direction), explaining that it has a shared meaning (*ma'nā mushtarak*, i.e., it can be understood in different ways), and about the term *ḥaqīqah* (reality).

He was asked about the issue of the Qur'an and the Voice (*ṣawt*), and he answered in detail, consistent with an answer he had given previously. He said: 'Whoever says that the servant's voice reciting the Qur'an or the ink in the *Muṣḥaf* (copy of the Qur'an) is eternal (*qadīm*) is mistaken and misguided. None of the scholars among the companions of Imām Aḥmad or others ever said this. What is transmitted from them—that they say the Qur'an is nothing but the voice heard from the reciter and the ink in the *Muṣḥaf*, and that this [voice and ink] is nonetheless eternal—is a fabricated lie. Aḥmad never said this.' He presented explicit texts (*nuṣūṣ*) from Imām Aḥmad and his companions, and the companions of Mālik, Ash-Shāfi'ī, Al-Ash'arī, and others, stating: 'Whoever says, 'My utterance (*lafẓ*) of the Qur'an is uncreated,' is an innovator (*mubtadi*).' 'So what about one who says, 'My voice reciting it is uncreated,' or says, 'My voice reciting it is eternal (*qadīm*)?' He precisely defined the discourse on this matter, stating that making the unqualified assertion negating the Letter (*ḥarf*) is an innovation (*bid'ah*) not uttered by Imām Aḥmad or any other followed Imāms. Rather, the way of the Salaf is that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh: its letters (*ḥurūf*) and its meanings (*ma'ānī*). Speech is truly

<sup>1</sup> Blank space in the original manuscript.

Shaykh Nāṣir ibn Ḥamad al-Fahd said (p. 25): The Shaykh (may Allah have mercy on him) attributed this view in (*Majmū' al-Fatāwā* 33/177) to 'some later scholars' without naming them, saying, 'And whoever among the later scholars said that the way of the Salaf is that the apparent meaning is not intended...' In (6/355) he mentioned the proponent as 'some people' also without naming. It appears the missing word is 'from the later scholars' (*min al-muta'akhhirīn*), and Allah the Exalted knows best.

attributed to the one who spoke it initially, not to the one who conveyed it as a messenger. And [he affirmed] that Allāh spoke with a Voice (ṣawt), citing the Hadith of Abū Saʿīd (may Allāh be pleased with him) found in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

The Mālikī deputy began saying, 'You are saying that Allāh calls out with a voice (bi-ṣawt)! The Shaykh retorted: 'Thus spoke your Prophet, if you believe in him! Thus spoke Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh, if he is indeed a Messenger in your view!' Whenever the Shaykh cited a Hadith and attributed it to the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections, the Sultan's deputy would ask them [the opponents], 'Did the Prophet (peace be upon him) say this?' They would reply, 'Yes.' He would then ask, 'So, what is said about someone who holds the view of the Prophet (peace be upon him)?' He [the deputy] also asked him [Ibn Taymiyyah], 'Everything you have said, did you say it from yourself?' He replied: 'Rather, I transmit all of it from the Prophet of the Ummah (peace be upon him), and I demonstrate that the various groups of Islām transmit it from the Salaf just as I have transmitted it, that the Imāms of Islām adhere to it, that I debate based upon it, and that I know the position (madhhab) of everyone who opposes me.'

The Shaykh became greatly agitated with the Mālikī deputy and Ṣafī al-Hindī and silenced them so effectively that they spoke no more of consequence thereafter. The specific details of matters are too numerous for this paper. After the council, one of the Shāfi'īs brought a passage from the Tafsīr (Exegesis) of Al-Qurṭubī stating that none of the Salaf denied that Allāh the Exalted rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne in reality (ḥaqīqatan), that they do not negate direction (jihah), that they only speak according to what His Messengers informed, that the Throne is specified because it is the greatest of creations, and that they were only ignorant of the modality (kayfiyyah) of the Istiwā' and that its true nature (ḥaqīqah) is unknown. As Mālik (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: 'The Istiwā' is known'—meaning, in the language—'the modality (kayf) is unknown, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about it is an innovation (bid'ah).' The Mālikī remarked, 'We did not know this.'

After the council, indescribable lies, fabrications, and contradictions occurred on the part of Ibn al-Wakīl and others, as is their way. Therefore, know that anything reaching you that contradicts what I have mentioned consists of lies and fabrications. We do not yet know how the matter has unfolded in Egypt, except for what was in the Sultan's letter: 'It has reached us that Shaykh so-and-so [Ibn Taymiyyah] has written a creed he is calling people to, and that some people have objected to it. Let a council be convened for him regarding this. You [the deputy] are to observe what occurs, investigate the matter thoroughly (kashfan shāfiyan), and inform us.' Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. And upon the Shaykh, the great Imām, the learned, the virtuous, the delight of the eye, 'Izz al-Dīn, the best of peace. Likewise, peace upon every individual among the family, companions, and acquaintances. Peace.

## Section

Imām Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah stated in a 'response' to a paper sent to him while in prison during Ramaḍān, year 706 AH: All praise is due to Allāh; we praise Him, seek His aid, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our own souls and the wickedness of our deeds. Whomever Allāh guides, none can lead astray; and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone, having no partner. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger, whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all other religions, and sufficient is Allāh as a Witness.

May Allāh send abundant prayers and peace upon him and his family.

To proceed: The 'paper' containing the message from the two venerable, learned, devout Shaykhs and exemplars has arrived. May Allāh support them and all the brothers with a spirit from Him, inscribe faith in their hearts, grant them an entrance of truth and an exit of truth, and make them among those by whom the authority (sulṭān) is aided: the authority of knowledge, proof (ḥujjah), clarification (bayān), and evidence (burhān); and the authority of power and victory through the spearhead and supporters. May He make them among His pious allies (awliyā') and His conquering soldiers against those peers who oppose them, and among the leaders (a'immah) of the God-fearing (muttaqīn), those who combine patience (ṣabr) and certainty (iqān). Allāh will surely bring this to pass and fulfill His promise, in secret and in public, and He will exact vengeance from the party of Shayṭān on behalf of the servants of the Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān).

However, [this occurs] according to what His wisdom dictates and His established way (sunnah) entails, involving trial (ibtilā') and testing (imtiḥān), through which Allāh distinguishes the people of truthfulness and faith (īmān) from the people of hypocrisy (nifāq) and slander (buhtān). For His Book indicates that there must inevitably be trials (fitnah) for everyone who calls to faith, and punishment for those guilty of evil deeds and transgression (ṭughyān). Allāh the Exalted said: {Alif, Lām, Mīm.} {Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and that they will not be tested (yuftanūn)?} {And We certainly tested (fatannā) those before them. And Allāh will surely make known those who are true, and He will surely make known the liars.} {Or do those who do evil deeds think they can surpass Us? Evil is their judgment!} [Al-Ankabūt: 1-4]. Thus, He, Glorified is He, denounced whoever assumes that the perpetrators of evil deeds can escape Him (the Pursuer), or that those who claim faith will be left without a trial (fitnah) that distinguishes the truthful (ṣādiq) from the liar (kādhīb).

He informed [us] in His Book that truthfulness in faith is only realized through striving (jihād) in His way. He, the Exalted, said: {The bedouins say, 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted,'...'} until His statement: {The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allāh and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allāh. It is those who are the truthful.} [Al-Hujurat: 14-15]. And He informed [us] in His Book of the loss incurred by the one who turns back on his face [away from faith] when faced with trial (fitnah), the one who worships Allāh therein 'on an edge' ('alā ḥarf)—that is, the side or periphery, where one is unstable. Rather, faith only remains firm [for such a person] when he encounters the worldly good he desires. Allāh the Exalted said: {And of the people is he who worships Allāh on an edge...} [Al-Hajj: 11] the verse.

Allāh the Exalted said: {Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allāh has not yet made known those of you who strive hard (jāhadū) and made known the patient (ṣābirīn)?} [Āl 'Imrān: 142]. And Allāh the Exalted said: {And We will surely test you until We make known those among you who strive hard (mujāhidīn) and the patient (ṣābirīn), and We will test your affairs.} [Muḥammad: 31]. And He, Glorified is He, informed that when apostates (murtaddīn) appear, there must inevitably appear those who love [Allāh] and are loved [by Him] (muḥibbīn maḥbūbīn), the strivers (mujāhidīn). He said: {Whoever of you reverts from his religion—Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him...} [Al-Mā'idah: 54] the verse.

These are the ones who are grateful (shākīrūn) for the blessing of faith and patient (ṣābirūn) through testing, as Allāh the Exalted said: {Muḥammad is not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never

harm Allāh at all; but Allāh will reward the grateful (shākīrīn).} {And it is not [possible] for one to die except by permission of Allāh at a decree determined. And whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof; and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him thereof. And We will reward the grateful (shākīrīn).} {And how many a prophet [fought and] with him fought many religious scholars. But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allāh, nor did they weaken or submit. And Allāh loves the patient (ṣābirīn).} {And their words were not but that they said, 'Our Lord, forgive us our sins and the excess [committed] in our affairs and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.'} {So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allāh loves the doers of good (muḥsinīn).} [Āl 'Imrān: 144-148].

Therefore, if Allāh blesses a person with patience (ṣabr) and gratitude (shukr), then everything Allāh decrees for him is good for him, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Allāh does not decree anything for the believer except that it is good for him: if ease (sarrā') afflicts him and he is grateful (shakara), it is good for him; and if hardship (ḍarrā') afflicts him and he is patient (ṣabara), it is good for him.' The patient and grateful one (aṣ-ṣābir ash-shakūr) is the believer whom Allāh mentioned in more than one place in His Book. Whoever Allāh has not blessed with patience and gratitude is in the worst state, and both ease and hardship, in his case, lead to a dreadful end. How much more so when this [trial] concerns momentous matters that are among the tribulations (miḥan) of the Prophets and the Truthful (ṣiddīqīn), involving the affirmation of the fundamentals of the religion (uṣūl ad-dīn) and the preservation of faith and the Qur'an from the plots of the people of hypocrisy (nifāq), heresy (ilhād), and slander (buhtān)?

So, all praise is due to Allāh, abundant, pure, blessed praise, as our Lord loves and is pleased with, and as befits the nobility of His Countenance and the might of His Majesty. Allāh is the One asked to make you and all other believers firm with the steadfast word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, to perfect His blessings upon you, both hidden and apparent, and to grant victory to His religion, His Book, and His believing servants over the disbelievers (kāfirīn) and the hypocrites (munāfiqīn), whom we have been commanded in His clear Book to strive against (jihād) and be harsh toward.

As for you, then receive glad tidings of types of goodness and joy beyond what has ever crossed the mind. The significance of this 'affair' (qaḍīyyah) and what relates to it is greater than what is imagined by those who only consider the minor details of matters. This is why, among what I conveyed to the messenger's trustee, 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Ṭaybarsī, I said: 'The right in this 'affair' is not mine personally, but belongs to Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers from the east of the earth to its west. I cannot alter the religion, nor lower the banner of the Muslims. Nor can I apostatize from the religion of Islām for the sake of so-and-so.'

'Yes, it is possible for me not to seek retribution for myself, not to repay those who wronged me and slandered me, not to demand my personal due, and not to intend harm to anyone through [asserting] my right. All of this I readily forgo—and to Allāh belongs all praise—and my soul is content with that.' I had told him: 'The harm in this 'affair' is not upon me; rather, it is upon you. For those who instigated it are enemies of Islām, who detest it, detest its allies (awliyā') and those who strive (mujāhidīn) in its defense, and prefer the victory of its enemies like the Tatars and others. They have devised a plot against you to corrupt your religion (millah) and your state (dawlah). Some of them have gone to the lands of the Tatars, while others reside in Shām (Greater Syria) and elsewhere.'

'This affair has secrets I cannot mention, nor can I name those involved, until you consult

the Sultan's deputy. If he permits it, I will mention it to you; otherwise, it should not be said to him. As for what I am saying, investigate it yourselves.' He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] was astonished by this and said, 'O Mawlānā (Our Master)! Will you not name anyone for me?' I replied, 'I will not do that, for it is not appropriate. However, you should know generally that they intended to corrupt your religion and your worldly affairs. They used me as a figurehead and a cover, knowing that I am loyal to you [the Mamluk state] and strive for the well-being of your religion and worldly affairs. And soon, if Allāh wills, the matter will be exposed.'

I told him: 'Otherwise, what do I have to fear? If I am killed, I will be among the best of martyrs (shuhadā'), and mercy and acceptance will be upon me until the Day of Resurrection, while upon my killer will be perpetual curse in this world and punishment in the Hereafter. Let everyone who believes in Allāh and His Messenger know that if I am killed, it is for the sake of Allāh's religion. And if I am imprisoned, then imprisonment, in my case, is one of the greatest blessings of Allāh upon me. By Allāh, I cannot adequately thank Allāh for His blessing upon me in this imprisonment. I possess nothing over which I fear [loss at the hands of] people—no land grants (iqṭā'), no teaching position (madrasah), no wealth, no leadership (riyāṣah), and no status (jāh). The fear is rather for you, if your positions of leadership and wealth disappear, and your religion—through which you attain happiness in this world and the Hereafter—becomes corrupted. This was the objective of the enemy who instigated this fitnah (trial/discord).'

I said: 'These individuals in Egypt—the Amīrs, judges, and Shaykhs—are my brothers and companions. I have never wronged any of them, and I have always treated them well. So what [dispute] is there between me and them? However, the hypocrites (munāfiqūn), the enemies of Islām, have confused them.' (And I say to you [Zayn al-Dīn]—though it did not happen that I said this to him [Al-Ṭaybarsī])—'Indeed, among the believers are those who listen to the speech of the hypocrites and obey them, even if they are not hypocrites themselves, as Allāh the Exalted said: {And among you are listeners to them} [At-Tawbah: 47]. And Allāh said to His Prophet (peace be upon him): {And do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard their harm} [Al-Aḥzāb: 48].'

Hypocrisy (nifāq) has branches (shu'ab) and pillars (da'ā'im), just as faith (īmān) has branches and pillars. In the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim], it is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {'The sign of the hypocrite (munāfiq) is three: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted, he betrays.}' And also in both collections, he said: {'Four characteristics, whoever possesses them is a pure hypocrite, and whoever possesses one of them possesses a characteristic of hypocrisy until he abandons it: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a covenant, he acts treacherously; when he disputes, he behaves immorally (fajara); and when he is entrusted, he betrays.}'

I told him: 'This affair is bigger than what is in your minds. For a faction of these enemies went to the lands of the Tatars.' He exclaimed, 'To the lands of the Tatars?' I replied, 'Yes. They are among the most eager people to stir up evil against you,' in addition to other matters not suitable for me to mention to you. He had previously said to me, 'But you oppose the four madhāhib (schools of law),' mentioning the ruling of the four judges. I told him: 'Rather, what I have stated is the position held by the Imāms of the four madhāhib. I presented in Shām more than fifty books—from the works of the Ḥanafīyyah, Mālīkiyyah, Shāfi'iyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, the theologians (mutakallimīn), and the Ṣūfiyyah—all of which agree verbatim with what I said. These contain the explicit statements (nuṣūṣ) of the Salaf of the Ummah and its Imāms. The disputants, despite their lengthy search through the books of the city and its libraries, were unable to

produce anything contradicting this from any of the Imāms of Islām or its Salaf.'

When he [Al-Ṭaybarsī] gave me the document [containing accusations], I examined it and told him: 'This is all lies, except for one phrase: that He rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne in reality (ḥaqīqatan), but without specifying modality (takyīf) or comparison (tashbīh).' I added: 'And this is precisely what is in the 'Aqīdah [Wāsitiyyah], with this wording: 'without takyīf or tamthīl (likening), without taḥrīf (distortion) or ta'tīl (negation).' He said, 'Then write this in your own hand.' I replied: 'This was already written previously in the 'Aqīdah, and I have not said anything contradicting it. So what benefit is there in writing it anew?' I said: 'More than one scholar—from the Mālikiyyah, Shāfi'iyyah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and others—has related the consensus (ijmā') of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah on this wording. None among the scholars of Islām denies this except these opponents.'

I said: 'For these people [certain opponents] say: 'There is no Lord above the Throne who is invoked, nor any God above the heaven who is worshipped; there is nothing there but pure non-existence and absolute negation.' [They claim] that the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not ascend (mi'rāj) to Allāh the Exalted, but merely ascended to the heaven and descended. And that the supplicant does not raise his hands towards Allāh. Among them are those who say: 'Allāh is this very existence; I am Allāh, you are Allāh, the dog, the pig, and the excrement [are Allāh],' claiming that Allāh indwells (ḥāll) within these things.' He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] found this appalling and was horrified that anyone would say such things. He asked, '[Do] 'these people' [say this]?' meaning Ibn Makhlūf and his associates. I replied: 'I have not heard their speech, nor have they addressed me with anything, so it is not permissible for me to say about them what I do not know. However, this is the position of those who disputed with me and debated me in Shām and stated this explicitly to me. One of them explicitly stated that he would not accept from the Messenger (peace be upon him) anything he said in this field that contradicted their views.'

During the conversation, the man [Al-Ṭaybarsī] began to listen attentively to what I was saying and comprehend it, seeing my anger. For this reason, it reached me from more than one source that he left happy and pleased with what he heard from me, saying, 'This man is upon the truth, while those others have lost Allāh! Otherwise, where is Allāh?' This is what everyone with a sound natural disposition (fiṭrah salīmah) says. Just as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Akhram said to Al-Malik al-Kāmil when Al-Malik al-Kāmil addressed him concerning these people [negators of Allāh's Highness]; Al-Akhram told him: 'These people have lost your God, so find yourself another god to worship!'

It is known by the consensus of Muslims that Allāh is Living (Ḥayy) in reality (ḥaqīqatan), Knowing ('Alīm) in reality, Powerful (Qadīr) in reality, Hearing (Samī) in reality, Seeing (Baṣīr) in reality, and so forth regarding His Names and Attributes. Only the esoteric philosophers (falāsifah bāṭiniyyah) deny this. They say: 'We apply these names to Him, but we do not say they are real (ḥaqīqah).' Their aim in this is to permit their negation. For they say: 'He is neither truly living nor truly dead, neither knowing nor ignorant, neither powerful nor incapable, neither hearing nor deaf.' When they claim these names are metaphorical (majāz), it enables them to negate them, because the sign of metaphor is the validity of its negation. Thus, whoever denies that a term is literal (ḥaqīqah) necessarily permits its unqualified negation. So, whoever denies that He rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne in reality will say, 'The Most Gracious did not rise over the Throne,' just as one who says the term 'lion' (asad) for a brave man or 'donkey' (ḥimār) for a dull person is not literal, is necessarily committed to the validity of negating it, saying, 'This is not a lion, nor a donkey, but a human.' These people [the opponents] say to them [the

believers], 'Allāh does not rise over the Throne,' similar to their brethren's statement, 'He is not Hearing, nor Seeing, nor Speaking,' because these terms, according to them, are metaphorical. Thus, they confront the very core of what the Messengers informed about Allāh, Glorified is He, with negation and rejection, just as the polytheists (mushrikūn) confront it with denial (takdhīb). However, these [theologians] do not negate the wording absolutely.

Al-Ṭalamankī, one of the Imāms of the Mālikiyyah—predating Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Al-Bājjī, and their contemporaries—stated in his book *Al-Wuṣūl ilā Ma'rifat al-Uṣūl* (Attaining Knowledge of the Fundamentals): 'The Muslims among Ahl al-Sunnah have reached consensus (ijmā') that the meaning of {And He is with you wherever you are} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4] and similar verses in the Qur'an refers to His knowledge, and that Allāh is above the heavens with His Essence (bi-dhātih), risen over (mustawin 'alā) the Throne as He wills.' He also said: 'Ahl al-Sunnah state regarding Allāh the Exalted's saying, {The Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne} [Ṭāhā: 5], that the Istiwā' (Rising Over) of Allāh upon His Glorious Throne is literal ('alal-ḥaqīqah), not metaphorical ('alal-majāz):'

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr stated in *Al-Tamhīd*—his commentary on the *Muwatta'*, the most esteemed book composed in its field—when discussing the Hadith of the Nuzūl (Allāh's Descent): 'This is an established Hadith; the scholars of Hadith do not differ regarding its authenticity. It contains proof that Allāh is in the heaven (fis-samā'), upon the Throne, above the seven heavens, as the Jamā'ah (main body of Muslims) state. It is one of their proofs against the Mu'tazilah in their claim that He is in every place and not upon the Throne.' He said: 'The proof for the correctness of what the people of truth (ahl al-ḥaqq) say is the statement of Allāh the Exalted: {The Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne} [Ṭāhā: 5].' He also cited: {To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it} [Fāṭir: 10], and {The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him} [Al-Ma'ārij: 4], and {O 'Īsā, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself} [Āl 'Imrān: 55], mentioning several verses. He continued until he said: 'This [belief in Allāh's Highness] is more widely known among the common folk and the elite than to require further narration, because it is an innate certainty (iḍṭirār) that no one taught them, nor did any Muslim oppose them in it.'

This is similar to what Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir related from Abū Ja'far al-Hamadānī: that he attended the gathering of a certain theologian (mutakallim) who said, 'Allāh existed, and there was no Throne.' [Abū Ja'far] responded, 'O Ustādh (teacher), leave aside the mention of the Throne. Tell us about this innate certainty (darūrah) we find in our hearts: never has any gnostic ('ārif) ever said, 'O Allāh!' except that he found an innate certainty in his heart seeking Highness (al-'uluww), not turning right or left.' The theologian struck his head with his hand and exclaimed, 'Al-Hamadānī has bewildered me! Al-Hamadānī has bewildered me!' The Shaykh [Abū Ja'far] meant that the affirmation by the natural disposition (fiṭrah) that the One worshipped and invoked is above is a necessary, rational, innate matter, not derived merely from revelation (sam'). This contrasts with the Istiwā' (Rising Over) the Throne—after the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days—for this latter fact is known through revelation.

This is why the days of the week are only known through those who affirm the prophethoods. As for those who do not know this, like the polytheistic Turks, their language lacks names for the days of the week. This relates to the wisdom behind the gathering of the people of each religion on one specific day of the week, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: '{Today [Friday] is for us, tomorrow [Saturday] is for the Jews, and the day after tomorrow [Sunday] is for the Christians.}' Ibn 'Abd al-Barr elaborated

on this.

He [Ibn 'Abd al-Barr] continued until he said: 'As for their argument using the verse: {There is in no private conversation of three but that He is the fourth of them, nor of five but that He is the sixth of them} [Al-Mujādilah: 7], there is no proof in it for them. This is because the scholars among the Companions (Ṣaḥābah) and the Successors (Tābi'īn) said regarding the interpretation (ta'wīl) of this verse: 'He is upon the Throne, and His knowledge is in every place.' No one whose opinion carries weight disagreed with them on this.' Abū 'Umar [Ibn 'Abd al-Barr] said: 'Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous (muġmi'ūn) in affirming all the Attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, believing in them, and understanding them literally ('alal-ḥaqīqah), not metaphorically ('alal-majāz), except that they do not specify a modality (lā yukayyifūn) for anything, nor do they delimit any specific, restricted attribute therein. As for the people of innovation (ahl al-bida')—the Jahmiyyah, the Mu'tazilah, and the Khawārij—all of them deny these [attributes], do not understand any of them literally, and claim that whoever affirms them is an anthropomorphist (mushabbih). Whereas they [the innovators], according to those who affirm [the attributes], are negators of the One Worshipped (nāfūn lil-ma'būd). The truth is what the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him) have stated, and they [Ahl al-Sunnah] are the leaders of the Jamā'ah.'

He also said: 'The position of Ahl al-Sunnah and the Imāms of jurisprudence (fiqh) and tradition (athar) regarding this issue and similar ones is: belief in what came from the Prophet (peace be upon him), affirming it, and refraining from delimitation (taḥdīd) and [specifying] modality (kayfiyyah) concerning any aspect of it.'

Al-Sijzī stated in Al-Ibānah: 'Our Imāms, such as Al-Thawrī, Mālik, Ibn 'Uyaynah, Ḥammād ibn Salamah, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Ibn al-Mubārak, Al-Fuḍayl, Aḥmad, and Iṣḥāq, are agreed (muttafiqūn) that Allāh, Glorified is He, is with His Essence (bi-dhātih) above the Throne, that His knowledge encompasses every place, that He will be seen on the Day of Resurrection with eyesight above the Throne, that He descends to the lowest heaven, that He becomes angry and pleased, and that He speaks whatever He wills. Whoever opposes any of this, he [the opponent] is disassociated from them, and they are disassociated from him.'

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir [al-Jīlānī] stated in Al-Ghunyah: 'As for knowing the Maker through signs and proofs—in brief—it is to know and be certain that Allāh is One (Wāḥid), Unique (Aḥad), the Eternal Refuge (Ṣamad)...' He continued until he said: '...and He is in the direction of Highness (bi-jihat al-'uluww), risen over (mustawin 'alā) the Throne, encompassing the dominion (al-mulk), His knowledge surrounding all things.' He said: 'It is impermissible to describe Him as being in every place; rather, it is said: He is in the heaven (fis-samā'), upon the Throne.' He continued until he said: 'The attribute of Istiwā' (Rising Over) should be affirmed without interpretation (ta'wīl), and it is the rising over of the Essence (istiwā' adh-dhāt) upon the Throne.' He said: 'His being upon the Throne [is mentioned] in every Book revealed to every Messenger sent, without specifying modality (bilā takyīf).'

Shaykh Naṣr al-Maqdisī mentioned in Kitāb al-Ḥujjah, relating from Ibn Abī Ḥātim who said: 'I asked my father [Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī] and Abū Zur'ah [al-Rāzī] about the positions (madhāhib) of Ahl al-Sunnah. They replied: 'We met the scholars in all the major cities—Hijāz, Iraq, Egypt, Shām, and Yemen—and their position included: that faith (īmān) is speech and action, increasing and decreasing; the Qur'an is the Speech of Allāh, revealed (munazzal), uncreated in all its aspects...' He continued until he said: '...and that Allāh is upon His Throne ('alā 'arshih), distinct (bā'in) from His creation, as He described Himself in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger (peace be upon him), without

modality (bilā kayf). He has encompassed all things in knowledge.’

Shaykh Naṣr stated within the book: ‘If someone says: ‘You have mentioned what is obligatory upon the people of Islām regarding following the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and that upon which the Imāms and scholars reached consensus (ijmā’). So mention their position (madhhab) and what they agreed upon.’ The answer is: That which we found the people of knowledge upon, and the position of others that reached me...’ He then mentioned the summary of the ‘Creed of Ahl al-Sunnah,’ including: ‘...and that Allāh is risen over (mustawin ‘alā) His Throne, distinct (bā’in) from His creation, as He stated in His Book.’

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karājī al-Shāfi‘ī stated in his famous ode (qaṣīdah) on the Sunnah: ‘Their creed is that the Deity, with His Essence (bi-dhātih) ... is upon His Throne, while His knowledge encompasses the unseen.’

Al-Qurṭubī—author of the major Tafsīr (Exegesis)—said regarding Allāh the Exalted’s statement: {Then the Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā ‘alā) the Throne} [Al-Furqān: 59]: ‘This is the ‘Issue of Istiwā,’ and the scholars have discourse concerning it.’ He mentioned the view of the theologians (mutakallimīn), then said: ‘The early Salaf did not negate direction (jihah), nor did they speak of such [negation]. Rather, they and the masses affirmed it for Allāh, just as His Book stated it and His Messengers informed of it.’ He said: ‘None of the Righteous Salaf denied that He rose over (istawā ‘alā) His Throne in reality (ḥaqīqatan). They were only ignorant of the modality (kayfiyyah) of the Istiwā’, for its true nature (ḥaqīqah) is unknown.’ Then, after relating fourteen different views, he said: ‘The most apparent position is that which is supported by the convergence of verses (āyāt), reports (akhbār), and [the view of] the virtuous, excellent scholars: that Allāh is upon His Throne, as He informed in His Book and upon the tongue of His Prophet, without modality (bilā kayf), distinct (bā’in) from all His creation. This is the way (madhhab) of the Righteous Salaf, according to what the trustworthy have transmitted from them.’

When we gathered in Damascus, he [Ibn Taymiyyah] brought forth, among other things, the books of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, such as Al-Maqālāt (The Discourses) and Al-Ibānah (The Clarification), and [works of] the Imāms among his companions like Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī], Ibn Fūrak, Al-Bayhaqī, and others. He presented the book Al-Ibānah and what Ibn ‘Asākir mentioned in his book Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī fimā Nusiba ilā al-Ash‘arī (Clarifying the Lie of the Fabricator Regarding What is Attributed to Al-Ash‘arī)—which Abū Zakariyyā al-Nawawī had transcribed in his own hand. In it [Al-Ibānah], he [Al-Ash‘arī] stated: ‘If someone asks: ‘You have rejected the views of the Mu‘tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Jahmiyyah, the Ḥarūriyyah [Khawārij], the Rāfiḍah, and the Murji‘ah. So inform us of the view you yourselves hold.’ It is said to him: Our view is adherence to the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and what is narrated from the Companions, the Successors, and the Imāms of Hadith. We hold fast to this, and we affirm what Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal—may Allāh brighten his face, raise his rank, and grant him abundant reward—used to say, and we shun whatever opposes his view. For he is the virtuous Imām through whom Allāh clarified the truth when misguidance appeared, illuminated the path (minhāj), and suppressed the innovations (bida’) of the innovators, the deviation (zaygh) of the deviants, and the doubt (shakk) of the doubters.’

He [Al-Ash‘arī] mentioned the creed that he related in Al-Maqālāt from Ahl al-Sunnah, then provided proofs for the chapters of the fundamentals (uṣūl), such as the ‘Issue of the Qur’an,’ ‘the Vision [of Allāh],’ and ‘the Attributes.’ Then he said: ‘Chapter: Mention of the Istiwā’ (Rising Over). If someone asks: ‘What do you say about the Istiwā?’ It is said that Allāh is risen over (mustawin ‘alā) His Throne, as He, Glorified is He, said: {The Most

Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne} [Ṭāhā: 5]. And He said: {To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it} [Fāṭir: 10]. And He, Glorified is He, said: {Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself} [An-Nisā': 158]. And Pharaoh said: {O Hāmān, construct for me a tower that I might reach the ways,} {The ways into the heavens so that I may look at the God of Mūsā; but indeed, I think he is a liar.} [Ghāfir: 36-37]—he declared Mūsā a liar in his statement that Allāh is above the heavens. And He said: {Do you feel secure that He who is in the heaven (man fis-samā') will not cause the earth to swallow you?} [Al-Mulk: 16]. The heavens have the Throne above them, and He only intended the Throne which is upon the heavens. Do you not see that Allāh mentioned the heavens and said: {And made the moon therein a light} [Nūh: 16]? He did not mean that the moon fills all of them or is within all of them. And we see all Muslims raising their hands towards the Throne when they supplicate.'

He [Al-Ash'arī] said: 'Some proponents from the Mu'tazilah, Jahmiyyah, and Ḥarūriyyah have said that the meaning of His statement {The Most Gracious (Ar-Raḥmān) rose over (istawā 'alā) the Throne} is 'He conquered (istawlā), possessed (malaka), and subdued (qahara),' and [they claim] Allāh is in every place, denying that Allāh is upon His Throne as Ahl al-Ḥaqq (the People of Truth) state.' He said: 'If it were as they claimed, there would be no difference between the Throne and the seventh, lowest earth, because Allāh has power over all things and has decreed that.' He continued the discussion until he said: 'And confirming for you that Allāh is risen over His Throne, distinct from all other things, is what the narrators have transmitted from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) regarding his statement: {'Allāh descends (yanzilu) to the lowest heaven every night and says: Is there anyone asking, that I may give him? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, that I may forgive him? Until dawn breaks.}' Then he mentioned the relevant Aḥādīth.

Allāh the Exalted said: {O 'Īsā, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify you from those who disbelieve} [Āl 'Imrān: 55]. He [Al-Ash'arī] said: 'The Ummah has reached consensus (ijmā') that Allāh raised 'Īsā to the heaven.' He mentioned proofs, continuing until he said: 'All of this indicates that Allāh is not within His creation, nor is His creation within Him, and that He, Mighty and Majestic is He, is risen over (mustawin 'alā) His Throne. Exalted and Sublime is He, high above what the wrongdoers say! Sublime is He above what is said by those who, in their description of Him, affirm no reality (ḥaqīqah) for Him, nor do they necessitate His Oneness (waḥdāniyyah) through their mention of Him, since their speech ultimately leads to negation (ta'tīl), and all their descriptions, upon interpretation (ta'wīl), amount to negation. They intend by this, so they claim, transcendence (tanzīh) and the negation of comparison (tashbīh). So we seek refuge in Allāh from a 'transcendence' that necessitates negation and denial (ta'tīl)!'

This is a vast topic; the statements of scholars from all groups concerning it cannot be enumerated, nor can the rational ('aqliyyah) and transmitted (naqliyyah) proofs therein, nor the counter-arguments of the negators and the responses to them. I have written on this subject what amounts to several volumes, mentioning therein the positions of all the groups, along with their scriptural (shar'iyyah) and rational ('aqliyyah) arguments. I comprehensively addressed what [Fakhr al-Dīn] al-Rāzī mentioned in his book Ta'sīs al-Taqdīs (The Foundation of Sanctification), Nihāyat al-'Uqūl (The Pinnacle of Intellects), and elsewhere, even covering the positions of the Peripatetic philosophers (falāsifah mashshā'in), the followers of Aristotle, and the non-Peripatetics, both their predecessors and successors, such as the best of their later figures, Ibn Sinā (Avicenna), and the unique figure of his time, Abū al-Barakāt [al-Baghdādī], mentioning their arguments.

For I know that confusion abounds in this field, and groups of virtuous and intelligent people have become bewildered therein due to the apparent contradiction of evidences

in their view. I have established the sound textual proofs and distinguished them from corrupt pseudo-arguments (shubuhāt), along with the great fundamentals (uṣūl) and momentous principles (qawā'id) that arise within this discussion. Among the first of these—and a matter of great significance to many people—is establishing the sphericity of the celestial bodies (istidārat al-aflāk). I established this and mentioned the statements of those who related the consensus (ijmā') of the Muslims on this, such as Ibn al-Munādī, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn al-Jawzī, and related matters concerning astronomical calculations (al-umūr al-ḥisābiyyah) and scriptural evidence (sam'iyyah) from the Book and the Sunnah, and similar topics whose description would be lengthy.

Also, when I was in the citadel [prison], it was mentioned to me that someone had attached criticisms to the Fatwā Ḥamawīyyah (The Legal Opinion from Hamah), and it was sent to me. I have [already] written what amounts to volumes [on these topics]. And there is no might nor power except with Allāh.

People know that there used to be alienation (waḥshah) and aversion (munāfarah) between the Ḥanbaliyyah and the Ash'ariyyah. I was among the foremost people in reconciling the hearts of the Muslims, seeking the unity of their word, and following the command we received to hold fast to the rope of Allāh. I removed most of the alienation that was in people's hearts and clarified to them that Al-Ash'arī was among the most distinguished theologians (mutakallimīn) affiliated with Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) and his like, supporting his path, as Al-Ash'arī himself mentions in his books.

As Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī said: 'The Ash'ariyyah only gained currency among the people through their affiliation with the Ḥanābilah.' The early Imāms of the Ḥanābilah, like Abū Bakr 'Abd al-'Azīz, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī, and their like, used to mention his [Al-Ash'arī's] statements in their books. Indeed, his standing among their predecessors was like that of Ibn 'Aqīl among the later ones. However, Ibn 'Aqīl had a specialization in knowing jurisprudence (fiqh) and its principles (uṣūl), whereas Al-Ash'arī is closer to the principles (uṣūl) of Aḥmad than Ibn 'Aqīl and more adherent to them. For the closer a person's era is to the Salaf, the more knowledgeable he is of both the rational (ma'qūl) and the transmitted (manqūl).

I used to establish this for the Ḥanbaliyyah, explaining that Al-Ash'arī, although he was among the students of the Mu'tazilah and then repented—he was a student of Al-Jubbā'ī—he inclined towards the methodology of Ibn Kullāb and learned the principles of Hadīth (uṣūl al-ḥadīth) from Zakariyyā al-Sājī in Basra. Then, when he came to Baghdad, he learned other matters from the Ḥanbaliyyah of Baghdad, and that was the final stage of his development, as he and his companions mentioned in their books. Likewise, Ibn 'Aqīl was a student of the Mu'tazilīs Ibn al-Walīd and Ibn al-Tabbān, then he repented from that; his repentance in the presence of Al-Sharīf Abū Ja'far is well-known.

Just as there are among the companions of Aḥmad those who detest Ibn 'Aqīl and censure him, those who censure Al-Ash'arī are not exclusive to the companions of Aḥmad; rather, such individuals exist in all groups. When I presented the words of Al-Ash'arī and the Ḥanbaliyyah saw them, they said, 'This is better than the words of Shaykh Al-Muwaffaq [Ibn Qudāmah].' The Muslims rejoiced at the unity of word. I highlighted what Ibn 'Asākir mentioned in his Manāqib (Virtues [of Al-Ash'arī]) that the Ḥanābilah and the Ash'arīrah remained in agreement until the time of Al-Qushayrī, for when that fitnah occurred in Baghdad, the unity was broken. It is well-known that within every group, there are those who deviate and those who are upright.

Despite this, throughout my life up to this very hour, I have never called anyone in the fundamentals of religion (uṣūl ad-dīn) to a Ḥanbalī or non-Ḥanbalī school of thought (madhhab). Nor have I championed such [partisanship], nor do I mention it in my speech. I only mention that upon which the Salaf of the Ummah and its Imāms agreed. I have told them [my opponents] more than once: 'I grant anyone who disagrees with me three years. If he brings a single letter from any of the Imāms of the first three centuries that contradicts what I have said, I will concede to it. As for what I mention, I mention it from the Imāms of the first three centuries in their own words, and in the words of those from all groups who transmitted their consensus (ijmā').'

This is alongside the fact that I am always—and whoever sits with me knows this about me—among the most emphatic in forbidding that a specific individual be accused of disbelief (takfir), impiety (tafsīq), or disobedience (ma'ṣiyah), unless it is known that the prophetic proof (al-ḥujjah al-risāliyyah) has been established against him, the violation of which would render one a disbeliever (kāfir) at times, impious (fāsiq) at other times, or disobedient ('āṣī) at others. I affirm that Allāh has forgiven this Ummah for its errors (khaṭa'), and this encompasses errors in doctrinal matters based on reports (al-masā'il al-khabariyyah al-qawliyyah) as well as practical matters (al-masā'il al-'amaliyyah).

The Salaf continually disputed many of these issues, yet none of them testified against another with disbelief (kufr), impiety (fisq), or disobedience (ma'ṣiyah). For example, [Qāḍī] Shurayḥ rejected the recitation of those who read {Nay, but I wonder (bal 'ajibtu), while they mock} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 12, variant reading], saying, 'Indeed, Allāh does not wonder (lā ya'jab).' When this reached Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, he said, 'Shurayḥ is merely a poet impressed by his own knowledge. 'Abd Allāh [ibn Mas'ūd] was more knowledgeable than him, and he used to recite {bal 'ajibtu}.' Similarly, 'Ā'ishah and other Companions disputed whether Muḥammad (peace be upon him) saw his Lord. She said, 'Whoever claims that Muḥammad saw his Lord has fabricated a monstrous lie against Allāh.' Despite this, we do not say about Ibn 'Abbās and others who disagreed with her that they fabricated lies against Allāh. Likewise, she disputed regarding the dead hearing the speech of the living, and regarding the dead being punished due to the weeping of their families, and other such matters.

Conflict among the Salaf even led to fighting. Yet Ahl al-Sunnah agree that both factions [involved in early conflicts] were believers, and that the fighting does not negate the established probity ('adālah) they possessed. This is because the fighter, even if acting wrongfully (bāghiyān), may be acting based on an interpretation (muta'awwil), and interpretation prevents [automatic designation of] impiety (fusūq).

I used to explain to them that what is transmitted to them from the Salaf and the Imāms regarding unqualified statements (iṭlāq al-qawl) declaring disbelief (takfir) upon whoever says such-and-such is also correct. However, one must differentiate between the general ruling (al-iṭlāq) and its application to a specific individual (at-ta'yīn). This relates to the first major issue of fundamentals (uṣūl) the Ummah disputed, namely the issue of the Divine Threat (al-wa'īd). The texts of the Qur'an regarding the Divine Threat are general, like His statement: {Indeed, those who consume the property of orphans unjustly...} [An-Nisā': 10] the verse. Likewise, all other statements such as, 'Whoever does such-and-such, for him is such-and-such [punishment].' These are general and unqualified statements. They are analogous to the statements of the Salaf, 'Whoever says such-and-such is such-and-such [e.g., a disbeliever].' Then, for a specific individual, the ruling of the Divine Threat may be averted due to repentance (tawbah), erasing good deeds (ḥasanāt māḥiyah), expiating calamities (maṣā'ib mukaffirah), or accepted intercession (shafā'ah maqbūlah).

Takfir (declaring someone a disbeliever) falls under the category of the Divine Threat. For

even if a statement constitutes a denial of what the Messenger said, the person [making it] might be recently converted to Islām or might have grown up in a remote desert region. Such a person is not declared a disbeliever for rejecting what he rejects until the proof (ḥujjah) is established against him. A person might not have heard those texts, or he might have heard them but they were not established as authentic in his view, or he might have encountered a conflicting text that necessitated interpreting them figuratively (ta'wil), even if he is mistaken [in that interpretation].

I always used to mention the Hadith found in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections about the man who said: 'When I die, burn me, then crush my remains, then scatter me into the sea. For by Allāh, if Allāh has power over me (qadara Allāhu 'alayya), He will punish me with a punishment He has not inflicted upon anyone else in the worlds.' They did that to him. Allāh then said to him, 'What led you to do what you did?' He replied, 'Fear of You (khashyatuk).' So He forgave him.' This was a man who doubted Allāh's power (qudrah) and His ability to resurrect him after being scattered; rather, he believed he would not be resurrected. This is disbelief (kufr) by the consensus of Muslims. However, he was ignorant and did not know [the implication of his statement], yet he was a believer who feared Allāh would punish him, so Allāh forgave him for that reason. The interpreter (muta'awwil) from among the people of ijtihād (qualified independent reasoning) who is eager to follow the Messenger is more deserving of forgiveness than someone like this.

## Section

Regarding what you mentioned about gentle speech and addressing others in the best manner: you are well aware that I am among those who employ this approach most frequently. However, everything is appropriate in its proper place. When Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) command severity towards a speaker due to their transgression and aggression against the Book (the Qur'an) and the Sunnah (the Prophetic Way), then we are commanded to confront them accordingly; we are not instructed to address them in the best manner in such situations. It is well-known that Allāh Almighty says: {So do not weaken and do not grieve, for you will be superior if you are [true] believers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 139]. Therefore, whoever is a believer is indeed superior, by the explicit text of the Qur'an. And He said: {And to Allāh belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers} [Al-Munāfiqūn: 8]. And He said: {Indeed, those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger – those will be among the most humbled.} [Al-Mujādilah: 20]. {Allāh has written [decreed]: 'I will surely overcome, I and My messengers.}' [Al-Mujādilah: 21]. And Allāh fulfills His promise to those who fit this description, whoever they may be.

Among the matters that must be understood is that seeking the approval of created beings is impermissible, both rationally and religiously, for two reasons: (1) Firstly: It is impossible to achieve. As Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'Pleasing all people is an unattainable goal. Therefore, adhere firmly to that which benefits you, and leave everything else; do not trouble yourself with it.' (2) Secondly: We are commanded to earnestly seek the pleasure of Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him). As Allāh Almighty says: {But Allāh and His Messenger are more worthy that they should please Him} [At-Tawbah: 62]. And we must fear Allāh, fearing none but Allāh. As Allāh Almighty says: {So fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 175]. And He said: {So fear not the people but fear Me.} [Al-Mā'idah: 44]. And He said: {So fear [only] Me.} [Al-Baqarah: 40]. {And fear [only] Me.} [Al-Baqarah: 41]. Therefore, we must fear Allāh and be mindful of Him (have taqwā) in our dealings with people – meaning we should not wrong them in our hearts or with our actions, and we

should fulfill their rights with our hearts and our actions. However, we must not fear them instead of Allāh, such that we abandon what Allāh and His Messenger have commanded out of fear of them.

Whoever adheres to this path, the ultimate outcome will be in their favor, as ‘Ā’ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) wrote to Mu’āwiyah: ‘To proceed: Whoever seeks the pleasure of people at the cost of Allāh’s displeasure, Allāh will be displeased with him and make the people displeased with him, and those among the people who praised him will turn to blame him. But whoever seeks the pleasure of Allāh even if it incurs the displeasure of people, Allāh will be pleased with him and make the people pleased with him.’ Thus, the believer’s thought and intention should be solely focused on the pleasure of his Lord and avoiding His displeasure; and the final success belongs to him. And there is no power and no strength except with Allāh.

This is alongside the fact that the envoy [or messenger involved in this affair] was inwardly pleased by these matters, deep down, and whatever he displayed outwardly was merely for show towards his associate; otherwise, inwardly, they hold differing views. There are matters known only to their inner circle. Suffice it to mention al-Ṭaybarsī; it has been widely reported that he expressed joy and gladness at what transpired, even though he was the adversary upon whom severity was shown. Whether this [report about al-Ṭaybarsī] is true or not, the fundamental principle that must be followed is the first one mentioned [regarding firmness where required]. As for the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) saying, ‘Do not initiate fighting against them, but if they mass against you (akṭhabūkum), then shoot them with arrows’, it is accepted wholeheartedly [‘upon the head and the eye’]. We did not shoot [metaphorically, engage harshly] until after they intended harm towards us and after they massed against us (akṭhabūnā). And for this reason, Allāh brought benefit through that [firmness].

## Section

Regarding what you mentioned about me requesting that the judgment be entrusted to a specific individual [Ibn Jamā’ah]: this is not appropriate. Rather, it entails harm for that person and for myself, and causes general corruption. This is because you know concerning the Qāḍī Badr al-Dīn that I was among the foremost people in supporting him, championing his cause, assisting him, and defending him against his enemies on numerous occasions. Indeed, I know of no one who showed him greater loyalty and assistance. And that was purely for the sake of Allāh alone, not out of any desire [for gain] or fear on my part. A significant portion of the harm that befell me – both in Damascus and also in Egypt – was precisely because of my support for him and his deputies, such as al-Zarī and al-Ṭabrīzī and others from his circle, and my highlighting his merits in Egypt as well. I became known for this, to the extent that the ‘Party of Perdition’ (Ḥizb al-Radā) and others became hostile towards me on account of it. Allāh knows that his standing with me and his place in my heart are not even close to the standing of others, let alone being equal to them. Far be it from Allāh that Badr al-Dīn should be compared to those whom Allāh has distinguished him from in numerous, significant ways! And in the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, it is narrated from ‘Ā’ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) that she said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) commanded us to treat people according to their respective ranks.’ [Abū Dāwūd 4842].

In my view, among the most unjust of people is one who equates him [Badr al-Dīn] with others at the same level, whether in Syria or Egypt. Badr al-Dīn has continually been wronged by such comparisons. I believe that among the greatest acts by which I draw

closer to Allāh are supporting him, showing loyalty to him, and assisting him...<sup>1</sup> You are aware of this, especially in these lands [Egypt], for indeed, assistance and support for him should be even greater here than it was in Syria, because many among these people [here] harbor an aversion towards him, along with falsehood and wickedness, not found in others. Therefore, I love and prefer everything that elevates his status in this world and in religion. And I do not wish to make him a target for the arrows of enemies. Rather, whatever I have done with him and with others, and whatever I continue to do with them, my reward for it rests with Allāh, Who says: {So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it;} {And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.} [Az-Zalzalah: 7-8].

This is why when al-Ṭaybarsī mentioned the judges and spoke generally about them, I told him: 'The only one who got involved in this particular case was Ibn Makhlūf. And that man is a liar, wicked, deficient in knowledge and religion.' He [al-Ṭaybarsī] began to smile as I said this, as if he knew him and as if he [Ibn Makhlūf] were notorious for his reprehensible conduct. I asked, 'What business does Ibn Makhlūf have interfering in this? Has anyone filed a specific legal claim against me of the type he adjudicates? Or is this matter I spoke about one of general religious knowledge, such as the interpretation of the Qur'an (Tafsīr), the meanings of Hadith, discussions in jurisprudence (Fiqh), and the fundamentals of religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn)?' The authority in these matters belongs to those who possess knowledge thereof and piety (taqwā) towards Allāh concerning them. If the ruler or judge possesses such knowledge and piety, he may speak on these matters from that capacity [as a scholar]. And if a judge is removed from office, he is not stripped of the scholarly capacity he possesses, such as issuing fatwās (legal rulings) and the like; discussion in these areas is not restricted by holding office. Conversely, if the ruler or judge lacks the requisite knowledge or piety concerning these matters, it is not permissible for him to speak on them, let alone act as an arbiter. And Ibn Makhlūf possesses neither the knowledge nor the piety required for this.

I continued: 'As for Qāḍī Badr al-Dīn, then far be it from Allāh [that he would be involved]! He possesses virtue and religious commitment that would prevent him from participating in such a ruling, which contradicts the consensus (Ijmā') of the Muslims on more than twenty points.' I also stated, 'Whoever insists that this ruling issued by Ibn Makhlūf represents the judgment of the Shari'ah (Law) of Muḥammad (peace be upon him), after the proof (hujjah) has been established against him, is a disbeliever (kāfir). For even the children of the Muslims know by necessity from the religion of Islām that such a ruling would not be acceptable even to the Jews or the Christians, let alone the Muslims.' I mentioned to him [al-Ṭaybarsī] some of the reasons demonstrating the invalidity of this ruling, which are written down with 'Sharaf Muḥammad'. Likewise, I exonerated Qāḍī Shams al-Dīn al-Sarūjī from involvement in such a ruling.

I said to him [al-Ṭaybarsī], 'Your objective was not a ruling according to the Shari'ah; rather, your aim was to deflect the accusation concerning the King that you had heard. When the judges realized that the King's affair was involved in the case, they hesitated and feared to speak – a fear for which Allāh may or may not excuse them. But were it not for this [fear], they would have spoken out about many things. Even if this ruling were merely anomalous or served the interest of someone wielding power ('one with a sword'), it would still be astonishing.' They [the judges/officials] said, 'O Mawlānā (Our Master), who can speak regarding the King's affair? We will not speak. Leave aside talk about the King.' So I replied, 'O slumbering one! Let me relieve you [of concern] about the King! But this turmoil (fitnah) with which you have filled the world – was it not stirred

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<sup>1</sup> Gap in the original text.

up precisely because of that [issue involving the King]? We heard about this in Damascus, but we did not believe any rational person would credit it.' These people, after the accusation regarding the King has left their minds, when some of what my opponents say is mentioned to them, they deem it utterly appalling and believe the speaker deserves the harshest punishment. For indeed, Allāh, Glorified is He, says: {It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion. And sufficient is Allāh as Witness.} [Al-Faḥ: 28].

It should be known that if I were to request this [that Badr al-Dīn be the judge], rumors would fly wildly about me and Badr al-Dīn ('the birds would take us in every direction'), and it would be said that there are secret agreements between us. Therefore, I interact with him [Badr al-Dīn] in a way for which I hope for reward from Allāh, and he acts according to the requirements of his religion. Furthermore, Badr al-Dīn cannot endure the kind of talk and harm from people that these individuals inflict. He is a man holding a position and has enemies. As for myself – and there is no power and no strength except with Allāh – they have already done the utmost they could against me. Nothing remains except the victory from Allāh which He promised His Messenger and those who believe, in the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [cf. Ghāfir: 51].

Furthermore, it should be known that this matter either pertains to a specific judicial ruling (ḥukm) or it does not. If it does pertain to a ruling, the defendant (the accused party) does not have the right to choose the judgment of a specific judge; rather, the case must go to one who judges with knowledge and justice. If it does not pertain to a judge's ruling, then [choosing a specific judge] is even more inappropriate. Moreover, no specific legal claim falling under the jurisdiction of a judge – concerning prescribed punishments (ḥudūd) or legal rights (ḥuqūq), such as murder, slander (qadhf), financial matters, or the like – has been brought against me. Rather, the issue concerns matters of general, universal knowledge: such as Qur'anic interpretation (Tafsīr), Hadith, jurisprudence (Fiqh), and other similar fields.

Within these fields [of general knowledge], there are matters upon which the Ummah (Muslim community) has agreed, and matters upon which they have differed. When the Ummah differs – regarding the meaning of a verse (āyah) or a Hadith, or concerning an informative ruling (ḥukm khabarī) or a prescriptive ruling (ḥukm ṭalabī) – the correctness of one opinion and the incorrectness of another cannot be established merely by the decree of a judge. For a judge's ruling is only executed in specific, designated cases, not in general matters [of interpretation or doctrine]. If this were permissible, a judge could rule that Allāh's statement {wait concerning themselves for three quru' periods} [Al-Baqarah: 228] refers definitively to either menstrual cycles or periods of purity, and this ruling would then be binding upon all people. Or he could rule that 'touching' (lams) in Allāh's statement {or you have touched women} [An-Nisā': 43] definitively means intercourse versus physical contact short of it. Or [he could rule] that 'the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage' [cf. Al-Baqarah: 237] is definitively the husband versus the father or guardian. No one asserts such a thing [that a judge can settle these interpretive debates by decree].

Similarly, if people differ regarding His statement: {The Most Merciful [who is] above the Throne established Himself (Istawā)} [Tā Hā: 5] – where one group says: It refers to His establishing Himself with His own Essence above the Throne; the meaning of Istiwā' (establishment) is known, but its modality (kayfiyyah) is unknown. And another group says: There is no Lord above the Throne, nor is there anything there at all; rather, the meaning of the verse is that He gained mastery over the Throne (qadara 'alā al-'arsh), or similar interpretations – a judge's ruling affirming the correctness of one view and the

incorrectness of the other would be of no benefit. If it were otherwise, then someone supporting the opposing view could simply issue a ruling affirming its correctness when he says [his opinion]. The same applies to matters of worship ('ibādāt): such as whether touching the private parts nullifies ablution or not; whether it is recommended to hasten the 'Aṣr prayer or delay it; whether Qunūt (supplication in prayer) should be recited constantly in the Fajr prayer or not, or only during calamities (nawāzil), and so forth.

The duty incumbent upon the ruler (Sulṭān) regarding matters of dispute within the Ummah is one of two things: Either he unites them all upon what is established by the Book and the Sunnah and agreed upon by the Salaf (pious predecessors) of the Ummah, based on Allāh Almighty's statement: {And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger} [An-Nisā': 59]. When they disagree, their arguments should be understood. If the ruler is capable of discerning the truth, and what is established by the Book and the Sunnah becomes clear to him, he should call the people to it. [The second option is] that he allows the people to remain upon their differing [valid] positions, just as he permits them to follow their respective schools of practical jurisprudence (madhāhib 'amaliyyah). However, if the innovation (bid'ah) is manifest – such that the common people recognize it contradicts the Shari'ah – like the innovations of the Khawārij, the Rāfiḍah, the Qadariyah, and the Jahmiyah, then the ruler must condemn it, because knowledge of its deviation is widespread. This is similar to his duty to condemn those who deem permissible immoral acts (fawāḥish), intoxicants (khamr), abandoning prayer (ṣalāh), and the like.

Despite this [duty to condemn clear innovation], the adherents of these deviant inclinations (ahwā) may become numerous in certain places and times, to the point where, due to the prevalence of their discourse, it appears equivalent – in the eyes of the ignorant – to the discourse of the people of knowledge and Sunnah. This can cause confusion for the one in authority over these people. At that point, there arises a need for someone to undertake the task of manifesting and clarifying Allāh's proof (ḥujjah), so that any punishment comes only after the proof has been established. Otherwise, punishment before establishing the proof is not legislated (mashrū'ah). Allāh Almighty says: {And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.} [Al-Isrā': 15]. This is why the jurists (fuqahā) state regarding rebels (bughāh) that the Imām (leader) should correspond with them; if they mention a doubt (shubhah), he clarifies it, and if they mention an injustice (maẓlimah), he removes it. This is exemplified by 'Alī sending Ibn 'Abbās to the Khawārij; he debated them until four thousand of them returned [to the truth]. Similarly, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz summoned the proponents of the Qadariyah and Khawārij and debated them until the truth became apparent to them and they acknowledged it. Then, after his death, Ghaylān al-Qadārī renounced his repentance and was crucified.

However, for the ruler to compel adherence to a particular opinion in matters of dispute, without proof (ḥujjah) from the Book and the Sunnah, is impermissible by the consensus (ittifāq) of the Muslims. Nor does a judge's ruling affirming the correctness of one opinion over another in such matters hold any weight, unless he possesses a proof to which recourse is obligatory. In that case, his statement [based on proof] carries the same weight whether made before assuming office or after. This is analogous to the books he might author on matters of knowledge. Yes, holding office (wilāyah) might empower him to state a truth or disseminate knowledge that he was unable to without it; but the domain of ability and inability is distinct from the domain of entitlement and lack thereof.

Yes, a judge does have the authority to establish what Zayd or 'Amr actually said. Then, after establishing that, if the statement pertains specifically to him [the speaker, in a legal

context], it falls under matters adjudicated by judges. But if it is one of the general opinions [on matters of knowledge], it falls under the category of people's viewpoints (madhāhib). As for establishing that a particular statement was indeed made by Zayd, based on evidence (bayyinah), confession (iqrār), or handwriting (khaṭṭ) – this does relate to the function of judges. And there is no doubt that someone like Badr al-Dīn is among the most just of people, beloved among the people of truthfulness and justice, and among those most intensely averse to false witnesses (shuhūd al-zūr). If he had power over them, he would take significant action. Therefore, if there were a need [to establish facts] in this matter requiring someone like Badr al-Dīn, he would be the appropriate judge to handle it, not someone notorious for wickedness (fujūr).

However, these official records (maḥāḍir) they possess are not worth the ink they are written with; they themselves know they are false and invalid. I do not object to contesting them before him [Badr al-Dīn], so that the truth may be established before him, rather than falsehood. If he were agreeable to this, it would be most welcome (fa-yā ḥabbadhā). But I fear that harm might come to him on my account through the discrediting of certain people. So, let him seek Allāh's guidance (yastakhīr Allāh) in what he does, and may Allāh choose the best for him in all matters. Indeed, I and others would prefer to contest this before one of his deputies, like Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dīn al-Zarī, for he is among the upright judges. Otherwise, Badr al-Dīn is of too high a rank to be burdened with this, even if I were in need of it.

However, since the matter has become clear to both the elite and the common people, there is no need for it [contesting the records]. As I told al-Ṭaybarsī: 'The official letter from the Sultan, written in the Sultan's name, reporting all that it reported of lies and violations of the Shari'ah – these are grave matters on about ten counts. The letter written in the name of [the Mongol ruler] Ghāzān was closer to the Shari'ah than this letter written in the name of the Sultan!' Regardless of whether he [Badr al-Dīn] takes any action or not, I believe and hold as my religion before Allāh that supporting him and aiding him in righteousness and piety (birr wa-taqwā), in upholding his truthfulness and justice against the falsehood and oppression of others, and in elevating his rank above others, are among the greatest obligations. And there is no power and no strength except with Allāh.

Shaykh Naṣr sent word to me, offering, if I wished, to have the official records (maḥāḍir) brought so that I could refute them. I replied to him: 'They are too insignificant and trivial to require being presented for refutation. For I have already demonstrated, on more than twenty points, that this judge [Ibn Makhlūf, who issued the ruling] has deviated from the Shari'ah of Islām by the consensus (Ijmā') of the Muslims – the adherents of the four schools of law (madhāhib) and others.'

## Section

And among the things you ought to know is that this group – Ibn Makhlūf and his associates – are utterly incapable of engaging in rigorous, truth-based debate (muḥāqqah). They have deliberated amongst themselves and realized that in any such confrontation, they would inevitably be overpowered, confused, and exposed.

Al-Ṭaybarsī requested more than once that I refrain from such rigorous debate. I replied to him: I have never initiated aggression against anyone, nor have I ever said to anyone, 'Agree with my creed (i'tiqād), or else I will do such-and-such to you.' I have never compelled anyone through word or deed. Indeed, I have never written anything on these matters except in response to a request for a ruling (istiftā'), and only after the

questioner's persistent urging (ilḥāh), burning desire (iḥtirāq), and repeated inquiries. It is not my habit to address people on this subject proactively. Rather, they are the ones who have summoned people to their position and compelled them towards it. Therefore, let them clarify to the people precisely what they have commanded them to do and what they have forbidden them from. If they have commanded what Allāh and His Messenger commanded, then hearing and obeying (as-sam' wa-t-ṭā'ah) are due – to Allāh, His Messenger, and whoever commands what Allāh and His Messenger commanded. But if they have commanded a mixture of truth (ḥaqq) and falsehood (bāṭil), forbidden a mixture of truth and falsehood, and commanded and forbade matters whose reality they do not even understand, then they are thereby among the ignorant wrongdoers (al-jāhilīn al-zālimīn). A ruler acting upon such commands would be like one of the two types of judges destined for the Fire, and obedience to them in such matters would not be permissible; rather, it would be forbidden (ḥarām).

Were I to pursue rigorous debate (muḥāqqah), momentous matters would arise. However, let anyone who objects to anything I have said state clearly: 'I object to such-and-such,' write down his objection in his own hand, and justify it. I, in turn, will write my response in my own hand. Then, both statements should be presented to all the scholars ('ulamā') of the Muslims, from East to West – I stand by this proposal. I have said previously in Damascus: These vague, unspecified objections (inkārāt mujmalah) achieve nothing. Instead, whoever objects to something should write down precisely what he objects to and his proof (ḥujjah) for it, in his own hand. I will then write my response to that in my own hand, and the people of knowledge and faith (ahl al-'ilm wa-l-īmān) can examine both arguments. This is the proper procedure for matters of public concern.

As for verbal statements that are not written down, they are prone to much confusion (takhlīṭ), addition (ziyādah), and omission (nuqṣān), as has indeed occurred. I said to Al-Ṭaybarsī, among other things: 'This affair you have orchestrated constitutes corruption (fasād) in your religion (millah), your state (dawlah), and your law (sharī'ah). The Sultanic decree (al-kitāb as-sultānī) issued in the Sultan's name contains numerous instances – exceeding ten points – of falsehood attributed to you [the officials] and violations of the Sharī'ah. Even the decree of Ghāzān [the Ilkhanid ruler], which was read from the pulpit (minbar) of Damascus, was closer to the Sharī'ah of Islām than this decree issued in the name of the Sultan of the Muslims and read from the pulpits of Islām! If, in their very presence, lies are written attributing falsehoods to you and the judges, and the religion of Islām is distorted, then what might occur in matters beyond your direct observation? Similarly, I sent a message with Al-Fattāḥ to the Sultan's Deputy, saying: 'This creed (i'tiqād) is before you; it is the one discussed by the scholars of Damascus. Whoever objects to any part of it, let him clarify his objection.'

It must also be understood that anyone wishing to condemn (yunkir) something held by people may only do so with proof (ḥujjah) and clear explanation (bayān). No one has the right to compel another person to do something or forbid them from something without specific proof, except the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), the conveyer from Allāh. Allāh obligated creation to obey him in matters their intellects grasp and those they do not; his reports are to be believed whether we comprehend their wisdom or not. As for anyone else, if they declare something correct or incorrect without substantiating it with evidence that necessitates following them, [their claim is invalid]. Indeed, the first prerequisite for condemnation is that the condemner must possess knowledge of what he is condemning and understand people's capacity. No created being, whoever they may be, has the right to invalidate a statement or prohibit an action except by the authority of proof (sultān al-ḥujjah). Otherwise, they fall among those about whom Allāh said: {Indeed, those who dispute concerning the signs of Allāh without

any authority [proof] having come to them – there is nothing within their breasts except pride, [the aspiration for] which they will never attain.} [Ghāfir: 56]. And He said about such people: {Those who dispute concerning the signs of Allāh without any authority having come to them – great is hatred [for them] in the sight of Allāh and in the sight of those who have believed. Thus does Allāh seal over every heart [belonging to] an arrogant tyrant.} [Ghāfir: 35].

Despite all this, I remain broad-chested (patient and tolerant) towards those who oppose me. Even if someone transgresses Allāh's limits concerning me – through declaring me an unbeliever (takfīr), declaring me a sinner (tafsīq), slander (iftirā'), or ignorant partisanship ('aṣbiyyah jāhiliyyah) – I do not transgress Allāh's limits concerning him. Rather, I carefully control what I say and do, weigh it on the scale of justice (mizān al-'adl), and ensure it follows the guidance of the Book that Allāh revealed, which He made a guidance for humanity and a judge in their disputes. Allāh Almighty said: {Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allāh sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.} [Al-Baqarah: 213]. And He Almighty said: {And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger...} [An-Nisā': 59]. And He Almighty said: {We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice (qist).} [Al-Ḥadīd: 25].

This approach stems from the principle that the best way you can recompense someone who has disobeyed Allāh concerning you is by obeying Allāh concerning them. {Indeed, Allāh is with those who fear Him (attaqaw) and those who are doers of good (muḥsinūn).} [An-Naḥl: 128]. And Allāh Almighty said: {But if you are patient and fear Allāh, their plot will not harm you at all. Indeed, Allāh is encompassing of what they do.} [Āl 'Imrān: 120]. Should they wish to raise objections using whatever rational ('aqliyyah) or scriptural (sam'iyyah) arguments they please, I am prepared to respond to all of them. I will provide an explanation, understandable to both the specialist and the layman, demonstrating that what I affirm aligns with self-evident reason (ḍarūrat al-'aql) and innate human disposition (fiṭrah), and that it conforms to the Book (Qur'ān), the Sunnah, and the consensus (ijmā') of the Pious Predecessors (Salaf) of the Ummah. Conversely, I will show that the opposing view contradicts both clear reason (ṣarīḥ al-ma'qūl) and authentic transmitted texts (ṣaḥīḥ al-manqūl).

Even if I had been the one to initiate the condemnation (inkār) and discussion of such matters, the burden of proof (ḥujjah) would still rest upon them [to refute me with evidence]. How much more so, then, when it was others who initiated the condemnation? {And whoever defends himself after having been wronged – for those there is no cause [for blame] against them.} [Ash-Shūrā: 41-42]. {And Our word has already preceded for Our servants, the messengers,} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 171] {Indeed, they would be those given victory,} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 172] {And indeed, Our soldiers will be those who overcome.} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 173].

{Indeed, We will surely support Our messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses (ashhād) will stand.} [Ghāfir: 51]. And may peace, mercy, and blessings of Allāh be upon you and upon the rest of the group. Convey the warmest greetings and peace specifically to Badr al-Dīn, and you may show him these pages if you wish. For he used to say regarding certain matters, 'No secret is hidden from the beloved.' And give glad tidings of everything by which Allāh brings ease to His believing servants and through which He takes vengeance upon the disbelievers and the hypocrites. For I am aware of some of the bitter draughts that he and his ilk – those who

seek leadership through falsehood (tara'us bi-l-bātil), characterized by lies (kadhib) and absurdity (muḥāl) – are forced to swallow.

Allāh is the Supporter of His religion and the Helper of His believing servants against those who oppose them with falsehood. However, this is not the place to relate joyous details. And praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allāh send prayers and peace upon Muḥammad, his family, and his companions.

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh; we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our own souls and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomever Allāh guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He allows to stray, none can guide. We bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, and we bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger, may Allāh send abundant peace upon him (peace be upon him).

To proceed: Your letter has arrived, in which you mentioned informing the Shaykh about the messenger [purportedly] meeting with me and the words I conveyed, and that the Shaykh said, 'Know that, by Allāh, I am greatly astonished at how this situation has unfolded...' and so forth. And that he said, 'You should meet with the Shaykh [referring to Ibn Taymiyyah] and come to an agreement with him based on whatever he deems appropriate and chooses, whether it is as I stated or otherwise.' So, convey my greetings to him and tell him: Regarding this entire affair (qaḍiyyah), I have absolutely no personal objective (gharaḍ mu'ayyan) whatsoever. I am involved in it merely as one Muslim among others; I have the same rights and responsibilities as they do.

And, praise be to Allāh, I have no need for anything specific that might be sought from creation, nor am I suffering any harm whose removal might be sought from creation. Rather, I am immersed in abundant blessings (ni'mah sābiḡah) and immense mercy from Allāh, for which I am incapable of expressing sufficient gratitude. However, it is incumbent upon me to obey Allāh and His Messenger, and to obey those in authority (ūli al-amr) if they command me to obey Allāh. But if they command me to disobey Allāh (ma'ṣiyat Allāh), then there is no obedience to any creature in disobedience to the Creator.

This is what the Book (Qur'ān) and the Sunnah indicate, and upon which the Imāms of the Ummah are agreed. Allāh Almighty said: {O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is best and most excellent in interpretation (ta'wīl).} [An-Nisā': 59].

It is authentically established from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {'There is no obedience to a creature in disobedience to Allāh.'} [Aḥmad, authentic] And: {'Obedience is only in what is right (ma'rūf).'} [Al-Bukhārī, 7145; Muslim, 1840]. [I am also commanded] to be patient with the tyranny (jawr) of rulers and not to rebel against them during times of trial (fitnah), based on the authentic narration from Ibn 'Abbās, who said: The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) said, {'Whoever sees something he dislikes from his ruler, let him be patient, for whoever separates from the main body (al-jamā'ah) by even a handspan and then dies, dies the death of Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islāmic ignorance).'} [Al-Bukhārī, 7053; Muslim, 1849]. Alongside this, I am also commanded to speak – or stand for – the truth wherever I may be, fearing no blame from any blamer (lawmat lā'im) in Allāh's cause. This is as reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections from 'Ubādah ibn

al-Ṣāmit, who said: {‘We pledged allegiance (bāya’nā) to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) for hearing and obeying in ease and hardship, in enthusiasm and reluctance, and even when others are given preference over us; and that we would not contest the authority of those in charge; and that we would speak – or stand for – the truth wherever we were, fearing no blame from any blamer in Allāh’s cause.’} [Al-Bukhārī, 7199; Muslim, 1709].

So, he took their pledge based on these three comprehensive principles (uṣūl thalāthah jāmi’ah): 1) Obedience [to rulers] in matters that constitute obedience to Allāh, even if the one commanding is unjust. 2) Refraining from contesting the authority of those rightfully in charge. 3) Upholding the truth without fear of creation. Allāh, Glorified is He, has commanded in His Book that when the Ummah disputes, the matter must be referred back to Allāh and His Messenger; He did not command referral to any specific individual or entity in cases of dispute. The Imāms have stated that those in authority (ūlī al-amr) are of two types: the scholars (al-‘ulamā’) and the rulers (al-umarā’). This includes religious Shaykhs and Muslim kings: each is to be obeyed in the matters pertaining to their respective domains. Just as the scholars are obeyed regarding the acts of worship they enjoin, and referred to for understanding the meanings of the Qur’ān and Hadith and for knowledge about Allāh, so too are the rulers obeyed in matters like Jihād, establishing legal punishments (ḥudūd), and other actions they undertake which Allāh has commanded them to perform.

When these two groups [scholars and rulers] agree upon a matter, their consensus (ijmā’) constitutes decisive proof (ḥujjah qāṭi’ah), for the Ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) will never unite upon misguidance (ḍalālah). If they dispute, however, the reference point is the Book and the Sunnah. As for this particular case (qaḍīyyah), events have unfolded which this is not the place to detail.

You used to convey messages to me from the Shaykh, both verbally and in writing. You have seen and heard my willingness to comply with everything that involves obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, and my disinterest in demanding my personal rights or retaliating against those who harm me. You have ascertained this about me. What more can be demanded of a Muslim beyond this? You advised abandoning fear and adopting a lenient approach, and I am agreeable to all of this.

Then, Al-Fattāḥ came first and said, ‘The Deputy [ruler] sends his greetings.’ He asked, ‘How long will this stay in prison continue? Will you not come out? Are you still holding to that statement or not?’ Knowing that relying solely on Al-Fattāḥ as a messenger was not conducive to resolving the matter properly, for reasons that are obvious, I told him: ‘Convey my greetings to the Deputy and tell him: I do not know what ‘that statement’ is. To this moment, I do not know on what grounds I was imprisoned, nor have I been informed of my offense. The response to this message cannot be conveyed through your service. Rather, let him send four trustworthy Amīrs from his retinue – individuals who understand and report accurately – so that the discussion with them can be precisely recorded, free from additions or omissions. For I am well aware of the falsehoods (akādhīb) that have permeated this affair.’

After that, Al-Fattāḥ returned, accompanied by a person I did not recognize, but he mentioned to me that he was called ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Ṭaybarsī. I later saw that those who knew him spoke well of him and mentioned him favorably. However, his initial words were not such as could warrant a gentle reply. He did not specify the statement I supposedly denied, saying ‘such-and-such,’ nor did he inquire, ‘Are you willing to agree to such-and-such?’ Had he presented his case – including the accusations of lies (kadhib) against me, disbelief (kufr), and argumentation – in a manner that called for a response

'in the best way,' I would have done so. For people know that I am among the most patient and forbearing (aṭwal al-nās rūḥan wa ṣabran) when faced with harsh words, and among the most just in dialogue even with the least of people, let alone with those in authority (wulāt al-umūr). But he came with the demeanor of one compelling me to agree with what he proposed. He produced a scroll (durj) containing falsehoods, injustice (ẓulm), calls to disobey Allāh, and prohibitions against obeying Him – the extent of which Allāh alone knows. Every time I tried to respond or entrust him with a message to convey, he refused to listen or relay it. Instead, he demanded nothing less than an admission of what was mentioned [in the scroll] and a commitment never to return to it. Allāh Almighty says: {And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them.} [Al-'Ankabūt: 46]. Thus, when the interlocutor commits injustice (ẓalama), we are not commanded to respond 'in the best way.' Indeed, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (may Allāh be pleased with him), in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), retorted harshly to 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd when he said [about the Companions], 'I see a rabble of people likely to flee and abandon you,' saying, 'Go suck the clitoris of Al-Lāt! Would we flee from him and abandon him?' [Al-Bukhārī, 2731, 2732]. It is well-known that honor ('izzah) belongs to Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers, whoever they may be. Allāh Almighty has said: {So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 139]. Therefore, whoever is a believer is superior, regardless of their status. As for whoever opposes Allāh and His Messenger, Allāh Almighty has said: {Indeed, those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger – those will be among the most humiliated.} [Al-Mujādilah: 20]. Whether I or others fall into the first category or the second, Allāh will deal with me and others according to His promise, for His word is the truth: { [It is] the promise of Allāh. Allāh does not fail in His promise.} [Ar-Rūm: 6]. So, I told him during the conversation: 'The right (ḥaqq) in this matter is not mine personally, but belongs to Allāh, His Messenger, and all the believers from the East of the earth to its West. I have no intention of altering or changing the religion. It is not for your sake, or the sake of anyone else, that I would renounce the religion of Islām and affirm disbelief (kufr), falsehood (kadhib), and slander (buhtān), either by retracting [the truth] or agreeing [to falsehood].'

When I saw him insisting on this course, I spoke harshly to him. I said, 'Enough of this bluster (fushār)! Get up and go about your business. I never asked you people to release me.' (They had locked the inner door leading to the main locked gate.) I then said, 'Open the door for me so I can go down,' meaning the conversation was over. More than once, he kept asking me, 'Do you oppose the four Madhhabs (schools of jurisprudence)?' I replied, 'I have only stated what agrees with the four Madhhabs. None of the judges passed judgment against me except Ibn Makhlūf – and you [Al-Ṭaybarsī] were present that day.' I had asked him [Ibn Makhlūf], 'Are you judging alone, or are you judging with these [other judges]?' He replied, 'No, I alone.' I then said to him, 'You are my adversary (khaṣm), so how can you pass judgment on me?' He just said, 'So be it!' raising his voice and shrinking back into the corner. He then ordered, 'Stand up, stand up!' So they made me stand and ordered me taken to prison. Afterwards, my brothers and I repeatedly stated, 'I am willing to return and answer, even if you are the sole judge.' But this was not accepted from me. After they took me to prison, he passed the judgment he passed, recorded what he recorded, and commanded what he commanded in the Sultanic decree. Would anyone – Jew or Christian, let alone a Muslim – claim that this imprisonment was according to the Sharī'ah? Let alone claiming it was according to the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (peace be upon him)! This procedure is something that even young children know, by necessity from the religion of Islām, contradicts the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (peace be upon him). Yet this judge and his

associates constantly claim, 'We did what we did according to the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh.'

This judgment violates the Sharī'ah of Allāh – upon which the Muslims have consensus (ijmā') – in more than twenty aspects. Furthermore, Christians are held in comfortable confinement where they commit Shirk (associating partners with Allāh) and establish churches! If only our imprisonment were like that of the Christians! If only we were treated on par with polytheists and idol worshippers! Instead, they receive honor (karāmah), while we face humiliation (hawān). Would anyone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day say that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) commanded this? And for what offense were my brothers in the religion of Islām imprisoned, other than lies and slander (kadhīb wa buhtān)? Whoever claims that this was done according to the Sharī'ah has committed disbelief (kufr) by the consensus of the Muslims.

I also told him [Al-Ṭaybarsī] during the conversation: 'If a man were to file a claim against you for ten dirhams while you were present in the city and not refusing to attend the judge's court, the judge would not be permitted to rule against you in your absence. This applies to civil rights (ḥuqūq); how much more so does it apply to punitive measures ('uqūbāt), where ruling in absentia is forbidden (ḥarām) by the consensus of the Muslims! Furthermore, this man [Ibn Makhlūf] has been exposed as a liar (kadhīb) on numerous occasions. That day [of the trial], most of what he said about me was false. This document (waraqah) he ordered to be written is mostly lies. The Sultan's decree issued at his behest violates the Sharī'ah in about ten aspects and contains egregious falsehoods about the council meeting that was held, as is known to both the elite and the common folk.'

So, if the official decree, written in the Sultan's name and read from the pulpits of Islām, reported things about the council members – the Amīrs and judges – that were among the most blatant lies and slanders (kadhīb wa buhtān), then what can be expected regarding matters that occurred outside their view? I added, 'And he [Ibn Makhlūf] constantly claims about me that I say Allāh is 'in a corner' (fi zāwiyah) or that He 'begot a son' (walada waladan) – all of which is utter falsehood. His reputation for lying (kadhīb) and immorality (fujūr) is known to the elite and the common folk alike. Is such a person fit to adjudicate on the fundamental principles (uṣūl) of the religion and the meanings of the Book and the Sunnah, matters he does not even understand?' At this point, I saw him [Al-Ṭaybarsī] smile, the smile of someone who knew the truth of what I was saying. It seemed as though this judge's wicked conduct (sīrah) was notorious among the Muslims.

He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] then started saying to me, 'But these records (maḥāḍir)... and they found things in your handwriting...' I replied, 'You were present that day. Did anyone show me any error or any record (maḥḍar) that day? Was I told, 'Witnesses testified against you regarding such-and-such'? Was I even allowed to speak? On the contrary, when I began by praising Allāh (aḥmadu Allāh) and lauding Him, in accordance with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, '{Every matter of significance not begun with the praise of Allāh is deficient (ajdham).}' [Abū Dāwūd], they stopped me from praising Allāh! They said, 'Do not praise Allāh; just answer!' I then asked Ibn Makhlūf, 'Should I answer you, or this claimant?' (Both of them had made statements, most of which were lies). He replied, 'Answer the claimant.'

'I then asked, 'So, are you judging alone, or are you judging with these [other] judges?' He replied, 'No, I alone.' I said, 'Then you are my adversary (khaṣm)! How can your judgment against me be valid?' Did you [Ibn Makhlūf] even ask me to clarify the basis of the adversarial relationship (wajh al-mukhāṣamah)? For he was indeed an adversary for multiple reasons, well-known to all Muslims.'

‘Then I said [to Al-Ṭaybarsī]: ‘As for what is genuinely in my handwriting, I stand by it. As for the records (maḥāḍīr), the witnesses involved possess multiple characteristics that legally disqualify (qāḍiḥah) their testimony, preventing its acceptance by the consensus (ijmā’) of the Muslims. Furthermore, what they testified to is contradicted by what Muslims – both the elite and the common folk – in Damascus and elsewhere know to be the truth.’

‘Consider Judge Sharaf al-Dīn ibn al-Maqdisī: reliable individuals heard him state, ‘I follow the creed (‘aqīdah) of so-and-so [referring to Ibn Taymiyyah].’ Even three [days/nights] before his death, I visited him, apparently with a group of people, and he declared in front of them, ‘I am dying upon your creed, O so-and-so! I am not upon the creed of these others’ – meaning the opponents (khuṣūm).’

‘Likewise, Judge Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khūlī stated more than once behind your back [addressing the recipient or referring generally], ‘I am upon his creed.’ And Judge Imām al-Dīn testified before reliable witnesses that he had said, ‘Nothing objectionable has appeared in his [Ibn Taymiyyah’s] speech, and whoever speaks ill of him, I will punish him (‘azzartuhu).’

‘He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] also said to me during our conversation, ‘Some of the judges claim that they removed you from your teaching chair (kursī).’ I replied: ‘This is among the most blatant lies, known as such by everyone! I was never removed from the chair, nor did anyone ever demand my repentance (istitābah) for anything, nor ask me to retract (istirjā’) anything.’

‘I added, ‘You must have received the document (maḥḍar) containing the signatures of the Shaykhs of Damascus and the leaders of Islām, as well as the document containing the statements of judges who are my opponents, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mālikī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, and what they mentioned therein contradicts these current records (maḥāḍīr).’

‘[Consider] the statement of Al-Mālikī: ‘It never reached me that he [Ibn Taymiyyah] was asked to repent, nor prevented from issuing fatwas, nor removed [from his chair], nor such-and-such. Nor was anything ever established before me that impugned his religion.’ Similar statements were made by other scholars and judges in my absence.’

‘As for the current testimonies (shahādāt), they contain momentous issues – reflect upon them! How [can they be accepted] when the witnesses of the record (shuhūd al-maḥḍar) possess factors that impede the validity of their testimony (mawānī’ ash-shahādah) – matters that will be detailed when the need arises.’

## Incidental Section

You mentioned in your letter that you told the Shaykh: ‘It occurred to me that you should request the official records (maḥāḍīr) for me, so that he [Ibn Taymiyyah] can examine them. If he has a refutation, [well and good]; otherwise, the group [who passed judgment] are all excused [justified].’ This is something for which there is absolutely no need. These records (maḥāḍīr) are far too insignificant and trivial (aqallu wa aḥqaru) to necessitate their physical presence in order to refute them. Indeed, I have already demonstrated – through more than twenty points – that this judgment falls outside the Sharī’ah (Islāmic Law) of Islām by the consensus (ijmā’) of the Muslims: [including] the four Madhhab (schools of jurisprudence) and all other Imāms of the religion.

I said to the messenger [Al-Ṭaybarsī]: What business does Ibn Makhlūf and his ilk have interfering in matters of religious knowledge (‘ilm ad-dīn) in which others are more

knowledgeable than they are – such as the interpretation (tafsīr) of the Qur’ān, the Hadīths of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the sayings of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors), and the fundamental principles of the religion (uṣūl ad-dīn) which they do not even know? These matters are referred only to those who possess knowledge of them. If the Sultan, or his ruling deputy, possesses this knowledge, then his position is like that of any other knowledgeable person. Otherwise, they have no authority in these matters, just as one does not consult anyone for a religious ruling (istiftā’) except one who is qualified to issue fatwas (futyā).

I told him: Nothing has ever issued from me except answers to questions and rulings for those seeking them (iftā’ mustaftī). I have never initiated correspondence with anyone regarding these matters, nor have I addressed anyone about them proactively. Rather, a man seeking guidance (mustarshid), seeking a ruling (mustaftī) concerning what Allāh revealed to His Messenger, comes to me, often from afar, burning with desire (muḥtariq) to find guidance (hudā). Is it permissible within my religion, then, for me to conceal knowledge (‘ilm) from him? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘{Whoever is asked about knowledge he possesses and conceals it, Allāh will bridle him on the Day of Resurrection with a bridle of fire.}’ [Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah – graded Ḥasan or Ṣaḥīḥ by various scholars]. And Allāh Almighty has said: ‘{Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture – those are cursed by Allāh and cursed by those who curse.}’ [Al-Baqarah: 159]. Should I, upon your command, refrain from answering the seeker of guidance, thereby incurring such consequences? Would the Sultan, or any other Muslim, command me to do this?

‘However, your objective was merely to countermand the King’s [or ruler’s] order due to the lies (akādhib) that reached you.’ He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] replied, ‘O Mawlānā (Our Master), leave the matter of the King. No one is talking about the King.’ I retorted, ‘Indeed (Īh)! Now no one is talking about the King? Was this entire trial (fitnah) not stirred up precisely because of that? We heard about this while we were still in Damascus – that the instigation for it was suspicion concerning the King [perhaps related to Ibn Taymiyyah’s influence or views affecting the ruler]. But we never believed anyone would actually credit this.’

I mentioned to him that the harm (ḍarar) of this affair is not upon me. For what do I have to fear? If I am killed, I will be among the best of martyrs (shuhadā’), and that would be a source of felicity (sa’ādah) for me. People will invoke Allāh’s pleasure upon me for it until the Day of Resurrection, while cursing the one who instigated it until the Day of Resurrection. For the entirety of the Ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) knows that I would be killed for upholding the truth (ḥaqq) with which Allāh sent His Messenger. And if I am imprisoned, then by Allāh, my imprisonment is one of the greatest blessings (ni’ām) of Allāh upon me! I possess nothing over which I fear [losing at the hands of] people: no school (madrasah), no land grant (iqṭā’), no wealth (māl), no position of leadership (ri’āsah), nor anything else of that sort.

Rather, the harm of this affair will rebound upon you [the authorities and opponents in Egypt]. For those who instigated it from Damascus – I know that their intention was to plot against you (kaydukum) and corrupt your religion (millah) and your state (dawlah). Some of them have gone to the lands of the Tatars, and others reside there. They are the ones who intended corruption (fasād) in your religious and worldly affairs (dīnukum wa dunyākum), and they used me as a hidden frontman (imāman bi-t-tasattur), knowing that I am loyal (uwālīkum) to you, sincere (aṣṣaḥu lakum) towards you, and desire good for you in this world and the Hereafter. This affair has secrets that are gradually coming

to light. Otherwise, I had no enmity ('adāwah) or hatred (bughḍ) towards anyone in Egypt; I have always been loving and loyal towards them – their Amīrs, their Shaykhs, and their judges.

He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] then asked me, 'So what should I tell the Sultan's Deputy?' I replied, 'Convey my greetings to him and relate everything you have heard.' He said, 'That is a lot.' I summarized: 'The gist is that most of what is in that scroll (durj) is lies (kadhib). As for this phrase, 'He rose over (istawā) in reality (ḥaqīqatan)', more than one scholar from various groups – Mālikīs and non-Mālikīs – have mentioned that Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community) have reached consensus (ijmā') upon this [affirmation]. None of the Salaf of the Ummah nor its Imāms ever denied this. Indeed, I know of no [recognized] scholar who denied it. How, then, could I abandon what Ahl al-Sunnah agreed upon and which no scholar has denied?'

In saying this, I alluded to several points, including what was mentioned by Imām Abū 'Umar al-Ṭalamankī – one of the Mālikī Imāms preceding Al-Bājī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, and that generation. He said: 'The Muslims among Ahl al-Sunnah have unanimously agreed (ajma'a) that the meaning of {And He is with you wherever you are} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4] and similar verses in the Qur'an is that this refers to His knowledge, and that Allāh is above the heavens with His Essence (bi-dhātihi), having risen over (mustawin) His Throne in the manner He willed (kayfa shā):' He also said: 'Ahl al-Sunnah state regarding Allāh's saying {The Most Gracious [who is] over ('alā) the Throne rose (istawā)} [Ṭā Hā: 5] that the Istiwā' (Rising Over) of Allāh upon His Glorious Throne is literal/real ('alā al-ḥaqīqah), not metaphorical (lā 'alā al-majāz).'

And Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Qurṭubī, author of the famous Tafsīr, said regarding the verse {Then He rose over (istawā) the Throne} [Al-A'rāf: 54, Yūnus: 3, Ar-Ra'd: 2, Al-Furqān: 59, As-Sajdah: 4, Al-Ḥadīd: 4]: 'This is the 'Issue of Istiwā', about which the scholars have extensive discussions and writings. We have clarified the scholars' views on it in the book 'Al-Asnā fi Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā' (The Most Luminous Explanation of Allāh's Most Beautiful Names), mentioning fourteen different opinions therein.' He continues until he says: 'The early Salaf (may Allāh be pleased with them) did not negate direction (jihah) [for Allāh] nor did they speak in such terms [of negation]. Rather, they and the vast majority affirmed it for Allāh Almighty, just as His Book stated and His Messengers informed.' He [Al-Qurṭubī] also said: 'None of the righteous Salaf denied that He rose over (istawā) His Throne in reality (ḥaqīqatan). The Throne is specified because it is the greatest of His creations. They were only ignorant of the modality (kayfiyyah) of the Istiwā', for its true nature cannot be known. As Mālik said: 'The Istiwā' is known' – meaning, its linguistic meaning – 'the modality (kayf) is unknown, and asking about it is an innovation (bid'ah).' Umm Salamah (may Allāh be pleased with her) said similarly.'

This Shaykh [Al-Qurṭubī], renowned in Egypt and elsewhere, also said in his 'Sharḥ al-Asmā': 'Imām Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaḍramī al-Qayrawānī, author of the treatise he named 'Risālat al-Asmā' ilā Mas'alat al-Istiwā' (Treatise of Names on the Issue of Istiwā)', when discussing the disagreement among later scholars regarding Istiwā', mentioned the view of Al-Ṭabarī (meaning Abū Ja'far, author of the major Tafsīr), Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd [al-Qayrawānī], Qāḍī 'Abd al-Wahhāb [al-Mālikī], and a group of Hadīth and Fiqh Shaykhs. He [Al-Ḥaḍramī] said: 'This [view] is also apparent in some books of Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī]' and Abū al-Ḥasan [al-Ash'arī]. Qāḍī 'Abd al-Wahhāb also related it from him [Qāḍī Abū Bakr]. This view is that He, Glorified is He, is established (mustawin) over the Throne with His Essence (bi-dhātihi). In some places, they stated it unrestrictedly as 'above His Throne (fawqa 'arshihi)'. Imām Abū Bakr [al-Ḥaḍramī] said: 'And this is the correct view (ṣahīḥ) which I hold, without delimitation

(taḥdīd), nor occupying a place (tamakkun fi makān), nor being contained within it (kawn fihi), nor contact (mumāssah):'

Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Qurṭubī] continued: 'This is the statement of Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī] in his book 'Tamhīd al-Awā'il.' It was also stated by Ustādh Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak in his 'Sharḥ Awā'il al-Adillah.' It is the view of Abū 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Ṭalamankī, and other Andalusians, and the view of al-Khaṭṭābī in 'Shi'ar ad-Dīn.' Then, after relating fourteen opinions, he [Al-Qurṭubī] concluded: 'The most evident (aẓhar) of the opinions is that which is supported by the convergence of verses (āyāt), reports (akhbār), and the virtuous, chosen scholars: that Allāh is upon ('alā) His Throne, as He informed in His Book and upon the tongue of His Prophet, without modality (bilā kayf), distinct (bā'in) from all His creation. This is the Madhhab (way) of the Righteous Salaf, according to what the trustworthy (thiqāt) have transmitted from them.' (All this is his wording).

Shaykh Abū Naṣr al-Sijzī said in his book 'Al-Ibānah': 'Our Imāms – such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, Ḥammād ibn Salamah, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubāarak, Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāq, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Iṣḥāq ibn Rāhawayh – are unanimous (muttafiqūn) that Allāh, Glorified is He, is above (fawqa) the Throne with His Essence (bi-dhātihi), and that His knowledge encompasses every place. [They also agree] that He will be seen on the Day of Resurrection with eyesight, above the Throne; that He descends (yanzilu) to the lowest heaven; and that He gets angry (yaghḍab), is pleased (yarḍā), and speaks (yata kallam) as He wills. Whoever opposes anything from this, he is disassociated from them, and they are disassociated from him.'

Abū 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr said in his book 'At-Tamhīd,' the commentary on the Muwaṭṭa' – which is the most esteemed work composed in its field – when discussing the Hadīth of Descent (nuzūl): 'This is a Hadīth established through transmission (naql), with an authentic chain of narration (ṣaḥīḥ al-Isnād); the scholars of Hadīth do not differ regarding its authenticity. It is a Hadīth transmitted through routes other than this one, via reports from reliable narrators ('udūl) from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It contains proof (dalīl) that Allāh is in the heaven (fi as-samā'), upon ('alā) the Throne, above (min fawqi) the seven heavens, as the Jamā'ah (main body of scholars) has stated. It is part of their evidence (ḥujjah) against the Mu'tazilah in their claim that Allāh is in every place and not upon the Throne.'

He [Ibn 'Abd al-Barr] said regarding the evidence for the correctness of what Ahl al-Haqq (the People of Truth) state: Allāh's saying, {The Most Gracious [who is] over ('alā) the Throne rose (istawā)} [Ṭā Hā: 5]; and His saying, {To Him ascends good speech} [Fātir: 10]; and His saying, {The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him} [Al-Ma'ārij: 4]; and His saying to 'Īsā, {Indeed, I will take you and raise you to Myself} [Āl 'Imrān: 55]. He mentioned several verses, continuing until he said: 'This [belief in Allāh's Highness] is more widely known among the common folk ('āmmah) and the elite (khāṣṣah) than to require further narration, because it is a matter of innate certainty (iḍṭirār) that no one taught them, and no Muslim has opposed them in it.' He elaborated extensively on this.

He continued until he said: 'As for their [the Mu'tazilah's] citing as evidence the saying of Allāh Almighty: {There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them – and no less than that and no more except that He is with them wherever they are.} [Al-Mujādilah: 7], there is no proof (ḥujjah) for them in the apparent meaning (ẓāhir) of the verse. This is because the scholars among the Companions (Ṣaḥābah) and the Successors (Ṭābi'in) – from whom the interpretation (ta'wil) was transmitted – said regarding the interpretation of this verse: 'He is upon ('alā) the Throne, and His knowledge is in every place.' No one whose

opinion carries weight (yuḥtaju bi-qawlihi) has opposed them in this.'

He related from Al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim that he said regarding the verse {There is no private conversation three...}: 'He is upon His Throne, and His knowledge is with them wherever they are.' A similar statement is related from Sufyān al-Thawrī. And from Ibn Mas'ūd, who said: 'Allāh is above (fawqa) the Throne, and nothing of your deeds is hidden from Him.'

Abū 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr said: 'Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous (mujmī'ūn) in affirming (iqrār) all the Attributes (ṣifāt) mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, believing (īmān) in them, and understanding them according to their reality (ḥaqīqah), not metaphorically (majāz). However, they do not specify a modality (lā yukayyifūn) for any of them, nor do they define (lā yaḥuddūn) a confined description for them. As for the People of Innovation (Ahl al-Bida') – the Jahmiyyah, all the Mu'tazilah, and the Khawārij – all of them deny these Attributes and do not understand any of them according to their reality. They claim that whoever affirms them is a Mushabbih (one who likens Allāh to creation). Conversely, in the view of those who affirm the Attributes, these groups are deniers (nāfūn) of the One Worshipped (al-Ma'būd). The truth regarding these Attributes is what is stated by those who adhere to what the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) have articulated – and they are the Imāms of the Jamā'ah (main body).'

Abū 'Umar also said: 'What Ahl al-Sunnah and the Imāms of Fiqh (jurisprudence) and Athar (tradition) hold regarding this issue and similar ones is to believe (īmān) in what has come from the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning them, affirm (taṣdīq) it, and refrain from delimitation (taḥdīd) and specifying modality (kayfiyyah) for any of it.'

The Shaykh, the Knower (al-'Ārif), Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Jīlānī (or al-Kīlānī), said in his book 'Al-Ghunyah': 'As for knowing the Maker through signs (āyāt) and indications (dalālāt) – in brief – it is to know and be certain that Allāh is One (Wāḥid), Unique (Aḥad).' He continues until he says: '...and He is in the direction of Highness (bi-jihat al-'uluww), established (mustawin) upon the Throne, encompassing (muḥtawin) the dominion (mulk), His knowledge surrounding all things.' He stated: 'It is not permissible to describe Him as being in every place; rather, it should be said that He is in the heaven (fī as-samā'), upon ('alā) the Throne, as He said: {The Most Gracious [who is] over ('alā) the Throne rose (istawā)} [Ṭā Hā: 5]'. He mentioned verses and hadīths, continuing until he said: 'The attribute of Istiwā' should be affirmed unrestrictedly (iṭlāq) without interpretation (ta'wīl), and it is the Istiwā' (establishment) of the Essence (dhāt) upon the Throne.' He added: 'His being upon the Throne is mentioned in every Book revealed to every Prophet sent, without [specifying] modality (bilā kayf).' He then discussed this at length.

Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karājī al-Shāfi'ī said in his famous introduction on the 'Creed (l'itiqād) of Ahl al-Sunnah' (transmitted from the handwriting of Shaykh Abū 'Amr ibn al-Ṣalāḥ): 'Their creed is that the Deity, with His Essence (bi-dhātihi) ... is upon His Throne, while His knowledge encompasses the unseen (ghawā'ib).'

I did not mention all of these narrations (āthār) to the messenger [Al-Ṭaybarsī], but they are part of what I alluded to when I said: 'I have not said anything from myself; I only stated what the Salaf of the Ummah and its Imāms agreed upon.' This space is too limited to encompass all the statements of the Ummah on this matter. He [Al-Ṭaybarsī] then said to me: 'Yes, He is established (mustawin) upon the Throne in reality (ḥaqīqatan), with His Essence (bi-dhātihi), without specifying modality (bilā takyīf) or resemblance [to creation] (wa lā tashbīh).' I replied: 'Yes, and this is precisely what is in the 'Creed' (al-

'Aqīdah [referring to his written creed, Al-'Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyyah].' He then said, 'So write this down now,' or 'Write this,' or something similar. I responded, 'This is already written, using this exact wording, in the Creed that you have with you – the one that was discussed in Damascus and upon which the Muslims agreed. So what exactly is it that is wanted [from me]?'

I told him: 'I have produced more than fifty books – from the works of Ahl al-Ḥadīth (the People of Hadith), Ahl al-Taṣawwuf (the Sufis), the Mutakallimīn (theologians), and the Fuqahā' (jurists) of the four schools: Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī – all of which concur with what I have stated. I also said: I challenge anyone who opposes me to bring forth, within three years, a single letter from any of the Imāms of Islām that contradicts what I have said. What more am I supposed to do?'

When Al-Ṭaybarsī and Al-Fattāḥ left, Al-Fattāḥ returned after an hour and said, 'The Sultan's Deputy sends his greetings and says: 'Write down a creed ('aqīdah) for us now in your own handwriting.' I replied, 'Convey my greetings to the Sultan's Deputy and tell him: If I were to write something now, someone might claim, 'He has added or omitted things,' or 'He has changed the creed.' Similarly in Damascus, when they requested the creed, I was only held accountable for something that had already been written previously.'

I added: 'And this creed is the very one that was read in Damascus during the three council sessions. Your deputy [in Damascus] sent it to you [in Egypt] via courier (barīd), and you have all the documents. Then, when the second letter arrived, he sent you again via Al-'Umarī what the judges and scholars had said, the official record (maḥḍar), and the book of Al-Bukhārī which Al-Mizzī read. The creed is not something I invent anew from myself such that I have a different creed every day. It is that exact same creed, the exact same text (nuskhah). So examine it.' He [Al-Fattāḥ] then left.

Then he returned and requested that I write something, anything, in my own hand. I asked, 'So what should I write?' He suggested, 'Something like [a statement of] pardon ('afw) and that you will not interfere with anyone.' I replied, 'Yes, I am agreeable to this. It is not my aim to harm anyone, nor seek revenge (intiḳām) against them, nor hold them accountable. I pardon ('āfin) whoever has wronged me.' I intended to write this, but then I thought, 'It is not customary to write such things down, for a person pardoning their personal right does not require this [formal documentation].'

You know that when the matter proceeded in this manner [with the scroll and demands for agreement], some hearts nearly turned against the Shaykh, thinking he had conceded to [the contents of] that scroll (durj), and that this contradicted what he used to say and send [in his writings]. So my brother and I began refuting that, saying, 'This is the doing of Ibn Makhlūf.' And I myself have verified that it was indeed the work of Ibn Makhlūf.

The Shaykh knows that an affair like this, which has become so well-known and widespread, cannot be resolved in this manner [through forced concessions or superficial agreements]. For my part, I exert the utmost effort within my capacity towards kindness (iḥsān), abandoning revenge (intiḳām), and reconciling hearts (ta'līf al-qulūb). However, he knows many of the people in the Egyptian lands, and that a person cannot escape their evil (sharr) and injustice (zulm) except by pursuing one of two paths: one is stable, the other is fickle. (The first path: To have support (ta'yīd) and authority (sulṭān) from Allāh, refuge (iltijā') in Him, seeking His aid (isti'ānah), reliance (tawakkul) upon Him, seeking His forgiveness (istighfār), and obedience (ṭā'ah) to Him, through which He repels from the person the evil of the devils (shayāṭīn) among humans and jinn. This path is the firm (thābitah), enduring (bāqiyah) one. The second path: If [support] comes from

someone of high status (dhī jāh), they [the people] will show regard for that person of status as long as his status remains. But if his status changes, these very same people become among the most vehement in opposing him, even to the point where they might beat a judge with whips (maqāri') and the like – actions scarcely known among others.)

His [Ibn Makhlūf's] enemies (a'dā') and detractors (mubghīdūh) are many. He has involved himself in legal confirmations (ithbātāt), property matters (amlāk), and other affairs connected to the state (dawlah) and beyond. If someone of high status (dhawī al-jāh) were to arise with an interest in overturning his judgments and transferring properties, it would be among the easiest things for them to accomplish. For instance, they could document his apostasy (riddah) – and the judgments of an apostate (murtadd) are not legally valid (lā tanfudh). This is because it is known to the elite and the common folk that he declared what he did in this affair [against Ibn Taymiyyah] to be the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (peace be upon him). Whenever a person declares permissible (ḥallala) that which is forbidden (ḥarām) by consensus (mujma' 'alayhi), or declares forbidden (ḥarama) that which is permissible (ḥalāl) by consensus, or alters (baddala) the Sharī'ah established by consensus, he becomes an unbeliever (kāfir), an apostate (murtadd), by the agreement (ittifāq) of the jurists (fuqahā').

It is concerning such situations that His saying – according to one of the two interpretations – was revealed: {And whoever does not judge by what Allāh has revealed – then it is those who are the disbelievers (kāfirūn).} [Al-Mā'idah: 44]. That is, the one who deems it permissible (mustahill) to judge by other than what Allāh revealed.

The term 'Shar' (Law) is used in common parlance ('urf) with three meanings: (1) The Revealed Law (ash-Shar' al-Munazzal): This is what the Messenger brought. Following it is obligatory (wājib), and whoever opposes it deserves punishment ('uqūbah). (2) The Interpreted Law (ash-Shar' al-Mu'awwal): This comprises the opinions (ārā') of scholars derived through Ijtihād (independent reasoning), such as the Madhhab of Mālik and the like. Following this is permissible (yasūghu), but it is neither obligatory nor forbidden [to follow a different valid interpretation]. No one has the right to compel the general populace ('umūm an-nās) to adhere to it, nor to prevent the general populace from [following another valid interpretation]. (3) The Altered Law (ash-Shar' al-Mubaddal): This involves lying (kadhib) against Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him), or against people through false testimony (shahādāt az-zūr) and the like, and manifest injustice (ẓulm bayyin). Whoever claims that this [altered law] is from the Law of Allāh has committed disbelief (kafara) without dispute (bilā nizā'). This is like someone claiming that blood and carrion (dam wa maytah) are permissible – even if he says, 'This is my Madhhab,' or similar excuses.

Even if what Ibn Makhlūf judged by were the Madhhab of Mālik or [the view of] al-Ash'arī, he would still have no right to compel all people to follow it or punish those who disagreed with him, by the consensus (ittifāq) of the Ummah. How much more so, then, when the view he promotes and imposes actually contradicts the explicit texts (naṣṣ) of Mālik and the leading Imāms of his school, and contradicts the explicit texts of al-Ash'arī and the leading Imāms of his school – such as Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī], Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarī, Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, and Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī? All of these, and others, explicitly stated views similar to what we have affirmed, and the opposite of what he [Ibn Makhlūf] stated.

This is why the Ḥanbalīs and the Ash'arīs reconciled, and all the people came to agreement. When the Ḥanbalīs saw the actual words of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, they said, 'This is better than the words of Shaykh al-Muwaffaq [Ibn Qudāmah].' The rancor (aḍghān) that was in hearts dissipated, and the jurists (fuqahā') among the Shāfi'īs and

others began saying, 'Praise be to Allāh for the unity of the Muslims' word (ittifāq kalimat al-muslimīn).'

Furthermore, even if we were to assume that the matter he judged upon was one where Ijtihād is permissible, he still would have no right to overturn (yanquḍ) the judgment of others. How much more egregious is it, then, when the judgment of all the judges of Damascus was overturned without any valid justification (shubhah), but rather based on something that contradicts the religion of the Muslims by the consensus (ijmā') of the Muslims? Even if someone were to claim that the judges of Damascus acted under duress (mukrahūn), more than one among them explicitly stated there was no coercion. In contrast, these [judges] in Egypt were under more apparent duress, given the widespread public knowledge that he [Ibn Makhlūf] acted as he did for the sake of state interests (gharaḍ ad-dawlah) related to the monarchy (mulk), and that were it not for this, the judges would have spoken differently. This [fact about duress] is established concerning the judges of Egypt.

How [can his judgment stand], then, when this ruling he issued contradicts the Sharī'ah of Islām in more than twenty aspects? And most of these violations contradict the consensus (ijmā') of the Muslims. These points (wujūh) are written down with [our associate] Sharaf Muḥammad. Therefore, Shaykh Naṣr [al-Manbijī, another intermediary] should be informed of the reality (ḥaqīqah) of the matter and the underlying nature (bāṭin) of the affair, so that he may remedy it with his prudent management (tadbīr). As for me, my only aim is obedience to Allāh and His Messenger. And the only thing to be feared for the Egyptians is [harm] from each other, as has become customary.

You have heard what transpired in Damascus – even though those people were closer to agreement – involving the aforementioned judge renewing his Islām before another judge. And when I was there [in Damascus], this court official (ādhin), Yaḥyā al-Ḥanafī, went to Judge Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī, renewed his Islām (jaddada islāmahu), and [the judge] ruled to protect his life (ḥaqn damihi) when some of their associates rose against him regarding certain matters.

Some time ago, when Judge Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī was overseeing the judiciary of Damascus, he intended to shave the beard of this [person] al-Adhra'i, and brought a razor (mūsā) and a donkey (ḥimār) for him to ride and be paraded around. His brother came and informed me, so I went to him [Ḥusām al-Dīn] and persisted until he refrained from doing so. Other incidents occurred in which I consistently acted kindly (muḥsinan) towards them. These kinds of actions [punitive measures based on factionalism] are not my doing, nor the doing of those like me. We only involve ourselves in what Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers love. We have no personal agenda (gharaḍ) against anyone; rather, we repay evil with good (najzī bi-s-sayyi'ati al-ḥasanah), pardon (na'fū), and forgive (naghfiru).

This case (qaḍiyyah) has become widespread; what he [Ibn Makhlūf] did in it has become apparent and is known to the elite and the common folk. If circumstances were to change, such that an Amīr or a Wazīr came along who had an interest in transferring a property that he [Ibn Makhlūf] had confirmed (athbatahu) or ruled upon (ḥakama bihi), this would be among the easiest things for the Egyptians to achieve. They would establish his apostasy (riddah) – and the judgments of an apostate (murtadd) are rejected (mardūdah) by the consensus (ittifāq) of the scholars. The harm (ḍarar) would then rebound upon those who aided and supported him in falsehood (bāṭil), whether from the state officials (ahl ad-dawlah) or others. This is a grave matter that should not be neglected. The Shaykh [Naṣr] is experienced (khabīr) and understands the consequences ('awāqib) of affairs.

And I, by Allāh, am among the foremost people in assisting to extinguish every evil (sharr) in this situation and others, and to establish every good (khayr). As for Ibn Makhḷūf, no matter what he does, by Allāh, if I am capable of any good towards him, I will do it, and I will never aid his enemy against him. And there is no might nor power except with Allāh (wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh). This is my intention (niyyah) and resolve ('azm), despite my knowledge of all the circumstances. For I know that Shayṭān sows discord (yanzaghu) between the believers, and I will never be an aide to Shayṭān against my Muslim brothers.

Were I outside [of prison], I would know better how to assist him. But this is an affair they have perpetrated unjustly (zūran). May Allāh choose for all Muslims what holds goodness (khīrah) for them in their religion and their worldly life. The cycle [of tribulation] will not cease, nor will the confusion (ḥayrah) dissipate, except through turning back (inābah) to Allāh, seeking forgiveness (istighfār), repentance (tawbah), and sincere refuge (ṣidq al-iltijā) in Him. For truly, Glorified is He, there is no refuge from Him except in Him. And there is no might nor power except with Allāh.

As for what you mentioned from Shaykh Naṣr, that he said, 'I would have preferred that they [the authorities] not sense anything about him [Ibn Taymiyyah] until he was already released, fearing that so-and-so and so-and-so [opponents] might find out, interfere, and start talking, leading to much clamor (ghawghā') and discussion.' Inform him [Shaykh Naṣr] that whoever speaks truth (ḥaqq), I am the most deserving person to hear the truth, adhere to it, and accept it, whether it is sweet or bitter. And I am the most deserving person to repent (yatūb) from any sins (dhunūb) that may have issued from me. Indeed, I am even most deserving of punishment ('uqūbah) if I were truly misleading Muslims from their religion.

I have said previously: It is not appropriate for anyone's affection (taḥannun) for a person and loyalty (muwālāh) to him to lead him to partisan support (yata'aṣṣab) for him in falsehood (bāṭil), or to suspend (yu'aṭṭil) the limits (ḥudūd) of Allāh Almighty for his sake. Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: '{Whoever's intercession prevents one of the prescribed punishments (ḥadd) of Allāh from being carried out has opposed Allāh in His command.}' [Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad].

And this matter that he [Shaykh Naṣr] fears – the enemy (al-'adūww) raising objections based on the record (maḥḍar) brought from Damascus to Ibn Makhḷūf concerning seeking aid (istighāthah) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) – if they [the opponents] were to bring this up, its negative consequence (wabāl) would fall upon them. It would demonstrate that they are polytheists (mushrikūn) who cannot differentiate between the religion of the Muslims and the religion of the Christians. For Muslims are unanimously agreed (muttafiqūn) upon what they know by necessity (bi-l-iḍṭirār) from the religion of Islām: that it is not permissible for a servant to worship (ya'bud), supplicate (ya'dū), seek aid (yastaghīth), or place reliance (yatawakkal) except upon Allāh alone. And whoever worships an angel brought near or a messenger sent, or supplicates to him, or seeks aid from him, is a polytheist (mushrik).

Therefore, it is not permissible according to any Muslim for someone to say: 'O Jibrā'īl!' or 'O Mikā'īl!' or 'O Ibrāhīm!' or 'O Mūsā!' or 'O Messenger of Allāh! Forgive me (ighfir lī), or have mercy on me (irḥamnī), or provide for me (urzuqnī), or grant me victory (unṣurnī), or aid me (aghithnī), or protect me from my enemy (ajirnī min 'aduwwī),' or anything similar. Rather, all of this belongs exclusively to the divine attributes (khaṣā'is al-ilāhiyyah).

These are noble, well-known issues that the scholars have clarified. They have

mentioned the distinction between the rights (ḥuqūq) exclusive to Allāh, [apart from]<sup>1</sup> the Messengers, and the rights due to both Him and His Messengers. Just as He, Glorified is He, distinguishes between them in His saying: {...that you may honor him [the Prophet] and respect him, and exalt Him [Allāh] morning and afternoon.} [Al-Faḥḥ: 9]. Honoring (ta'zīr) and respecting (tawqīr) are for the Messenger, while exalting (tasbīh) morning and afternoon is for Allāh.

And as He said: {And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger and fears Allāh and is mindful of Him (yattaqhi) – it is those who are the attainers [of success].} [An-Nūr: 52]. Obedience (ṭā'ah) is for Allāh and His Messenger, while fear (khashyah) and mindfulness/piety (taqwā) are for Allāh alone. Similarly, the Messengers say: {Worship Allāh, fear Him (ittaquhu), and obey me (aṭī'ūn).} [Nūh: 3]. They designate worship ('ibādah) and piety (taqwā) for Allāh alone, while designating obedience (ṭā'ah) for themselves [as Messengers].

Allāh Almighty said: {And [He revealed] that the mosques are for Allāh, so do not invoke (ta'dū) anyone along with Allāh.} [Al-Jinn: 18] {And that when the servant of Allāh [Muḥammad] stood up invoking Him (yad'ūhu), they almost became about him a compacted mass.} [Al-Jinn: 19] {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'I only invoke (ad'ū) my Lord and do not associate with Him anyone.} [Al-Jinn: 20] {Say, 'Indeed, I do not possess for you [the power of] harm or right direction (rashad).'} [Al-Jinn: 21] {Say, 'Indeed, there will never protect me from Allāh anyone [if I should disobey], nor will I find in other than Him a refuge (multaḥad).'} [Al-Jinn: 22].

And Allāh Almighty said: {So do not invoke (ta'du) with Allāh another deity and [thus] be among the punished.} [Ash-Shu'arā': 213]. And Allāh Almighty said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'Invoke (ud'ū) those you claim [as deities] besides Allāh.' They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] within the heavens or within the earth, nor have they therein any share [of ownership], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant (ḡahīr).} [Saba': 22] {And intercession (shafā'ah) does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits.} [Saba': 23].

And Allāh Almighty said: {...Who is it that can intercede (yashfa'u) with Him except by His permission?...} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. And Allāh Almighty said: {Say, 'Invoke (ud'ū) those you have claimed [as gods] besides Him, for they do not possess the [ability for] removal of adversity (kashf aḍ-ḡurr) from you or [its] transfer.'} [Al-Isrā': 56] {Those whom they invoke (yad'ūn) seek means of access (wasīlah) to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared (maḥdhūr).} [Al-Isrā': 57].

And Allāh Almighty said: {They have taken their scholars and monks as lords (arbāban) besides Allāh, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Maryam. And they were not commanded except to worship one God (ilāhan wāḥidan); there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him (yushrikūn).} [At-Tawbah: 31].

And Allāh Almighty said: {It is not [possible] for one to whom Allāh has given the Scripture and wisdom (ḥukm) and prophethood (nubuwwah) to say to the people, 'Be servants ('ibādan) to me rather than Allāh,' but [instead, he would say], 'Be Rabbaniyyīn (learned scholars who practice what they know and preach) because you teach the Scripture and because you study [it].'} [Āl 'Imrān: 79] {Nor would he command you to take the angels and prophets as lords (arbāban). Would he command you to disbelief (kufr) after you had become Muslims?} [Āl 'Imrān: 80]. Therefore, whoever takes angels and prophets as lords has committed disbelief (kafara) after his Islām, by the consensus

<sup>1</sup> The word 'dūn' (apart from/besides) is noted as missing in the printed edition by the editor of the digital version.

(ittifāq) of the Muslims.

It is for this reason that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade taking graves as places of worship (masājid) and forbade setting up rivals (niddan) to Allāh in the exclusive characteristics of Lordship (khaṣā'is ar-rubūbiyyah). It is reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections from him that he said: '{May Allāh curse (la'ana) the Jews and the Christians; they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship (masājid).}' He was warning against what they did. [Al-Bukhārī, 435, 1330; Muslim, 529]. And it is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ from him that he said: '{Indeed, those before you used to take graves as places of worship. Beware! Do not take graves as places of worship, for I forbid you from doing so.}' [Muslim, 532].

It is reported in the Sunan collections from him that he said: '{Do not take my grave as a place of recurring visitation (īdan).}' [Abū Dāwūd, 2042]. And it is narrated from him that he said: '{O Allāh, do not let my grave become an idol (wathanan) that is worshipped.}' [Mālik, Muwaṭṭa', Book 9, Hadīth 85 – mursal but supported]. {And when a man said to him, 'Whatever Allāh wills (mā shā'a Allāh) and you will (wa shi'ta),' he replied, 'Have you made me a rival (niddan) to Allāh? Say: Whatever Allāh alone wills (mā shā'a Allāhu waḥdah).}' [Aḥmad, Musnad, 1839; Ibn Mājah, 2117].

For this reason, the scholars have stated: Whoever visits the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should not touch (yastalimuhu) it nor kiss (yuqabbiluhu) it, nor liken the dwelling of the created being to the House of the Creator [the Ka'bah], from which the Black Stone (ar-Rukn al-Aswad) is touched and kissed, and the Yemeni Corner (ar-Rukn al-Yamānī) is touched. This is why the scholars unanimously agreed that it is not legislated (lā yushra'u) to kiss any stone or touch it [for blessing] – except the two Yemeni Corners [the Black Stone and the Yemeni Corner]. Even the Station of Ibrāhīm (Maqām Ibrāhīm) in Makkah is not kissed nor wiped (yutamassaḥu bihi). How much less so, then, other stations (maqāmāt) and shrines (mashāhid)?

And when you mentioned this [issue of Istighāthah] that day, I told you: This is from the fundamental principles (uṣūl) of Islām. If the judge [Ibn Makhlūf] cannot differentiate between the religion of Islām and the religion of the Christians who invoke (yad'ūn) the Messiah and his mother, then what am I to do?

But one who takes Nafisah [Sayyidah Nafisah, a revered descendant of the Prophet buried in Cairo] as a lord (rabban), saying, 'She grants protection (tujīr) to the fearful and provides aid (tughīth) to the distressed,' and 'I am under her patronage (fī ḥasabihā),' and prostrates (yasjudu) to her, and supplicates (yataḍarra'u) to her with the same humility as one supplicates to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and places reliance (yatawakkalu) on a living person who has died, instead of relying on the Ever-Living (al-Ḥayy) Who never dies – there is no doubt that his association of partners (ishrāk) with someone better than her [like the Prophet] would be even stronger [in his misguided view].

Allāh Almighty said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'In whose hand is the realm (malakūt) of all things – and He protects (yujīr), while none can protect against Him – if you should know?'} [Al-Mu'minūn: 88] {They will say, '[It belongs] to Allāh.' Say, 'Then how are you deluded (tushārūn)?'} [Al-Mu'minūn: 89].

And the Hadīth of {Mu'ādh, when he returned from Shām (Greater Syria) and prostrated (sajada) to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He [the Prophet] asked, 'What is this, O Mu'ādh?' He replied, 'I saw them in Shām prostrating to their bishops (asāqifah), and they attribute this practice to their prophets.' He [the Prophet] said, 'O Mu'ādh, tell me, if you were to pass by my grave, would you prostrate to it?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Then do not

prostrate to me. If I were to command anyone to prostrate to anyone, I would have commanded the wife to prostrate to her husband.} [Aḥmad, Musnad, 19403; Ibn Mājah, 1853].

So, one who does not forbid the misguided (dāllīn) from such Shirk (polytheism), which is forbidden (muḥarram) by the consensus (ijmā') of the Muslims, how can he forbid what is less than it? Whoever invokes (da'ā) a man or a woman besides Allāh is comparable (muḍāhin) to those who took the Messiah and his mother as two gods besides Allāh.

It is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {‘Do not exaggerate in praising me (lā tuṭrūnī) as the Christians exaggerated in praising ‘Īsā, son of Maryam. I am only a servant (‘abd), so say: The servant of Allāh (‘Abd Allāh) and His Messenger.’} [Al-Bukhārī, 3445].

Indeed, whoever permits the invocation (yud’ā) of the created being while preventing the invocation (du’ā) of the Creator – which involves affirming His Self-Sufficiency (ṣamadiyyah) and Divinity (ilāhiyyah) – has contradicted Islām in both its negation (nafy) and affirmation (ithbāt), which constitute the testimony that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh (shahādah an lā ilāha illā Allāh).

As for the rights (ḥuqūq) of the Messenger of Allāh (may my father and mother be sacrificed for him) – such as prioritizing love for him over oneself, family, and wealth; honoring (ta’zīr), respecting (tawqīr), and venerating (ijlāl) him; obeying (ṭā’ah) him; following his Sunnah; and other rights – they are indeed immense. [Similarly, among the legislated acts is Tawassul (seeking means) through him in supplication (du’ā’), as in the Hadīth reported by At-Tirmidhī and graded authentic (ṣaḥḥaḥahu) that {the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught a person to say: ‘Allāhumma innī as’aluka wa atawassalu ilayka bi-nabiyika Muḥammadin nabiyi ir-raḥmah. Yā Muḥammadu yā Rasūl Allāh, innī atawassalu bika ilā rabbī fi ḥājati li-yaqdiyahā. Allāhumma fashaffi’hu fiyya’ [O Allāh, I ask You and seek means through You by Your Prophet Muḥammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muḥammad, O Messenger of Allāh, I seek means through you to my Lord concerning my need, that He may fulfill it. O Allāh, accept his intercession for me.]} This type of Tawassul through him is good (ḥasan).<sup>1</sup>

However, supplicating (du’ā’) to him and seeking aid (istighāthah) from him is forbidden (ḥarām). The distinction between these two [Tawassul and Istighāthah directed to the Prophet] is agreed upon (muttafaquun ‘alayhi) among Muslims. The one performing Tawassul (mutawassil) is only supplicating to Allāh, addressing Him, and asking from Him; he does not invoke anyone else except by way of bringing him to mind (istiḥḍār), not by way of requesting (ṭalab) from him. As for the supplicant (ad-dā’ī) and the seeker of aid (al-mustaghīth) [in the forbidden sense], he is the one who asks the one invoked (al-mad’ūw), requests from him, seeks aid from him, and relies upon him. And Allāh is the Lord of the Worlds (Rabb al-‘Ālamīn), the Owner of Dominion (Mālik al-Mulk), the Creator of all things. He is the One Who responds (yuḥib) to the distressed (muḍṭarr) when he calls upon Him, and He is the Near (al-Qarīb) Who answers the call of the supplicant when he calls upon Him, and He is the Hearer of Supplication (Samī’ ad-Du’ā’). Glorified and Exalted is He, far above what the wrongdoers (zālimūn) say!

I have authored a large book titled ‘Aṣ-Ṣārim al-Maslūl ‘alā Shātim ar-Rasūl’ (The Drawn Sword against the Reviler of the Messenger), in which I discussed matters related to this issue [respect for the Prophet] that I do not know anyone to have preceded me in

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<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Nāṣir ibn Ḥamad al-Fahd (p. 24) said: Here the Shaykh (may Allah have mercy on him) speaks concisely about Tawassul; he elaborated on it at the end of the first volume in [the section on] Tawassul and Wasīlah.]

addressing. Likewise, these 'Foundations of Faith' (Al-Qawā'id al-Īmāniyyah) – I have written chapters within them that are among the most beneficial things concerning matters of religion.

Among the things the Shaykh [Naṣr] should be made aware of is that I fear this affair (qaḍiyyah) may spiral completely out of his control, resulting in harm (ḍarar) to him, to Ibn Makhlūf, and others like them. For he [Ibn Makhlūf or the authorities] has demanded things from me that could become a cause for such [negative outcomes], but I did not comply. I am only of one color [consistent and straightforward]. By Allāh, I have never deceived (ghashashtuhumā) either of them [Naṣr and Ibn Makhlūf]. Had I deceived them, I would have concealed it. I am ready to assist both of them in all righteousness (birr) and piety (taqwā).

Undoubtedly, the foundation (aṣl) upon which matters can be rectified is for every person to return (rujū') to Allāh and repent (tawbah) to Him, [especially] during these blessed ten [days/nights, likely referring to Dhū al-Ḥijjah or Ramaḍān]. For when the inner states (sarā'ir) are rectified, Allāh rectifies the outer states (ẓawāhir). {Indeed, Allāh is with those who fear Him (attaqaw) and those who are doers of good (muḥsinūn).} [An-Naḥl: 128]. This is a momentous affair (qaḍiyyah kabīrah); the more it comes to light, the more widespread it becomes. May peace, mercy, and blessings of Allāh be upon you (as-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh). Praise be to Allāh alone, and may Allāh send abundant prayers and peace upon Muḥammad and his family.



## The Principle of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah

Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Allāh, the Exalted and Most Holy, has said: {O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He rightfully should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].} [Āl 'Imrān: 102] {And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allāh (i.e., the Qur'an and Sunnah), and do not become divided. And remember Allāh's favor upon you: how you were enemies, and He brought your hearts together, and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allāh make His signs clear to you, that you may be guided.} [Āl 'Imrān: 103] {And let there be from among you a community inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right (al-ma'rūf) and forbidding what is wrong (al-munkar). And it is they who are the successful.} [Āl 'Imrān: 104] {And do not be like those who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.} [Āl 'Imrān: 105] {On the Day [of Judgment] when some faces will turn bright and others will turn dark.} [Āl 'Imrān: 106]

Ibn 'Abbās and others have said regarding this verse: The faces of the People of the Sunnah and the Community (Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah) will turn bright, while the faces of the People of Innovation and Division (Ahl al-Bid'ah wa al-Furqah) will turn dark. {As for those whose faces turn dark, [they will be asked,] 'Did you disbelieve after your faith? Then taste the punishment for what you used to reject.'} [Āl 'Imrān: 106] {But as for those whose faces turn bright, they will be in Allāh's mercy; they will abide therein eternally.} [Āl 'Imrān: 107]

And in [the collection of] At-Tirmidhī, it is narrated from Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said concerning the Khawārij (a deviant sect known for extremism): 'They are the dogs of the inhabitants of Hellfire.' He then recited this verse: {On the Day when some faces will turn bright and others will turn dark...} [Āl 'Imrān: 106]. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal stated: 'The Hadith concerning the Khawārij are authentic through ten different chains of narration.' Muslim has recorded them in his Ṣaḥīḥ, and Al-Bukhārī has recorded a number of them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said about them: {'One of you would deem his prayer insignificant compared to their prayer, his fasting insignificant compared to their fasting, and his recitation insignificant compared to their recitation. They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go beyond their throats. They will pass through Islām just as an arrow passes through its target.'} – And in another narration – {'They will kill the people of Islām and spare the people of idolatry.'} [Narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

The Khawārij were the first to declare Muslims disbelievers (kuffār); they declare people disbelievers on account of sins, and they declare anyone who opposes them in their innovation (bid'ah) a disbeliever, deeming their blood and wealth permissible. And this is the condition of the People of Innovation (Ahl al-Bid'ah): they introduce an innovation into the religion and declare anyone who opposes them regarding it a disbeliever. In contrast, the People of the Sunnah and the Community (Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah)

follow the Book (the Qur'an) and the Sunnah (the Prophetic way), obey Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him); thus, they adhere to the truth and show mercy to the creation.

The first innovations (bid'ah) to arise in Islām were the innovation of the Khawārij and that of the Shī'ah. Both emerged during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Mu'minīn), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him). He took punitive action against both factions. As for the Khawārij, they waged war against him, so he fought and killed them. As for the Shī'ah, he had their extremists (ghāliyah)—those who excessively venerated him—burned with fire, and he sought to execute 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' (a key figure associated with extremist Shī'ī doctrines), but the latter fled from him. Furthermore, 'Alī ordered the flogging of anyone who claimed he was superior to Abū Bakr and 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both). It is narrated from 'Alī through numerous chains of transmission that he said: 'The best of this Ummah (Muslim community) after its Prophet (peace be upon him) is Abū Bakr, then 'Umar.' Al-Bukhārī narrated this statement from him in his Ṣaḥīḥ.

## Section

Among the foundational principles (uṣūl) of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community) is that they perform the Friday prayers (Jumu'ah), the 'īd prayers, and the congregational prayers (Jamā'āt). They do not abandon the Friday prayer or congregational prayer, unlike the people of innovation (Ahl al-Bida'), such as the Rāfiḍah and others.

If the Imām is mastūr—that is, his inward state is unknown, and no innovation (bid'ah) or open immorality (fujūr) is apparent from him—then the Friday prayer and congregational prayers are performed behind him by the unanimous agreement (ittifāq) of the Four Imāms and other Imāms of the Muslims. None of the Imāms ever stipulated that prayer is only permissible behind someone whose inner reality is known. Rather, Muslims have continuously, since the time after their Prophet (peace be upon him), prayed behind any outwardly observant Muslim (al-muslim al-mastūr).

However, if innovation (bid'ah) or open immorality (fujūr) does become apparent from the one leading the prayer, and it is possible to pray behind someone else, [what is the ruling on praying behind the one known to be an innovator or sinner]? Even in this situation where an alternative exists, the majority of scholars hold the follower's prayer behind the innovator (mubtadi') or open sinner (fāsiq) to be valid. This is the position (madhhab) of Ash-Shāfi'ī and Abū Ḥanīfah, and it is one of the two recorded opinions in the schools of Mālik and Aḥmad.

As for the situation where prayer is only possible behind an innovator (mubtadi') or an open sinner (fājir)—such as the Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) where the Imām is an innovator or sinner and no other Jumu'ah prayer is available—then the prayer is performed behind such individuals according to the general consensus of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah. This is the position (madhhab) of Ash-Shāfi'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and other Imāms of Ahlus Sunnah, without any dispute among them on this point (bi-lā khilāf 'indahum).

When deviant inclinations and innovations (al-ahwā') became widespread, some individuals preferred, as a matter of recommendation (istiḥbāb), not to pray except behind someone whose condition they knew well. This preference was reported from Imām Aḥmad, who mentioned it in response to a questioner. However, Aḥmad never stated that prayer is invalid (lā taṣiḥḥu) except behind someone whose state he

personally knew.

When Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Marzūq arrived in the lands of Egypt, its rulers at that time outwardly professed Tashayyu' (Shi'ism) but were, in reality, esoteric heretics (Bāṭiniyyah Malāhidah). As a result of their rule, innovations (bida') had proliferated and become manifest throughout the Egyptian lands. For this reason, he instructed his companions not to pray except behind those whose [sound] condition they knew. Then, after his death, Sunni rulers like Salāh al-Dīn conquered Egypt, and the word of the Sunnah, in opposition to the Rāfiḍah, became dominant. Subsequently, [authentic Islāmic] knowledge and the Sunnah increasingly flourished and became prominent there.

Therefore, praying behind someone whose state is unknown (al-mastūr) is permissible (jā'izah) by the unanimous agreement (ittifāq) of Muslim scholars. Anyone who claims that praying behind someone whose condition is unknown is forbidden (muḥarramah) or invalid (bāṭilah) has directly contradicted the consensus (ijmā') of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah.

Indeed, the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), may Allāh be pleased with them (riḍwān Allāhi 'alayhim), used to pray behind individuals whose open sinfulness (fujūr) they were aware of. For instance, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and other Companions prayed behind Al-Walīd ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abī Mu'ayt, who was known to drink wine and once prayed the morning prayer (Ṣubḥ) with four units [instead of two], for which [Caliph] 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān had him flogged. Likewise, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and other Companions used to pray behind Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf [known for his tyranny]. Furthermore, the Companions and the Tābi'ūn (the generation succeeding the Companions) prayed behind Ibn Abī 'Ubayd, who was accused of heresy (ilhād) and known for calling others to misguidance (dalāl).

## Section

It is impermissible to declare a Muslim a disbeliever (takfīr) on account of a sin he committed, nor for an error he fell into, such as in the issues over which the People of the Qiblah (i.e., Muslims) have disputed. For indeed, Allāh Almighty has said: {The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.'} [Al-Baqarah: 285]. And it is established in the authentic (Ṣaḥīḥ) collections that Allāh Almighty answered this supplication and forgave the believers their errors.

The Khawārij, the deviants (Māriqūn) whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to be fought, were indeed fought by the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Mu'minīn), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn). The leading scholars (A'immaḥ) of the religion from among the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), their Successors (Tābi'īn), and those who came after them reached a consensus (ittifaqū) on fighting them. Yet, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās, and other Companions did not declare them disbelievers (kuffār). Rather, they considered them Muslims despite fighting them. 'Alī did not fight them until they had shed inviolable blood and raided the property of Muslims; thus, he fought them to repel their oppression and transgression (baghy), not because they were disbelievers. For this reason, he did not take their women captive nor did he take their property as spoils of war.

Therefore, if even these individuals [the Khawārij], whose misguidance was established by explicit texts (naṣṣ) and scholarly consensus (ijmā'), were not declared disbelievers despite the command of Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) to fight them,

how then can it be permissible regarding various differing groups for whom the truth has become obscure in matters where even those more knowledgeable than them have erred? Consequently, it is not lawful for any of these groups to declare another group disbelievers (takfīr), nor to deem their blood or wealth permissible, even if the other group holds a confirmed innovation (bid'ah muḥaqqaqah). How much more applicable is this when the group issuing the charge of disbelief is itself involved in innovation? Indeed, the innovation of the accusers might be even more severe, and often both sides are ignorant of the true realities of the matters over which they differ.

The foundational principle (aṣl) is that the blood, wealth, and honor of Muslims are inviolable amongst themselves; they are not permissible except by the permission of Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him), when addressing the people during the Farewell Pilgrimage (Ḥajjat al-Wadā'), said: {Indeed, your blood, your wealth, and your honor are sacred to you, like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this land of yours, in this month of yours.} He also said: {Everything belonging to a Muslim is inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his wealth, and his honor.} And he said: {Whoever prays our prayer, faces our Qiblah, and eats our slaughtered animals is a Muslim; he has the protection (dhimmah) of Allāh and His Messenger.} He further stated: {When two Muslims confront each other with their swords, both the killer and the killed are in the Fire.} It was asked, 'O Messenger of Allāh, this is understandable for the killer, but what about the one killed?' He replied, 'He intended to kill his companion.' He also warned: {Do not revert to disbelief (kuffār) after I am gone, striking the necks of one another.} And he said: {If a Muslim says to his brother, 'O Kāfir (disbeliever)!', then it returns upon one of them.} All of these narrations (aḥādīth) are found in the authentic collections (Ṣiḥāḥ).

If a Muslim acts upon a particular interpretation (ta'wīl) in fighting or declaring disbelief (takfīr), he is not declared a disbeliever on that account. For instance, {Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said regarding Ḥātib ibn Abī Balta'ah, 'O Messenger of Allāh, let me strike the neck of this hypocrite!' But the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, 'He witnessed Badr. And what would let you know? Perhaps Allāh looked upon the people of Badr and said, 'Do as you wish, for I have forgiven you.'} This is reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. Also reported in both, from the narration concerning the slander incident (al-Ifk), is that {Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr said to Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah, 'Indeed, you are a hypocrite, arguing on behalf of the hypocrites!' The two groups then quarreled, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) reconciled between them.} Thus, among these participants of Badr, one called another a hypocrite, yet the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not declare either of them a disbeliever; rather, he testified that all of them [the participants of Badr] were destined for Paradise.

Similarly, it is established in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections concerning {Usāmah ibn Zayd that he killed a man after the man had declared Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh). When Usāmah informed the Prophet (peace be upon him), he regarded it as a grave matter and said, 'O Usāmah, did you kill him after he said Lā ilāha illā Allāh?' He repeated this to him until Usāmah said, 'I wished that I had not embraced Islām before that day.} Despite this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not obligate retribution (qawad), blood money (diyah), or expiation (kaffārah) upon him, because Usāmah had acted upon a misinterpretation (mutā'awwil), believing it was permissible to kill that man, assuming he had only uttered the declaration out of fear [to save himself].

Likewise, the Pious Predecessors (Salaf) fought one another, such as the participants in the Battle of the Camel (Ahl al-Jamal), the Battle of Ṣiffīn, and similar conflicts, yet all of

them remained Muslims and believers (mu'minūn). This is as Allāh Almighty stated: {And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the one that transgresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.} [Al-Ḥujurāt: 9]. Thus, Allāh Almighty clarified that despite their fighting and the transgression of some against others, they remain brothers in faith (ikhwah mu'minūn), and He commanded reconciliation between them with justice.

For this reason, the Salaf, despite the fighting amongst them, maintained religious allegiance (muwālāh) towards one another. They did not treat each other with the enmity reserved for disbelievers. They would accept each other's testimony, acquire knowledge from one another, inherit from each other, intermarry, and engage in dealings as Muslims deal with one another, despite the fighting, mutual cursing, and other conflicts that occurred between them.

It is established in the Ṣaḥīḥ collection that {the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked his Lord not to destroy his Ummah (community) by a widespread famine, and He granted him that. He asked Him not to impose upon them an external enemy who would overwhelm them, and He granted him that. And he asked Him not to cause their harm [to come from] amongst themselves, but He did not grant him that.} He (peace be upon him) informed [us] that Allāh would not impose an external enemy upon them that could vanquish them all, until they reached a state where some of them kill others and some take others captive. It is also established in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections that {when the verse was revealed: {Say, 'He is the [one] Able to send upon you affliction from above you'} [Al-An'ām: 65], the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'A'ūdhu bi-Wajhik' [I seek refuge in Your Countenance]. {or from beneath your feet} [Al-An'ām: 65], he said, 'A'ūdhu bi-Wajhik' [I seek refuge in Your Countenance]. {or to confuse you into sects and make you taste the violence of one another.} [Al-An'ām: 65], he said, 'These two are easier [or less severe].'}.

This is despite the fact that Allāh commanded adherence to the main body of Muslims (al-Jamā'ah) and unity (al-i'tilāf), and He forbade innovation (al-bid'ah) and discord (al-ikhtilāf). He said: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.} [Al-An'ām: 159]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'Adhere to the Jamā'ah, for indeed the Hand of Allāh is over the Jamā'ah.} He also said: {'Shayṭān (Satan) is with the lone person, and he is further away from two.} And he said: {'Shayṭān is the wolf of mankind just like the wolf is [the predator] of sheep; the wolf only takes the sheep that is isolated and distant from the flock.}

Therefore, the obligation upon a Muslim, when he finds himself in any Muslim city, is to pray the Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) and congregational prayers (Jamā'ah) with them, maintain allegiance (muwālāh) with the believers, and not harbor enmity towards them. If he sees some among them misguided (ḍāllan) or astray (ghāwīyan) and is able to guide and rectify them, he should do so. Otherwise, Allāh does not burden a soul beyond its scope. If he is capable of appointing the most virtuous person to lead the Muslims [in prayer], he should appoint him. If he is able to prevent someone who openly displays innovations (bida') and wickedness (fujūr), he should prevent him. If he is unable to do that, then praying behind the one most knowledgeable of the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him), and the foremost in obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, is preferable. This is in accordance with the authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) Hadith where the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'The people should be led in prayer by

the one most recited in the Book of Allāh. If they are equal in recitation, then by the one most knowledgeable of the Sunnah. If they are equal in the Sunnah, then by the one who emigrated earliest (hijrah). If they are equal in emigration, then by the oldest in age.}

If boycotting someone who openly displays innovation and wickedness serves a greater overriding benefit (maṣlaḥah rājiḥah), then one should boycott him, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) boycotted the three who were left behind [from the Tabūk expedition] until Allāh accepted their repentance. However, if someone else is appointed [as Imam] without one's consent, and there is no legislated benefit (maṣlaḥah shar'iyah) in abandoning prayer behind him, then missing the Friday or congregational prayer under such circumstances constitutes ignorance and misguidance, and amounts to countering one innovation with another. Indeed, regarding praying the Friday prayer behind a wicked person (fājir), people have differed on whether the prayer should be repeated. Most scholars disliked repeating it, to the extent that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, in the narration of 'Abdūs, said: 'Whoever repeats it is an innovator (mubtadi)'. This is the stronger of the two opinions, because the Companions (Ṣaḥābah) did not used to repeat their prayers when they prayed behind people known for wickedness or innovation. Furthermore, Allāh Almighty has never commanded anyone, having prayed as ordered according to his ability, to repeat the prayer.

This is why the sounder of the two scholarly opinions is that whoever prays according to his ability does not have to repeat the prayer. This applies even to one who performs tayammum (dry ablution) due to fear of extreme cold, one who lacks both water and soil [for purification] and prays according to his condition, a prisoner, and those with rare, habitual, continuous, or intermittent excuses. None of them are obligated to repeat the prayer if they performed the initial prayer according to their capacity. It is established in the Ṣaḥīḥ collection that the Companions once prayed without water or tayammum when 'Ā'ishah lost her necklace, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command them to repeat the prayer. More significantly, one who abandoned prayer out of ignorance of its obligation was not commanded to make it up (qaḍā'). When 'Amr [ibn al-'Āṣ] and 'Ammār [ibn Yāsir] became junub (ritually impure after sexual activity), 'Amr did not pray, while 'Ammār rolled in the dust like an animal rolls; the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command either of them to make up the prayer. When Abū Dharr used to become junub and not pray [for extended periods], the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command him to make up the missed prayers. The woman experiencing prolonged non-menstrual bleeding (mustahāḍah), whose severe and unusual bleeding prevented her from prayer and fasting, was not commanded by him to make up [the missed prayers]. Those who ate during Ramaḍān [after dawn] until the 'white rope' became distinct from the 'black rope' were not commanded to make up the fast, even though they had erred in understanding the verse. They thought Allāh's statement {until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]} [Al-Baqarah: 187] referred to actual ropes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) clarified, {It is merely the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day;} but did not command them to make up the fast. The man who prayed incorrectly (al-muṣī' fī ṣalātih) was not commanded to repeat his previously offered prayers. Those who prayed towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) in Makkah, Abyssinia, and elsewhere after the command had been abrogated (by the order to pray towards the Ka'bah), continuing to pray towards the Rock [in Jerusalem] until news of the abrogation reached them, were not commanded to repeat the prayers they had offered – even though these individuals might be considered more excused than others, as they were adhering to a abrogated ruling.

Scholars have differed regarding the address (commandments) of Allāh and His Messenger: does its ruling become established upon servants before notification

(balāgh) reaches them? There are three opinions on this within the school (madhhab) of Aḥmad and others: (1) It is established. (2) It is not established. (3) The original ruling is established, but not the abrogating one. The correct view (aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ) is that which the Qur'an indicates in His statement, {And never would We punish until We sent a messenger} [Al-Isrā': 15], and His statement, {so that mankind will have no argument against Allāh after the messengers} [An-Nisā': 165]. It is also reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections from the Prophet (peace be upon him): {No one loves to accept an excuse more than Allāh; it is for this reason that He sent the messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners.} Therefore, the ruling concerning one who acts upon misinterpretation (al-mutā'awwil) or is excusably ignorant (al-jāhil al-ma'dhūr) is not the same as the ruling concerning the defiant (al-mu'ānid) or the wicked (al-fājir). Indeed, Allāh has appointed for everything a measure.

## Section

The Muslims are unanimously agreed (ijmā') upon the testimony that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh) and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). They are also agreed that this testimony is truth, which Muslims affirm with certainty (jazm), hold with absolute conviction (qaṭ'), and entertain no doubt (rayb) about. Indeed, everything that a Muslim knows and affirms with certainty, he holds with absolute conviction (qaṭ'), even while acknowledging that Allāh has the power (Qudrah) to alter it. Thus, the Muslim possesses absolute conviction regarding what he sees and hears, and simultaneously holds absolute conviction that Allāh has power over all things He wills. When a Muslim says, 'I have absolute conviction (aqṭa'u) about this,' his intention is not to imply that Allāh lacks the power to change it. Rather, anyone who claims that Allāh does not possess the power to do things such as causing creation to die and resurrecting them from their graves, or causing mountains to move, or transforming the earth into another earth – such a person is called to repent (yustatāb). If he repents, [he is spared]; otherwise, he is executed.

Those associates of Abū 'Amr ibn Marzūq who dislike the term 'absolute conviction' (al-qaṭ') are a people who originated this aversion themselves; this Shaykh [Abū 'Amr] did not deny [the validity of expressing] this [conviction]. The origin of this issue, however, lies in their practice of making istithnā' (adding the qualification 'if Allāh wills') concerning faith (Īmān), following a practice reported from the Salaf (the pious predecessors). Thus, one of them might say, 'I am a believer, if Allāh wills (in shā' Allāh).' They would also make this qualification regarding righteous deeds, with one saying, for example, 'I have prayed, if Allāh wills (in shā' Allāh).'

The intention of the Salaf in making such istithnā' was due to several possible reasons: either because one could not be absolutely certain that he had performed the obligatory duty precisely as Allāh and His Messenger commanded, thus having doubt about Allāh's acceptance, leading him to make this qualification; or due to uncertainty about his final state (al-'āqibah); or making the qualification because all matters ultimately occur only by the Will of Allāh (Mashī'ah), as exemplified by Allāh the Exalted's statement: {You shall surely enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allāh wills (in shā' Allāh)} [Al-Fath: 27], even though Allāh knew with certainty that they would indeed enter; or so that one would avoid claiming self-purity (tazkiyah).

The Salaf, therefore, refrained from asserting absolute conviction (qaṭ') in matters such as these [i.e., the acceptance of deeds or one's final state]. However, after them came an ignorant people (juhhāl) who developed an aversion to the term 'absolute conviction' (al-qaṭ') in all matters, and they narrated fabricated Aḥādīth (sayings attributed to the

Prophet) to support this view. Anyone who narrates from the Prophet (peace be upon him), or from his Companions (Aṣḥāb), or from any of the Muslim scholars that they disliked the term 'absolute conviction' (al-qaṭ') regarding matters known with certainty (al-umūr al-majzūm bihā) has indeed lied against them.

Consequently, individuals among these people came to believe that affirming this word (al-qaṭ') constituted affirming something dreadful in the religion. This is sheer ignorance (jahḷ) and misguidance (ḍalāl) on the part of these ignorant individuals, an error unprecedented by any group among the Muslims. Neither their Shaykh, Abū 'Amr ibn Marzūq, nor his companions during his lifetime, nor the best of his companions after his death, refrained from using this term absolutely. Rather, this [absolute rejection of the term] was done only by a faction among their ignorant followers.

Similarly, another faction claimed that whoever reviles the Companions (Sahābah), Allāh will not accept his repentance (Tawbah), even if he repents. They narrated [a saying attributed] to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he purportedly said: {'Reviling my Companions is an unforgivable sin.} This Ḥadīth is a fabrication, a lie against the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). It has not been narrated by any person of knowledge, nor is it found in any of the reliable books of the Muslims. Furthermore, it contradicts the Qur'ān, for Allāh has stated: {Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association with Him (Shirk), but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.} [An-Nisā: 48, 116]. This applies to one who does not repent. And concerning those who do repent, Allāh says: {Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.} [Az-Zumar: 53]. Thus, it is established by the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) that Allāh accepts the repentance of everyone who sincerely repents.

It is well-known that even among the belligerent disbelievers (kuffār al-muḥāribīn) who reviled the Messenger (peace be upon him), calling him a sorcerer, a poet, possessed, taught [by others], or an imposter – if they subsequently repented [and accepted Islām], Allāh accepted their repentance. Indeed, there was a group among the people of war (ahl al-ḥarb) who used to revile the Prophet (peace be upon him), yet later embraced Islām, became excellent Muslims, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted [their conversion and repentance]. Among them were Abū Sufyān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Sarḥ, who had previously apostatized and used to lie against the Prophet (peace be upon him), claiming, 'I used to teach him the Qur'ān.' Yet, he later repented, embraced Islām, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted his pledge of allegiance based on that repentance.

If it is argued: 'But reviling the Companions involves the right of a human being,' the response is: One who deems reviling them permissible (mustahill), like a Rāfiḍī (a member of a specific Shi'a sect known for this) who believes it to be part of his religion – just as a disbeliever considers reviling the Prophet (peace be upon him) part of his religion – if such a person repents, comes to love the Companions, praises them, and supplicates for them, Allāh will erase his evil deeds through these good deeds. Generally, whoever wrongs another person – by slandering (qadhaf), backbiting (ightāb), or insulting (shatam) them – and then repents, Allāh accepts his repentance. However, if the wronged person is aware [of the offense], he is enabled to claim his right [in this life or the Hereafter]. If the person slandered or backbit was unaware of it, there are two scholarly opinions, both reported as narrations from [Imām] Aḥmad: the sounder view (aṣaḥḥuhumā) is that the offender should not inform the victim, saying, 'I backbit you.'

Instead, it is said he should do good towards the victim in their absence, just as he spoke ill of them in their absence. This aligns with the statement of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 'The expiation (kaffārah) for backbiting is to seek forgiveness for the one you backbit.'

Therefore, if a person has reviled the Companions, or anyone else for that matter, and then repents, he should act kindly towards them by supplicating for them and praising them in proportion to the harm he caused them. Indeed, good deeds erase evil deeds. This is analogous to the disbeliever who used to revile the Prophet (peace be upon him) and call him a liar; if he repents, testifies that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, the truthful (Aṣ-Ṣādiq), the believed (Al-Maṣdūq), and comes to love him, praise him, and send salutations upon him (ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam), his subsequent good deeds will erase his past evil deeds. And Allāh the Exalted {accepts repentance from His servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do.} [Ash-Shūrā: 25]. He has also said: {Hā. Mīm. The revelation of the Book is from Allāh, the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in punishment, the Bestower of bounty. There is no deity except Him; to Him is the final return.} [Ghāfir: 1-3]. And may Allāh send prayers and peace upon Muḥammad and his Companions.

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām – may Allāh sanctify his soul – was asked:<sup>1</sup>

Is it permissible to delve into matters concerning the foundations of the religion (uṣūl al-dīn) about which people have engaged in discussion, but regarding which no statement has been transmitted from our master Muḥammad (peace be upon him), or is it not permissible? If it is deemed permissible, what is the justification for it, especially since we have understood from him (peace be upon him) a prohibition against speaking on certain matters? And if it is deemed permissible, does it then become obligatory (wājib)? Has anything been transmitted from him (peace be upon him) that would necessitate its obligation? Furthermore, is the preponderant belief (ghalabat al-ẓann) reached by a qualified scholar (mujtahid) sufficient in this regard, or is it absolutely necessary to attain definitive certainty (qaṭʿ)? If attaining certainty proves impossible for the scholar, is he excused in that matter, or is he still held responsible for achieving it? Does this fall under the category of assigning an unbearable burden (taklīf mā lā yuṭāq) given this situation, or not? Lastly, if engaging in such matters is deemed obligatory, what is the underlying wisdom (ḥikmah) in the fact that no explicit text (naṣṣ) from the Lawgiver (Shāri') is found concerning it that would safeguard people from falling into perilous errors – particularly given that he (peace be upon him) was intensely eager for the guidance of his Ummah

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<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Nāṣir ibn Ḥamad al-Fahd states (p. 26): This fatwā is located in (Al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā) 1/373, the marginalia of (Mukhtaṣar al-Miṣriyyah) 1/213-241, and (Dur' Ta'arūḍ al-'Aql wa al-Naql) 1/25-78. The Shaykh [Ibn Taymiyyah] (may Allah have mercy on him) said in (Ad-Dur') preceding this fatwā: "When I was in the Egyptian lands, some of its distinguished scholars asked me about this issue, stating in their question..." – then he mentioned the question and the fatwā. The fatwā as recorded in the Majmū' [al-Fatāwā] concludes at 3/326 with his statement: "We have elaborated on this topic elsewhere and discussed the corrupt principle assumed by the divergent groups: that affirming the true meaning, which they label determinism (jabr), contradicts the divine commands and prohibitions. This led the Qadariyyah (proponents of absolute free will, denying God's decree over actions) to consider it absolutely contradictory to command and prohibition. Meanwhile, a faction of the Jabriyyah (proponents of absolute determinism, denying human agency) considered it contradictory to the intrinsic goodness and reprehensibility of actions, making this one of their bases for denying the rationally known intrinsic goodness and reprehensibility inherent in actions. It is well-established, however, that affirming divine decree does not contradict this [intrinsic moral quality], except in the same way it might contradict the notion of an action being suitable and beneficial for the actor, or unsuitable and harmful to him." Some questions posed by the questioner here remain, the answers to which are not included in the Fatāwā collection but are found in (Ad-Dur') from 1/72, line 5, up to p. 78, line 7.

(community)? And Allāh knows best.

He responded: All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

Regarding the first issue: The questioner's statement – 'Is it permissible to delve into matters concerning the foundations of the religion (uṣūl al-dīn) about which people have engaged in discussion, but regarding which no statement has been transmitted from our master Muḥammad (peace be upon him), or is it not permissible?' – is a question formulated according to prevailing, yet innovated and invalid, assumptions.

For concerning those matters that are truly foundations of the religion – those which genuinely deserve to be called uṣūl al-dīn, meaning the core principles of the religion with which Allāh sent His Messenger and for which He revealed His Book – it is absolutely impermissible to claim, 'No statement regarding them has been transmitted from the Prophet (peace be upon him):' Indeed, such a claim is intrinsically contradictory. The very fact that these matters constitute the foundations of the religion necessitates that they are among the most crucial aspects of the faith and are indispensable to it. To then negate the transmission of any statement about them from the Messenger (peace be upon him) inevitably leads to one of two conclusions: either the Messenger neglected the vital matters the religion requires and failed to clarify them, or he did clarify them, but the Ummah failed to transmit his clarification. Both of these possibilities are definitively false.

This notion constitutes one of the most severe accusations leveled against the religion by the hypocrites. Only someone ignorant of the true realities of what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought, or ignorant of what people comprehend through sound reason (lit. 'with their hearts'), or ignorant of both, would entertain this notion or similar ones. Ignorance of the first (revelation) results in unawareness of the foundational principles (uṣūl) and secondary branches (furū') of the religion contained within it. Ignorance of the second (sound reason) leads to incorporating into the realm of rational truths what he and those like him term 'rationalities' ('aqliyyāt), which are, in reality, matters stemming from ignorance (jahliyyāt). Ignorance of both aspects leads one to mistakenly consider certain invalid issues and methodologies as foundations of the religion when they are not, and to wrongly assume that the Messenger (peace be upon him) failed to clarify what ought to be believed regarding these matters – a misconception unfortunately prevalent among various groups of people, including their supposed experts, let alone their common folk.

This is because the foundations of the religion (uṣūl al-dīn) consist either of:

Matters requiring belief, whether in word alone or in both word and deed – such as the core issues of Tawḥīd (the absolute Oneness of Allāh), His Attributes, Qadar (Divine Decree), Prophethood, and the Hereafter (al-Ma'ād).

Or, the proofs and arguments (dalā'il) that establish these foundational matters.

As for the first category (the core beliefs): Everything that people need to know, believe, and affirm concerning these essential matters has already been clarified by Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) with a comprehensive and sufficient explanation that leaves no room for excuse. Indeed, this clarification constitutes one of the greatest aspects of the clear message conveyed by the Messenger and explained to mankind. It is also one of the most significant ways Allāh has established His definitive proof (ḥujjah) against His servants through the Messengers who clarified and conveyed it.

The Book of Allāh – whose wording and meanings the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), and subsequently the Successors (Ṭābi'ūn), transmitted from the Messenger (peace be upon

him) – and the Wisdom (Ḥikmah), which is the Sunnah (way and teachings) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), also transmitted by them from him, comprehensively contain the ultimate objective and the complete fulfillment of all that is obligatory (wājib) and recommended (mustaḥabb) in this regard. All praise is due to Allāh Who sent to us a Messenger from among ourselves, reciting to us His verses, purifying us, and teaching us the Book and the Wisdom; Who perfected for us the religion, completed His favor upon us, and approved for us Islām as our religion; Who sent down the Book detailing everything, as guidance, mercy, and glad tidings for the Muslims. {It is not an invented narrative, but a confirmation of what came before it, a detailed explanation of all things, guidance, and mercy for a people who believe.} [Yūṣuf: 111].

Only one deficient in intellect and hearing (i.e., understanding and acceptance), possessing a share of the lament of the inhabitants of the Fire who will say: {‘Had we but listened or used our intellect, we would not have been among the companions of the Blaze.’} [Al-Mulk: 10], would assume that the Book and the Wisdom do not encompass the clarification of these foundational matters – even though this erroneous assumption is unfortunately common among many philosophers (mutafalsifah), speculative theologians (mutakallimah), ignorant individuals among the scholars of Hadith (ahl al-ḥadīth), jurists (mutafaqqihah), and Sufis (mutaṣawwifah).

As for the second category, which concerns the proofs and arguments (dalā’il) for these foundational matters (uṣūliyyah): Although factions among the speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) and philosophers (mutafalsifah) assume that the Sacred Law (Shar’) only indicates truth by way of reliable reports (khabar ṣādiq), thus making its demonstrative value dependent on knowing the truthfulness of the reporter, and they consider the basis upon which the reporter’s truthfulness is established to be purely rational matters (ma’qūlāt maḥḍah) independent of revelation – they have erred profoundly in this assertion. Indeed, they have gone far astray in their assumption that the demonstrative capacity of the Book and the Sunnah is confined merely to abstract reporting (khabar mujarrad).

Rather, the reality is as understood by the righteous predecessors (Salaf) of this Ummah and its leading scholars (A’immah) – the people of sound knowledge and faith: that Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, has Himself clarified within revelation the necessary rational arguments (adillah ‘aqliyyah) required for attaining knowledge of these truths, to an extent and quality that none of these thinkers can truly appreciate. In fact, the culmination of the rational arguments they laboriously construct is already presented in the Qur’ān in its most refined essence and most excellent form. This includes the parables (amthāl) set forth by Allāh Almighty in His Book, concerning which He said: {And We have certainly presented for the people in this Qur’ān every kind of parable.} [Ar-Rūm: 58]. For the parables presented in the Qur’ān are, in essence, rational analogies (aqyisah ‘aqliyyah), whether they function as analogies of inclusion (qiyās shumūl, akin to deductive syllogism) or analogies of representation (qiyās tamthīl, akin to analogical reasoning). This encompasses what philosophers and logicians term ‘demonstrations’ (barāhīn), specifically referring to the syllogism of inclusion (al-qiyās ash-shumūlī) composed of certain premises – although the linguistic meaning of the term ‘burhān’ (proof) is broader than this technical usage, as evidenced by Allāh designating the two signs given to Mūsā (peace be upon him) as ‘two proofs’ (burhānayn).

What further clarifies this point is that in matters of divine theology (al-’ilm al-ilāhī), it is impermissible to employ an analogy of representation (qiyās tamthīl) where the source case (aṣl) and the branch case (far’) are treated as equals, nor is it permissible to use an analogy of inclusion (qiyās shumūlī) whose individual members are considered equal.

This is because Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, {there is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. Therefore, it is impermissible to draw a direct analogy (tamthīl) between Him and anything else, nor is it permissible for Him and anything else to fall under a universal proposition (qaḍīyyah kullīyyah) whose individual members are treated as equal. It is precisely for this reason that when various factions of philosophers and speculative theologians employed these types of standard analogies in their theological inquiries, they failed to arrive at certainty (yaqīn). Instead, their arguments became riddled with contradictions, and ultimately, perplexity and confusion (al-ḥayrah wa al-iḍṭirāb) overwhelmed them as they perceived the inherent flaws or the mutual neutralization (takāfu') of their proofs.

However, the type of analogy that is appropriately employed in this domain is the analogy of the superior (qiyās al-awlā), whether it takes a representational or inclusive form, as indicated by Allāh Almighty's statement: {And for Allāh is the highest description [al-mathal al-a'lā].} [An-Naḥl: 60]. This principle operates, for instance, as follows: We recognize that every attribute of perfection established for a contingent (mumkin) or originated (muḥdath) being, which contains no deficiency whatsoever – meaning it is a perfection for an existent entity that does not entail non-existence – then the Necessary, Pre-eternal Being (al-Wājib al-Qadīm, i.e., Allāh) is more entitled (awlā) to possess this perfection. Furthermore, every perfection containing no deficiency whatsoever, the like of which is found in a created, sustained, caused, and governed being, is only acquired by that creature from its Creator, Lord, and Governor. Therefore, He (Allāh) is inherently more entitled (aḥaqq) to that perfection than the creature possessing a reflection of it. Conversely, every deficiency and flaw in itself – meaning that which entails the negation of perfection – if its negation is deemed necessary even for some types of created, originated, or contingent beings, then its negation concerning the Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, is necessary by greater reason (bi-ṭarīq al-awlā). Thus, He (Allāh) is more entitled to all attributes of positive existence (al-umūr al-wujūdiyyah) than any other existent being, whereas contingent beings are more susceptible to attributes implying non-existence or limitation (al-umūr al-'adamiyyah), and so forth.

These types of rational approaches, particularly the analogy of the superior (qiyās al-awlā), are precisely those employed by the righteous predecessors (Salaf) and the leading scholars (A'immaḥ) for establishing such theological truths. Imām Aḥmad, as well as the leading scholars of Islām before and after him, utilized similar methods. Indeed, the Qur'ān itself employs such methods to establish the foundations of the religion (uṣūl al-dīn), including matters of Tawḥīd, the Divine Attributes, the Hereafter (al-Ma'ād), and related issues.

An example of this is when Allāh, Glorified is He, informed about the Hereafter (Resurrection). Knowledge of its occurrence is dependent upon knowing its possibility, for that which is impossible cannot occur. Allāh, therefore, explained its possibility in the most complete manner. In doing so, He did not adopt the approach taken by certain groups among the speculative theologians (ahl al-kalām), who attempt to prove external possibility (imkān khārijī) merely based on mental possibility (imkān dhihnī). They argue, 'This is possible because if we were to suppose its existence, no logical impossibility would necessarily follow from that supposition.' However, the crux of the matter lies in this very premise: how can one know with certainty that supposing its existence entails no impossibility? The term 'impossibility' (muḥāl) here includes both intrinsic impossibility and impossibility due to external factors. Mental possibility, in reality, merely signifies the absence of knowledge regarding impossibility. Yet, not knowing something to be impossible does not necessitate knowing it to be externally possible. Rather, the matter remains in the mind as neither known to be impossible nor known to

be externally possible – this is the nature of mere mental possibility.

Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, did not suffice with this level of reasoning to demonstrate the possibility of Resurrection, because something might still be impossible (even if due to external factors) even if the mind is unaware of its impossibility. This contrasts with established external possibility; once external possibility is known, the notion of impossibility is nullified. A person ascertains external possibility sometimes by knowing the thing itself exists, sometimes by knowing that something similar (naẓīr) to it exists, and sometimes by knowing that something even greater or more complex (ablagħ) than it exists. For the existence of a greater thing is proof that something lesser than it is even more entitled (awlā) to the status of possibility.

Furthermore, after demonstrating that something is possible, it is essential to demonstrate the Lord's power (qudrah) over it. Merely knowing its possibility is insufficient to establish the possibility of its actual occurrence if the Lord's power to bring it about is not also known. Thus, Allāh, Glorified is He, clarified all of this through verses such as His statement: {Do they not see that Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth, is Able to create the like of them? And He has appointed for them a term, about which there is no doubt. But the wrongdoers refuse [anything] except disbelief.} [Al-Isrā': 99]. And His statement: {Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the like of them? Yes, [indeed]! And He is the Knowing Creator.} [Yā Sīn: 81]. And His statement: {Do they not see that Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth and did not tire in their creation, is Able to give life to the dead? Yes, indeed! He is over all things competent.} [Al-Aḥqāf: 33].

And His statement: {The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind} [Ghāfir: 57]. It is self-evident to sound intellects that creating the heavens and the earth is a far greater feat than creating beings like the children of Ādam, and the power required for it is more profound. Therefore, this lesser act (re-creating humans) is even more clearly within the scope of possibility and power than the greater act already accomplished.

Likewise, He argues for Resurrection by referencing the initial creation (an-nash'ah al-ūlā), as in His statement: {And He it is Who begins creation; then He repeats it, and it is easier for Him.} [Ar-Rūm: 27]. It is for this reason that He subsequently states: {And His is the highest description [i.e., attribute of perfection, al-mathal al-a'lā] in the heavens and the earth.} [Ar-Rūm: 27]. And He said: {O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust...} [Al-Ḥajj: 5].

Similarly, consider what He mentioned regarding the one who {presents for Us an example and forgets his [own] creation. He says, 'Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?'} [Yā Sīn: 78]. Allāh responds: {Say, 'He will give them life Who produced them the first time...'} [Yā Sīn: 79]. The denier's statement, {'Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?'} is essentially a flawed analogy (qiyās). One of its premises is omitted due to its obviousness, while the other is a universal negative proposition accompanied by its supposed proof – the very example (mathal) he struck, mentioned in Allāh's words: {He presents for Us an example and forgets his [own] creation. He says, 'Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?'}. This question is a rhetorical question of denial, implying a negation: 'No one can give life to bones when they are disintegrated.'

The state of being disintegrated (ramīm) prevents their revival, in his view, because they have reached a state of dryness and coldness, contrary to life which is based on heat and moisture; and also due to the dispersal of their particles and their mixing with other

elements, and similar specious arguments. The implicit structure of his argument is: [Premise 1] These bones are disintegrated. [Premise 2] No one can revive bones that are disintegrated. [Conclusion] Therefore, no one can revive these bones. However, this second premise (the universal negative) is false, and its implication is the impossibility of revival.

Allāh, Glorified is He, demonstrates the possibility of revival through several arguments, by showing the possibility of, and His power over, things even more profound. He states: {Say, 'He will give them life Who produced them the first time'} [Yā Sīn: 79] – and He produced them initially from mere dust. Then He adds: {And He is, of all creation, Knowing} [Yā Sīn: 79], to affirm His perfect knowledge of all the particles that have dispersed and transformed.

Then He says: {[He] Who made for you from the green tree, fire} [Yā Sīn: 80]. Here He shows that He brings forth fire (hot and dry) from something cool and moist. This demonstrates power over an even greater contrast, because combining heat and moisture (as in life) is easier than combining heat and dryness (as in fire emerging from moist wood); moisture is more receptive to change than dryness.

Then He says: {Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the like of them?} [Yā Sīn: 81]. This premise is self-evidently true. That is why it is phrased as a rhetorical question affirming a truth already established and known to the listener. This aligns with Allāh's statement: {And they do not come to you with an argument except that We bring you the truth and the best explanation.} [Al-Furqān: 33]. Finally, He clarifies His absolute, overarching power with His statement: {His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is.} [Yā Sīn: 82].

In this passage and elsewhere in the Qur'an, there are profound secrets and expositions of definitive proofs concerning fundamental religious truths, the detailed discussion of which is beyond the scope of this current context. The intention here is merely to draw attention to this fact.

Similarly, consider the methods He, Glorified is He, employs to affirm His absolute transcendence (*tanzīh*) and sanctity (*taqḍīs*), negating the concept of progeny they attribute to Him—whether conceived physically or metaphysically. Examples include the Christians' claim regarding the generation of the Word (which they posit as the essence of the Son) from Him, and the claims of the Sabian philosophers concerning the emanation of the Ten Intellects and the Nine Celestial Souls (entities regarding which they themselves are conflicted, debating whether they are substances [*jawāhir*] or accidents [*a'rāḍ*]). They might even posit the Intellects as analogous to males and the Souls as analogous to females, considering these entities their proximate fathers, mothers, deities, and lords. Their awareness of the Souls is perhaps more pronounced due to the observation of cyclical celestial motion, which suggests volitional movement, in turn implying a motivating soul. However, most of them classify the celestial soul as an accident ('*araḍ*'), not a self-subsisting substance (*jawhar*). This entire framework bears resemblance to the assertions of the Arab polytheists and others who assigned sons and daughters to Him.

Allāh Almighty says: {Yet they associate the jinn with Allāh as partners, even though He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without any knowledge. Glorified and Exalted is He above what they attribute!} [Al-An'ām: 100]. And He says: {Indeed, it is out of their falsehood that they say,} {'Allāh has begotten children.' And indeed, they are liars.} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 151-152]. The polytheists used to claim that the angels were the daughters of Allāh, just as these philosophers claim that the Intellects, or

the Intellects and Souls, 'are the angels' and that they emanated from Allāh. Allāh Almighty addressed this, saying: {And they assign daughters to Allāh—Glory be to Him!—while they have for themselves what they desire [i.e., sons].} {When one of them is given news of [the birth of] a female, his face darkens, and he is filled with suppressed anger.} {He hides himself from the people because of the bad news he has received. Should he keep her in humiliation or bury her in the dust? Unquestionably, evil is their judgment!} {For those who do not believe in the Hereafter is the description of evil, while for Allāh is the highest description. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.} [An-Naḥl: 57-60, 62]. And He continues, up to His statement: {And they attribute to Allāh what they themselves dislike, while their tongues assert the lie that the best reward will be theirs. Assuredly, the Fire will be theirs, and they will be hastened into it.} [An-Naḥl: 62].

Allāh Almighty also says: {Or has He taken daughters from what He creates and chosen sons for you?} {And when one of them is given news of that which he attributes as an example to the Most Merciful [i.e., a daughter], his face darkens, and he is filled with suppressed grief.} {Is it, then, one [a daughter] who is brought up in adornments and is unclear in argument?} {And 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.} [Az-Zukhruf: 16-19].

And He Almighty says: {Have you then considered Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā?} [An-Najm: 19], continuing until His statement: {Is the male for you and for Him the female?} {That, then, would be an unfair division!} [An-Najm: 21-22]—meaning, an unjust division. There are numerous other similar passages in the Qur'an.

Thus, He, Glorified is He, makes it clear that the Lord, the Creator, is far more worthy than you yourselves are to be exalted above any attributes of deficiency. How then can you attribute to Him that which you detest being ascribed to yourselves and feel demeaned by its association with you—even though such things (like having daughters) are a reality among you? Yet you do not declare Him transcendent above such notions and deny them for Him, when He is most deserving of being free from all detested imperfections?

Likewise, concerning Tawḥīd (the Oneness of Allāh), consider His statement: {He presents to you an example from yourselves. Do you have among those whom your right hands possess [i.e., slaves] any partners in what We have provided for you, such that you are equal therein [sharing authority], fearing them as you fear each other [lit. yourselves]?} [Ar-Rūm: 28]. The phrase 'as you fear yourselves (anfusakum)' here means as you fear one another, i.e., your peers or equals. This usage of 'anfusakum' (yourselves/each other/your own kind) is consistent in other verses, such as: {Then you are those [same people] who kill one another (anfusakum)...} [Al-Baqarah: 85]; {Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another (anfusihim)...?} [An-Nūr: 12]; {...and do not insult one another (anfusakum)...} [Al-Ḥujurāt: 11]; {...so turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves (anfusakum) [i.e., the guilty among you]...} [Al-Baqarah: 54]; {...and you will not evict yourselves (anfusakum) from your homes...} [Al-Baqarah: 84], leading to His statement: {Then you are those [same people] who kill one another (anfusakum)...} [Al-Baqarah: 85]. In all these instances, the intended meaning relates to individuals of the same kind or group.

Here, He, Glorified is He, clarifies that a created being would never accept his own slave as an equal partner in his possessions, to the extent that he would fear his slave just as he fears his peers. Indeed, you refuse to consider your slaves as your equals. How then can you approve for Me that you designate My own creation, My own property, as a partner alongside Me—invoked and worshipped just as I am invoked and worshipped? This mirrors what the polytheists used to say in their Talbiyah (pilgrimage invocation):

'Labbayk, Lā Sharīka Lak, illā Sharīkan huwa Lak, Tamlikuhu wa mā Malak' [Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, except a partner that belongs to You; You own him and all that he owns]. This subject is indeed exceedingly vast and profound, and this is not the place for its exhaustive treatment.

The purpose here is merely to highlight that the Qur'an and the Prophetic Wisdom encompass the universal principles of the religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn)—both the core tenets (masā'il) and the definitive proofs (dalā'il)—that truly deserve to be considered the foundations of the faith. Conversely, the falsehoods that some people incorporate under this label ('Uṣūl al-Dīn') are not part of the true foundations of the religion, even if they introduce them as such. This includes corrupt theological positions (masā'il) and flawed arguments (dalā'il), such as the negation of divine Attributes, the denial of divine Decree (Qadar), and similar issues.

It also includes arguments like the proof for the createdness (ḥudūth) of the world based on the temporal origination (ḥudūth) of accidents (a'rāḍ)—which are the qualities inherent in physical bodies (ajsām), whether these are modes of being (akwān) or other qualities. Establishing this proof requires several premises: (1) First: Proving the existence of accidents (a'rāḍ), which are qualities, or at least proving the existence of some of them, like the modes of being (akwān), which include motion (ḥarakah), rest (sukūn), conjunction (ijtimā'), and separation (iftirāq). (2) Second: Proving the temporal origination (ḥudūth) of these accidents, by refuting the possibility of their emergence after latency (kumūn) or their transference from one locus (maḥall) to another. (3) Third: Proving the impossibility of a physical body (jism) being devoid of accidents. This is argued either concerning every category of accident—by asserting that a body is receptive (qābil) to them, and whatever is receptive to a thing cannot be devoid of it or its opposite—or specifically concerning the modes of being (akwān). (4) Fourth: Proving the impossibility of an infinite regress of temporally originated events (ḥawādith lā awwala lahā). This itself is based on two premises: (a) that a physical body is never devoid of accidents (a'rāḍ), which are qualities; and (b) that whatever is not devoid of qualities (ṣifāt), which are accidents (a'rāḍ), must itself be temporally originated (muḥdath), because these qualities/accidents can only be temporally originated. Some may apply this specifically to certain qualities/accidents, like the modes of being (akwān), arguing that whatever is not devoid of the genus of temporally originated events must itself be temporally originated, due to the impossibility of an infinite series of such events.

This entire method, it is known with certainty (bi-l-iqṭirār – as an undeniable truth), was not the means by which Muḥammad (peace be upon him) called people to affirm the Creator and the prophethood of His messengers. Consequently, even the most astute proponents of speculative theology (Ahl al-Kalām), such as al-Ash'arī and others, have acknowledged that this was not the path of the Messengers, their followers, or the early generations (Salaf) and leading scholars (A'immah) of this Ummah. Indeed, they mentioned that this method was considered forbidden (muḥarramah) according to the early scholars.

Moreover, rigorous scholarly investigators (muḥaqqiqūn) maintain that this method is fundamentally flawed and that its premises involve distinctions and classifications that prevent the establishment of the intended conclusion absolutely. This is why you find that anyone who relies upon this method for the foundations of his religion inevitably faces one of two outcomes: Either he recognizes its inherent weakness and, upon comparing it with the arguments of those who posit the eternity of the world, finds the proofs equally weighted, or perhaps favors one side at one time and the other at another—as is the case with various groups among them. Or, he is forced, for the sake of

upholding this method, to commit to conclusions known to be corrupt according to both revelation (Shar') and reason ('Aql). Examples include: (1) Jahm ibn Ṣafwān being led by it to assert the eventual annihilation (fanā') of Paradise and Hell. (2) Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf being led to assert the cessation (inqiṭā') of movement for the inhabitants of Paradise. (3) Certain groups, like al-Ash'ari and others, being led to posit that water, air, and fire possess taste, color, and smell [even when imperceptible, as necessary implications of their framework]. (4) Other groups being led, by this and other arguments, to assert that all accidents (a'rāḍ)—like taste, color, etc.—cannot possibly endure (lā yabqā), even for an instant. They needed this assertion to counter the objection raised against them when they affirmed Attributes for Allāh while simultaneously using the argument from the accidents (qualities) of bodies to prove the createdness of those bodies. They argued: The qualities (ṣifāt) of bodies are accidents (a'rāḍ), meaning they occur and cease, never enduring, unlike the Attributes of Allāh, which are everlasting (bāqiyah). However, the vast majority of rational human beings reject this, stating: This contradicts what is known through sensory experience (al-ma'lūm bi-l-ḥiss).

Furthermore, various factions among Ahl al-Kalām, including the Mu'tazilah and others, were compelled by this method to deny the Attributes of the Lord altogether, or to deny some of them. This was because, according to their reasoning, the indicator (dalīl) of the temporal origination (ḥudūth) of things is the subsistence of qualities (ṣifāt) in them, and a proof, they argued, must be universally applicable (ṭard). Consequently, they committed themselves to the notion that everything characterized by inherent qualities must be temporally originated—a conclusion which is also utterly corrupt and misguided. This led them to embrace doctrines such as the createdness of the Qur'an, the denial of the Beatific Vision (seeing Allāh in the Hereafter), and the denial of His Highness ('uluww) above His Throne ('Arsh). These are examples of the necessary implications embraced by those who consistently applied the premises of this argument, which the Mu'tazilah and their followers made the foundation of their religion.

Therefore, these matters fall under what such groups have termed 'Uṣūl al-Dīn' (Foundations of the Religion), but in reality, they are not part of the Uṣūl al-Dīn that Allāh has legislated for His servants. As for the kind of 'religion' concerning which Allāh says: {Or do they have partners who have prescribed for them a religion that Allāh has not permitted?} [Ash-Shūrā: 21], that invented religion certainly has its own 'foundations' (uṣūl) and 'branches' (furū') according to its own system.

Once it is recognized that the term 'Uṣūl al-Dīn,' as customarily used by those who employ this designation, suffers from ambiguity and imprecision—due to the variations arising from different conventions and terminologies—it becomes evident that what truly constitutes the Uṣūl al-Dīn according to Allāh, His Messenger (peace be upon him), and His believing servants is that which is inherited directly from the Messenger.

Conversely, regarding anyone who prescribes a 'religion' not authorized by Allāh, it is self-evident that its foundational principles (uṣūl), which are intrinsically linked to it, cannot possibly be traced back to the Prophet (peace be upon him), because such a religion is inherently false, and that which is necessitated by falsehood (malzūm al-bāṭil) is itself false, just as that which necessarily follows from truth (lāzim al-ḥaqq) is itself true. This distinction also illuminates what the Salaf and the A'imma intended by their condemnation of Kalām and its practitioners (Ahl al-Kalām): their censure applies to those who employ flawed proofs (adillah fāsidah) or argue for false doctrines (maqālāt bāṭilah).

However, anyone who articulates the truth authorized by Allāh, both in its substance (ḥukm) and its supporting evidence (dalīl), is counted among the people of knowledge

and faith (Ahl al-'Ilm wa-l-Īmān). And Allāh speaks the truth, and He guides to the [right] way.

Furthermore, addressing specialists (Ahl Iṣṭilāḥ) using their specific terminology (iṣṭilāḥ) and linguistic conventions is not considered reprehensible (makrūh)—provided there is a genuine need (ḥājah) for it and the underlying meanings being conveyed are sound (ṣaḥīḥah). This is analogous to addressing non-Arabs ('Ajam)—such as Romans (Rūm), Persians (Furs), or Turks (Turk)—in their own languages and according to their customs ('urf). Such communication is permissible (jā'iz) and indeed beneficial (ḥasan) when necessity dictates.

The leading scholars (A'immah) only disapproved of using specialized terminology or foreign languages when there was no need. This principle is illustrated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) speaking to Umm Khālid bint Khālid ibn Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ—who was a young girl born in Abyssinia (Arḍ al-Ḥabashah) because her father was among those who migrated there (Muhājirūn). He said to her, 'Yā Umm Khālid, hādhā sanā.' The word 'sanā' means 'beautiful' or 'good' (al-ḥasan) in the Abyssinian tongue, and he used it because she was familiar with that language.

Similarly, the Qur'an and Hadith may be translated for someone who requires a translation to understand them. Likewise, a Muslim may read necessary texts from other nations and their discourse in their own languages, and translate them into Arabic. This is exemplified by the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanding Zayd ibn Thābit to learn the script (or language - kitāb) of the Jews so that he could read their communications to the Prophet and write to them on his behalf, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not feel he could trust the Jews with this task directly.

Thus, the Salaf and the A'immah did not disapprove of Kalām merely because of the novel terminologies it employed, such as the terms 'substance' (al-jawhar), 'accident' (al-'arad), 'body' (al-jism), and the like. Rather, their disapproval stemmed from the fact that the concepts expressed through these terms often contained reprehensible falsehoods, both in the arguments presented (adillah) and the theological conclusions reached (aḥkām), which necessitated prohibition. This was due to these terms encompassing ambiguous meanings (ma'ānī mujmalah) used for both negation (nafy) and affirmation (ithbāt) [in theological discourse, leading to potential error].

This is akin to what Imām Aḥmad said in his description of the proponents of innovation (Ahl al-Bida'): 'They differ regarding the Book [the Qur'an], they oppose the Book, and they are united upon opposing the Book. They speak using ambiguous elements of speech (al-mutashābih min al-kalām) and confuse the ignorant masses through the ambiguous speech they employ.'

Therefore, if the specific meanings intended by the users of such expressions [like jawhar, 'arad, jism] are identified and then evaluated against the standard of the Book and the Sunnah—such that the truth affirmed by the Book and Sunnah is upheld, and the falsehood negated by the Book and Sunnah is rejected—then this process aligns with the truth. This stands in contrast to the path taken by the people of desires (Ahl al-Ahwā'), who employ these terms—both negatively and affirmatively, in their methodologies (wasā'il) and their theological positions (masā'il)—without providing the necessary detailed clarification and distinctions (tafṣil wa-taqṣīm) that constitute the Straight Path (aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm).

This ambiguity [surrounding Kalām terminology] is a source of confusion (shubḥah). Indeed, one cannot find in the speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor any of the Companions (Ṣaḥābah), the Successors (Tābi'īn), or any of the followed Imāms, that

they based any aspect of the foundations of the religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn)—neither its proofs (dalā'il) nor its core tenets (masā'il)—upon the designated meanings of terms like 'substance' (al-jawhar), 'body' (al-jism), 'occupying space' (at-taḥayyuz), 'accident' (al-'arad), or similar vocabulary.

Furthermore, those who employ these expressions (the Mutakallimūn) differ among themselves regarding their intended meanings. Sometimes this difference arises from varying conventions (ikhtilāf al-waḍ'), and other times from disagreements about the actual concept signified by the term (ikhtilāf fi al-ma'nā alladhī huwa maḍlūl al-lafẓ). For instance, consider those who define 'body' (al-jism) as 'that which is composite' (al-mu'allaf). They then dispute whether this refers to a single substance (jawhar) contingent upon its composition, or two or more substances, or six, or eight, or some other number. Others define it as 'that in which three dimensions can be posited,' asserting it is composed of matter (māddah) and form (ṣūrah). Yet others define it simply as 'that which exists' (al-mawjūd) or 'the existent which subsists by itself' (al-mawjūd al-qā'im bi-nafsih), arguing that nothing exists except in this manner.

The Salaf and the A'immaḥ, who condemned and declared as innovation (bida') the discourse concerning substance (jawhar), body (jism), and accident ('arad), implicitly included in their condemnation anyone who incorporates the meanings intended by these theologians [using these terms] into the foundations of the religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn)—whether in its proofs or its tenets, employing them for negation or affirmation.

However, if one knows the correct meanings established by the Book and the Sunnah and then expresses these meanings using such terminology [like jawhar, 'arad, etc.] when addressing those who understand these terms, with the aim of clarifying which of the meanings employed by these theologians align with the truth and which oppose it, then this approach is of immense benefit. It falls under the category of judging between people according to the Book in matters where they differ, as Allāh Almighty says: {Mankind was one community; then Allāh sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.} [Al-Baqarah: 213]. This is analogous to judging between various nations according to the Book regarding the differing concepts they express using their own conventions and customs.

Undertaking this requires knowledge of the meanings derived from the Book and the Sunnah, as well as knowledge of the meanings intended by these groups [theologians, philosophers, etc.] through their specific terminology. Then, one must compare these latter meanings with the former [scriptural meanings] to discern what conforms to the truth and what deviates from it.

Regarding the questioner's statement: 'If engaging in [such theological discourse] is deemed permissible, what is the justification, given that we understand the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited discussion (kalām) on certain issues?' The response is that the need for clarification and detailed distinction (istifsār wa-tafṣīl) has already been addressed in answering the initial question. What constitutes, in reality, the foundations of the religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn) with which Allāh sent His Messenger cannot possibly be forbidden under any circumstance. This is contrary to that which is merely labeled Uṣūl al-Dīn but does not truly belong to the foundations—neither its proofs nor its tenets—or constitutes the foundations of a 'religion' not legislated by Allāh, but rather prescribed by those {who have prescribed for them a religion that Allāh has not permitted} [Ash-Shūrā: 21].

As for the prohibition mentioned by the questioner, the Book and the Sunnah explicitly

forbid several matters. Among them is speaking about Allāh without knowledge, as in His statement: {Say, 'My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—both open and secret—sin, aggression without right, associating partners with Allāh for which He has sent down no authority, and saying things about Allāh of which you have no knowledge.'} [Al-A'rāf: 33], and His statement: {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.} [Al-Isrā': 36].

Also forbidden is attributing falsehood to Him, as in His statement: {Has not the covenant of the Scripture been taken upon them that they would not say about Allāh except the truth?} [Al-A'rāf: 169], and His statement: {Do not exceed limits in your religion, nor say about Allāh except the truth.} [An-Nisā': 171].

Also forbidden is disputation (jadal) without knowledge, as in His statement: {Here you are—those who have argued about that of which you have [some] knowledge, but why do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge?} [Āl 'Imrān: 66]. Also forbidden is disputing the truth after it has become clear, as in His statement: {They dispute with you concerning the truth after it has become clear.} [Al-Anfāl: 6]. And forbidden is disputing with falsehood, as in His statement: {...and disputed with falsehood to refute the truth thereby.} [Ghāfir: 5].

Also forbidden is disputing concerning His signs (Āyāt), as in His statement: {None dispute concerning the signs of Allāh except those who disbelieve.} [Ghāfir: 4], and His statement: {Those who dispute concerning the signs of Allāh without any authority having come to them—great is hatred [for them] in the sight of Allāh and in the sight of those who have believed.} [Ghāfir: 35], and His statement: {Indeed, in their breasts is nothing but arrogance, [the goal of] which they will never attain.} [Ghāfir: 56], and His statement: {And that those who dispute concerning Our signs may know that for them there is no place of escape.} [Ash-Shūrā: 35]. Similar is His statement: {And those who argue concerning Allāh after He has been responded to—their argument is invalid with their Lord.} [Ash-Shūrā: 16], and His statement: {...while they dispute concerning Allāh, and He is severe in assault.} [Ar-Ra'd: 13], and His statement: {And of the people is he who disputes about Allāh without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening book.} [Al-Hajj: 8].

Among the matters Allāh has forbidden in His Book are division (tafarruq) and differing (ikhtilāf), as in His statement: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided...} [Āl 'Imrān: 103], continuing until His statement: {And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment} {On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black.} [Āl 'Imrān: 105-106]. Ibn 'Abbās commented: 'The faces of the People of the Sunnah and the Community (Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jamā'ah) will turn white, and the faces of the People of Innovation and Division (Ahl al-Bid'ah wa-l-Furqah) will turn black.' Allāh Almighty also says: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects—you [O Prophet] are not associated with them in anything.} [Al-An'ām: 159]. And He says: {So set your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiṭrah (natural disposition) of Allāh upon which He has created all people. No change should there be in the creation of Allāh...} [Ar-Rūm: 30], continuing until His statement: {...and do not be of the polytheists,} {Of those who have divided their religion and become sects.} [Ar-Rūm: 31-32].

He has condemned the people of division and differing in verses such as: {And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them—out of jealous animosity between themselves.} [Āl 'Imrān: 19], and: {...but they will not cease to differ,} {Except whom your Lord has given mercy, and for that He created them...}

[Hūd: 118-119]; and: {...and indeed, those who differ over the Scripture are in extreme dissension.} [Al-Baqarah: 176].

Likewise, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) corresponds with the Book of Allāh. Consider the well-known hadith, part of which Muslim narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr, with the remainder known from the Musnad of Aḥmad and elsewhere, transmitted via ‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb from his father from his grandfather: {The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) came out to his Companions while they were debating about Qadar (Divine Decree). One man was saying, ‘Did Allāh not say such-and-such?’ and another was saying, ‘Did Allāh not say such-and-such?’ [Pitting verses against each other]. His face became flushed with anger as if pomegranate juice had been squeezed onto it, and he said, ‘Is this what you were commanded to do? Those before you were destroyed precisely because of this: they set parts of the Book of Allāh against other parts. The Book of Allāh was revealed confirming itself, not contradicting itself. Look to what you have been commanded to do, and do it; and what you have been forbidden from, and avoid it.’} [Musnad Aḥmad, 6702].

Similarly, his statement: {‘Contentious argument (al-mirā’) concerning the Qur’an is disbelief (kufr).’} [Abū Dāwūd, 4603]. Likewise, the hadith reported in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections from ‘Ā’ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her): {The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the verse: {It is He who has sent down to you the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise (muḥkamāt)—they are the foundation of the Book—and others [that are] ambiguous (mutashābihāt). As for those in whose hearts is deviation [zaygh], they follow that which is ambiguous, seeking discord [fitnah] and seeking its [hidden] interpretation...} [Āl ‘Imrān: 7]. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘When you see those who pursue what is ambiguous therein, then these are the ones whom Allāh has named [as having deviation in their hearts], so beware of them.’} [Al-Bukhārī, 4547; Muslim, 2665].

However, it is inconceivable that the Book or the Sunnah would forbid acquiring knowledge of those matters that genuinely qualify as foundations of Allāh’s religion (Uṣūl Dīn Allāh). The only exception would be a prohibition against discussing certain aspects of these foundations in specific situations. For example, addressing someone with knowledge that is beyond their capacity to comprehend, potentially leading them astray. This aligns with the statement of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him): ‘You will not narrate a discourse to a people which their minds cannot grasp except that it becomes a source of trial (fitnah) for some of them.’ [Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his Ṣaḥīḥ]. And the statement of ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him): ‘Speak to people according to their level of understanding. Leave that which they would find objectionable. Do you wish for Allāh and His Messenger to be disbelieved?’ [Reported by Al-Bukhārī, 127]. Another example is refraining from stating a truth if doing so would lead to a greater corruption (fasād) than leaving it unsaid. This falls under the principle derived from the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) saying: {‘Whoever among you sees an evil (munkar), let him change it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue; if he is unable, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.’} [Muslim, 49]. [The implication being that changing the evil should not lead to a greater evil].

Regarding the questioner’s query: ‘If [discussing Uṣūl al-Dīn] is deemed permissible, is it obligatory (wājib)? And has anything been transmitted from the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicating its obligation?’ The response is: Undoubtedly, it is obligatory upon every individual to believe in what the Messenger brought, in a general and comprehensive manner (īmānan ‘āmmaṅ mujmalan). Furthermore, acquiring detailed knowledge (ma‘rifah ‘alā at-tafṣīl) of what the Messenger brought is a communal obligation (farḍ ‘alā

al-kifāyah). This falls under the duty of conveying the message with which Allāh sent His Messenger, pondering (tadabbur) the Qur'an, understanding it ('aql, fahm), acquiring knowledge of the Book and Wisdom ('ilm al-kitāb wa-l-ḥikmah), preserving the Reminder (ḥifẓ adh-dhikr), calling to the way of the Lord with wisdom, good counsel, and arguing in the best manner, and other such duties that Allāh has obligated upon the believers. Thus, detailed knowledge is obligatory upon the community collectively.

As for what is obligatory upon individuals (wājib 'alā a'yānihim), this varies according to their capacity (qudrah), existing knowledge (ma'rifah), need (ḥājah), and the specific commands directed towards them. What is obligatory upon someone capable of hearing certain knowledge or understanding its subtleties is not obligatory upon someone incapable of doing so. Similarly, the obligation regarding detailed knowledge that falls upon someone who has heard the relevant texts (nuṣūṣ) and understood them differs from that of someone who has not heard them. Likewise, the obligation upon a Muftī (one who issues legal rulings), a Muḥaddith (narrator/scholar of Hadith), or a Mujādil (debater/defender of the faith) is greater than that upon someone not in such a position.

Regarding his question: 'Is it sufficient in these matters [of Uṣūl al-Dīn] for the Mujtahid (independent scholar) to reach a level of preponderant belief (ghalabat al-ẓann), or is it necessary to attain certainty (al-qaṭ')?' The correct answer involves making distinctions (tafṣīl).

Although factions among Ahl al-Kalām claim that all creedal matters based on reports (al-masā'il al-khabariyyah), which they sometimes call 'matters of Uṣūl,' require absolute certainty (qaṭ'), and that it is impermissible to use any proof that does not yield certitude (yaqīn), and they may even obligate this certainty in all such matters upon every single individual—this assertion, in its unqualified generality, is erroneous and contradicts the Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus (ijmā') of the Salaf and A'imma of the Ummah.

Furthermore, despite imposing this requirement, they themselves are often the furthest from fulfilling it. They frequently argue using proofs they claim are definitive (qaṭ'iyyāt), while in reality, these proofs are mere sophistries (ughlūṭāt), let alone being merely probabilistic (zanniyyāt). It often happens that a single individual among them will assert the certainty of an argument in one context and assert its definitive falsehood in another. Indeed, for some, this inconsistency characterizes the entirety of their discourse. It even reaches the point where two disputants might each claim self-evident knowledge (al-'ilm aḍ-ḍarūrī) of the direct opposite of what the other claims.

As for the correct, nuanced position (at-tafṣīl): In matters where Allāh has mandated knowledge ('ilm) and certainty (yaqīn), then achieving that level of knowledge and certainty mandated by Allāh is obligatory. Examples include His statement: {Know that Allāh is severe in penalty and that Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.} [Al-Mā'idah: 98], and His statement: {So know that there is no deity except Allāh, and ask forgiveness for your sin...} [Muḥammad: 19]. Likewise, belief (īmān) is obligatory concerning everything Allāh has mandated belief in.

It is firmly established in the Sharī'ah (Islāmic Law) that obligation (wujūb) is contingent upon the servant's ability (istiṭā'ah), as indicated by His statement: {So fear Allāh as much as you are able.} [At-Taghābun: 16], and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) statement: {'When I command you to do something, do as much of it as you are able.}' [Reported by Al-Bukhārī, 7288; Muslim, 1337].

So, if many of these subtle theological issues over which the Ummah has disputed remain ambiguous (mushtabah) for many people, such that they are unable to find a proof—whether scriptural (sharī) or otherwise—that grants them certitude (yaqīn), then such

individuals are not obligated regarding these matters beyond their capacity. They are not required to abandon the strong conviction based on preponderant belief (i'tiqād qawiyi ghālib 'alā ḡannih) that they are capable of achieving, simply because they are unable to attain complete certitude. Rather, reaching that level of preponderant belief is what lies within their ability. This is especially true if their belief corresponds to the truth. A conviction that aligns with the truth benefits its holder, earns him reward, and fulfills the obligation upon him if he is incapable of achieving more than that.

However, it should be recognized that generally, whoever goes astray in this domain or is unable to ascertain the truth, does so primarily because of his negligence (tafrīt) in following what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought and his abandonment of the reflection and reasoning (nazar wa-l-istidlāl) that lead to knowing it. When they turned away from the Book of Allāh, they went astray, as Allāh Almighty stated: {Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in this world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter].} {But whoever turns away from My remembrance—indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind.} [Tā Hā: 123-124]. Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'Allāh has guaranteed for whoever reads the Qur'an and acts upon what is in it that he will not go astray in this world nor suffer in the Hereafter,' then he recited this verse.

This is also illustrated in the hadith narrated by At-Tirmidhī and others from 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him), reporting that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {Trials (fitan) shall certainly arise.' I ['Alī] asked, 'What is the way out of them, O Messenger of Allāh?' He replied, 'The Book of Allāh. In it is news of those who came before you, information about what will come after you, and the judgment regarding matters between you. It is the decisive criterion, not mere jest. Whoever abandons it out of arrogance, Allāh will break him. Whoever seeks guidance in other than it, Allāh will lead him astray. It is the firm rope of Allāh, the Wise Reminder, and the Straight Path. It is that by which desires do not deviate, nor tongues become confused. Its wonders never cease, nor does it wear out from frequent repetition. The scholars are never satiated by it.'} [Another narration adds: {Nor do opinions diverge because of it.}] {It is that which the jinn could not help but exclaim upon hearing it: {Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur'an,} {It guides to the right path...} [Al-Jinn: 1-2]. Whoever speaks according to it speaks the truth. Whoever acts according to it will be rewarded. Whoever judges by it judges justly. And whoever calls to it is guided to a straight path.} [At-Tirmidhī, 2906].

Allāh Almighty says: {And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way.} [Al-An'ām: 153]. And He says: {Alif, Lām, Mīm, Ṣād.} { [This is] a Book revealed to you, [O Muḥammad]—so let there not be in your breast any constraint therefrom...} [Al-A'rāf: 1-2], continuing until His statement: {Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other allies besides Him.} [Al-A'rāf: 3]. And He says: {And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed; so follow it and fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.} {[Lest] you say, 'The Scripture was only sent down to two groups before us, and we were unaware of their study.'} {Or [lest] you say, 'If only the Scripture had been sent down to us, we would have been better guided than they.'} So there has [now] come to you a clear evidence from your Lord and a guidance and mercy. Then who is more unjust than one who denies the signs of Allāh and turns away from them? We will recompense those who turn away from Our signs with the worst of punishment for their having turned away.} [Al-An'ām: 155-157].

Thus, He, Glorified is He, mentioned that He will recompense anyone who turns away (ṣādif) from His signs—regardless of whether he explicitly denies them (mukadhhib) or

not—with the worst punishment because they turned away (ṣadafū). This clarifies that everyone who does not affirm what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought is a disbeliever (kāfir), whether he believes it to be false, or is too arrogant to believe in it, or turns away from it following his own desires, or doubts what he brought. Therefore, everyone who denies what he brought is a disbeliever. Moreover, someone who does not explicitly deny it may still be a disbeliever if he fails to believe in it.

Consequently, Allāh informs us in multiple places in His Book about the misguidance and punishment awaiting those who abandon following what He revealed, even if they engage in intellectual reasoning (naẓar), argumentation (jadāl), and exertion (ijtihād) in rational matters (ʿaqliyyāt) and other affairs. He attributes this behavior to the disbelievers (kuffār) and hypocrites (munāfiqīn). Allāh Almighty says: {And We had given them hearing and sight and hearts, but their hearing and sight and hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were rejecting the signs of Allāh; and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.} [Al-Aḥqāf: 26]. And He says: {And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they rejoiced in what they had of knowledge, and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.} {And when they saw Our punishment, they said, 'We believe in Allāh alone and disbelieve in that which we used to associate with Him.'} {But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment. [This is] the established way (sunnah) of Allāh which has preceded among His servants. And the disbelievers thereupon lost.} [Ghāfir: 83-85].

Allāh Almighty says: {Those who dispute concerning the signs of Allāh without any authority (sulṭān) having come to them—great is hatred [for them] in the sight of Allāh and in the sight of those who have believed.} [Ghāfir: 35]. And He says: {Indeed, in their breasts is nothing but arrogance, [the goal of] which they will never attain. So seek refuge in Allāh.} [Ghāfir: 56]. The term 'sulṭān' here refers to proof or authority revealed by Allāh, as He Almighty says: {Or have We sent down to them an authority (sulṭān) which speaks of that which they associate with Him?} [Ar-Rūm: 35]. And He says: {Or do you have a clear authority (sulṭān)?} {Then produce your scripture, if you should be truthful.} [Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 156-157]. And He says: {They are not but [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allāh has sent down no authority (sulṭān).} [An-Najm: 23].

Indeed, He, Glorified is He, challenged those who adopt a religion [other than His] with His statement: {Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a remnant (athārah) of knowledge...} [Al-Aḥqāf: 4]. The 'scripture' (kitāb) refers to a revealed book. As for 'athārah' (remnant/trace), some among the Salaf explained it as narration (riwāyah) and chain of transmission (isnād). Others said it also refers to writing (khaṭṭ), since narrations and chains of transmission are recorded in writing. This is because 'athārah' derives from 'athar' (trace, remnant, report). Thus, the knowledge transmitted by someone whose word is accepted is traced (yu'thar) through chains of transmission (isnād) and preserved (yuqayyad) through writing (khaṭṭ); all of these constitute its 'traces' (āthār).

Allāh Almighty also says, describing the hypocrites (munāfiqīn): {Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you? They wish to refer judgment to Ṭāghūt (false objects of worship or sources of judgment other than Allāh), while they were commanded to reject it. And Satan wishes to lead them far astray.} {And when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger,' you see the hypocrites turning away from you with aversion.} {So how [will it be] when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth, and then they come to you swearing by Allāh, 'We intended nothing but good treatment and reconciliation (tawfiq)'?} {Those are the ones of whom

Allāh knows what is in their hearts; so turn away from them but admonish them and speak to them a penetrating word about themselves.} [An-Nisā': 60-63].

In these verses are various lessons ('ibar), including proof of the misguidance and hypocrisy (nifāq) of anyone who seeks judgment from sources other than the Book and the Sunnah, even if he claims he only intends reconciliation (tawfīq) between the scriptural proofs (adillah shar'iyyah) and what he terms 'rational arguments' ('aqliyyāt)—matters often derived from certain Ṭāghūt among the polytheists (mushrikīn), the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb), and other sources considered authoritative [by them].

Therefore, anyone whose error stems from negligence (tafrīt) regarding his obligation to follow the Qur'an and maintain faith, or from transgressing the limits set by Allāh by pursuing paths He has forbidden, or from following his own desires without guidance from Allāh—such a person has wronged himself and is subject to divine warning (ahl al-wa'īd). This contrasts with the Mujtahid (one who exerts effort to derive rulings) who strives sincerely in obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, inwardly and outwardly, seeking the truth through his diligent effort (ijtihād) as commanded by Allāh and His Messenger. The error of such a person is forgiven.

As Allāh Almighty says: {The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.'...} [Al-Baqarah: 285], continuing until His statement: {Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. 'Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred.'} [Al-Baqarah: 286]. It is authentically established in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that Allāh responded [to this supplication], saying: {'I have done so.'} [Muslim, 126]. Likewise, it is established therein from the hadith of Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not recite a single letter from these two verses [Al-Baqarah: 285-286] or from Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah without being granted [what was requested therein]. [Muslim, 806]. This demonstrates the acceptance of this supplication for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers, confirming that Allāh does not hold them accountable if they forget or err.

Regarding the questioner's query: 'Given this situation [the complexity and potential for error], does this fall under the category of taklīf mā lā yuṭāq (assigning obligations beyond capacity)?' The response is: Although people have extensively disputed this expression (taklīf mā lā yuṭāq), both affirming and denying it, it should be understood that the actual disagreement concerning it comprises two types:

First: Matters regarding whose permissibility and occurrence people generally agree, but they dispute whether it is appropriate to label them as 'beyond capacity' (lā yuṭāq).

Second: Matters which they agree are indeed 'beyond capacity' (lā yuṭāq), but they dispute whether commanding such things is conceptually permissible (jawāz al-amr bih), while agreeing that such commands do not actually occur [in the Sharī'ah]. As for the notion of a command that the people of knowledge and faith agree is beyond capacity, yet dispute whether such a command has actually occurred [in revelation]—this scenario does not exist.

The first type [disagreement over labeling] includes disputes among the Mutakallimūn—both those affirming Qadar (Divine Decree) and those denying aspects of it—regarding the servant's 'capacity' (istiṭā'ah), meaning his ability and power (qudrah, ṭāqah). Does this capacity necessarily exist only concurrently with the action and not before it? Or must it precede the action? Or must it exist concurrently, even if it also preceded it? Whoever

adopts the first position (capacity only concurrent with action) is forced to conclude that every servant who fails to perform a commanded act has been assigned something beyond his capacity (kullifa mā lā yuṭīquhu), since he possessed no ability except at the moment of action [which didn't occur].

For this reason, the correct position—upheld by rigorous investigators among the Mutakallimūn, as well as scholars of Fiqh (jurisprudence), Hadith, Ṭaṣawwuf (Sufism), and others, and indicated by the Qur'an—is that the capacity (al-istiṭā'ah) upon which commands and prohibitions are based (manāṭ al-amr wa-n-nahy), and which validates the action (al-muṣaḥḥihah li-l-fi'l), does not necessarily have to be concurrent with the action. However, the capacity (al-istiṭā'ah) that necessitates the occurrence of the action is concurrent with it.

The first type [preconditional capacity] is exemplified by Allāh's statement: {And [due] to Allāh from the people is a pilgrimage to the House—for whoever is able (mana-ṣtaṭā'a) to find thereto a way.} [Āl 'Imrān: 97]. And the Prophet's (peace be upon him) statement to 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn: {'Pray standing; if you are not able (lam tastaṭī'), then sitting; and if you are not able (lam tastaṭī'), then on your side.} [Al-Bukhārī, 1117]. It is well-known that Hajj and prayer are obligatory upon the one who possesses this ability (mustaṭī'), whether he actually performs the act or not. Thus, it is clear that this type of capacity does not have to be concurrent with the action.

The second type [executive capacity, often expressed negatively] is mentioned, according to one interpretation, in Allāh Almighty's statement: {...they were not able to hear (mā kānū yastaṭī'ūna-s-sam'a), nor could they see.} [Hūd: 20]. And His statement: {And We will present Hell that Day to the disbelievers, on display—} {Those whose eyes had been within a cover from My remembrance, and they were unable (lā yastaṭī'ūna) to hear.} [Al-Kahf: 100-101]. This applies if 'istiṭā'ah' here is interpreted as the capacity concurrent with action. However, according to the interpretation of the Salaf and the majority (jumhūr), the meaning of 'inability' ('adam al-istiṭā'ah) in such verses refers to the act being extremely difficult (mashaqqah) and burdensome upon their souls. Their souls are 'unable' to will it, even though they possess the physical ability (qādirin) to perform the action if they were to will it. This is the condition of one whose desires (hawā) and corrupt opinions prevent him from listening to and following the revealed Books of Allāh. Allāh informs us that such a person 'is unable' (lā yastaṭī') to do so. This 'inability' relates to the capacity concurrent with the action, which necessitates it [or whose absence prevents it].

As for the first type [preconditional capacity], were it not for its existence, obligation (taklīf) itself could not be established, as indicated by His statement: {So fear Allāh as much as you are able (mā-ṣtaṭā'tum).} [At-Taghābun: 16], and His statement: {And those who believed and did righteous deeds—We charge no soul except [within] its capacity (wus'ahā)...} [Al-A'rāf: 42], and similar verses. Therefore, those who are negligent (mufarriṭūn) and transgressors (mu'tadūn) regarding the foundations of the religion, when they are 'unable' (lam yastaṭī'ū) to heed what was revealed to the Messenger, fall under this second category [i.e., their inability stems from aversion, not lack of fundamental capacity].

Similarly, [falling under the first type of dispute] is their disagreement concerning a commanded act (ma'mūr bih) which Allāh knew would not occur, or even informed [us] that it would not occur. Some people argue that such an act is beyond the servant's capacity (ghayr maqdūr 'alayh). Correspondingly, the extreme Qadariyyah deny that Allāh's prior knowledge, decree, or report could determine that an act will not occur. Both groups implicitly agree that something contrary to what is known [by Allāh] cannot be possible (mumkin) or within capacity (maqdūr). However, the majority of scholars

(*jumhūr an-nās*) opposed them on this, arguing that this position is refuted by [considering] the power (*qudrah*) of Allāh Himself [Who knows possibilities He does not enact]. They stated that Allāh knows the act as it truly is: possible (*mumkin*) and within the servant's capacity (*maqdūr*), yet non-occurring (*ghayr wāqī'*) because the servant did not will it, or disliked it, or for similar reasons—not because the servant was incapable (*'ajz*) of performing it. This dispute is resolved by distinguishing the types of capacity, as mentioned earlier. Such an act is indeed beyond the 'capacity concurrent with the action' (*al-qudrah al-muqārinah li-l-fi'l*) [since the action doesn't occur], but it remains within the 'capacity that validates the action' (*al-qudrah al-muṣaḥḥihah li-l-fi'l*), which is the basis for commands and prohibitions.

As for the second type [disagreement over permissibility of commanding the impossible]: This relates to their agreement that one who is genuinely incapable (*'ājiz*) of an action lacks the capacity (*lā yuṭīquhu*) for it—just as a blind person cannot dot the letters of the *Muṣḥaf* (copy of the *Qur'an*), a person with severed hands cannot write it, and a crippled person cannot fly. They unanimously agree that commands of this type [i.e., commanding the truly impossible] do not occur in the *Sharī'ah*.

Their dispute solely concerns whether commanding such impossibilities is conceptually permissible according to reason (*jawāz al-amr bih 'aqlan*). Some even disputed whether things impossible in themselves (*al-mumtani' li-dhātih*), like combining two opposites or contradictories, could conceivably be commanded from a rational perspective, despite acknowledging that such commands are absent from the *Sharī'ah*.

Anyone who goes to extremes and claims that this type [commanding the impossible] does occur in the *Sharī'ah*—like those who allege that *Abū Lahab* was obligated (*kullifa*) to believe that he would not believe—is propagating falsehood according to the general consensus of the People of the *Qiblah* (*Ahl al-Qiblah*) from all factions. Rather, if we were to suppose that he was informed he would enter the Fire (which necessitates dying upon disbelief) and that he heard this address, then in that state, his obligation (*taklīf*) would cease, and faith would not benefit him at that point, just like the faith of one who believes only after witnessing the punishment. Allāh Almighty says: {But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment.} [*Ghāfir*: 85]. And He says [to Pharaoh]: {'Now? When you had disobeyed before and were of the corrupters?'} [*Yūnus*: 91].

The point here is to highlight that the dispute concerning this principle (*taklīf mā lā yuṭāq*) sometimes relates to the nature of the commanded act itself [whether it's truly impossible given prior knowledge] and other times to the conceptual permissibility of commanding the impossible. It is by conflating these two distinct issues that certain *Mutakallimūn* have confused people. They treated both types as one and claimed the occurrence of *taklīf mā lā yuṭāq* absolutely, based on the existence of certain cases [like commanding acts known not to occur] which the majority of Muslims do not consider to be instances of commanding the impossible. The dispute in these cases does not pertain to matters of command and prohibition (*amr wa nahy*) but rather to matters of divine decree and predestination (*qaḍā' wa qadar*).

Furthermore, [this confused *Mutakallim*] then treated the permissibility of this first type [commanding what is known not to occur] as necessitating the permissibility of the second type [commanding the truly impossible], which Muslims agree is beyond capacity, drawing an analogy (*qiyās*) between the two. This is one of those analogies whose invalidity is agreed upon by Muslims, indeed by all people of revealed religions (*Ahl al-Milal*), and even by all rational people (*'uqalā'*). For whoever equates the situation of a healthy person commanded to perform actions—arguing, for instance, that capacity only exists with the action, or that Allāh knew he wouldn't perform it—with the situation

of a genuinely incapable person ('ājiz) who could not perform the action even if he willed it, has conflated two things whose difference is known with certainty (bi-l-iḍṭirār) through both reason and religion. This conflation is one of the sources of misguided passions (Ahwā') between the Qadariyyah and their counterparts, the Jabriyyah.

Once this is understood, it becomes clear that making unqualified statements about taklīf mā lā yuṭāq is among the newly invented innovations (bida' hādithah) in Islām, similar to making unqualified statements that people are compelled (majbūrūn) in their actions. The Salaf of the Ummah and its A'immah unanimously agreed upon rejecting such unqualified statements and censuring those who make them, even if their intention was to refute the Qadariyyah who deny that Allāh is the Creator of the servants' actions or that He willed all existent things. The Salaf said this amounts to refuting one innovation (bid'ah) with another, countering corruption with corruption, and falsehood with falsehood.

Were it not that this response cannot accommodate lengthy elaboration, I would cite textual evidence from their statements demonstrating their rejection of this [use of unqualified, ambiguous terms]. However, if one clarifies the intended meaning of the speaker, explains what is true using expressions where truth is not confused with falsehood, and distinguishes between truth and falsehood, then this constitutes true discernment (furqān). The one providing such clarification is then absolved from the censure directed at those whom the A'immah described as 'differing regarding the Book of Allāh, opposing the Book of Allāh, united upon abandoning the Book of Allāh,' and that 'they speak using ambiguous elements of speech, distort words from their proper contexts, and deceive the ignorant masses with the ambiguities they present.'

This is why [the Salaf] sometimes included the proponents of compulsion (al-Mujbirah, i.e., Jabriyyah) under the label of the condemned 'Qadariyyah'—because they delved into the matter of Qadar (Divine Decree) with falsehood. This [delving into Qadar with falsehood] encapsulates the meaning for which the Qadariyyah [in the broader sense, including both extremes] were censured. For this reason, Imām Abū Bakr al-Khallāl included a chapter heading in his Kitāb as-Sunnah (Book of the Sunnah) stating: '(Refutation of the Qadariyyah and their claim that Allāh compelled (ajbara) the servants to commit sins).'

He then narrated from 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān, from Baqiyyah ibn al-Walīd, who said: I asked Az-Zubaydī and Al-Awzā'ī about jabr (compulsion). Az-Zubaydī replied: 'Allāh's command is greater and His power is greater than that He should compel (yajbur) or constrain ('aḍl). Rather, He decrees (yaqḍī), predestines (yuqaddir), creates (yakhlūq), and instills in His servant the nature (yajbil) according to what He loves.' Al-Awzā'ī said: 'I know of no basis for [the term] jabr in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, so I am hesitant to use it. However, decree (al-qaḍā'), predestination (al-qadar), creation (al-khalq), and innate disposition (al-jabl)—these are known from the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him).' [Baqiyyah added:] 'I only recorded this fearing that some follower (tābi'ī) among the people of the community and affirmation (Ahl al-Jamā'ah wa-t-Taṣḍīq) might fall into doubt.'

These two answers given by these two Imāms during the era of the followers of the Successors (Tābi'ī at-Tābi'īn) are among the best responses. As for Az-Zubaydī—Muḥammad ibn al-Walīd, the companion of Az-Zuhrī—he said: 'Allāh's command is greater and His power is greater than that He should compel (yajbur) or constrain ('aḍl).' He thus negated jabr. This is because jabr, as commonly understood in the language, means forcing a person contrary to his consent. For example, jurists (fuqahā) discuss in the chapter on marriage: Is a woman compelled (tujbar) into marriage or not? And if her

guardian prevents her from marrying ('aḍalahā), what should she do? By 'compelling' her (jabr), they mean marrying her off without her consent and choice. By 'constraining' her ('aḍl), they mean preventing her from what she consents to and chooses. So, Az-Zubaydī said: 'Allāh is greater than that He should compel or constrain,' because Allāh, Glorified is He, is able to make the servant love and be pleased with what he does, and detest and dislike what he refrains from, as is indeed the reality. Therefore, the servant is not 'compelled' (majbūr) regarding what he chooses, consents to, and wills—these being his 'chosen actions' (af'āluhu-l-ikhtiyāriyyah). Nor is he 'constrained' ('aḍl) from that which he refrains from, dislikes, detests, and does not will—these being his 'chosen omissions' (tarkuhu-l-ikhtiyāriyyah).

As for Al-Awzā'ī, he forbade the unqualified use of this term (jabr) altogether, even if this [correct] meaning [that Allāh creates the will] was intended, since the term itself has no basis in the Book or the Sunnah. Using it leads to employing an innovated term that outwardly suggests a false meaning, and this is impermissible, even if it is claimed that a correct meaning was intended by it.

Al-Khallāl said: Al-Marwadhī informed us, saying: I heard one of the Shaykhs say: I heard 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī say: 'Sufyān Ath-Thawrī rejected [the term] jabr and said: 'Allāh Almighty instilled the nature (jabala) in the servants.' Al-Marwadhī commented: 'I think he intended [to allude to] the Prophet's (peace be upon him) statement to Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays'—meaning his statement recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim—'Indeed, you possess two qualities that Allāh loves: forbearance (ḥilm) and deliberation (anāh).' He asked, 'Are these two qualities I have acquired through my own efforts, or two qualities upon which I was created (jubiltu 'alayhimā)?' The Prophet replied, 'Rather, two qualities upon which you were created (jubilta 'alayhimā).' He then said, 'Praise be to Allāh Who created me (jabalanī) with two qualities that Allāh Almighty loves.' [Muslim, 17, 18].

This is why Al-Bukhārī and others used Allāh Almighty's statement as evidence for the creation of actions (khalq al-af'āl): {Indeed, mankind was created anxious (halū'ā):} {When evil touches him, impatient (jazū'ā),} {And when good touches him, withholding (manū'ā).} [Al-Ma'ārij: 19-21]. Here, Allāh Almighty informs us that He created man with this disposition.

Al-Awzā'ī's answer is sounder than Az-Zubaydī's. This is because Az-Zubaydī negated jabr, whereas Al-Awzā'ī forbade its unqualified use. Since this term (jabr) could potentially encompass a correct meaning [related to creation and decree], negating it might imply the negation of both truth and falsehood. This is supported by what Al-Khallāl related from 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad's Kitāb as-Sunnah, where he said: Muḥammad ibn Bakkār narrated to us, Abū Ma'shar narrated to us, Ya'lā narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ka'b that he said: 'He [Allāh] is named Al-Jabbār (The Compeller/Restorer) because He compels (yajbur) creation according to what He wills.' Therefore, refraining from using an ambiguous, potential, and confusing term eliminates the danger and is better than negating it—even if its apparent meaning leans towards falsehood—out of concern that people might think both meanings (true and false) are being negated.

The same principle applies to negating the capacity (tāqah) for commanded acts. Asserting jabr regarding prohibited acts is analogous to denying capacity regarding commanded acts [both are problematic unqualified statements]. This was the approach of Imām Aḥmad and other Imāms of the Sunnah. Al-Khallāl said: Al-Maymūnī informed us, saying: I heard Abū 'Abdillāh—meaning Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal—debating Khālīd ibn Khidāsh regarding Qadar. They mentioned a certain man, and Abū 'Abdillāh said: 'What I dislike about this is saying, 'Allāh compelled (ajbara).'

Al-Khallāl also said: Al-Marwadhī informed us: I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh, ‘A man says, ‘Allāh compelled (ajbara) the servants.’ He replied, ‘Do not say that.’ He rejected this and said [instead], ‘{Allāh sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills.}’ [cf. Ar-Ra’d: 27, Fāṭir: 8, etc.]. Al-Khallāl also said: Al-Marwadhī informed us: A letter was written to ‘Abd al-Wahhāb [al-Warraḡ] concerning Ḥasan ibn Khalaf al-‘Ukbarī, stating that he had abstained from his father’s inheritance. A Qadarī man commented, ‘Allāh did not compel (lam yujbir) the servants to commit sins.’ Aḥmad ibn Rajā’ retorted, ‘Allāh compelled (jabara) the servants according to what He willed,’ intending thereby to affirm Qadar. Then Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī wrote a book arguing for this position. I [Al-Marwadhī] brought it to Abū ‘Abdillāh and informed him of the incident. He exclaimed, ‘And he writes a book?!’ He condemned both parties: Ibn Rajā’ for saying ‘compelled the servants,’ and the Qadarī who said ‘did not compel.’ He also condemned Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī for writing the book and arguing [in that manner], and ordered him to be boycotted for writing the book. He said to me, ‘Ibn Rajā’ must seek forgiveness from his Lord for saying ‘compelled the servants.’ I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh, ‘So what is the [correct] response in this matter?’ He replied, ‘{Allāh sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills.}’

Al-Marwadhī commented on this issue, stating that he heard Abū ‘Abdillāh, when condemning both the one who said [‘Allāh] did not compel’ and the one who retorted [‘He] compelled,’ say: ‘Whenever someone introduces an innovation, they [others] expand upon responding to it [often improperly].’ He also said regarding the one who responded [using the term jabr]: ‘Let him seek his Lord’s forgiveness for responding to them with his innovated term.’ He condemned responding with anything resembling Kalām if one has no precedent from a leading Imām in the matter.

Al-Marwadhī continued: No sooner had this happened than Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī arrived from ‘Ukbarā accompanied by some elders and a letter from the people of ‘Ukbarā. I brought Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī before Abū ‘Abdillāh. He said, ‘O Abā ‘Abdillāh, here is the book; give it to Abū Bakr [Al-Marwadhī] to destroy it. I will stand upon the pulpit (minbar) of ‘Ukbarā and seek forgiveness from Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.’ Abū ‘Abdillāh said to me, ‘You should accept this from him.’ So they reconciled with him.

We have elaborated on this topic elsewhere and discussed the corrupt principle assumed by the divergent groups: namely, that affirming the true meaning [related to divine creation and decree], which they label jabr, contradicts the existence of divine commands and prohibitions (al-amr wa-n-nahy). The Qadariyyah considered it absolutely contradictory to commands and prohibitions. A faction of the Jabriyyah considered it contradictory to the intrinsic goodness (ḥusn) and badness (qubḥ) of actions, using this as a basis for denying the rationally discernible inherent goodness or badness of actions. However, it is evident that [affirming divine creation and decree] does not contradict [commands, prohibitions, or intrinsic moral quality], except in the same way that it might be said to ‘contradict’ the fact that an action can be suitable and beneficial for the doer, or unsuitable and harmful to him [i.e., there is no real contradiction; divine decree and the nature/consequences of actions coexist].

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām Abū al-‘Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah – may Allāh Almighty have mercy upon him – was asked: What is it that the morally obligated individual (mukallaf) must believe (i’tiqād)? What knowledge is obligatory upon him? What is the knowledge that is encouraged? What is certainty (yaqīn)? How is it attained? And what constitutes knowledge of Allāh?

He answered: All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds. Regarding the question: What must the morally obligated individual believe? The answer involves both a general principle (ijmāl) and specific details (tafṣīl). As for the general principle, it is obligatory upon the morally obligated individual to believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and to affirm (yuqirra) all that the Messenger brought. This includes the command to have faith (īmān) in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, as well as everything the Messenger commanded and forbade, such that the individual affirms everything he reported and commanded. Thus, one must accept (taṣdīq) what he reported as true and submit (inqiyād) to what he commanded.

As for the specific details, every morally obligated individual must affirm whatever has been established for them as having been reported or commanded by the Messenger. However, regarding matters the Messenger reported but knowledge of which has not reached the individual, and they had no means of knowing it, they are not punished for failing to affirm it in detail, as it is included within their general, comprehensive affirmation. Furthermore, if such an individual says something contrary to a specific detail due to a particular interpretation (mutā'awwilan), they are considered mistaken, but their error is forgiven, provided no negligence (tafrīt) or transgression (udwān) occurred on their part. This is why scholars (ulamā') have obligations regarding belief that are not required of the common folk, and why one raised in an environment of knowledge and faith has obligations in this regard that are not incumbent upon one raised in an environment of ignorance.

As for that which is known to be established solely through rational analogy (qiyās 'aqlī) without reference to the Message (revelation), one is not punished for failing to believe in it. Regarding the assertion made by a faction among the scholastic theologians (Ahl al-Kalām)—that only the Attributes established through reason ('aql) are obligatory to affirm, and that rejecting them constitutes disbelief (kufr), unlike those Attributes established through revelation (sam', literally 'hearing')—this position is problematic. Concerning the revealed Attributes, they sometimes negate them, sometimes interpret them figuratively (yata'awwalūnahu), sometimes consign their meaning to Allāh (yufawwidūna ma'nāhu), and sometimes affirm them. However, they ultimately tie faith (īmān) and disbelief (kufr) exclusively to the 'rational' Attributes. This stance has no basis in the teachings of the predecessors (Salaf) of this Ummah or its Imāms. This is because faith and disbelief are rulings established by the Message (of the Prophet) and are distinguished based on revealed legal evidences (adillah shar'iyyah), not merely on rational proofs (adillah 'aqliyyah).

Regarding the question: What knowledge is obligatory upon him? This also varies. It is obligatory upon every morally obligated individual to know what Allāh has commanded him to do. Thus, he must know what he has been commanded to believe in and what he has been commanded to know. For instance, if someone possesses wealth upon which Zakāh (obligatory charity) is due, it becomes obligatory upon him to learn the rulings of Zakāh. If someone has the means to perform Ḥajj (pilgrimage), it becomes obligatory upon him to learn the rulings of Ḥajj, and so forth for similar matters. Furthermore, it is obligatory upon the Ummah as a whole to possess knowledge of everything the Messenger brought, ensuring that none of the knowledge conveyed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his Ummah is lost—this encompasses all that is indicated by the Book (Qur'an) and the Sunnah. However, the knowledge exceeding the specific needs of an individual is a communal obligation (farḍ 'alā al-kifāyah): if a sufficient group within the community undertakes it, the obligation is lifted from the rest.

As for 'the knowledge that is encouraged in general,' it is the knowledge that the Prophet

(peace be upon him) taught his Ummah. However, each individual is particularly encouraged to seek the knowledge they need most and which is most beneficial for them. This varies from person to person. For the general populace, the desire to know the obligatory (wājibāt) and recommended (mustaḥabbāt) actions, as well as [Allāh's] promise [of reward] (wa'd) and threat [of punishment] (wa'id), is most beneficial. Each person among them should desire whatever knowledge they require from these areas. For someone in whose heart a doubt (shubḥah) arises, their desire for [knowledge leading to] an action that counteracts this doubt might be more beneficial than anything else.

As for 'certainty' (yaqīn), it is the tranquility (ṭuma'nīnah) of the heart and the settling (istiqrār) of knowledge within it. This reflects the meaning when Arabs say 'mā'un yaqanun' [water that is settled] when it has ceased moving. The opposite of certainty is doubt (rayb), which is a type of movement and agitation. It is said, 'rābanī yarībunī' [it caused me doubt/unease]. Related to this is the ḥadīth where the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a gazelle resting crouched (ḥāqif) and said: {Let no one disturb (yarībuhu) it}. Certainty, then, comprises two aspects: knowledge of the heart ('ilm al-qalb) and action of the heart ('amal al-qalb). For a servant may possess resolute knowledge of a matter, yet still experience within their heart some agitation or wavering regarding the action necessitated by that knowledge. An example is the servant's knowledge that Allāh is the Lord and Sovereign of all things, that there is no creator besides Him, and that whatever He wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be. This knowledge might be accompanied by tranquility towards Allāh and reliance (tawakkul) upon Him, or it might not be accompanied by the corresponding action [of the heart]. This could be due to the heart's heedlessness (ghaflah) regarding this knowledge—and heedlessness is the opposite of complete knowledge, even if not the opposite of foundational knowledge—or due to distracting thoughts that arise in the heart, turning its attention towards secondary causes, or for other reasons.

In the well-known ḥadīth narrated by Abū Bakr from the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: {Ask Allāh for certainty (yaqīn) and well-being ('āfiyah), for indeed, no one has been given anything better after certainty than well-being. So ask Allāh for both of them}. The people of certainty (ahl al-yaqīn), when tested, remain steadfast, unlike others whose faith may be destroyed or diminished by trials. Allāh Almighty says: {And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs} [As-Sajdah: 24]. Do you not see the statement of Allāh Almighty: {Those to whom people said, 'Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.' But it [only] increased them in faith, and they said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs'} [Āl 'Imrān: 173]? This describes the state of such people. And Allāh Almighty says: {O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allāh upon you when armies came to [attack] you and We sent upon them a wind and armies [of angels] you did not see. And ever is Allāh, of what you do, Seeing} [Al-Aḥzāb: 9]... continuing until His words: {There the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking} [Al-Aḥzāb: 11], and {And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease said, 'Allāh and His Messenger did not promise us except delusion'} [Al-Aḥzāb: 12]. Allāh Almighty also says: {And We have not made the keepers of the Fire except angels. And We have not made their number except as a trial for those who disbelieve – that those who were given the Scripture will be convinced...} [Al-Muddaththir: 31].

As for how certainty (yaqīn) is attained, it is through three means: (1) First: Pondering (tadabbur) the Qur'an. (2) Second: Pondering the signs (āyāt) that Allāh brings about within human souls and upon the horizons, which demonstrate that it [the Qur'an, or the

Message] is the truth. (3) Third: Acting in accordance with the requirements of knowledge. Allāh Almighty says: {We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?} [Fuṣṣilat: 53]. The pronoun 'it' [in 'that it is the truth'] refers back to the Qur'an. This is similar to Allāh Almighty's statement: {Say, 'Have you considered: if it [the Qur'an] is from Allāh and you disbelieved in it, who is more astray than one who is in extreme dissension?} [Fuṣṣilat: 52], followed by: {We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...} [Fuṣṣilat: 53].

As for the assertion by a group among the philosophers (*mutafalsifah*) and those who followed them among the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and Sufis (*mutaṣawwifah*)—that the pronoun [in Fuṣṣilat: 53, 'that it is the truth'] refers to Allāh, and that the verse intends to mention the path of knowing Him through rational deduction (*istidlāl bi-l-'aql*)—interpreting the verse in this manner is erroneous for numerous reasons and contradicts the consensus of the predecessors (*Salaf*) of the Ummah and its Imāms. Rather, He, the Glorified, clarified that He shows the witnessed signs (*āyāt mashhūdah*) in order to demonstrate the truthfulness of the heard signs (*āyāt masmū'ah*, i.e., the Qur'an), although His testimony through the heard signs is sufficient in itself. This is because He, the Glorified, did not guide His servants through the Qur'an merely by way of reporting (*khabar*), as factions among Ahl al-Kalām assume. They suppose that the Qur'an's indication is solely through reporting, and that [accepting] the report depends on knowing the truthfulness of the reporter (the Messenger). They further claim that knowing his truthfulness depends on establishing the existence of the Creator (*aṣ-Ṣāni'*), knowing what is necessary, possible, and impossible regarding Him, knowing the possibility of sending Messengers, and knowing the signs proving their truthfulness. They term these principles the 'rational fundamentals' (*uṣūl 'aqliyyāt*), believing that revealed knowledge (*ṣam'*) is contingent upon them. This is a grave error and constitutes one of the greatest deviations of factions among Ahl al-Kalām and innovators (*ahl al-bida'*). For Allāh, the Glorified, has elucidated in His Book everything needed concerning the foundations of the religion (*uṣūl ad-dīn*). He established within it Tawḥīd (Divine Oneness), Prophethood (*nubuwwah*), and the Resurrection (*ma'ād*) with proofs (*barāhīn*) whose verification surpasses all [human] investigation—unlike the approach of the Muslim scholastic theologians, the philosophers, and their followers. He argued within it using parables pertaining to the Self-Sufficient Lord (*amthāl ṣamadiyyah*), which are rational analogies (*maqāyīs 'aqliyyah*) that yield certainty. We have elaborated on this matter elsewhere.

Regarding the witnessed signs (*āyāt mashhūdah*), indeed, what is witnessed and known through mass transmission (*tawātur*)—concerning the punishments inflicted upon those who denied the Messengers and disobeyed them, the victory granted to the Messengers and their followers in the manner it occurred, the known instances of Allāh Almighty honoring the people of His obedience and granting them the best outcome, and His vengeance upon the people of His disobedience, causing misfortune to encompass them—all contains a lesson (*'ibrah*) that clarifies His command and prohibition, His promise and threat, and other matters that align with the Qur'an. This is why Allāh Almighty said: {It is He who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think they would leave...} continuing to His statement: {...So take warning, O people of vision!} [Al-Ḥaṣhr: 2]. This clearly demonstrates drawing lessons (*i'tibār*) concerning the foundations of the religion, even if it also encompasses drawing lessons in its branches (*furū'*). Likewise is His statement: {There has already been for you a sign in the two armies which met – one

fighting in the cause of Allāh and another of disbelievers...} continuing to His statement: {...Indeed in that is a lesson for those of vision} [Āl 'Imrān: 13].

As for action ('amal), acting according to the requirements of knowledge reinforces and establishes that knowledge, whereas acting contrary to it weakens it, and may even eliminate it entirely. Allāh Almighty said: {So when they deviated, Allāh caused their hearts to deviate} [Aṣ-Ṣaff: 5]. And He said: {And We will turn away their hearts and their eyes just as they refused to believe in it the first time} [Al-An'ām: 110]. And He said: {And if they had done what they were instructed, it would have been better for them and a stronger means of strengthening [their faith]} [An-Nisā': 66]. And He said: {There has certainly come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book} [Al-Mā'idah: 15], {By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace...} [Al-Mā'idah: 16]. And Allāh Almighty said: {O you who have believed, fear Allāh and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you...} [Al-Ḥadīd: 28].

As for knowledge ('ilm), fundamentally two types are intended: (1) First: Knowledge pertaining to Him Himself (bihi nafsihi), concerning the attributes of Majesty and Honor with which He is described, and what His Most Beautiful Names (Asmā'uhu al-Ḥusnā) indicate. When this knowledge becomes firmly rooted (rasakha) in the heart, it inevitably engenders the awe and fear of Allāh (khashyat Allāh). This is because one necessarily learns that Allāh rewards obedience and punishes disobedience, as attested by the Qur'an and by direct observation ('iyān). This is the meaning behind the statement of Abū Ḥayyān al-Taymī – one of the Successors to the Successors (Atbā' al-Tābi'in) – 'The scholars (ulamā') are of three types: one knowledgeable of Allāh but not knowledgeable of Allāh's command (amr Allāh); one knowledgeable of Allāh's command but not knowledgeable of Allāh; and one knowledgeable of Allāh and of Allāh's command. The one knowledgeable of Allāh is he who fears (yakhshā) Allāh, and the one knowledgeable of Allāh's command is he who knows the lawful (ḥalāl) and the unlawful (ḥarām).' A man once addressed Ash-Sha'bī saying, 'O scholar!' Ash-Sha'bī replied, 'The true scholar is only one who fears Allāh.' And 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'Sufficient is the fear of Allāh as knowledge, and sufficient is being heedlessly deluded about Allāh as ignorance.'

(2) Second type: Sometimes 'knowledge of Allāh' (al-'ilm billāh) refers to knowledge of the revealed legal rulings (aḥkām shar'iyyah). This is seen in the Ṣaḥīḥ [authentic collection of ḥadīth] where the Prophet (peace be upon him) {took a dispensation (tarakhkhaṣa) regarding something, and news reached him that some people abstained from it out of piety (tanazzahū). He then said: 'What is the matter with people who abstain from things in which I take a dispensation? By Allāh, indeed I am the most knowledgeable of you regarding Allāh (a'lamukum billāh) and the most fearful of Him (akhshākum lahu).'} In another narration: {'By Allāh, indeed I am the most fearful of you regarding Allāh (akhshākum lillāh) and the most knowledgeable of you regarding His limits (a'lamukum bi-ḥudūdih).'} Here, he equated knowledge of Him with knowledge of His limits (divinely set boundaries). Similar to this is the statement of one of the Tābi'in describing the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him), where he said: 'Indeed, Allāh was tremendous in my heart, and indeed I was knowledgeable concerning the dhāt of Allāh (bi-dhāt Allāh).' By this, he meant Allāh's rulings (aḥkām Allāh). This is because the term dhāt in their language was not like the term Dhāt (Essence) in the terminology of later scholars. Rather, it referred to that which is related or pertains to Allāh, as Khubayb (may Allāh be pleased with him) said [in poetry]: 'And that is for the sake of the Deity (fī dhāt al-ilāh), and if He wills, He blesses the joints of a dismembered corpse.' Also related is the ḥadīth: {Ibrāhīm did not lie except

three times, all of them for the sake of Allāh (fī dhāt Allāh).} And from this usage is Allāh Almighty's statement: {So fear Allāh and amend that which is between you (dhāta baynikum)} [Al-Anfāl: 1], and {And He is Knowing of that within the breasts (bi-dhāti aṣ-ṣudūr)} [Āl 'Imrān: 119], and similar examples. For dhāt is the feminine form of dhū (possessor of), which is used in an annexed construction (muḍāf) to describe something by its genus. If the described noun is masculine, one says dhū kadhā (possessor of such-and-such); if feminine, dhāt kadhā (possessor of such-and-such), like saying dhātu siwārīn (possessor of a bracelet, i.e., a woman wearing a bracelet). So if it is said, 'So-and-so was afflicted for the sake of Allāh (fī dhāt Allāh),' the meaning is: in His cause and for His sake, i.e., concerning what He commanded and loved, and for His sake.

Then, since Attributes (ṣifāt) are related to the self/essence (nafs), it is also said of the self that it is dhātu 'ilmin wa qudratin wa kalāmin (possessor of knowledge, power, speech, etc.). Later scholars omitted the annexation and made the term definite, saying: al-Dhāt al-mawṣūfah (the described Essence), meaning the described Self/Being. So when these later theologians use the term al-Dhāt (the Essence), they mean the real Self/Being which possesses descriptions (waṣf) and Attributes (ṣifāt). The terms ṣifah (attribute) and waṣf (description) sometimes refer to the words used to describe the subject, like the Companion's statement regarding {Say, 'He is Allāh, [who is] One'} [Al-Ikhlās: 1]: 'I love it because it is the ṣifah (description/attribute) of the Most Merciful.' At other times, these terms refer to the meanings indicated by the words, such as Knowledge ('Ilm) and Power (Qudrah). The Jahmiyyah, the Mu'tazilah, and others deny these [real attributes], claiming that Attributes are merely the expressions used to refer to the described subject. The Kullābiyyah and their followers among the Ṣifātiyyah (affirmers of Attributes) sometimes differentiate between ṣifah and waṣf, making waṣf the statement/description and ṣifah the meaning subsisting in the described subject. However, the majority of people understand that both ṣifah and waṣf are originally verbal nouns (maṣdar), like wa'd and 'idah (promise), or wazn and zinah (weight), and that sometimes one meaning is intended, and sometimes the other.

Since those Jahmiyyah denied that Allāh possesses any subsisting attribute (waṣf qā'im bihi)—such as Knowledge, Power, Will (Irādah), or Speech (Kalām)—which the Muslims affirmed, they [the Jahmiyyah] started saying: 'These people [the affirmers] have affirmed Attributes (ṣifāt) that are additional (zā'idah) to the Essence (Dhāt):' Subsequently, a faction among their opponents from the Ṣifātiyyah adopted this phrasing, saying: 'The Attributes are additional to the Essence,' which they described as possessing attributes and descriptions. This gives people the impression that there exists an Essence distinct from the Attributes, and that it possesses Attributes distinct from the Essence. The deniers of Attributes (nufāt al-ṣifāt) then raise objections based on this, the details of which are not appropriate here, and whose invalidity we have demonstrated elsewhere.

The accurate position (taḥqīq) is that the described Essence (al-Dhāt al-mawṣūfah) is never separable from its Attributes whatsoever; the existence of an essence devoid of attributes is impossible. The claim of one who asserts the existence of a Living, Knowing, Powerful, Seeing being without Life, Knowledge, or Power is like the claim of [the existence of abstract] Power, Knowledge, and Life where the one described by them is not Living, Knowing, or Powerful. Indeed, the very claim of something existent, self-subsisting (qā'im bi-nafsihi), whether eternal (qadīm) or originated (muḥdath), that is bare of all attributes is impossible according to sound reason (ṣarīḥ al-'aql). However, when the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, and others affirmed an Essence stripped (mujradah) of Attributes, their opponents [among the Ṣifātiyyah] began to say: 'I affirm Attributes additional to the Essence you affirm,' meaning, 'I do not limit myself merely to affirming an Essence without Attributes.' They did not mean by this that in external reality there

exists an Essence established in itself, and alongside it, Attributes that are additional to this Essence and distinct from it.

This is why some people held the view: 'The Attributes are other than (ghayr) the Essence.' This was stated by the Mu'tazilah and the Karrāmiyyah; however, the Mu'tazilah then denied the Attributes, while the Karrāmiyyah affirmed them [as being 'other']. Others held the view: 'The Attribute is neither the Described [Essence] nor other than Him.' This was stated by factions among the Şifātiyyah, such as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and others. And others held the view articulated by the Imāms [of the Salaf]: 'We do not say the Attribute is the Described, nor do we say it is other than Him,' because [saying 'neither it is Him nor other than Him'] is problematic. The term 'other' (ghayr) contains ambiguity (ijmāl). It might refer to that which is separate and distinct (mubāyin) from something, or that which merely accompanies another or is proximate to it in existence, time, or place. 'Other' might also refer to the possibility of knowing one thing while being ignorant of the other.

According to the first meaning [of ghayr as separate/distinct], the Attribute is not 'other than' the Described, just as a part of a whole is not 'other than' the whole [in the sense of being entirely separate]. According to the second meaning [of ghayr as conceptually distinguishable], the Attribute is 'other than' the Described, just as a part of a whole is 'other than' it [in the sense that one can conceive of the whole without focusing on a specific part]. Therefore, the Salaf and the Imāms refrained from applying the term ghayr ('other') to the Attributes, either in negation or affirmation, due to the ambiguity and confusion (talbīs) inherent in it. This became pertinent when the Jahmī would ask: 'Is the Qur'an Allāh or other than (ghayr) Allāh?' Sometimes, [the scholars] would counter him regarding Allāh's Knowledge, asking: 'Is Allāh's Knowledge Allāh or other than Him?' (if the questioner was someone who affirmed Knowledge or could not deny it). At other times, they would resolve the ambiguity (shubhah) and demonstrate the error of both unqualified statements—negation and affirmation—because of the confusion they entail. Instead, the questioner should be asked to clarify: 'If by 'other' you mean that which is separate and distinct (mubāyin) from the Described, then the Attribute is not separate from Him, so it is not 'other' in this sense. But if by 'other' you mean that which allows the Described to be understood in a general way [even if the specific attribute is not considered], then it is 'other' in this respect [i.e., conceptually distinguishable].' And Allāh Almighty knows best. May Allāh send blessings upon Muḥammad.

## Section

When many proponents of theological rhetoric (kalām) and textualism (ḥurūf), as well as proponents of experiential practice and vocal expressions (ṣawt), turned away from the Qur'ān and true faith (īmān), you find them adopting divergent paths concerning the intellect (aql). Many scholastic theologians (Mutakallimah) establish the intellect alone as the foundation of their knowledge, isolating it and making faith and the Qur'ān subordinate to it. For them, rational concepts (ma'qūlāt) constitute the universal, primary principles that are self-sufficient, independent of faith and the Qur'ān.

Conversely, many Sufis (Mutaṣawwifah) disparage and find fault with the intellect, believing that lofty spiritual states (aḥwāl) and elevated stations (maqāmāt) can only be attained in its absence. They affirm matters that sound reason (ṣarīḥ al-'aql) deems false. They praise spiritual intoxication (sukr), madness (junūn), ecstatic bewilderment (walah), and various forms of gnosis (ma'ārif) and states that only occur when reason and discernment (tamyīz) are lost. Similarly, they accept as true, based on the claims of individuals whose veracity is unknown, matters whose falsehood is known through

sound reason.

Both of these extremes are reprehensible. Rather, the intellect (aql) is an indispensable condition for acquiring knowledge and for the perfection and soundness of actions; through it, both knowledge (ilm) and action (amal) are completed. However, it is not independently sufficient for this. Instead, it is an innate faculty (gharīzah) within the soul, a potentiality akin to the power of sight residing in the eye. If the light of faith (īmān) and the Qurʾān connects with it, it becomes like the light of the eye when illuminated by the sun or a flame. But if the intellect remains isolated, relying solely on itself, it cannot perceive those matters that it is inherently incapable of grasping alone.

And if the intellect is entirely sidelined, then the statements and actions performed in its absence are merely animalistic phenomena. They might involve some form of love (maḥabbah), ecstasy (wajd), or tasting (dhawq), just as may occur in beasts. Therefore, spiritual states attained without the intellect are deficient, and statements that contradict reason are false.

The Messengers came with truths that the intellect is incapable of grasping on its own; they did not come with what the intellect knows to be impossible. However, those who go to extremes regarding the intellect (the rationalists) have decreed certain things to be necessary, permissible, or impossible based on what they claim are rational proofs, believing them to be true when they are, in fact, false. They use these flawed arguments to oppose the Prophetic teachings and what they brought. Conversely, those who turn away from the intellect (the anti-rationalists) accept falsehoods, engage in corrupt spiritual states and practices, and abandon the faculty of discernment (tamyīz) by which Allāh has favored the children of Ādam over other creatures.

Indeed, even some adherents of Ḥadīth (Ahl al-Ḥadīth) may draw near to the errors of either group: sometimes by excluding the intellect from its rightful domain, and other times by opposing the Sunnah based on rational arguments. This divergence concerning the discerning intellect (al-ʿaql at-tamyīzī) between the proponents of textualism (ḥarfiyyah) and the proponents of experiential/vocal practices (ṣawtiyyah) mirrors the divergence between them regarding heartfelt spiritual experience (wajd qalbī). The latter group (the ṣawtiyyah) affirm and exalt this experience, going to such excess that they make it the ultimate criterion and goal, just as the former group (the rationalists) do with the intellect. Meanwhile, the textualists (ḥarfiyyah) turn away from such experience, criticize it, and do not consider it among the attributes of perfection.

The reason for this is that the objective of the textualists (ahl al-ḥiraf) is primarily knowledge, the gateway to which is the intellect, while the objective of the experientialists (ahl aṣ-ṣawt) is primarily action/experience, the gateway to which is love (ḥubb). Consequently, each group tends to exalt what pertains to its focus and disparage the other, despite the fact that both knowledge and action are indispensable. There must be: intellectual understanding (ʿaql ʿilmī) and mental engagement (ʿamal dhihnī) alongside love (ḥubb); discernment (tamyīz) alongside spiritual movement (ḥarakah); statement/text (qāl/ḥarf) alongside spiritual state (ḥāl/ṣawt). When both aspects are correctly balanced according to the Book (the Qurʾān) and the Sunnah, that constitutes the Straight Path (aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm). All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allāh send blessings and peace upon Muḥammad and his family.

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām (may Allāh sanctify his soul) said:

Since the Shahādatayn (the two testimonies of faith: Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadur

Rasūlullāh) constitute the foundation (aṣl) of the religion (Dīn), its outward manifestation (far'), and indeed encompass all its other pillars (da'ā'im) and branches (shu'ab), it follows that worship ('ibādah) is fundamentally linked to obedience to Allāh and His Messenger. As Allāh Almighty stated: {And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger—those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor: the Prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth (ṣiddīqīn), the martyrs (shuhadā'), and the righteous (ṣāliḥīn). And excellent are those as companions!} [An-Nisā': 69]. And He stated in the verse prescribed for the Khuṭbat al-Ḥājah (the sermon recited to commence important matters): {O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great attainment.} [Al-Aḥzāb: 70-71]. And in the sermon [as reported in Hadīth]: 'Whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has been rightly guided (rashada), and whoever disobeys them both harms only himself and does not harm Allāh in the least.' He also stated: {And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger and fears Allāh and is mindful of Him (yattaqhi) – it is those who are the attainers [of success].} [An-Nūr: 52]. And He stated: {And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein; and that is the great attainment.} [An-Nisā': 13] {And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and transgresses His limits – He will admit him into a Fire, abiding eternally therein, and he will have a humiliating punishment.} [An-Nisā': 14].

Likewise, Allāh linked various matters to love for Allāh and His Messenger, as in His statement: {...dearer to you than Allāh and His Messenger...} [At-Tawbah: 24]; and to the pleasure of Allāh and His Messenger, as in His statement: {...but Allāh and His Messenger are more worthy that they should please Him...} [At-Tawbah: 62]; and to the judgment of Allāh and His Messenger, as in His statement: {And when they are called to Allāh and His Messenger to judge between them...} [An-Nūr: 48] and His statement: {And when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger'...} [An-Nisā': 61]. He commanded referral back to Allāh and the Messenger in times of dispute, saying: {O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it back to Allāh and the Messenger...} [An-Nisā': 59]. And He designated the spoils of war (maghānim) as belonging to Allāh and the Messenger, stating: {They ask you [O Muḥammad] about the spoils of war (al-anfāl). Say, 'The spoils are for Allāh and the Messenger...'} [Al-Anfāl: 1]. Examples like these are numerous.

Therefore, basing matters such as love and hatred, loyalty (muwālāh) and enmity (mu'ādāh), support (nuṣrah) and abandonment (khiḍhlān), agreement (muwāfaqah) and opposition (mukhālafah), pleasure (riḍā) and anger (ghaḍab), giving ('aṭā') and withholding (man') on criteria that contradict these foundational principles revealed by Allāh is erroneous. Such deviations fall into categories relative to the true principles: they are either [1] broader than them, [2] narrower than them, or [3] broader in one aspect and narrower in another. [1] The broader deviation is exemplified by the path of the philosophers (mutafalsifah) and those influenced by them—such as deviant theologians (mutakallimah), Sufis (mutaṣawwifah), and political entities founded on such ideas (like the [historical] Turkic rulers and others). This involves legitimizing religious practice (tadayyun) based on paths other than that brought by Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), even if they outwardly venerate Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and consider his religion the best. Likewise, this includes anyone who permits salvation and success after his advent through means other than his Sharī'ah (divine law). [2] The deviation that is broader in one aspect and narrower in another includes basing affiliations on lineage (ansāb), tribes (qabā'il), ethnicities (ajnās – Arab, Persian, Roman,

Turkic), or specific cities (amṣār) and regions (bilād).

[3] The absolutely narrower deviation involves affiliation with a specific group defined by certain aspects of the religion, such as identifying primarily as warriors (muǧāhidīn), jurists (fuqahā'), or the poor/ascetics/Sufis ('ubbād). It also includes partisanship towards specific sub-groups within these categories, such as loyalty to a particular Imām, Shaykh, King, or prominent theologian (mutakallim); or adherence to a specific statement (maqālah) or action (fi'l) that distinguishes a faction; or adopting the distinctive symbols (shi'ār) of these factions, like specific attire (turbans or otherwise). For instance, some exhibit partisanship (ta'aṣṣub) towards a particular khirqah (cloak or mantle) or style of dress—whether it be a general style associated with jurists and the poor (fuqarā'), or one specific to one of these groups, or even a sub-group within them—or towards military attire, and so forth. All of this constitutes matters of Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islāmic ignorance and tribalism) that divide the Ummah (Muslim community). Those involved in such practices are deviating from the Sunnah (Prophetic Way) and the Jamā'ah (the unified body of Muslims adhering to the truth), entering into bid'ah (reprehensible innovation) and furqah (division and sectarianism).

Rather, the religion of Allāh Almighty dictates that His Messenger, Muḥammad (peace be upon him), is the one whose commands and prohibitions are to be obeyed; the one to be followed in matters of love and [avoiding] disobedience, pleasure and displeasure, giving and withholding, loyalty and enmity, support and abandonment. Every individual or category within creation should be accorded the rights granted to them by the Messenger (peace be upon him). Thus, the one brought near [to Allāh] is the one the Messenger brought near; the one distanced is the one he distanced; and the one placed in a middle station is the one he placed there. Regarding all these matters [actions, beliefs, affiliations, etc.], one must love—whether specific instances or general qualities—what Allāh and His Messenger love thereof, and hate what Allāh and His Messenger hate thereof. One must leave aside—as neither beloved nor hated—that which Allāh and His Messenger left as such. One must command what Allāh and His Messenger commanded thereof, and forbid what Allāh and His Messenger forbade thereof.

One must deem permissible what Allāh and His Messenger permitted thereof, and consider pardoned what Allāh and His Messenger pardoned thereof. One must prefer what Allāh and His Messenger preferred thereof, give precedence to what Allāh and His Messenger gave precedence to, and defer what Allāh and His Messenger deferred. And one must refer any disputed matter back to Allāh and His Messenger. Whatever is clear [from the sources] is to be followed; whatever is ambiguous (mushtabah) requires clarification. As for matters involving legitimate scholarly reasoning (ijtihādiyāt) where disagreement occurs, but which Allāh and His Messenger have permitted—such as the ijihād of the Companions regarding delaying the 'Aṣr prayer beyond its usual time on the day of [the campaign against] Banū Qurayzah versus performing it on time (the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not censure either group); or how some Companions cut down the palm trees of Banū al-Naḍīr while others did not, and Allāh affirmed both approaches [in the Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-Ḥaṣhr: 5]; or as Allāh mentioned concerning Dāwūd (David) and Sulaymān (Solomon), that they both judged regarding the field, but He gave Sulaymān the deeper understanding (fahm) of the ruling, yet He praised both of them for their knowledge and judgment; and as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: '{When a judge exercises ijihād and reaches the correct conclusion, he receives two rewards; and if he exercises ijihād and errs, he receives one reward.}' [Agreed upon]—in all such cases, whatever Allāh and His Messenger have allowed scope for is accepted as having scope, and whatever Allāh and His Messenger have pardoned is pardoned.

Furthermore, whatever the Muslims have agreed upon (ittafaqa ‘alayhi)—whether it be an obligation (ijāb), a prohibition (taḥrīm), a recommendation (istiḥbāb), a permissibility (ibāḥah), or their mutual forgiveness for errors made [in ijtihād] and their mutual acceptance of differing conclusions reached through valid ijtihād—all this falls under what Allāh and His Messenger have commanded. For indeed, Allāh and His Messenger commanded adherence to the Jamā’ah (the unified body) and forbade furqah (division). And He indicated that the Ummah will not collectively agree upon misguidance (ḍalālah), as is elaborated upon in the relevant discussions [in Islāmīc scholarship].

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah – may Allāh sanctify his soul – was asked: Regarding the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ‘My Ummah (community/nation) will split into seventy-three sects (firaq)’: What are these sects? And what is the core belief (mu’taqad) of each of these groups?

He responded: All praise be to Allāh. The Ḥadīth (prophetic report) is authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) and widely transmitted (mashhūr) in the major collections of Sunan and Masānid, such as the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, An-Nasā’ī, and others. Its wording is: {The Jews split into seventy-one sects, all of them are in the Fire except one. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, all of them are in the Fire except one. And this Ummah will split into seventy-three sects, all of them are in the Fire except one.} [Sunan Abī Dāwūd: 4596, Sunan At-Tirmidhī: 2640, Sunan Ibn Mājah: 3991]. In another wording, it mentions {seventy-three paths (millah)}. In one narration, {They asked: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, who is the Saved Sect (al-Firqah an-Nājiyah)?’ He replied: ‘Those who are upon [the path] that I and my Companions are upon today.’} [Sunan At-Tirmidhī: 2641]. And in another narration, he said: {It is the Jamā’ah (the main body of Muslims); the Hand of Allāh is upon the Jamā’ah.} [Sunan At-Tirmidhī: 2167]. For this reason, the Saved Sect is described as Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā’ah (the People of the Prophetic Way and the Main Body/Community), and they represent the overwhelming majority (al-jumhūr al-akbar) and the largest body (as-sawād al-a’zam).

As for the remaining sects, they are the people of deviation (shudhūdh), division (tafarruq), religious innovations (bida’), and capricious desires (ahwā’). None of these individual sects reach anywhere near the numbers of the Saved Sect, let alone equaling it; indeed, some of these sects may be extremely small in number. The defining characteristic of these sects is their departure from the Book (the Qur’an), the Sunnah (the Prophetic Way), and the Ijmā’ (scholarly consensus). Therefore, whoever adheres to the Book, the Sunnah, and the Ijmā’ is considered among Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā’ah.

Regarding the specific identification of these sects, people have authored works concerning them and mentioned them in books detailing various theological positions (kutub al-maqālāt). However, definitively asserting that this particular described sect...<sup>1</sup> is one of the seventy-two requires evidence (dalīl). For indeed, Allāh has forbidden speaking without knowledge (‘ilm) in general, and He has specifically forbidden speaking about Him without knowledge. He, the Exalted, stated: {Say: My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—both open and secret—and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has sent down no authority, and that you say about Allāh what you do not know.} [Al-A’rāf: 33]. And He, the Exalted, said: {O mankind, eat from whatever is upon the earth [that is] lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.} {He only commands you to evil

<sup>1</sup> A word here was unclear in the original manuscript.

and immorality and to say about Allāh what you do not know.} [Al-Baqarah: 168-169]. And He, the Exalted, said: {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.} [Al-Isrā': 36].

Furthermore, many people speak about these sects based on conjecture (ẓann) and personal inclination (hawā). They designate their own group—the one affiliated with and loyal to their particular followed leader—as Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah, and label anyone who opposes them as people of innovation (Ahl al-Bida'). This is manifest error (dalāl mubīn). For indeed, the people of truth and the Sunnah have no ultimate figure to be followed except the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), {who does not speak of [his own] desire; it is naught but revelation revealed} [An-Najm: 3-4]. He is the one who must be believed in everything he informed, and obeyed in everything he commanded. This status is not held by any other figure among the Imāms (leaders/scholars); rather, the statement of every single person may be accepted or rejected, except for the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him).

Therefore, whoever elevates any individual other than the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) to a position where loving and agreeing with that individual makes one part of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah, while opposing him makes one part of Ahl al-Bid'ah wal-Furqah (the People of Innovation and Division)—as is found among various groups who follow specific Imāms in matters of Kalām (speculative theology) or other religious affairs—such a person is himself among the people of innovation, error, and division.

From this, it becomes evident that the people most deserving of being the Saved Sect are Ahl al-Ḥadīth was-Sunnah (the People of the Prophetic Reports and the Prophetic Way). They are those who have no followed leader for whom they display partisan loyalty (ta'aṣṣub) except the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). They are the most knowledgeable of people regarding his sayings and states, the most adept at distinguishing the authentic from the weak among them, and their Imāms are jurists deeply versed in the Sunnah, possessing profound understanding of its meanings and dedicated to following it in belief, action, and love—showing loyalty to those who uphold it and enmity to those who oppose it. They are the ones who refer ambiguous statements back to what the Messenger brought of the Book and Wisdom (Sunnah). They do not establish a particular theological position and make it a foundation of their religion or a core tenet of their discourse unless it is firmly established in what the Messenger brought. Instead, they make what the Messenger was sent with—the Book and Wisdom—the fundamental source (aṣl) which they believe in and rely upon.

Regarding matters wherein people have disputed—such as issues concerning the Divine Attributes (Ṣifāt), Predestination (Qadar), the Divine Threat (Wa'īd), Names and Rulings (al-Asmā' wal-Aḥkām), Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil (al-Amr bil-Ma'rūf wan-Nahy 'an al-Munkar), and other such topics—they refer them back to Allāh and His Messenger. They clarify ambiguous terms (alfāz mujmalah) over which the people of division and disagreement have contended. Whatever meanings align with the Book and the Sunnah, they affirm; whatever meanings contradict the Book and the Sunnah, they reject. They do not follow conjecture (ẓann) or what the souls desire (hawā), for following conjecture is ignorance (jahīl), and following the soul's desire without guidance from Allāh is injustice (ẓulm). The totality of evil stems from ignorance and injustice. Allāh the Exalted said: {...and man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust (ẓalūm) and ignorant (jahūl).} [Al-Aḥzāb: 72] until the end of the Sūrah.

Allāh mentioned repentance (Tawbah) [in the continuation of the verse in Al-Aḥzāb] due to His knowledge, Glorified and Exalted is He, that every human inevitably possesses some degree of ignorance and injustice. Then, Allāh turns in forgiveness to whom He

wills. Thus, the believing servant continually has aspects of the truth clarified for him which he was previously ignorant of, and he turns back from actions wherein he was unjust—the least of which is injustice towards his own soul. As Allāh the Exalted stated: {Allāh is the Ally (Walī) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light.} [Al-Baqarah: 257]. And He, the Exalted, said: {It is He who sends down upon His Servant clear verses that He may bring you out from darkneses into the light.} [Al-Ḥadīd: 9]. And He, the Exalted, said: {Alif, Lām, Rā. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that you might bring mankind out of darkneses into the light.} [Ibrāhīm: 1].

It should also be understood that the groups affiliated with specific followed figures in the foundational principles of religion (Uṣūl ad-Dīn) and speculative theology (Kalām) exist at various levels. Among them are those who have contradicted the Sunnah in major foundational matters, while others may have only contradicted the Sunnah in subtle or minor issues. There are also those who have refuted other groups that are even further removed from the Sunnah than they are; such individuals may be praised for the falsehood they refuted and the truth they affirmed. However, in their refutation, they might have transgressed the bounds of justice, denying some aspect of the truth while affirming some aspect of falsehood. Consequently, they might have refuted a major innovation (bid'ah) with a lesser innovation, or countered one falsehood with another, albeit lesser, falsehood. This is the condition of most proponents of Kalām who affiliate themselves with Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah.

Such individuals, provided they do not make their innovation a doctrine upon which they separate from the main body of Muslims—forming alliances and enmities based on it—their error falls into the category of mistake (khaṭa'). And Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, forgives the believers for their mistakes in such matters. This is why many of the Salaf (pious predecessors) and Imāms of this Ummah fell into similar situations: they held positions based on their ijtihād (scholarly reasoning) which happened to contradict what is established in the Book and the Sunnah. This is distinct from those who show loyalty only to those who agree with them and enmity towards those who disagree, thereby dividing the Muslim community, declaring dissenters to be disbelievers (kuffār) or open sinners (fussāq) while excusing supporters in matters of opinion and ijtihād, and even deeming it permissible to fight those who disagree with them but not those who agree. These latter individuals are among the people of division and discord (ahl at-tafarruq wal-ikhtilāfāt).

For this reason, the first among the people of innovation to separate from the main body of Muslims were the Khawārij (lit. 'those who went out'), the renegades (al-māriqūn). Authentic Aḥādīth concerning the Khawārij have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through ten different chains, narrated by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ; Al-Bukhārī also narrated several of these chains. The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) fought them alongside the Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Commander of the Faithful), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The Companions did not differ regarding the legitimacy of fighting the Khawārij, unlike their disagreement concerning the battles of fitnah (trial/tribulation) at the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Ṣiffin. In those conflicts, they were divided into three groups: one group fought with one side, another group fought with the other side, and a third group abstained from fighting and remained neutral. Textual evidences (nuṣūṣ) indicate the preferability of this latter stance [of abstention during fitnah].

So, when the Khawārij separated from the main body of Muslims, declared them disbelievers (kuffār), and deemed it permissible to fight them, the Sunnah came with clear descriptions of them, such as the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: {One of

you would belittle his own prayer compared to their prayer, his fasting compared to their fasting, and his recitation compared to their recitation. They recite the Qur'an, but it does not go beyond their throats. They will pass through Islām like an arrow passes through its target. Wherever you find them, kill them, for indeed, there is a reward with Allāh on the Day of Resurrection for whoever kills them.} [Al-Bukhārī: 3344, Muslim: 1066].

Indeed, the first of their kind emerged during the time of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). When this man observed the Prophet's (peace be upon him) distribution [of spoils], {he said: 'O Muḥammad, be just! For you have not been just!' The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied to him: 'Woe to you! Who would be just if I am not just? You would indeed be ruined and lost if I were not just!' One of his Companions then said to him: 'Allow me, O Messenger of Allāh, to strike the neck of this hypocrite (munāfiq)! But he (peace be upon him) said: 'Leave him, for indeed, from the offspring (ḍi'ḍi) of this man will emerge a people, one of whom you would belittle your prayer compared to their prayer, your fasting compared to their fasting, and your recitation compared to their recitation...'} [Al-Bukhārī: 3344, Muslim: 1066] continuing the Ḥadīth. Thus, the origin of innovations (bida') was challenging the Sunnah based on conjecture (ẓann) and personal inclination (hawā), just as Iblīs challenged the command of his Lord based on his own opinion and desire.

As for identifying the doomed sects, the earliest scholars we know of who spoke about declaring them misguided were Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ and then 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak—both of whom were eminent Imāms among the most distinguished leaders of the Muslims. They stated: The roots of innovation (uṣūl al-bida') are four: the Rāfiḍah (extreme Shī'ah who reject the first three Caliphs), the Khawārij, the Qadariyyah (deniers of predestination), and the Murji'ah (those who exclude actions from faith). When Ibn al-Mubārak was asked, 'And the Jahmiyyah (followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān, known for negating divine attributes)?' he replied that they were not part of the Ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He used to say: 'We can quote the words of the Jews and Christians, but we cannot bring ourselves to quote the words of the Jahmiyyah.'

This statement [of Ibn al-Mubārak regarding the Jahmiyyah] was followed by a group of scholars, including some companions of Imām Aḥmad and others. They argued that the Jahmiyyah are disbelievers (kuffār) and thus are not included within the seventy-two sects mentioned in the Ḥadīth, just as the Munāfiqūn (hypocrites) who conceal disbelief while outwardly professing Islām—also known as Zanādiqah (heretics)—are not included. Others, also from the companions of Aḥmad and others, held that the Jahmiyyah are included within the seventy-two sects, making the roots of innovation five. According to this latter view, each of the five primary innovator groups would then subdivide into twelve sects ( $5 \times 12 = 60$ , implying further divisions to reach 72). According to the former view [excluding the Jahmiyyah], each of the four primary innovator groups would subdivide into eighteen sects ( $4 \times 18 = 72$ ).

This difference is based on another underlying principle: the issue of Takfīr (declaration of disbelief) concerning Ahl al-Bida' (people of innovation). Those who excluded the Jahmiyyah [from the 72 sects] did not declare them disbelievers [in this specific context of counting sects within the Ummah], nor did they declare other people of innovation disbelievers. Instead, they considered them subject to the Divine Threat (Ahl al-Wa'īd), placing them in the category of open sinners (fussāq) and the disobedient ('uṣāh). They interpret the Prophet's statement {all of them are in the Fire} similarly to warnings issued concerning other major sins, like consuming the orphan's wealth, as Allāh the Exalted said: {Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies Fire.} [An-Nisā': 10].

As for those who included the Jahmiyyah within the seventy-two sects, they hold two positions: Some among them declare all people of innovation to be disbelievers. However, this view was primarily articulated by some later scholars affiliated with the Imāms or by the Mutakallimūn (speculative theologians). As for the Salaf and the early Imāms, they did not dispute the fact that the Murji'ah and the Shī'ah Mufaḍḍilah (those Shī'ah who merely preferred 'Alī over the first two Caliphs without rejecting them or declaring them disbelievers) and similar groups were not to be declared disbelievers. The textual statements from Imām Aḥmad are consistent in not declaring these groups disbelievers, even though some of his companions narrated differing opinions from him or within his school of thought (madhhab) regarding the Takfīr of all Ahl al-Bida'—these groups included. Some even went so far as to claim these groups would abide eternally in Hellfire, but this is an error attributed to his madhhab and contradicts the Sharī'ah (Islāmic Law).

Others [among those who included the Jahmiyyah in the 72 sects] did not declare any of these groups disbelievers, equating Ahl al-Bida' with Ahl al-Ma'aṣī (people of sin). They argued: Just as it is a foundational principle of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah that they do not declare anyone a disbeliever merely on account of a sin, likewise, they do not declare anyone a disbeliever merely on account of an innovation.

What is authentically transmitted from the Salaf and the Imāms are statements making general Takfīr of the 'pure Jahmiyyah' (al-Jahmiyyah al-maḥḍah)—those who deny the Divine Attributes. The reality of their doctrine implies that Allāh does not speak, cannot be seen, is not distinct from creation, and possesses no knowledge, power, hearing, sight, or life; rather, [they claim] the Qur'an is created, and the inhabitants of Paradise will not see Him, just as the inhabitants of Hellfire will not see Him, and similar such assertions. As for the Khawārij and the Rāfiḍah, there is disagreement and hesitation regarding their Takfīr reported from Imām Aḥmad and others. Regarding the Qadariyyah, those who denied Allāh's foreknowledge and the writing of destiny were declared disbelievers [by some Salaf], whereas those who affirmed Allāh's knowledge but denied His creation of human actions were not declared disbelievers [by the same standard].

The decisive resolution in this matter rests upon mentioning two foundational principles: The first principle: It must be understood that among those who outwardly perform prayer (Ahl aṣ-Ṣalāh), anyone who is truly a disbeliever (kāfir) in reality can only be a hypocrite (munāfiq). Since Allāh sent Muḥammad (peace be upon him), revealed the Qur'an to him, and he migrated to Madīnah, mankind became categorized into three groups: believers in him; disbelievers who openly manifest their disbelief; and hypocrites who conceal their disbelief. This is why Allāh mentioned these three categories at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Baqarah: He dedicated four verses to describing the believers, two verses to the disbelievers, and thirteen verses (bid'a 'ashara āyah) to the hypocrites.

Allāh has mentioned the disbelievers and the hypocrites together in numerous places in the Qur'an, such as His statement: {And do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites} [Al-Aḥzāb: 48]. And His statement: {Indeed, Allāh will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers in Hell all together} [An-Nisā': 140]. And His statement [addressing the hypocrites]: {So today no ransom will be taken from you, nor from those who disbelieved} [Al-Ḥadīd: 15]. He mentions them alongside the disbelievers to distinguish them [from the believers] due to their outward display of Islām; otherwise, inwardly, they are worse than the [open] disbelievers, as Allāh the Exalted stated: {Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths (ad-dark al-asfal) of the Fire} [An-Nisā': 145]. And as He said: {And do not pray [the funeral prayer, O Muḥammad] over any of them who has died—ever—nor stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allāh and His

Messenger} [At-Tawbah: 84]. And as He said: {Say, 'Spend willingly or unwillingly; never will it be accepted from you. Indeed, you have been a defiantly disobedient people (qawman fāsiqin).'} {And what prevents their expenditures from being accepted from them but that they have disbelieved in Allāh and in His Messenger, and that they come not to prayer except while they are lazy, and that they spend not except while they are unwilling.} [At-Tawbah: 53-54].

Given this, among the people of innovation (Ahl al-Bida'), there can be the hypocrite-heretic (al-munāfiq az-zindīq); such a person is undoubtedly a disbeliever. This type is frequently found among the Rāfiḍah and the Jahmiyyah, for indeed their leaders were often hypocrites and heretics. The originator of Rafḍ (the doctrine of the Rāfiḍah) was a hypocrite. Likewise, Tajahhum (the doctrine of the Jahmiyyah) has its roots in heresy (zandaqah) and hypocrisy (nifāq). This is why the heretical hypocrites among the Qaramitah (an extreme Ismā'īlī sect), the Bāṭiniyyah (esoteric sects), the pseudo-philosophers (al-mutafalsifah), and their ilk tend to gravitate towards the Rāfiḍah and the Jahmiyyah due to their ideological proximity.

However, there are also people of innovation who possess genuine faith (īmān) both inwardly and outwardly, but due to ignorance (jahl) and wrongdoing (zulm), they have erred in matters pertaining to the Sunnah. Such a person is neither a disbeliever (kāfir) nor a hypocrite (munāfiq). Furthermore, he might commit transgression and injustice, thereby becoming a fāsiq (open sinner) or 'āṣī (disobedient one); or he might be mistaken due to interpretation (mukhti' muta'awwil), in which case his error may be forgiven; and alongside his error, he might possess a level of faith and piety (taqwā) that grants him a corresponding degree of Allāh's friendship and support (wilāyah). This concludes the first foundational principle.

The second foundational principle: A statement (maqālah) itself might constitute disbelief (kufr)—such as denying the obligation of prayer (Ṣalāh), Zakāh (obligatory charity), fasting (Ṣiyām), or Hajj (pilgrimage), or declaring permissible fornication (zinā), alcohol (khamr), gambling (māysir), or marriage to those within prohibited degrees (dhawāt al-mahārim). However, the person uttering such a statement might be someone whom the message [establishing its prohibition or obligation] has not reached. Likewise, someone who denies it might not be declared a disbeliever, such as a person new to Islām or someone raised in a remote desert region where the detailed laws of Islām have not reached him. Such an individual is not judged to be a disbeliever for denying something revealed to the Messenger if he did not know it was revealed to the Messenger.

The doctrines of the Jahmiyyah fall into this category [of statements that are inherently kufr], as they constitute a denial of the true nature of the Lord, the Exalted, and a denial of what Allāh revealed to His Messenger. Their doctrines are erroneous from three perspectives: First: The textual evidences (nuṣūṣ) in the Book, the Sunnah, and the Ijmā' that contradict their views are extremely numerous and well-known; they only reject them through distortion (taḥrīf). Second: The true implication of their doctrine is the negation of the Creator (ta'ṭīl aṣ-Ṣāni'), even if some among them are unaware that their position necessitates this negation. Just as the foundation of faith (īmān) is the affirmation of Allāh, the foundation of disbelief (kufr) is the denial of Allāh. Third: They contradict what all religious traditions (milal) and all people of sound innate disposition (fiṭrah salimah) have agreed upon.

Despite this [inherent error in Jahmī doctrines], many of their specific tenets may remain obscure to numerous people of faith, to the extent that these believers might assume the truth lies with the Jahmiyyah due to the specious arguments (shubuhāt) they present.

Such believers remain believers in Allāh and His Messenger, both inwardly and outwardly; the matter has merely become confused and ambiguous for them, just as matters became confused for other types of innovators. Therefore, these individuals [who adopt such views out of confusion or misinterpretation, without realizing the implications] are definitely not disbelievers (*kuffār*). Rather, among them may be the *fāsiq* (open sinner) or the *'aṣī* (disobedient one); or among them may be the mistaken one whose error is forgiven; and such a person might possess a level of faith and piety (*taqwā*) that grants him a corresponding degree of Allāh's friendship and support (*wilāyah*) proportionate to his faith and piety.

The foundational principle of Ahlus Sunnah by which they distinguish themselves from the Khawārij, the Jahmiyyah, the Mu'tazilah (rationalist school emphasizing justice and free will, often adopting Jahmī views on attributes), and the Murji'ah is that faith (*īmān*) varies in degree and can be partial (*yatafāḍalu wa yataba'aḍ*). As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed (or atom - *mithqāl dharratin*) of faith will be brought out of the Fire.} [Al-Bukhārī: 44, Muslim: 193]. Consequently, Allāh's friendship and support (*wilāyah*) also varies in degree and can be partial according to the level of faith.

Having understood the roots of innovation, the core doctrine of the Khawārij is that they declare Muslims disbelievers on account of major sins (*yukaffirūna bidh-dhanb*). They also deem things to be sins which are not actually sins, and they advocate following the Qur'an alone, rejecting any Sunnah that appears to contradict the literal meaning of the Qur'an—even if the Sunnah is mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*). They declare anyone who opposes them a disbeliever (*kāfir*) and, considering them apostates, deem permissible actions against them (like killing and taking wealth) that they would not deem permissible against an original disbeliever (*kāfir aṣlī*). This aligns with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) description of them: {They kill the people of Islām and leave the people of idols.} [Al-Bukhārī: 3344, Muslim: 1066]. Based on this, they declared 'Uthmān, 'Alī, and their followers disbelievers, and they declared both warring factions at Ṣiffin disbelievers, among other such vile assertions.

The core doctrine of the Rāfiḍah is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) explicitly designated 'Alī [as his successor] with a text (*naṣṣ*) that leaves no room for excuse; that 'Alī is an infallible Imām (*imām ma'ṣūm*), and whoever opposes him is a disbeliever. They claim that the Muhājirūn (Emigrants) and the Anṣār (Helpers) concealed this designation, disbelieved in the infallible Imām, followed their own desires, altered the religion, changed the Sharī'ah, oppressed, and transgressed—indeed, they claim all but a small group of a dozen or so Companions became disbelievers. They further assert that Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and their like were always hypocrites. Some might say they initially believed but then apostatized. Most Rāfiḍah declare anyone who opposes their doctrine a disbeliever, calling themselves 'the believers' (*al-mu'minūn*) and their opponents 'disbelievers' (*kuffār*). They consider Muslim lands where their doctrines are not dominant to be lands of apostasy (*dār riddah*), worse even than the lands of polytheists and Christians. Consequently, they often ally themselves with Jews, Christians, and polytheists against the Muslim majority, showing enmity and waging war against them. This is known from their alliances with polytheist disbelievers against the Muslim majority, their alliances with the European Christians (*al-lfrinj an-Naṣārā*) against the Muslim majority, and their alliances with the Jews against the Muslim majority.

From among the Rāfiḍah emerged the primary sources of heresy (*zandaqah*) and hypocrisy (*nifāq*), such as the heresy of the Qaramitah, the Bāṭiniyyah, and their ilk. There is no doubt that they are the furthest of all innovator sects from the Book and the Sunnah.

This is why they became widely known among the common people for their opposition to the Sunnah, to the extent that the majority of common folk recognize no opposite to a 'Sunni' except a 'Rāfiḍī.' When someone says, 'I am a Sunni,' it often simply means, 'I am not a Rāfiḍī.'

Undoubtedly, the Rāfiḍah are worse than the Khawārij. While the Khawārij, in the early days of Islām, raised the sword against Ahl al-Jamā'ah (the Main Body), the Rāfiḍah's alliance with disbelievers is more detrimental than the swords of the Khawārij. For the Qaramitah, the Ismā'īliyyah, and similar groups who wage war against Ahl al-Jamā'ah are affiliated with the Rāfiḍah. Furthermore, the Khawārij were generally known for their (albeit misguided) truthfulness, whereas the Rāfiḍah are notorious for lying (kadhib). The Khawārij 'passed through' Islām [like an arrow through its target], while these [Rāfiḍah] have openly opposed Islām.

As for the 'pure Qadariyyah' (those whose primary deviation was denying predestination without adopting other major heresies), they are far better than the Rāfiḍah and closer to the Book and the Sunnah. However, the Mu'tazilah and other Qadariyyah groups were also Jahmiyyah [in their denial of attributes]. They would sometimes declare their opponents disbelievers and deem the blood of Muslims permissible, thus resembling those [more extreme groups like the Khawārij and Rāfiḍah].

As for the Murji'ah, their innovation is not among these severe ones (al-bida' al-mughallazah). Indeed, groups of jurists (Ahl al-Fiqh) and worshippers (Ahl al-'Ibādah) adopted aspects of their views, and they were generally considered among Ahlus Sunnah until their position became more severe due to additional extreme doctrines they incorporated. Because certain well-known and followed figures were associated with Irjā' (the doctrine of the Murji'ah) and Tafḍīl (preferring 'Alī over Abū Bakr and 'Umar), the renowned Imāms of the Sunnah spoke out in condemnation of the Murji'ah and the Mufaḍḍilah to discourage adherence to their views. An example is the statement of Sufyān ath-Thawrī: 'Whoever prefers 'Alī over Abū Bakr and the two Shaykhs [Abū Bakr and 'Umar] has disparaged the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, and I do not think any of his deeds ascend to Allāh alongside that,' or words to that effect. He said this when the view of preferring 'Alī was attributed to some Kūfan Imāms. Similarly, Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī said: 'Whoever prefers 'Alī over 'Uthmān has disparaged the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār.' He stated this when he heard it attributed to some Kūfan Imāms, although it is reported that [the person attributed with the view] retracted it. Likewise, Ath-Thawrī, Mālik, Ash-Shāfi'ī, and others condemned the Murji'ah when some well-known figures were associated with Irjā'.

The statements of Imām Aḥmad on this subject are consistent with the statements of the preceding Imāms of guidance; he did not introduce any new, innovated opinion. Rather, he manifested and clarified the Sunnah, defended it, exposed the condition of its opponents, strove for its cause, and patiently endured harm for its sake when desires (ahwā') and innovations (bida') became widespread. Allāh the Exalted has said: {And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.} [As-Sajdah: 24]. Thus, leadership (Imāmah) in religion is attained through patience (ṣabr) and certainty (yaqīn). Because Imām Aḥmad fulfilled these qualities, the title 'Imām of the Sunnah' became famously associated with his name, and he became a followed figure for those after him, just as he was a follower of those before him. Otherwise, the Sunnah itself is simply that which the Companions received from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), which the Tābi'ūn (Successors) received from them, and then their successors, continuing until the Day of Resurrection—even if some Imāms possessed greater knowledge of it and demonstrated

greater patience in upholding it. And Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, knows best and is most wise. And Allāh knows best.

## Section

Principle: Deviation from the middle path (al-wasat) is common in most matters among the majority of people. An example is their opposing stances regarding certain actions: some adopt an action as part of their religion (dīn), considering it obligatory (wājib), recommended (mustahabb), or generally commanded (ma'mūr bih fi-l-jumlah). Others, conversely, believe the same action to be disliked (makrūh), forbidden (ḥarām), or generally prohibited (manhiyy 'anh fi-l-jumlah).

An example of this is listening to musical performance (samā' al-ghinā'). A faction among the Sufis (Mutaṣawwifah) and ascetics (Mutafaqqirah) adopts it as part of their religion. Even if they do not explicitly state with their tongues or believe in their hearts that it is an act of drawing near to Allāh (qurbah)—for their 'religion' is often based on spiritual states (ḥāl) rather than creedal belief (i'tiqād)—their state (ḥāl) and practice ('amal) involve finding it pleasing in their hearts and loving it as an act of devotion (diyānatan) and seeking closeness to Allāh. Some among them might indeed hold this belief and state it verbally. Others among them may believe and say it is not an act of drawing near, yet their state reflects their view of it as something spiritually beneficial (qurbah), advantageous for the religion, and corrective for the heart. Some go to extremes (yaḡhlū) regarding it, to the point of considering all who abstain from it as excluded from the friendship (wilāyah) of Allāh and its fruits, such as attaining high spiritual stations (manāzil 'aliyyah).

Opposing them are those who reject all forms of musical performance, declare it forbidden (yuḥarrimuhu), and make no distinction between the singing of young girls and women during joyous occasions (afrāḥ) and the singing of others, or their singing outside of joyous occasions. Some go to extremes regarding those who engage in it, deeming them all impious sinners (fussāq) or even disbelievers (kuffār).

These two extremes—either adopting something not legislated (ghayr mashrū') as religion, or forbidding what Allāh has not forbidden—are characteristic of the religion of the pre-Islāmic era of ignorance (Jāhiliyyah) and the Christians, practices for which Allāh censured them. As Allāh Almighty says: {And those who associate others with Allāh say, 'If Allāh had willed, we would not have worshipped anything other than Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything other than Him.'} [An-Naḥl: 35]. And Allāh Almighty says, in a hadith narrated by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ from 'Iyāḍ ibn Ḥimār: {Indeed, I created My servants inclining to truth (ḥunafā'), but the devils came to them and diverted them, forbade for them what I had permitted for them, and commanded them to associate partners with Me for which I had sent down no authority.'} [Muslim, 2865]. And regarding the Christians, He says: {...nor forbid what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, nor adopt the religion of truth...} [At-Tawbah: 29].

Another example: Some people may exhibit negligence (taqṣīr) regarding commanded duties or transgression (i'tidā') regarding prohibited matters—whether arising from ambiguities (shubuhāt) or desires (shahawāt). In response, others might react either with excessive transgression (i'tidā') in commanding good and forbidding evil, or conversely, with negligence (taqṣīr) in commanding good and forbidding evil.

This negligence (taqṣīr) and transgression (i'tidā')—whether concerning what is commanded or forbidden by the Sharī'ah, or concerning the very act of commanding and forbidding people—is what earned the People of the Book their punishment, as

Allāh stated: {Humiliation has been struck upon them wherever they are overtaken, except for a rope [i.e., covenant] from Allāh and a rope [i.e., treaty] from the people. And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allāh... That is because they disbelieved in the verses of Allāh and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed ('aṣaw) and used to transgress (ya'tadūn).} [Āl 'Imrān: 112]. He attributed this outcome to disobedience (ma'ṣiyah) and transgression (i'tidā'). Disobedience (ma'ṣiyah) involves violating a command, which constitutes negligence (taqṣīr). Transgression (i'tidā') involves exceeding the limits (mujāwazat al-ḥadd).

Similarly, anyone entrusted with wealth (mu'taman 'alā māl) becomes liable if he is negligent (qaṣṣara wa farrata) regarding his duties—which is disobedience (ma'ṣiyah)—or if he transgresses (i'tadā) through betrayal (khiyānah) or other means. This is why Allāh says: {...and do not cooperate in sin (ithm) and aggression ('udwān)...} [Al-Mā'idah: 2]. Here, sin (al-ithm) corresponds to disobedience (al-ma'ṣiyah)—and Allāh knows best.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'Indeed, Allāh has ordained obligatory duties (farā'id), so do not neglect them; He has forbidden sacred limits (maḥārim), so do not violate them; He has set boundaries (ḥudūd), so do not transgress them; and He has remained silent about certain things out of mercy for you, not out of forgetfulness, so do not inquire about them.'} [Ad-Dāraquṭnī]. Thus, disobedience (ma'ṣiyah) involves neglecting obligatory duties (taḍyī' al-farā'id) and violating sacred limits (intihāk al-maḥārim)—which means contravening commands and prohibitions. Transgression (i'tidā') involves exceeding the boundaries (ḥudūd) of permissible things (mubāḥāt).

Allāh Almighty says [describing the Prophet]: {He commands them what is right (ma'rūf) and forbids them what is wrong (munkar), makes lawful for them the good things (ṭayyibāt) and prohibits for them the evil things (khabā'ith)...} [Al-A'rāf: 157]. Here, disobedience (ma'ṣiyah) is contravening his commands and prohibitions, while transgression (i'tidā') is exceeding what he made lawful into what he prohibited. Likewise—and Allāh knows best—consider the supplication: {'Our Lord, forgive us our sins (dhunūbanā) and our excess (isrāfanā) in our affairs...'} [Āl 'Imrān: 147]. Sins (dhunūb) correspond to disobedience (ma'ṣiyah), and excess (isrāf) corresponds to transgression (i'tidā') and exceeding the limit.

Know that 'exceeding the limit' (mujāwazat al-ḥadd) is itself a type of violating a prohibition (nahy), because transgressing the limit (i'tidā' al-ḥadd) is forbidden (muḥarram) and prohibited (manhiyy 'anh). Thus, it falls under the category of prohibited actions. However, prohibited actions can be divided into two types: (1) Things absolutely prohibited, like disbelief (kufr). Engaging in these is sin (ithm) and constitutes violating a prohibition. (2) Things where certain types or amounts are permitted, but exceeding those types or amounts is forbidden. Engaging in this excess constitutes aggression or transgression ('udwān).

Similarly, transgression ('udwān) can occur regarding commanded acts, just as it occurs regarding permissible acts. Exceeding what is commanded may constitute forbidden transgression ('udwān muḥarram). Alternatively, exceeding the command might be absolutely permissible (mubāḥ muṭlaqan), or it might be permissible up to a certain limit (ghāyah), beyond which any addition becomes transgression ('udwān).

Because of this distinction, it is said regarding the Sharī'ah that it comprises: commands (amr), prohibitions (nahy), the lawful (ḥalāl), the unlawful (ḥarām), obligatory duties (farā'id), limits (ḥudūd), recommended practices (sunan), and rulings (aḥkām). The 'obligatory duties' (al-farā'id) represent the specified measures within commanded acts. The 'limits' (al-ḥudūd) represent the boundaries of what is permissible, whether related

to commanded acts or other permissible matters.

## Section

Shaykh al-Islām (may Allāh sanctify his soul) said: In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. From Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah to whomever this letter may reach among the Muslims who ascribe themselves to the Sunnah and the Jamā'ah (the Prophetic Way and the Main Body of Muslims); who belong to the community of the Shaykh, the Gnostic (al-'Ārif), the Exemplar (al-Qudwah), Abū al-Barakāt 'Adī ibn Musāfir al-Umawī (may Allāh have mercy upon him), and those who follow their path – may Allāh grant them success in traversing His way, aid them in obedience to Him and obedience to His Messenger (peace be upon him), make them hold fast to His strong rope (ḥabl), guide them to the path of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor: the Prophets, the truthful (ṣiddīqīn), the martyrs (shuhadā'), and the righteous (ṣāliḥīn); and may He keep them far from the path of those who possess deviation and crookedness, those who depart from the Sacred Law (Shir'ah) and the Methodology (Minhāj) with which Allāh sent His Messenger (peace be upon him); so that they may be among those upon whom Allāh has bestowed the greatest favor through adherence to the Book and the Sunnah. Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

To proceed: We praise Allāh before you – He besides Whom there is no other god worthy of worship. He is deserving of all praise, and He has power over all things. We ask Him to send prayers upon the Seal of the Prophets and the Master of the Children of Ādam (peace be upon him), the most honored of creation to his Lord, the nearest of them to Him in station, and the greatest of them in rank before Him: Muḥammad, His servant and His Messenger. May Allāh send abundant prayers and peace upon him, his family, and his companions.

Thereafter: Indeed, Allāh sent Muḥammad (peace be upon him) with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all other religions, and sufficient is Allāh as a Witness. He sent down the Book to him in truth, confirming what came before it of the Scripture and superseding and guarding it). He perfected the religion for him and his Ummah (nation), completed His favor upon them, and made them the best nation produced for mankind. They complete seventy nations; they are the best of them and the most honored before Allāh. He made them a justly balanced (wasat) nation – meaning, upright and chosen – and for that reason, He made them witnesses over mankind. He guided them to that religion with which He sent all His Messengers, the religion He legislated for all His creation. Then, He specifically distinguished and favored them with the Sacred Law (Shir'ah) and Methodology (Minhāj) that He established for them.

The first category [the universal religion] includes the fundamentals of faith (uṣūl al-īmān). The highest and most excellent of these is Tawḥīd (the absolute Oneness of Allāh), which is the testimony that Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh). As Allāh Almighty stated: {And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me'} [Al-Anbiyā': 25]. And He stated: {And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allāh and avoid Ṭāghūt (false deities)'} [An-Naḥl: 36]. And He stated: {And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers: Did We appoint deities besides the Most Gracious to be worshipped?} [Az-Zukhruf: 45]. And He stated: {He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā} [Ash-Shūrā: 13]. And He stated: { [Allāh said], 'O messengers, eat from the good foods and work righteousness. Indeed, I,

of what you do, am Knowing.) {And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me'} [Al-Mu'minūn: 51-52].

Also included [in the universal fundamentals] is faith in all of Allāh's Books and all of His Messengers, as Allāh Almighty stated: {Say, [O believers], 'We have believed in Allāh and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Ishāq and Ya'qūb and the Descendants [al-Asbāt], and what was given to Mūsā and 'Isā and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him'} [Al-Baqarah: 136]. And like His statement: {And say, 'I have believed in what Allāh has revealed of the Scripture, and I have been commanded to do justice among you'} [Ash-Shūrā: 15]. And like His statement: {The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination'} [Al-Baqarah: 285].

Also included is faith in the Last Day and the reward (thawāb) and punishment ('iqāb) it entails, just as He informed about the faith of previous believers among the nations, saying: {Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muḥammad] – those [among them] who believed in Allāh and the Last Day and did righteousness – will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve} [Al-Baqarah: 62]. Likewise are the fundamental principles of the divine laws (uṣūl ash-sharā'i'), as mentioned in Sūrah Al-An'ām, Al-A'rāf, Subḥān [Al-Isrā'], and other Makkan Sūrahs. These include His command to worship Him alone, associating no partner with Him; His command regarding kindness to parents, maintaining ties of kinship, fulfilling covenants, being just in speech, giving full measure and weight, giving [charity] to the asker and the deprived; the prohibition of killing a soul unjustly, the prohibition of shameful deeds (fawāḥish), both apparent and hidden, the prohibition of sin (ithm) and transgression (baghy) without right, and the prohibition of speaking about the religion without knowledge. This is alongside what falls under Tawḥīd, such as sincerity (ikh-lās) in religion for Allāh, reliance (tawakkul) upon Allāh, hope (rajā') for Allāh's mercy, fear (khawf) of Allāh, patience (ṣabr) with Allāh's decree, upholding Allāh's command, and that Allāh and His Messenger be more beloved to the servant than his family, wealth, and all people. These and other fundamentals of faith (uṣūl al-īmān) Allāh mentioned in various places in the Qur'an, such as the Makkan Sūrahs and some Madīnan ones.

The second category [the specific legislation] comprises the laws (sharā'i') of His religion revealed in the Madīnan Sūrahs and what the Messenger (peace be upon him) established as Sunnah (practice/way) for his Ummah. For Allāh, the Glorified, sent down upon him the Book and the Wisdom (al-Ḥikmah), bestowed His favor upon the believers through that, and commanded the wives of His Prophet to remember it. He said: {And Allāh has revealed to you the Book and wisdom and has taught you that which you did not know} [An-Nisā': 113]. And He said: {Certainly did Allāh confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom} [Āl 'Imrān: 164]. And He said [addressing the Prophet's wives]: {And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allāh and wisdom} [Al-Aḥzāb: 34]. More than one scholar among the Salaf (pious predecessors) said: 'The Wisdom (al-Ḥikmah) is the Sunnah.' This is because what was recited in the houses of his wives (may Allāh be pleased with them) besides the Qur'an was his Sunnah (peace be upon him). This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {Indeed, I have been given the Book and something like it along with

it}. And Ḥassān ibn ‘Aṭīyyah said: ‘Jibrīl (peace be upon him) used to descend upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the Sunnah just as he descended with the Qur’an, teaching it to him just as he taught him the Qur’an.’

These specific laws (sharā’i) through which Allāh guided this Prophet and his Ummah include matters like the direction of prayer (wujhah), the rites of worship (mansak), and the methodology (minhāj). Examples include: the five daily prayers (ṣalawāt) performed at their appointed times, with this specific number [of units], this manner of recitation, bowing (rukū’), and prostration (sujūd), and facing the Ka’bah. Also, the obligations of Zakāh (obligatory charity) and its thresholds (nuṣub) which He imposed on the wealth of Muslims – concerning livestock, grains, fruits, trade goods, gold, and silver – and those designated to receive it, as He says: {Zakāh expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [Zakāh] and for bringing hearts together [for Islām] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allāh and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allāh. And Allāh is Knowing and Wise} [At-Tawbah: 60]. Also, the fasting of the month of Ramaḍān, the pilgrimage (Ḥajj) to the Sacred House (Ka’bah), the divinely prescribed limits (ḥudūd) He set for them regarding marriage, inheritance, punishments, and transactions. Likewise, the Sunnah practices He established for them, such as the Eid festivals, Friday prayers (Jumu’āt), congregational prayers (jamā’āt) for the obligatory prayers, congregational prayers during eclipses (kusūf) and for seeking rain (istisqā’), the funeral prayer (ṣalāt al-jināzah), and Tarāwīḥ prayers [during Ramaḍān]. Also, what He established for them regarding customs (‘ādāt), such as [rules concerning] foods, clothing, birth, death, and similar matters from the Sunnah practices, etiquettes (‘ādāb), and rulings (aḥkām) which constitute the judgment of Allāh and His Messenger among them concerning blood, wealth, private matters (abḍā’), honor (a’rād), benefits (manāfi’), personal injuries (abshār), and other prescribed limits (ḥudūd) and rights (ḥuqūq), in addition to other matters He legislated for them through the tongue of His Messenger (peace be upon him).

He endeared faith (īmān) to them and adorned it in their hearts, making them followers of His Messenger (peace be upon him). He protected them from collectively agreeing upon misguidance (ḍalālah), unlike the nations before them who went astray. For whenever a nation went astray, Allāh Almighty sent a messenger to them, as He stated: {And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship Allāh and avoid Tāghūt’} [An-Nahl: 36]. And He stated: {And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner} [Fāṭir: 24].

Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets; there is no prophet after him. Therefore, Allāh protected his Ummah from collectively agreeing upon misguidance. He ensured that within it there would always be those by whom the proof (ḥujjah) is established until the Day of Resurrection. This is why their consensus (ijmā’) is a proof, just as the Book and the Sunnah are proofs. For this reason, the people of truth (ahl al-ḥaqq) from this Ummah – Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah (the adherents of the Prophetic Way and the unified body) – are distinguished from the people of falsehood (ahl al-bāṭil), those who claim to follow the Book but turn away from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and from the path upon which the main body (jamā’ah) of Muslims proceeded.

Indeed, Allāh commanded in His Book to follow the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) and adhere to his path. He commanded unity (jamā’ah) and harmony (i’tilāf) and forbade division (furqah) and discord (ikhtilāf). Allāh Almighty said: {He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh} [An-Nisā’: 80]. He said: {And We did not send any

messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allāh} [An-Nisā': 64]. He said: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins'} [Āl 'Imrān: 31]. He said: {But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission} [An-Nisā': 65]. He said: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided} [Āl 'Imrān: 103]. He said: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects – you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything} [Al-An'ām: 159]. He said: {And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them} [Āl 'Imrān: 105]. {And they were not commanded except to worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth [ḥunafā], and to establish prayer and to give Zakāh. And that is the correct religion} [Al-Bayyinah: 5]. He said: {And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way} [Al-An'ām: 153].

And He stated in the Mother of the Book (Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah): {Guide us to the straight path} {The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray} [Al-Fātiḥah: 6-7]. It is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {The Jews are those who incurred [Allāh's] anger, and the Christians are those who went astray}. So He, the Glorified, commanded us in the Mother of the Book – the like of which was not revealed in the Tawrah, nor the Injīl, nor the Zabūr, nor the Furqān [Qur'an itself, referring to its unique status]; which was given to our Prophet (peace be upon him) from a treasure beneath the Throne; and without which no prayer is valid – to ask Him to guide us to the Straight Path (aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm): the path of those upon whom He bestowed favor, not of those who incurred His anger, like the Jews, nor of those who are astray, like the Christians.

This 'Straight Path' is the pure religion of Islām. It is what is contained in the Book of Allāh Almighty, and it is the 'Sunnah and the Jamā'ah.' For the pure Sunnah is the pure religion of Islām. Indeed, it is reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through multiple chains of narration, recorded by the compilers of Sunan and Masānid collections like Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, and others, that he said: {This Ummah will split into seventy-three sects, all of them are in the Fire except one: and that is the Jamā'ah (the main body adhering to the truth)}. In another narration: {Those who are upon what I and my companions are upon today}.

This saved sect (firqah nājiyah) is 'Ahl al-Sunnah' (the People of the Sunnah). They are a middle path (wasat) among the various sects (niḥal), just as the religion (millah) of Islām is a middle path among the various religions. The Muslims hold a middle position regarding the Prophets of Allāh, His Messengers, and His righteous servants. They do not exaggerate (yaghlū) concerning them as the Christians exaggerated, who took their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allāh, and [also] the Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him. Nor do they disrespect (yajfū) them as the Jews did, who used to kill the Prophets unjustly and kill those who commanded justice among the people; and whenever a messenger came to them with what their souls did not desire, a party they denied, and another party they killed. Rather, the believers believe in Allāh's Messengers, support them ('azzarūhum), aid them (naṣarūhum), honor them (waqqarūhum), love them, and obey them, without worshipping them or taking them as lords. As Allāh Almighty stated: {It is not for a human [prophet] that Allāh should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and

then he would say to the people, 'Be servants to me rather than Allāh,' but [instead, he would say], 'Be pious scholars [Rabbāniyyīn] of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.'} {Nor would he command you to take the angels and prophets as lords. Would he command you to disbelief after you had been Muslims?} [Āl 'Imrān: 79-80].

An example of this is that the believers adopted a middle position regarding the Messiah (al-Masīh, Jesus). They did not say he is Allāh, nor the son of Allāh, nor the third of three, as the Christians claim. Nor did they disbelieve in him and utter a monstrous slander (buhtān 'aẓīm) against Maryam (Mary), even making him out to be the son of an unchaste woman (walad baghiyyah), as the Jews alleged. Rather, they said: He is the servant of Allāh and His Messenger, and His Word which He bestowed upon Maryam, the chaste virgin (al-'adhrā' al-batūl), and a spirit created by Him.

Likewise, the believers are a middle path (wasat) regarding the laws (sharā'i) of Allāh's religion. They did not forbid Allāh from abrogating (yansakha) what He wills, erasing what He wills, and confirming what He wills, as the Jews asserted. Allāh Almighty related this about them in His saying: {The foolish among the people will say, 'What has turned them away from their qiblah, which they used to face?'} [Al-Baqarah: 142], and His saying: {And when it is said to them, 'Believe in what Allāh has revealed,' they say, 'We believe [only] in what was revealed to us.' And they disbelieve in what came after it, while it is the truth confirming that which is with them} [Al-Baqarah: 91]. Nor did they permit their senior scholars and worshippers to alter Allāh's religion, commanding whatever they wished and forbidding whatever they wished, as the Christians do. Allāh mentioned this about them in His saying: {They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allāh} [At-Tawbah: 31]. 'Adī ibn Ḥātim (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: {I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, they did not worship them.' He replied, 'They did not worship them [directly], but when they [the scholars and monks] declared the unlawful (ḥarām) lawful (ḥalāl) for them, they obeyed them, and when they declared the lawful unlawful for them, they obeyed them.'} The believers, however, say: 'To Allāh belong the creation and the command.' Just as none creates besides Him, none commands besides Him. They said: 'We hear and we obey,' so they obeyed all that Allāh commanded. They said: {Indeed, Allāh decrees what He intends} [Al-Mā'idah: 1]. As for the created being, he has no right to alter the command of the Creator Almighty, no matter how great he may be.

Similarly, regarding the Attributes of Allāh Almighty (ṣifāt Allāh): The Jews described Allāh Almighty with the deficient attributes of created beings. They said, 'He is poor, and we are rich.' They said, 'The hand of Allāh is chained.' They said, 'He became tired from creation and rested on the Sabbath,' and other such statements. The Christians, on the other hand, described a created being [Jesus] with the attributes exclusive to the Creator. They claimed that he creates and provides, forgives and shows mercy, accepts repentance from creation, and rewards and punishes. The believers, however, believe in Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He. He has no peer (samī) nor equal (nidd), nor is there to Him any equivalent (kufuwan aḥad), and {There is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11]. For He is the Lord of the Worlds, the Creator of all things, and everything besides Him are His servants, needy of Him. {There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Gracious as a servant.} {He has enumerated them and counted them a [full] counting.} {And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone} [Maryam: 93-95].

Another example is the matter of the lawful (ḥalāl) and unlawful (ḥarām). Regarding the Jews, as Allāh Almighty stated: {So for wrongdoing on the part of the Jews, We made unlawful for them [certain] good foods which had been lawful to them} [An-Nisā': 160].

Thus, they do not eat animals with undivided hooves (dhawāt al-zufur), like camels and ducks [or geese]. Nor [do they eat] the fat of the intestines (ath-tharb) or the kidneys, nor a kid boiled in its mother's milk, among other things forbidden to them regarding food, clothing, and other matters. It is even said that the prohibitions upon them numbered three hundred and sixty types, while the obligations upon them were two hundred and forty-eight commands. Likewise, He imposed strictness upon them regarding impurities (najāsāt), such that they would not eat with a menstruating woman (ḥā'id) nor associate with her in the home. As for the Christians, they deemed permissible impure things (khabā'ith) and all forbidden matters, and they engaged with all types of impurities. Yet the Messiah only said to them: {...and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you} [Āl 'Imrān: 50]. This is why Allāh Almighty said: {Fight those who do not believe in Allāh or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allāh and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled} [At-Tawbah: 29].

As for the believers, Allāh described them in His saying: {'...but My mercy encompasses all things.' So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give Zakāh and those who believe in Our verses –} {Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written about with them in the Tawrah and the Injil – who enjoins upon them what is right (ma'rūf) and forbids them what is wrong (munkar) and makes lawful for them the good things (ṭayyibāt) and prohibits for them the evil things (khabā'ith) and relieves them of their burden (iṣr) and the shackles (aghlāl) which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be the successful (muflihūn)} [Al-A'rāf: 156-157]. This is a topic whose description would be lengthy.

Similarly, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah hold the middle ground among the differing sects (firaq). In the domain of Allāh's Names (Asmā'), Signs (Āyāt), and Attributes (Ṣifāt), they are positioned between the people of Ta'tīl (negation/divestment) – those who deviate (yulḥidūn) concerning Allāh's Names and Signs and deny the true meanings (ḥaqā'iq) of what Allāh has described Himself with, to the point that they liken Him to non-existence or inanimate objects – and the people of Tamthīl (anthropomorphism/comparison) – those who strike parables for Him and liken Him to created beings. Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe in what Allāh has described Himself with and what His Messenger (peace be upon him) has described Him with, without taḥrīf (distortion), ta'tīl (negation), takyīf (asking/assigning 'how'), or tamthīl (comparison/likening to creation).

In the domain of His creation (khalq) and command (amr) [i.e., Divine Decree and human action], they are positioned between those who deny Allāh's power (qudrah) – those who do not believe in His complete power, His all-encompassing will (mashī'ah), and His creation of all things – and those who corrupt Allāh's religion by claiming the servant has no will, power, or action. These latter groups negate the concepts of command, prohibition, reward, and punishment, thus becoming like the polytheists (mushrikīn) who said: {If Allāh had willed, we would not have associated partners [with Him], nor would our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything} [Al-An'ām: 148]. Ahl al-Sunnah believe that Allāh has power over all things. He is able to guide His servants and turn their hearts. Whatever Allāh wills comes to be, and whatever He does not will does not come to be; nothing occurs in His dominion that He does not intend, and He is never incapable of enacting His will. He is the Creator of everything – entities, attributes, and movements. They also believe that the servant possesses capacity (qudrah), will (mashī'ah), and action ('amal), and that he has choice (mukhtār). They do not call him compelled (majbūr), for one who is compelled is forced against his choice. Allāh, the

Glorified, made the servant choose what he does; thus, he is one who chooses (mukhtār) and wills (murīd), and Allāh is his Creator and the Creator of his choice. This [relationship between Divine creation and human choice] has no parallel, for {There is nothing like unto Him} [Ash-Shūrā: 11] – not in His Essence (Dhāt), nor in His Attributes (Ṣifāt), nor in His Actions (Afāl).

In the domain of al-Asmā' wa al-Aḥkām (Names [defining faith/disbelief] and Rulings) and al-Wa'd wa al-Wa'īd (the Promise [of reward] and the Threat [of punishment]), they are positioned between the Wa'īdiyyah (those who emphasize the threat, like the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah) – who declare Muslim perpetrators of major sins (ahl al-kabā'ir) to be eternally condemned to Hellfire, expel them entirely from the fold of faith (īmān), and deny the intercession (shafā'ah) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) – and the Murjī'ah (those who postpone judgment/exclude actions from faith) – who claim the faith of sinners (fussāq) is like the faith of Prophets, that righteous deeds are not part of religion and faith, and who deny the threat (wa'īd) and punishment ('iqāb) altogether. Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe that sinful Muslims possess some faith and its foundation, but they do not possess the complete, obligatory faith that guarantees entry into Paradise. They believe such sinners will not remain eternally in the Fire; rather, anyone with an atom's weight or a mustard seed's weight of faith in their heart will eventually be brought out. They also affirm that the Prophet (peace be upon him) reserved his intercession for the perpetrators of major sins among his Ummah.

Regarding the Companions (Aṣḥāb) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him, and may Allāh be pleased with them), they are also a middle path (wasat) between the extremists (Ghāliyah, e.g., some Rāfiḍah sects) – who exaggerate concerning 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him), preferring him over Abū Bakr and 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them), believing him to be the infallible Imām to the exclusion of the others, claiming the [other] Companions were oppressors and sinners, declaring the subsequent Ummah disbelievers likewise, and perhaps even elevating 'Alī to prophethood or divinity – and the disrespectful (Jāfiyah, e.g., some Khawārij or Nāṣibah sects) – who believe in the disbelief (kufr) of 'Alī and 'Uthmān (may Allāh be pleased with them), deem it permissible to shed their blood and the blood of their loyalists, approve of cursing 'Alī, 'Uthmān, and others like them, and disparage the caliphate and leadership (imāmah) of 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him).

Likewise, in all other domains (abwāb) of the Sunnah, they [Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah] hold the middle ground. This is because they adhere firmly to the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him), and that upon which the first pioneers (as-Sābiqūn al-Awwalūn) among the Emigrants (Muhājirīn) and the Helpers (Anṣār), and those who followed them in excellence (iḥsān), agreed.

## Section

May Allāh rectify your affairs. Indeed, Allāh has bestowed upon you the immense favor of affiliation with Islām, which is the true religion of Allāh. He has safeguarded you from the trials that afflict those outside of Islām, such as the polytheists (mushrikīn) and the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb). Islām is the greatest and most magnificent blessing, for Allāh accepts no religion from anyone other than it: {And whoever seeks a religion other than Islām, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 85].

Furthermore, by your affiliation with the Sunnah, Allāh has protected you from most of the deviant innovations (bida' muḍillah), such as many of the innovations propagated by

the Rāfiḍah (extreme Shī'ah sects), the Jahmiyyah (who deny Allāh's Attributes), the Khawārij (who declare Muslims disbelievers for major sins), and the Qadariyyah (who deny predestination). Consequently, He has instilled within you an aversion—characteristic of the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wa-l-Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community)—towards those who deny Allāh's Names and Attributes (Asmā' wa-Ṣifāt), His divine decree and predestination (Qaḍā' wa Qadar), or who revile the Companions (Aṣḥāb) of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). This protection is among the greatest blessings Allāh bestows upon whomever He favors, for it represents the completion of faith (īmān) and the perfection of religion (dīn).

For this reason, there are numerous people of righteousness and piety (ahl aṣ-ṣalāh wa-d-dīn) among you, as well as warriors engaged in Jihād (ahl al-qitāl al-mujāhidīn), the likes of whom are not found among the proponents of innovation (mubtadi'īn). Within the victorious armies of the Muslims and the divinely supported soldiers of Allāh, there continue to be those from among you through whom Allāh supports the religion and grants honor to the believers. Among your people of asceticism (zuhādah) and worship ('ibādah), there are individuals who possess pure spiritual states (aḥwāl zakīyyah), follow a praiseworthy path (ṭarīqah marḍīyyah), and may experience spiritual unveilings (mukāshafāt) and influences (taṣarrufāt).

Among you are pious friends of Allāh (awliyā' Allāh al-muttaqīn) who are granted honorable mention (lisān ṣidq) throughout the world. Indeed, the early Shaykhs (mashāyikh) who were among you, such as the one titled Shaykh al-Islām, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Qurashī al-Hakkārī, and after him, the gnostic ('ārif) exemplar (qudwah), Shaykh 'Adī ibn Musāfir al-Umawī—and those who followed their path—possessed such virtue, religious commitment, righteousness, and adherence to the Sunnah that Allāh magnified their standing and elevated their renown. Shaykh 'Adī—may Allāh sanctify his soul (qaddasa Allāhu rūḥahu)—was among the most virtuous of Allāh's righteous servants and the greatest of the Shaykhs who are followed. He possessed pure spiritual states (aḥwāl zakīyyah) and lofty virtues (manāqib 'aliyyah), as recognized by those with knowledge in such matters. He holds widespread fame within the Muslim community (Ummah) and is remembered with honorable mention (lisān ṣidq).

His preserved creed (aqīdah) did not deviate from the creed of the preceding Shaykhs whose path he followed, such as the righteous Imām, Shaykh Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Anṣārī ash-Shīrāzī, later ad-Dimashqī, and Shaykh al-Islām al-Hakkārī, and others like them. These Shaykhs did not depart, regarding the major foundational principles (al-uṣūl al-kibār), from the principles of Ahl as-Sunnah wa-l-Jamā'ah. On the contrary, their encouragement towards the principles of Ahl as-Sunnah, their call to embrace them, their eagerness to disseminate them, and their opposition to those who contradicted them—combined with their piety, virtue, and righteousness—were such that Allāh elevated their status and raised their prominence.

Most of what they stated regarding the major foundational principles is sound. However, it is inevitable that within their discourse, and the discourse of their peers, one will find some issues based on less preferred opinions (masā'il marjūḥah) and weak proofs (dalā'il ḍa'īfah), such as narrations (Hadith) that are not authentically established or analogies (maqāyīs) that are not consistently applicable—as recognized by people of insight (ahl al-baṣīrah). This is because every individual's statement is subject to acceptance or rejection, except for the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him).

This is particularly true for the later generations of the Ummah, among whom mastery of the knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah, deep understanding (fiqh) of both, and

the ability to distinguish between authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) and weak (saqīm) Hadith, and between sound and unsound analogies, may not be firmly established. Added to this are the prevalence of desires (ahwā'), the multiplicity of opinions (ārā'), the intensification of disagreement (ikhtilāf) and division (iftirāq), and the emergence of enmity ('adāwah) and discord (shiqāq). These factors, and others like them, inevitably strengthen the 'ignorance (jah) and wrongdoing (zulm)' with which Allāh described humankind in His statement: {...but man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.} [Al-Aḥzāb: 72].

Thus, when Allāh blesses a person with knowledge ('ilm) and justice ('adl), He rescues him from this misguidance. He, the Glorified, has said: {By time, indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.} [Al-'Aṣr: 1-3]. And He, the Exalted, said: {And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.} [As-Sajdah: 24].

You know—may Allāh rectify your affairs—that the Sunnah which must be followed, whose adherents are praised, and whose opponents are condemned, is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) concerning matters of belief (i'tiqādāt), matters of worship ('ibādāt), and all other aspects of religious practice (diyānāt). This Sunnah is known only through knowledge of the authentically established narrations (Hadith) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding his statements, actions, and what he tacitly approved (literally: left) of statements and actions. Furthermore, it includes the path of the righteous predecessors (as-Sābiqūn) and those who follow them in excellence (at-Tābi'ūn lahum bi-iḥṣān).

This knowledge is found within the well-known canonical collections of Islām (Dawāwīn al-Islām), such as the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the books of Sunan like Sunan Abī Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī, and the Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik, as well as the recognized Musnad collections, such as the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad and others. Additionally, narrations (āthār) are found in the books of Qur'anic commentary (Tafāsīr), prophetic biography and campaigns (Maghāzī), and other Hadith compilations, both comprehensive and specialized, whereby some narrations can be used to corroborate or clarify others.

This is a matter for which Allāh has raised people of knowledge (ahl al-ma'rifah) who have dedicated themselves to it, such that Allāh has preserved the religion for its adherents. Groups of scholars have compiled the Hadith and narrations related to the chapters on the creed ('aqā'id) of Ahl as-Sunnah, such as Ḥammād ibn Salamah, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ad-Dārimī, 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ad-Dārimī, and others of their generation. Similar material is found in the chapter headings established by al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, and others in their collections. Likewise are the works compiled by Abū Bakr al-Athram, 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, Abū al-Qāsim aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Abū ash-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī, Abū Bakr al-Ājurri, Abū al-Ḥasan ad-Dāraquṭnī, Abū 'Abdillāh Ibn Mandah, Abū al-Qāsim al-Lālakā'ī, Abū 'Abdillāh Ibn Baṭṭah, Abū 'Amr aṭ-Ṭalamankī, Abū Nu'aym al-Aṣbahānī, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, and Abū Dharr al-Harawī.

However, it must be noted that some weak Hadith (aḥādīth ḍa'īfah) may appear in some of these compilations, as recognized by the experts (ahl al-ma'rifah). Furthermore, many people narrate—concerning the Attributes (Ṣifāt), other chapters of creed (i'tiqādāt), and religious matters in general—numerous Hadith that are actually fabricated (makdhūbah) and falsely attributed (mawḍū'ah) to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). These fabrications fall into two categories: The first consists of statements that are inherently false and impermissible to utter, let alone attribute to the Prophet (peace

be upon him).

The second category consists of statements that may have actually been said by some of the Salaf (pious predecessors), scholars, or other individuals, and might be true in substance, or represent a matter open to scholarly reasoning (ijtihād), or simply reflect the opinion (madhhab) of the speaker, yet they are falsely attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). This occurs frequently among those unfamiliar with Hadith science. An example is the set of questions formulated by Shaykh Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Anṣārī, which he intended as a test (miḥnah) to distinguish between a Sunni and an innovator (bid‘ī). These well-known questions (masā’il ma’rūfah) were later taken by some fabricator who concocted a chain of narration (isnād) back to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), presenting them as his words. Anyone with even minimal knowledge recognizes this as a fabricated lie.

Although most of these questions align with the principles of the Sunnah, they include points where disagreement does not warrant labeling someone an innovator. For instance, the question about the very first blessing (ni’mah) bestowed upon a servant is a matter of dispute among Ahl as-Sunnah, and the disagreement is largely semantic (lafẓī), revolving around whether a pleasure followed by pain can truly be called a blessing. The questions also contain other points based on less preferred (marjūḥah) opinions.

Therefore, it is obligatory (wājib) to differentiate between authentic Hadith (al-ḥadīth aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ) and fabricated Hadith (al-ḥadīth al-kadhib). For the Sunnah represents the truth (al-ḥaqq), not falsehood (al-bāṭil); it consists of the authentic narrations, not the fabricated ones (al-mawḍū‘ah). This is a foundational principle (aṣl ‘aẓīm) of utmost importance for the people of Islām in general, and particularly for those who claim adherence to the Sunnah.

## Section

It has already been established that the religion (Dīn) of Allāh is a middle path (wasat) between extremism (al-ghālī fihi - one who exaggerates in it) and negligence (al-jāfi ‘anhu - one who is estranged from it). Allāh Almighty never commanded His servants with any matter except that Shayṭān (Satan) interposed two opposing deviations concerning it, being indifferent as to which one he succeeds with: either excessiveness (ifrāt) regarding it or negligence (tafrīt) regarding it.

Given that Islām—which is the religion of Allāh, and no other religion is accepted from anyone—has been subjected to Shayṭān’s interference affecting many who ascribe to it, to the extent that he has led them away from many of its laws (sharā’i’); indeed, he has even led factions from among the most devout (a’bad) and pious (awra’) of this Ummah out of Islām entirely, causing them to exit from it just as an arrow passes clean through its target (yamruqūna minhu kamā yamruqu as-sahmu min ar-ramiyyah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded fighting those who thus exit from Islām (al-māriqīn). This is authentically established from him in the Ṣiḥāḥ (authentic Hadith collections) and elsewhere, narrated by the Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abū Sa’id al-Khudrī, Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, and Ibn Mas’ūd (may Allāh be pleased with them), among others. {The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned the Khawārij and said: ‘One of you would deem his own prayer insignificant compared to their prayer, his fasting insignificant compared to their fasting, and his recitation [of the Qur’ān] insignificant compared to their recitation. They recite the Qur’ān, but it does not go beyond their throats. They exit Islām just as an arrow passes

clean through its target. Wherever you find them, kill them (or: fight them), for indeed, in killing them there is a reward with Allāh on the Day of Resurrection for whoever kills them. If I were to reach their time, I would surely kill them with the killing [inflicted upon the people] of 'Ād.'} In another narration: {They are the worst of those killed under the canopy of the sky; the best of those killed are those whom they kill.} And in another narration: {If those who fight them knew what [reward] has been reserved for them upon the tongue of Muḥammad (peace be upon him), they would desist from [other] actions.}

When these [Khawārij] emerged during the Caliphate of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him), he and the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) fought them, based on the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his encouragement to fight them. All the Imāms of Islām unanimously agreed on fighting them. The same principle applies to everyone who separates from the Jamā'ah (unified body) of the Muslims and deviates from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and his Sharī'ah, belonging to the people of misguiding desires (ahl al-ahwā' al-muḍillāh) and opposing innovations (al-bida' al-mukhālifah). For this reason, the Muslims also fought the Rāfiḍah, who are even worse than the [Khawārij]. They are the ones who declare the vast majority of Muslims to be disbelievers (yukaffirūna), such as the first three Caliphs and others. They claim that they alone are the believers and everyone else is a disbeliever (kāfir). They declare as disbelievers those who affirm that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter, or who believe in Allāh's Attributes (ṣifāt), His perfect Power (qudrah), and His all-encompassing Will (mashī'ah). They declare as disbelievers anyone who opposes them regarding the innovations (bida') they adhere to. For instance, they [only] wipe their bare feet [in ablution] and do not permit wiping over the khuff (leather socks); they delay breaking the fast (fuṭūr) and the [Maghrib] prayer until the stars appear; they combine prayers without a valid excuse; they perform qunūt (supplication) in all five daily prayers; they prohibit fuqqā' (a type of non-alcoholic beverage, likely due to analogy with intoxicants); they prohibit the slaughtered animals of the People of the Book and the slaughtered animals of Muslims who oppose them (because they consider them disbelievers); and they utter atrocious statements about the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them)—which need not be detailed here—among other things. Consequently, the Muslims fought them by the command of Allāh and His Messenger.

Therefore, if during the era of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided Caliphs (Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn), there were those who affiliated themselves with Islām yet exited from it despite their intense worship—to the point that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded fighting them—then it is known that someone affiliating themselves with Islām or the Sunnah in these later times may also exit from Islām and the Sunnah. It is even possible for someone to claim adherence to the Sunnah while not being among its people, having in fact deviated from it. This occurs due to several reasons (asbāb): Among them is ghuluww (extremism), which Allāh Almighty condemned in His Book, where He said: {O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess (lā taghlū) in your religion or say about Allāh except the truth. The Messiah, 'Īsā, son of Maryam, was only a messenger of Allāh and His word which He directed to Maryam and a soul [created at a command] from Him...} until His statement {...And sufficient is Allāh as Disposer of affairs.} [An-Nisā': 171]. And Allāh Almighty said: {Say, 'O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits (lā taghlū) in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations (ahwā') of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way.} [Al-Mā'idah: 77]. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'Beware of extremism (ghuluww) in religion, for indeed those before you were destroyed only by extremism in religion.} This

is an authentic Hadith.

Among other causes are division (tafarruq) and disagreement (ikhtilāf), which Allāh Almighty mentioned [and warned against] in His Mighty Book. Another cause is the existence of narrations (aḥādīth) falsely attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him)—recognized as fabrications by the consensus of knowledgeable scholars (ahl al-maʿrifah)—which someone ignorant of Hadith methodology might hear and believe because they align with his own conjecture (ẓann) and desires (hawā).

The worst form of misguidance (aḍallu aḍ-ḍalāl) is following conjecture (ẓann) and desires (hawā), as Allāh Almighty stated concerning those He censured: {They follow not except assumption (ẓann) and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance (al-hudā).} [An-Najm: 23]. And concerning His Prophet (peace be upon him), He said: {By the star when it descends, Your companion [Muḥammad] has not strayed (mā ḍalla), nor has he erred (mā ghawā). Nor does he speak from [his own] desire (hawā). It is not but a revelation revealed (waḥyun yūḥā).} [An-Najm: 1-4]. Thus, Allāh exonerated him from ḍalāl (straying/misguidance) and ghawāyah (erring/deviation), which fundamentally stem from ignorance (jahl) and wrongdoing (ẓulm). The one who is astray (aḍ-ḍāll) is the one who does not know the truth, and the one who has erred (al-ghāwī) is the one who follows his desires. Allāh informed us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not speak from personal inclination; rather, it is revelation inspired to him by Allāh. Thus, He described him with knowledge ('ilm) and declared him free from desire (hawā).

I shall now mention comprehensive points regarding the foundations of falsehood (uṣūl al-bāṭil) that have been innovated (ibtada'ahā) by various factions who, while claiming affiliation with the Sunnah, have actually deviated from it and become among the greatest wrongdoers (akābir aẓ-ẓālimīn). These will be discussed in the following sections:

## Section

[This section addresses] narrations (aḥādīth) they transmit concerning the Attributes (Ṣifāt) which are additions to the authentic Hadiths found in the established collections (dawāwīn) of Islām. We know with absolute certainty (al-yaqīn al-qāṭi') that these additions are lies (kadhib), slander (buhtān), and indeed, heinous disbelief (kufr shanī'). They sometimes articulate forms of disbelief even without attributing them to a specific narration. An example is a narration they circulate claiming: {Indeed, Allāh descends on the afternoon of 'Arafah upon an ash-grey camel (jamal awraq), shaking hands with the riders and embracing the pedestrians.}

This is among the greatest lies fabricated against Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and its proponent is among the worst of those who speak untruthfully about Allāh. Not a single scholar among the Muslims has ever transmitted this narration. Rather, the scholars of Islām and the experts in Hadith (ahl al-maʿrifah bil-ḥadīth) unanimously agree (ajma'a) that it is falsely attributed (makhḍūb) to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). Scholars like Ibn Qutaybah and others have stated that this narration and similar ones were fabricated by the heretical disbelievers (az-Zanādiqah al-kuffār) to tarnish the reputation of the People of Hadith (Ahl al-Ḥadīth) by claiming that they transmit such things. Likewise, there is another fabricated narration claiming: {That he [the Prophet] saw his Lord during the departure (ifāḍah) from Muzdalifah, walking ahead of the pilgrims, wearing a woolen cloak (jubbah ṣūf)} or similar slander and fabrication against Allāh, which no one who truly knows Allāh and His Messenger

(peace be upon him) would ever utter.

Similarly, there is a narration claiming: {That Allāh walks upon the earth, and when there is a patch of greenery, they say: 'This is the place of His feet.'} They then recite Allāh Almighty's statement: {Then look at the effects (āthār) of the mercy of Allāh – how He gives life to the earth after its lifelessness.} [Ar-Rūm: 50]. This too is a lie by scholarly consensus (ittifāq al-'ulamā'). Allāh did not say, 'look at the effects/traces of Allāh's footsteps,' but rather, {the effects (āthār) of the mercy of Allāh}, and His mercy here refers to the vegetation.

Likewise are various other narrations, some claiming: {That Muḥammad (peace be upon him) saw his Lord during the Ṭawāf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah)}, others claiming: {That he saw Him while leaving Makkah}, and others: {That he saw Him in one of the streets of Madinah}, among other variations. Every single narration claiming: {That Muḥammad (peace be upon him) saw his Lord with his eyes (bi-'aynihi) while on earth} is a lie, by the consensus of the Muslims and their scholars. This is something no Muslim scholar has ever said, nor has any of them ever narrated it.

The only related dispute among the Companions (Ṣaḥābah) was regarding whether Muḥammad (peace be upon him) saw his Lord on the night of the Mi'rāj (Ascension). Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both) and the majority of the scholars of the Sunnah held that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) did see his Lord on the night of the Mi'rāj. However, 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) and a group with her denied this. 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) did not narrate anything from the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding this, nor did she ask him about it. Furthermore, nothing has been transmitted in this regard from Aṣ-Ṣiddīq [Abū Bakr] (may Allāh be pleased with him), contrary to what some ignorant people narrate: {That her father [Abū Bakr] asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), who replied, 'Yes [I saw Him],' but told 'Ā'ishah, 'No [I did not].'} This narration is a fabrication by scholarly consensus. This is why al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā and others mentioned that there are differing reports from Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) on this matter: should it be said that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) saw his Lord with his physical eyes (bi-'aynay ra'sihi)? Or should it be said [he saw Him] with the eye of his heart (bi-'ayni qalbihi)? Or should it simply be said that he saw Him, without specifying physical eyes or the heart's eye? There are three narrations [from Imām Aḥmad] reflecting these positions.

Similarly, the Hadith transmitted by scholars in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'I saw my Lord in such-and-such a form'}—narrated through Ibn 'Abbās, Umm aṭ-Ṭufayl, and others, and which includes the detail: {'He placed His hand between my shoulder blades until I felt the coolness of His fingertips on my chest'}—this Hadith does not pertain to the night of the Mi'rāj. This event occurred in Madinah. The context of the Hadith indicates: {That the Prophet (peace be upon him) overslept for the Fajr prayer, then came out to his companions and said, 'I saw such-and-such [in a dream].'} It is found in the narrations of those who only prayed behind him in Madinah, like Umm aṭ-Ṭufayl and others. The Mi'rāj, however, occurred from Makkah, by the consensus of scholars and based on the explicit text of the Qur'ān and the mutawātir (mass-transmitted) Sunnah, as Allāh Almighty stated: {Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā...} [Al-Isrā': 1]. Therefore, it is known that this Hadith refers to a vision in a dream (ru'yā manām) that occurred in Madinah, as explicitly stated in many of its chains of narration: {'It was a vision in a dream.'} Although the dreams of Prophets are revelation (wahy), this was not a waking vision (ru'yā yaqazah) on the night of the Mi'rāj.

The Muslims have unanimously agreed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not

see his Lord with his physical eyes while on earth, and that Allāh did not descend to the earth for him. There is absolutely no Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) stating: {That Allāh descended to the earth for him}. Rather, the authentic Hadiths state: {That Allāh draws near (yadnū) on the afternoon of 'Arafah}, and in another narration [regarding descending]: {to the lowest heaven (samā' ad-dunyā) every night when the final third of the night remains, saying: 'Who is calling upon Me that I may respond to him? Who is asking Me that I may give him? Who is seeking My forgiveness that I may forgive him?}'

It is established in the authentic collections: {That Allāh draws near on the afternoon of 'Arafah}. And in a narration: {to the lowest heaven, and He boasts to the angels about the people of 'Arafah, saying: 'Look at My servants! They have come to Me disheveled and dusty. What do these people want?}' It has also been narrated: {That Allāh descends on the night of the middle of Sha'bān}—if the Hadith is authentic, as this is a matter discussed by the scholars [regarding its authenticity].

Likewise, what some narrate: {That when the Prophet (peace be upon him) descended from [Mount] Ḥirā', his Lord appeared (tabaddā) to him on a chair (kursī) between the heaven and the earth} is incorrect by scholarly consensus. Rather, what is established in the authentic collections (Ṣiḥāḥ) is: {That the one who appeared to him was the Angel (al-Malak) who had come to him in Ḥirā' the first time and said to him: 'Read! I said: 'I am not a reader.' He took hold of me and squeezed me forcefully until I was exhausted; then he released me and said: 'Read! I said: 'I am not a reader.' He took hold of me and squeezed me forcefully a second time until I was exhausted; then he released me and said: 'Read! In the Name of your Lord Who created, Created man from a clinging substance. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not.'} [Al-'Alaq: 1-5]]. This was the first revelation received by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke about the period when revelation ceased (fatrat al-waḥy). He said: {While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up, and there was the Angel who had come to me in Ḥirā', sitting on a chair between the heaven and the earth.} This was narrated by Jābir (may Allāh be pleased with him) in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. So, he reported that he saw the Angel who had come to him in Ḥirā' between the heaven and the earth, and he mentioned that he was terrified by him. In some narrations, the word al-Malak (the Angel) appears, and some readers mistakenly thought it was al-Malik (the King, i.e., Allāh). This is erroneous and false.

In summary, every narration containing claims such as: {That the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw his Lord with his physical eyes while on earth}, or {That He descended to the earth for him}, or {That the gardens of Paradise are from the footsteps of the Truth [Allāh]}, or {That He stepped on the rock of Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem)}—all of this is false and fabricated (kadhib bāṭil) by the consensus of Muslim scholars, including the People of Hadith and others.

Likewise, anyone who claims to have seen his Lord with his physical eyes before death—his claim is false by the consensus of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah (the People of the Sunnah and the Community). This is because they have all agreed that no believer will see his Lord with his physical eyes until he dies. This is established in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from An-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān, that the Prophet (peace be upon him), when mentioning the Dajjāl (Antichrist), said: {And know that none of you will see his Lord until he dies.} This has also been narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through other chains, warning his Ummah about the trial (fitnah) of the Dajjāl and clarifying to them: {That none of them will see his Lord until he dies.} Therefore, no one should mistakenly think

that the Dajjāl, whom they might see, is his Lord.

However, what does occur for the people of true faith (ahl ḥaqā'iq al-īmān)—in terms of knowledge of Allāh (ma'rifah billāh), certainty of the heart (yaqīn al-qulūb), witnessing by the heart (mushāhadah), and divine manifestations (tajalliyāt)—exists at many levels. The Prophet (peace be upon him), when Jibrīl (peace be upon him) asked him about Iḥsān (spiritual excellence), said: {Iḥsān is to worship Allāh as though you see Him; for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you.} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim].

A believer may see his Lord in a dream (manām) in various forms, corresponding to the level of his faith (īmān) and certainty (yaqīn). If his faith is sound, he will only see Him in a beautiful form. If there is deficiency in his faith, he will see something reflective of his faith. Seeing in a dream has different implications than seeing the reality while awake; it requires interpretation (ta'bīr) and explanation (ta'wīl) because of the parables (amthāl) employed therein to represent realities. Some people may also experience while awake visions similar to those experienced by a sleeper in a dream; thus, one sees with his heart (bi-qalbihi) something akin to what a sleeper sees. Realities may manifest (yatajallā) to him such that he witnesses them with his heart. All of this can occur in this world.

Sometimes, the experience of what one witnesses with the heart may overwhelm him and absorb his senses, leading him to think he saw it with his physical eyes—just as a sleeper might think his dream is reality until he wakes up and realizes it was a dream, or sometimes even realizes within the dream that it is a dream. Similarly, among the servants [of Allāh], there are those who experience a witnessing of the heart (mushāhadah qalbiyyah) that overcomes them to the point of obliterating their sensory perception (tufnīhi 'an ash-shu'ūr bi-ḥawāssīhi), causing them to mistakenly believe it was a vision with the physical eye. Anyone who claims this is mistaken. Every servant, whether from earlier or later generations, who claims to have seen his Lord with his physical eyes is mistaken in that claim, by the consensus (ijmā') of the people of knowledge and faith.

Yes, seeing Allāh with physical sight (ru'yat Allāh bil-abṣār) is reserved for the believers in Paradise (Jannah), and it will also occur for people in the gathering places on the Day of Resurrection ('arāṣat al-qiyāmah). This is established by numerous mutawātir Hadiths from the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as his saying: {Indeed, you will see your Lord just as you see the sun at midday when there are no clouds beneath it, and just as you see the moon on the night of the full moon when it is clear and there are no clouds beneath it.} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim].

He (peace be upon him) also said: {The Gardens of Firdaws are four: two gardens of gold – their vessels, ornaments, and everything within them are of gold; and two gardens of silver – their vessels, ornaments, and everything within them are of silver. And nothing will prevent the people from looking at their Lord except the Veil of Pride (Ridā' al-Kibriyā') upon His Face in the Garden of Eden (Jannat 'Adn).} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. And he (peace be upon him) said: {When the people of Paradise enter Paradise, a caller will announce: 'O people of Paradise! You have a promise with Allāh which He wishes to fulfill for you.' They will ask: 'What is it? Has He not brightened our faces, made heavy our scales [of good deeds], admitted us into Paradise, and saved us from the Fire?' Then the Veil (al-ḥijāb) will be lifted, and they will look upon Him. They will not have been given anything more beloved to them than looking upon Him. This is the 'addition' (az-Ziyādah [mentioned in Qur'ān 10:26]).} [Muslim].

These Hadiths and others like them are found in the authentic collections. The Salaf (righteous predecessors) and the Imāms accepted them, and Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah

are unanimous upon them. They are only denied or distorted (yuharrifuhā) by the Jahmiyyah and their followers among the Mu'tazilah, the Rāfiḍah, and similar groups—those who deny the Attributes (Ṣifāt) of Allāh Almighty, His vision (ru'yah), and other related truths. These are the Mu'aṭṭilah (those who negate Allāh's Attributes), the worst of creation and character.

The religion of Allāh is a middle path (wasat) between the denial of these groups concerning what His Messenger (peace be upon him) informed about the Hereafter, and the affirmation of the extremists (al-Ghāliyah) that He can be seen with the physical eyes in this world. Both positions are false (bāṭil). Those who claim to see Him with their physical eyes in this world are misguided (ḍullāl), as previously mentioned. If they compound this error by claiming that they see Him embodied in certain individuals—whether righteous people, beardless youths (murdān), kings, or others—then their misguidance and disbelief (kufr) become immense. In that case, they are more astray than the Christians who claim they saw Him in the form of ʿĪsā ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary).

Indeed, they are more astray than the followers of the Dajjāl who will appear at the end of time, claiming to people, 'I am your Lord.' He will command the sky, and it will rain; the earth, and it will produce vegetation. He will say to ruins, 'Bring forth your treasures,' and their treasures will follow him. This is the one the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned his Ummah about, saying: '{There is no trial (fitnah) between the creation of Ādam and the establishment of the Hour greater than the Dajjāl.}' [Muslim]. He also said: '{When one of you sits in prayer [for Tashahhud], let him seek refuge with Allāh from four things, saying: 'Allāhumma innī a'ūdhu bika min 'adhābi jahannam, wa a'ūdhu bika min 'adhābil-qabr, wa a'ūdhu bika min fitnatil-maḥyā wal-mamāt, wa a'ūdhu bika min fitnatil-masīḥid-dajjāl' [O Allāh, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of Hellfire, and I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, and I seek refuge in You from the trials of life and death, and I seek refuge in You from the trial of the Antichrist (al-Masīḥ ad-Dajjāl)].}' [Muslim]. This Dajjāl will claim Lordship (rubūbiyyah) and produce deceptive signs (shubuhāt) with which he will test creation. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about him: '{He is one-eyed (a'war), and indeed, your Lord is not one-eyed. And know that none of you will see his Lord until he dies.}' [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. He mentioned two clear signs recognizable by all people, due to his knowledge (peace be upon him) that some people would go astray and permit the possibility of seeing their Lord in this world in human form, like these misguided individuals who hold such beliefs.

These people may be called Ḥulūliyyah (those who believe in divine indwelling) and Ittiḥādiyyah (those who believe in union or fusion with the divine). They are of two types: (1) A group that restricts ḥulūl (indwelling) or ittiḥād (union) to specific things. This includes what the Christians say about the Messiah (peace be upon him), what the extremists (Ghāliyah) say about 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) and the like, what some groups say about various Shaykhs, what others say about certain kings, and what others say about certain beautiful forms—among other beliefs that are worse than the doctrine of the Christians. (2) A group that generalizes, affirming His indwelling (ḥulūl) or union (ittiḥād) in all existing things—even dogs, pigs, impurities, and other things. This is asserted by some among the Jahmiyyah and their followers among the Ittiḥādiyyah, such as the adherents of Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Sab'īn, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, at-Tilimsānī, al-Balyānī, and others.

The creed (madhhab) of all the Messengers and their followers among the believers and the People of the Scripture is that Allāh (Glorified is He) is the Creator of all worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything between them, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne (al-'Arsh al-'Aẓīm). All of creation are His servants ('ibād) and are in need

of Him (fuqarā' ilayhi). He (Glorified is He) is above His heavens, upon His Throne, distinct (bā'in) from His creation. Despite this, He is with them wherever they may be [by His knowledge], as He (Glorified and Exalted is He) stated: {It is He who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above (istawā 'alā) the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you are. And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing.} [Al-Ḥadīd: 4].

These misguided disbelievers (aḍ-ḍullāl al-kuffār)—one of whom claims that he sees his Lord with his physical eyes, and perhaps even claims that he sat with Him, conversed with Him, or lay intimately with Him; and perhaps one of them designates a specific human, whether an adult, a youth, or someone else, claiming that Allāh spoke to them—are to be called to repent (yustatābūn). If they repent, [they are spared]; otherwise, they are executed, for they are disbelievers (kuffār). Indeed, they are more disbelieving than the Jews and Christians {who say, 'Allāh is the Messiah, the son of Maryam'} [Al-Mā'idah: 72]. For the Messiah was a noble Messenger, held in honor by Allāh in this world and the Hereafter, and among those brought near [to Him]. If those who said he is Allāh, or that Allāh united with him (ittahāda bihi) or dwelled within him (ḥalla fihi), have been declared disbelievers by Allāh and their disbelief deemed immense—nay, even those who merely claimed He has taken a son, about whom Allāh said: {And they say, 'The Most Merciful has taken a son.' You have certainly produced a monstrous thing. The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation, That they attribute to the Most Merciful a son. And it is not appropriate for the Most Merciful that He should take a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a servant.} [Maryam: 88-93]—then what about one who claims regarding some ordinary person that he is Allāh?

This is greater disbelief than that of the extremists (Ghāliyah) who claim that 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) or others from the Prophet's household (Ahl al-Bayt) are Allāh. These extremists are the Zanādiqah (heretics) whom 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) had burned with fire. He ordered trenches (akhādīd) to be dug for them near the Kindah Gate [in Kufa] and had them thrown into them after granting them three days to repent. When they did not repent, he had them burned. The Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them) agreed on their execution, although Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both) held the view that they should be executed by the sword without burning, which is the position of most scholars. Their story is well-known among the scholars.

## Section

Similarly, [another cause of deviation is] ghuluww (extremism/excessive veneration) directed towards certain Shaykhs—whether it be Shaykh 'Adī [ibn Musāfir], Yūnus al-Qattī, al-Ḥallāj, or others. Indeed, this includes ghuluww towards figures like 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) and similar personalities, and even ghuluww concerning the Messiah (Īsā, peace be upon him) and the like. Therefore, anyone who engages in ghuluww towards a living person, or a deceased righteous man such as 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him), 'Adī, or similar figures, or towards someone merely believed to be righteous like al-Ḥallāj, or al-Ḥākīm [bi-Amr Allāh] who ruled in Egypt, or Yūnus al-Qattī and their ilk, and attributes to them any form of divinity (ilāhiyyah)—for example, by saying, 'Any provision (rizq) that Shaykh so-and-so does not provide me, I do not want,' or by saying when slaughtering a sheep, 'In the name of my master (sayyidī) [so-and-so],' or by worshipping him through prostration (sujūd) to him or others [besides

Allāh], or by invoking him besides Allāh Almighty (such as saying: 'O my master so-and-so, forgive me,' or 'have mercy on me,' or 'grant me victory,' or 'provide for me,' or 'rescue me (aghithnī),' or 'protect me (ajirni),' or 'I place my trust in you (tawakkaltu 'alayk),' or 'You are sufficient for me (anta ḥasbī),' or 'I am under your sufficiency/care (anā fi ḥasbik)'), or similar statements and actions which are exclusive characteristics of Lordship (rubūbiyyah) and are befitting only for Allāh Almighty—all of this constitutes Shirk (associating partners with Allāh) and misguidance (ḍalāl). The perpetrator is called upon to repent (yustatāb); if he repents, [he is spared], otherwise, he is executed. For Allāh only sent the Messengers and revealed the Books so that we worship Allāh alone, associating no partner with Him, and do not set up any other god (ilāh) alongside Allāh.

Those [polytheists of the past] who used to invoke other deities (ālihah) alongside Allāh—such as the sun, the moon, the stars, 'Uzayr, the Messiah, the angels, al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā, and Manāt the third, the other one, Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, Nasr, or others—did not believe that these deities created creation, or that they sent down the rain, or that they caused vegetation to grow. Rather, they worshipped prophets, angels, stars, jinn, or idols (tamāthīl) made in their image, or they worshipped their graves, saying: {'We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position'} [Az-Zumar: 3]. And they would say: 'These are our intercessors (shufa'ā) with Allāh.' Therefore, Allāh sent His Messengers forbidding that anyone be invoked besides Him—neither invocation as worship (du'ā 'ibādah) nor invocation for help (du'ā istighāthah).

Allāh Almighty stated: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Him, for they do not possess the ability to remove adversity from you or to transfer it.' Those whom they invoke seek means of access (al-wasīlah) to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.} [Al-Isrā': 56-57]. A group among the Salaf commented: 'There were people who used to invoke the Messiah, 'Uzayr, and the angels. So Allāh told them: 'These whom you invoke are themselves seeking nearness to Me, just as you seek nearness; they hope for My mercy just as you hope for My mercy; and they fear My punishment just as you fear My punishment.'

Allāh Almighty also stated: {Say, [O Muḥammad], 'Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allāh.' They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] within the heavens or within the earth, nor have they any share (shirk) in either, nor is there for Him from among them any assistant (zahīr). And intercession (ash-shafā'ah) does not benefit with Him except for one whom He permits.} [Saba': 22-23]. Thus, He (Glorified is He) informed us that whatever is invoked besides Allāh possesses not even an atom's weight in the dominion (mulk), nor any share in the dominion, that He has no helper from among creation whom He relies upon, and that intercession with Him is of no benefit except by His permission.

And Allāh Almighty stated: {And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except after Allāh has given permission for whom He wills and approves.} [An-Najm: 26]. He also stated: {Or have they taken other than Allāh as intercessors? Say, 'Even though they do not possess [power over] anything, nor do they reason?' Say, 'To Allāh belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned.}' [Az-Zumar: 43-44]. And He stated: {And they worship other than Allāh that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allāh.' Say, 'Do you inform Allāh of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?' Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him!} [Yūnus: 18].

Worshipping Allāh alone ('ibādāt Allāh waḥdah) is the foundation (aṣl) of the religion;

it is Tawḥīd (the affirmation of Allāh's absolute Oneness) with which Allāh sent the Messengers and revealed the Books. Allāh Almighty stated: {And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers: Did We ever appoint deities (ālihah) besides the Most Merciful to be worshipped?} [Az-Zukhruf: 45]. And He stated: {And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allāh and avoid Ṭāghūt (false deities).'} [An-Naḥl: 36]. And He stated: {And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'} [Al-Anbiyā: 25].

The Prophet (peace be upon him) consistently established and taught Tawḥīd to his Ummah. Once, {a man said to him: 'What Allāh wills and you will.' He replied: 'Have you made me an equal (nidd) to Allāh? Rather, [say:] What Allāh alone wills.'} [Narrated by Aḥmad]. He also said: {'Do not say: 'What Allāh wills and Muḥammad wills,' but rather [say]: 'What Allāh wills, then Muḥammad wills.'} [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd]. He forbade swearing by other than Allāh, saying: {'Whoever intends to swear, let him swear by Allāh or remain silent.'} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. And he said: {'Whoever swears by other than Allāh has committed Shirk.'} [Narrated by Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhī]. He also cautioned: {'Do not excessively praise (lā tuṭrūnī) me as the Christians excessively praised ʿĪsā, son of Maryam. I am only a servant, so say: 'The servant of Allāh (ʿAbdullāh) and His Messenger.'} [Al-Bukhārī].

For this reason, the scholars unanimously agree that no one is permitted to swear an oath by any created being, such as the Ka'bah or anything similar. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade prostration (sujūd) to himself. When one of his companions prostrated to him, he forbade him from doing so and said: {'Prostration is not befitting for anyone except Allāh.'} [Narrated by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, sound]. He also said: {'If I were to command anyone to prostrate to anyone [other than Allāh], I would have commanded the wife to prostrate to her husband.'} [Narrated by At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, sound]. And he said to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal (may Allāh be pleased with him): {'Tell me, if you were to pass by my grave, would you prostrate to it?' He replied, 'No.' The Prophet said: 'Then do not prostrate to me [while I am alive].'} [Narrated by Aḥmad, sound].

The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade taking graves as places of worship (masājid). During the illness leading to his death, he said: {'May Allāh curse the Jews and Christians; they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship,'} warning against what they did. 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) commented: 'Were it not for that, his grave would have been made prominent, but he disliked that it be taken as a place of worship.' [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. It is also narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from him (peace be upon him) that five days before he died, he said: {'Indeed, those before you used to take graves as places of worship. Beware! Do not take graves as places of worship, for I forbid you from doing so.'} He (peace be upon him) also said: {'Do not take my house [grave] as a place of recurring visitation (ʿīd), nor make your houses like graves [by not praying in them]. And send salutations (ṣalāh) upon me wherever you may be, for your salutations reach me.'} [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, authentic]. For this reason, the Imāms of Islām unanimously agree that it is not legislated (lā yushra') to build mosques over graves, nor is it legislated to perform prayer at graves. Indeed, many scholars state that prayer performed at graves is invalid (bāṭilāh).

The Sunnah regarding visiting the graves of Muslims is analogous to praying the funeral prayer (ṣalāh) over them before burial [in that it involves supplication for them]. Allāh Almighty stated in His Book concerning the hypocrites: {And do not pray [the funeral prayer] over any of them who has died - ever - nor stand at his grave.} [At-Tawbah: 84]. The implied meaning (dalīl al-khiṭāb) is that believers are prayed over, and one does stand at their graves [to supplicate]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach his

companions, when they visited graves, to say: {‘As-salāmu ‘alaykum ahla-d-diyāri min al-mu‘minīn wa-l-muslimīn, wa innā in shā’ Allāhu bikum lāhiqūn. Yarhamullāhu al-mustaqdimīna minnā wa minkum wal-musta’khirīn. Nas‘alullāha lanā wa lakum al-‘āfiyah. Allāhumma lā taḥrimnā ajrahum, wa lā taftinnā ba’dahum, waghfir lanā wa lahum.’} [Peace be upon you, O inhabitants of the dwellings from among the believers and Muslims. And indeed we, Allāh willing, shall follow you. May Allāh have mercy upon those who preceded us and those who will come later among us and you. We ask Allāh for well-being for ourselves and for you. O Allāh, do not deprive us of their reward, do not put us to trial after them, and forgive us and them.] [Muslim].

This [caution regarding graves] is because one of the greatest causes of idol worship (‘ibādāt al-awthān) was the excessive veneration (ta‘zīm) of graves through acts of worship and similar practices. Allāh Almighty stated in His Book [regarding the people of Nūḥ]: {And they said, ‘Never leave your gods and never leave Wadd or Suwā’ or Yaghūth and Ya‘ūq and Nasr.’} [Nūḥ: 23]. A group among the Salaf explained: ‘These were the names of righteous men. When they died, people devoted themselves (‘akafū) to their graves, then they made images (tamāthīl) of them, and [eventually] worshipped them.’

For this reason, the scholars unanimously agree that one who gives salutations (sallama) to the Prophet (peace be upon him) at his grave should not wipe (yatamassah) his chamber (ḥujrah) nor kiss it. This is because kissing and touching (al-istilām) are acts specifically designated for the corners of the Sacred House of Allāh (the Ka’bah). Thus, the dwelling of the created should not be likened to the House of the Creator. Likewise, circumambulation (ṭawāf), prayer (ṣalāh), and gathering for acts of worship are intended to be performed in the Houses of Allāh, which are the mosques (masājid) that Allāh has permitted to be raised and in which His name is mentioned. Therefore, the dwellings [or graves] of created beings should not be sought out [for worship] or taken as places of recurring visitation (‘īd), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘Do not take my house [grave] as a place of recurring visitation (‘īd).’} All of this is to establish Tawḥīd, which is the foundation and pinnacle (aṣl wa ra’s) of the religion, without which Allāh accepts no deed. He forgives the one who upholds it [even if sinful in other ways], but He does not forgive the one who abandons it [by committing Shirk].

As Allāh Almighty stated: {Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association with Him (an yushraka bihi), but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allāh has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin.} [An-Nisā’: 48]. This is why the declaration of Tawḥīd (kalimat at-Tawḥīd - Lā ilāha illā Allāh) is the best and greatest of all speech. The greatest verse in the Qur’ān is the Verse of the Throne (Āyat al-Kursī): {Allāh - there is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him (lā ilāha illā Huwa), the Ever-Living (al-Ḥayy), the Sustainer of [all] existence (al-Qayyūm). Neither drowsiness (sinah) overtakes Him nor sleep...} [Al-Baqarah: 255]. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘Whoever’s last words are ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh’ (There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh) will enter Paradise.’} [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd]. The term Ilāh (deity, god) refers to the one towards whom the heart turns (ya’lahuhu al-qalb) in worship (‘ibādah), seeking aid (isti’ānah), hope (rajā’), fear (khashyah), reverence (ijlāl), and honor (ikrām).

## Section

Part of adhering to the middle path involves moderation (iqtisād) concerning the Sunnah and following it exactly as it came—without addition or subtraction. This applies, for instance, to discourse regarding the Qur’ān and all other Attributes (ṣifāt) [of Allāh]. The established creed (madhhab) of the predecessors (Salaf) of this Ummah and the People

of the Sunnah (Ahlus Sunnah) is that the Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh), revealed (munazzal), not created (ghayr makhluq). From Him it originated (minhu bada'a), and to Him it shall return (ilayhi ya'ud). This has been stated by numerous figures among the Salaf. It is narrated from Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dīnār—who was among the prominent Tābi'in (successors to the Companions)—that he said: 'I continuously heard the people [i.e., scholars] affirming this.' The Qur'ān that Allāh revealed to His Messenger (peace be upon him) is this very Qur'ān that Muslims recite and write in their copies (maṣāḥif). It is the Speech of Allāh, not the speech of anyone else, even though servants recite it and convey it using their own physical movements and voices. For speech is attributed to the one who originated it, not to the one who merely conveys and delivers it. Allāh Almighty stated: {And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the Speech of Allāh (Kalām Allāh). Then deliver him to his place of safety.} [At-Tawbah: 6].

This Qur'ān exists [preserved] before being written in the copies (maṣāḥif), as Allāh Almighty stated: {Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'ān [Inscribed] in a Preserved Tablet (Lawḥ Maḥfūz).} [Al-Burūj: 21-22]. And He stated: {[A Messenger from Allāh] reciting purified scriptures (ṣuḥufan muṭaḥharah), Within which are correct writings (kutubun qayyimah).} [Al-Bayyinah: 2-3]. And He said: {Indeed, it is a noble Qur'ān, in a Register well-protected (kitābin maḥnūn).} [Al-Wāqī'ah: 77-78]. The Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh comprising its letters (ḥurūf), structure (naẓm), and meanings (ma'ānī); all of this is included within the definition of the Qur'ān and the Speech of Allāh. The correct vocalization (i'rāb) of the letters is part of the completeness of the letters. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) reportedly said: {'Whoever recites the Qur'ān and vocalizes it correctly (a'rabahu), for him are ten good deeds for every letter.'}. Abū Bakr and 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both) reportedly said: 'Memorizing the correct vocalization (i'rāb) of the Qur'ān is dearer to us than memorizing some of its letters [without proper vocalization].'

When Muslims write a copy of the Muṣḥaf, if they choose not to add diacritical dots (tanqīṭ) or vowel marks (tashkīl), that is permissible. This is how the Companions used to write the Muṣḥafs, without dots or vowel marks, because the people were Arabs who did not make grammatical errors (lā yalḥanūn). This was also the state of the Muṣḥafs sent by 'Uthmān (may Allāh be pleased with him) to the major cities during the time of the Tābi'in. Later, grammatical errors (laḥn) became widespread, so the Muṣḥafs were dotted and vowel marks were added, initially using red dots, then later using marks similar in form to the letters themselves. Scholars then differed regarding the dislike (karāḥah) of this practice. There is a difference of opinion reported from Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) and other scholars on this. Some held it to be disliked (yukrahu) because it was an innovation (bid'ah). Others held it not to be disliked due to the need for it. A third view was that the dots were disliked, but the vowel marks indicating i'rāb were not. The soundest position (aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ) is that there is no harm in it [due to the necessity].

[Part of the correct belief is] affirming what is authentically established from the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as that Allāh speaks with a voice (ṣawt), and that He will call Ādam (peace be upon him) with a voice, and similar Hadiths. This overall position was held by the Salaf of the Ummah and the Imāms of the Sunnah. The Imāms of the Sunnah stated: The Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh Almighty, uncreated, wherever it is recited and wherever it is written. Therefore, one should not say regarding the servant's recitation (tilāwah) of the Qur'ān that 'it is created,' because this statement could be misconstrued to include the revealed Qur'ān itself. Nor should one say 'it is uncreated,' because this statement could be misconstrued to include the actions of the servant [which are

created]. No Imām among the Salaf ever claimed that the voices of the servants reciting the Qur’ān are eternal (qadīmah). Rather, they condemned those who said: ‘The servant’s pronunciation (lafẓ) of the Qur’ān is uncreated.’

As for one who claims that the ink (midād) [used to write the Qur’ān] is eternal (qadīm), such a person is among the most ignorant of people and the furthest from the Sunnah. Allāh Almighty stated: {Say, ‘If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as replenishment.’} [Al-Kahf: 109]. He thus informed us that ink is used to write His words [implying ink is a created tool]. Likewise, whoever claims that the Qur’ān is not in the Muṣḥaf, but rather that the Muṣḥaf contains only ink and paper, or that it is merely a ‘representation’ (hikāyah) or an ‘expression’ (‘ibārah) [of the eternal Speech], is a misguided innovator (mubtadi’ dāll). Rather, the Qur’ān that Allāh revealed to Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is that which is contained between the two covers (mā bayn ad-daffatayn). The Speech [of Allāh] within the Muṣḥaf—in the manner commonly understood—possesses a unique quality that distinguishes it from all other things.

Similarly, whoever goes beyond the Sunnah and claims that the servants’ pronunciations (alfāẓ) and voices are eternal is a misguided innovator. This is like the one who claims that Allāh does not speak with letters or a voice, for he too is an innovator who denies the Sunnah. Likewise, whoever goes further and claims that the ink is eternal is misguided, just like the one who claims that the Speech of Allāh is not contained within the Muṣḥafs.

As for those ignorant individuals who go even further, claiming that the paper, the leather binding, a peg, or a piece of the wall [on which the Qur’ān might be inscribed] is the Speech of Allāh, they are equivalent to those who say that Allāh did not speak the Qur’ān and that it is not His Speech. This extremism (ghuluww) from the side of affirmation mirrors the denial (takdhīb) from the side of negation; both are outside the Sunnah and the Jamā’ah. Likewise, singling out the diacritical dots (nuqṭah) and vowel marks (shaklah) for specific discussion [regarding their createdness or uncreatedness] is an innovation (bid’ah), whether affirming or denying [their eternity]. This particular innovation emerged about a hundred years ago or slightly more. Anyone who claims that the ink used for dotting and vowel marking is eternal is misguided and ignorant. And anyone who claims that the vocalization (i’rāb) of the Qur’ān’s letters is not part of the Qur’ān is a misguided innovator. Rather, the obligatory position (al-wājib) is to state: This Arabic Qur’ān is the Speech of Allāh, and this includes its letters with their correct vocalization, just as it includes its meanings. It should be affirmed: All that is between the two covers (mā bayn al-lawḥayn) is the Speech of Allāh. If the Muṣḥaf is dotted and vowel-marked, the statement ‘all that is between the two covers is the Speech of Allāh’ applies. And if it is without dots or vowel marks, like the ancient Muṣḥafs written by the Companions, then also, what is between the two covers is the Speech of Allāh. Therefore, it is impermissible to sow discord (fitnah) among Muslims over a newly invented matter and a verbal dispute (nizā’ lafẓī) that lacks substance. And it is impermissible to introduce into the religion that which does not belong to it.

## Section

Likewise, moderation (iqtisād) and balance (i’tidāl) are obligatory concerning the matter of the Companions (aṣ-Ṣaḥābah) and the Relatives (al-Qarābah) [of the Prophet] (may Allāh be pleased with them). Allāh Almighty praised the Companions of His Prophet (peace be upon him)—both the forerunners (as-Sābiqīn) and those who followed them in good conduct (at-Tābi’īn lahum bi-iḥsān). He informed us that He is pleased with them

and they are pleased with Him [At-Tawbah: 100]. He mentioned them in several verses of His Book, such as His statement: {Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is like a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sower - so that He may enrage by them the disbelievers. Allāh has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.} [Al-Faḥ: 29]. And Allāh Almighty stated: {Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.} [Al-Faḥ: 18].

It is narrated in the authentic collections (Ṣiḥāḥ) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {‘Do not insult my Companions! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if one of you were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uḥud in gold, it would not reach the measure of one mudd [a small measure] spent by one of them, nor even half of it.’} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā’ah are agreed upon what has been mass-transmitted (tawātara) from the Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) that he said: ‘The best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both).’ The Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) unanimously agreed on the pledge of allegiance (bay’ah) to ‘Uthmān after ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both). It is authentically established that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘The Caliphate of Prophethood (Khilāfat an-Nubuwwah) will last for thirty years, then it will become kingship (mulk).’} [Narrated by Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd]. He (peace be upon him) also said: {‘Adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided, Guided Caliphs (al-Khulafā’ ar-Rāshidīn al-Mahdiyyīn) after me. Hold fast to it and bite onto it with your molar teeth. And beware of newly invented matters (muḥdathāt al-umūr), for every innovation (bid’ah) is misguidance (ḍalālah).’} [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī]. The Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) was the last of the Rightly-Guided, Guided Caliphs.

The generality of Ahlus Sunnah—scholars, worshippers, rulers, and soldiers—have agreed upon affirming the order [of virtue]: Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthmān, then ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with them all). The proofs for this and the virtues (faḍā’il) of the Companions are numerous, but this is not the place to detail them. Likewise, we believe in withholding judgment and speech (al-imsāk) concerning the disputes that arose among them (‘ammā shajara baynahum). We know that some of what is narrated in this regard is false. They were individuals exercising ijtihād (scholarly reasoning): either they were correct, receiving two rewards, or they were mistaken [in their ijtihād] yet still rewarded for their righteous deeds, and their errors are forgiven. Whatever sins they may have committed—given that the promise of the best [reward, i.e., Paradise] from Allāh had already preceded for them—Allāh forgives them, whether through repentance (tawbah), effacing good deeds (ḥasanāt māḥiyah), expiating calamities (maṣā’ib mukaffirah), or other means. For they are the best generation of this Ummah, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘The best of generations is my generation in which I was sent, then those who follow them.’} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. And this [Ummah] is the best nation produced for mankind.

We know, along with this, that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) was more virtuous and closer to the truth (al-ḥaqq) than Mu’āwiyah and those who fought

alongside him. This is based on what is established in the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (may Allāh be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said [regarding the Khawārij]: ‘A deviant group (māriqah) will emerge during a time of division among the Muslims. They will be killed by the party closer (adnā) to the truth.’ [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. This Hadīth indicates that each party [‘Alī’s and Mu‘āwiyah’s] possessed some element of truth, but that ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) was closer to the truth. As for those who abstained (qaʿadū) from fighting during the fitnah (trial/discord), such as Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Ibn ‘Umar, and others (may Allāh be pleased with them), they followed the texts they had heard regarding [avoiding] fighting during times of fitnah. This is the position held by most of the People of Hadīth (Ahl al-Ḥadīth).

Likewise, the Household of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) (Āl Bayt Rasūlillāh) possess rights that must be upheld. Allāh has granted them a right in the khumus (one-fifth of spoils of war) and the fay’ (spoils acquired without fighting). He commanded us to send prayers (ṣalāh) upon them along with the prayers upon the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), instructing us: {Say: ‘Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammadin kamā ṣallayta ‘alā āli Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd. Wa bārik ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammadin kamā bārakta ‘alā āli Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd.’} [O Allāh, bestow Your favor upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You bestowed Your favor upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious. And bestow Your blessings upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You bestowed Your blessings upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.] [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. The Āl Muḥammad (Family of Muḥammad) are those upon whom ṣadaqah (obligatory charity) is forbidden. This is the view stated by Ash-Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and other scholars (may Allāh have mercy on them). For the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Indeed, ṣadaqah is not permissible for Muḥammad nor for the family of Muḥammad.’ [Muslim]. Allāh Almighty stated in His Book: {Allāh intends only to remove from you the impurity (ar-rijs), O people of the [Prophet’s] household (Ahl al-Bayt), and to purify you with [extensive] purification.} [Al-Aḥzāb: 33]. Allāh forbade ṣadaqah for them because it represents the impurities (awsākḥ) of people [i.e., a means of purification for the givers].

Some of the Salaf said: ‘Love for Abū Bakr and ‘Umar is faith (īmān), and hatred for them is hypocrisy (nifāq).’ It is narrated in the Masānīd and Sunan collections that when Al-‘Abbās complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the coldness of some people towards them [the Banū Hāshim], he said: ‘By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! They will not enter Paradise until they love you for my sake.’ [Narrated by Aḥmad, At-Tirmidhī, sound]. It is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: ‘Indeed, Allāh chose the descendants of Ismā‘īl; and from the descendants of Ismā‘īl, He chose Banū Kinānah; and from Kinānah, He chose Quraysh; and from Quraysh, He chose Banū Hāshim; and He chose me from Banū Hāshim.’}

When the fitnah occurred with the murder of ‘Uthmān and the subsequent division of the Ummah, some people who loved ‘Uthmān and were excessive (yaghlū) regarding him deviated (yanḥarifu) from ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him). This included many people in Syria, who at that time would insult ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) and harbor hatred towards him. Conversely, some people who loved ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) and were excessive regarding him deviated from ‘Uthmān (may Allāh be pleased with him). This included many people in Iraq, who harbored hatred towards ‘Uthmān and insulted him (may Allāh be pleased with him). Later, their innovation (bid‘ah) intensified until they insulted Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both), and the affliction (balā‘) caused by them increased significantly. The Sunnah, however, is to love both ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, while giving precedence to Abū Bakr and

'Umar over them (may Allāh be pleased with them all), due to the specific virtues with which Allāh distinguished them, by which they surpassed both 'Uthmān and 'Alī. Allāh has forbidden division (tafarruq) and fragmentation (tashattut) in His Book and commanded holding fast to His Rope. Therefore, this is a matter wherein the believer must be firm (yatathabbat) and hold fast to the Rope of Allāh. For the Sunnah is founded upon knowledge ('ilm), justice ('adl), and adherence (ittibā') to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him).

When the Rāfiḍah began insulting the Companions, the scholars started prescribing punishment for those who insulted the Companions. Later, the Rāfiḍah declared the Companions to be disbelievers (kaffarat aṣ-Ṣaḥābah) and made various claims about them—the ruling concerning which we have discussed elsewhere. At that time, no one was preoccupied with discussing Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah, nor was discourse about him considered part of the religion. Subsequently, however, certain events transpired, and some people began to openly curse (la'nah) Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah. Perhaps their aim in doing so was to find a pretext for cursing others. Consequently, most of Ahlus Sunnah expressed dislike for cursing any specific individual. Hearing this [dislike of cursing Yazīd specifically], some people who affiliated themselves with the Sunnah (yatasannan) mistakenly concluded that Yazīd must have been among the major righteous figures and Imāms of guidance.

Thus, extremists (ghulāh) emerged holding two diametrically opposed views concerning him. One group claims he was a disbeliever (kāfir), a heretic (zindīq), that he killed the grandson of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) [Al-Ḥusayn], and killed the Anṣār and their sons at the Battle of al-Ḥarraḥ to avenge his family members who were killed as disbelievers [at Badr], such as his maternal grandfather 'Utbaḥ ibn Rab'āh, his maternal uncle al-Walīd, and others. They attribute to him notoriety for drinking alcohol and publicly displaying immoral acts (fawāḥish). The other group believes he was a just ('ādil), guided (hādī), rightly-guided (mahdī) Imām, and that he was among the Companions or major Companions, and one of the close friends (awliyā') of Allāh Almighty. Some might even believe he was one of the Prophets! They claim: 'Whoever hesitates (waqafa) regarding Yazīd, Allāh will make him hesitate at the Fire of Hell.' They attribute narrations to Shaykh Ḥasan ibn 'Adī [claiming he supported Yazīd and condemned those who hesitated about him]. During the time of Shaykh Ḥasan, they added false matters in both poetry and prose, and engaged in extremism regarding both Shaykh 'Adī and Yazīd with beliefs contrary to the path of the elder Shaykh 'Adī (may Allāh sanctify his soul), whose way was sound and free from these innovations. They were also afflicted by conflict with the Rāfiḍah who opposed them and killed Shaykh Ḥasan, leading to tribulations (fitan) not beloved by Allāh or His Messenger.

This extremism regarding Yazīd from both sides contradicts the consensus (ijmā') of the people of knowledge and faith. For Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah was born during the Caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (may Allāh be pleased with him). He did not meet the Prophet (peace be upon him) and was not among the Companions, by scholarly consensus. Nor was he among those renowned for religious devotion and righteousness; he was one of the young Muslim men of his time. He was not a disbeliever (kāfir) nor a heretic (zindīq). He assumed leadership after his father, with some Muslims disliking it and others accepting it. He possessed courage (shajā'ah) and generosity (karam), and he did not publicly flaunt immoral acts (fawāḥish) in the manner described by his detractors.

However, momentous events occurred during his rule (imārah): First: The martyrdom of Al-Ḥusayn (may Allāh be pleased with him). Yazīd did not order the killing of Al-Ḥusayn, nor did he express joy at his killing, nor did he poke at his teeth (thanāyā) with a cane,

nor was the head of Al-Ḥusayn (may Allāh be pleased with him) carried to Syria [by his command]. However, he did command that Al-Ḥusayn (may Allāh be pleased with him) be prevented [from reaching Kufa] and deterred from seeking power, even if it required fighting him. His deputies (nuwwāb) exceeded his orders. Shimr ibn Dhil-Jawshan incited 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād to kill him. 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād then transgressed against him. Al-Ḥusayn (may Allāh be pleased with him) requested from them that he be allowed to go to Yazīd, or go to the frontier to serve as a border guard (murābit), or return to Makkah. They refused him (may Allāh be pleased with him) unless he surrendered himself (yasta'sira) to them. 'Umar ibn Sa'd was commanded to fight him, and so they killed him—unjustly (maẓlūm)—along with a group of his household (may Allāh be pleased with them). His martyrdom (may Allāh be pleased with him) was among the greatest calamities. Indeed, the killing of Al-Ḥusayn, and the killing of 'Uthmān before him, were among the greatest causes of fitnah in this Ummah, and their killers are among the worst of creation in the sight of Allāh. When Al-Ḥusayn's family (may Allāh be pleased with them) came before Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah, he treated them honorably and arranged for their journey to Madinah. It is reported that he cursed Ibn Ziyād for killing him and said: 'I would have been content with the obedience of the people of Iraq without the killing of Al-Ḥusayn.' Despite this, however, he did not publicly denounce the killing, nor seek justice for Al-Ḥusayn, nor take vengeance [against the direct perpetrators], which was incumbent upon him. Thus, the people of truth (Ahl al-Ḥaqq) blame him for neglecting this obligation, in addition to other matters. As for his detractors, they add many fabrications (firyāh) against him.

Second: The people of the Prophet's city, Madinah, revoked their pledge of allegiance to him and expelled his governors and family members. He dispatched an army against them, commanding it that if they did not submit after three days, the army should enter the city by force and sack it (yubīḥahā) for three days. Consequently, his army occupied the Prophet's city for three days, killing, looting, and violating inviolable sanctities (yaftaḍḍūna al-furūj al-muḥarramah). He then sent an army to Makkah the Honored, which besieged Makkah. Yazīd died while they were besieging Makkah. This was part of the transgression ('udwān) and oppression (ẓulm) perpetrated under his command.

Therefore, the established belief (mu'taqad) of Ahlus Sunnah and the Imāms of the Ummah is that he is neither insulted (lā yusabbu) nor loved (lā yuḥabbu). Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: 'I said to my father [Imām Aḥmad]: 'Some people say they love Yazīd.' He replied: 'O my son, does anyone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day love Yazīd?' I asked: 'O father, then why do you not curse him?' He replied: 'O my son, when did you ever see your father curse anyone?' It is also reported that Imām Aḥmad was asked: 'Would you write Hadith from Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah?' He replied: 'No, and no honor (lā karāmah)! Was he not the one who did what he did to the people of Madinah?' Thus, in the view of the scholarly Imāms of the Muslims, Yazīd is a king among kings. They do not love him with the love reserved for the righteous and the awliyā' (close friends) of Allāh, nor do they curse him, because they dislike cursing any specific Muslim (al-muslim al-mu'ayyan). This is based on what Al-Bukhārī narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him): {That there was a man nicknamed Ḥimār (donkey) who frequently drank alcohol. Whenever he was brought to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he would have him flogged. [On one occasion], a man exclaimed: 'May Allāh curse him! How often he is brought [for punishment]!' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Do not curse him, for indeed, he loves Allāh and His Messenger.'}

Despite this [general principle of not cursing specific Muslims], a faction among Ahlus Sunnah permits cursing him [Yazīd], because they believe he committed acts of oppression (ẓulm) of a degree that warrants cursing the perpetrator. Another faction

advocates loving him because he was a Muslim who ruled during the era of the Companions, and [some] Companions pledged allegiance to him. They argue that the negative reports about him are unauthentic, that he possessed good qualities (maḥāsīn), or that he was exercising ijtihād in his actions. However, the correct position (aṣ-ṣawāb) is that held by the Imāms: that he is neither singled out for love nor cursed. Furthermore, even if he was a sinner (fāsiq) or an oppressor (ẓālim), Allāh forgives sinners and oppressors, especially if they performed great good deeds (ḥasanāt ‘aẓimah). Al-Bukhārī narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘The first army to raid Constantinople (al-Qusṭanṭīniyyah) is forgiven (maghfūrun lahu).’} The commander of the first army that raided it was Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah, and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (may Allāh be pleased with him) was with him [in that army].

Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah might sometimes be confused with his paternal uncle, Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān. Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān was one of the Companions, indeed among the best of the Companions, and the best among the family of Ḥarb [Abū Sufyān’s father]. He was one of the commanders in Syria appointed by Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) during the conquests of Syria. Abū Bakr walked alongside his mount, advising him as he saw him off. Yazīd [ibn Abī Sufyān] said to him: ‘O Caliph of the Messenger of Allāh! Either you ride, or I will dismount.’ Abū Bakr replied: ‘I will not ride, and you will not dismount. I seek reward [from Allāh] for these steps of mine in the path of Allāh.’ When Yazīd [ibn Abī Sufyān] passed away after the conquests of Syria during the Caliphate of ‘Umar, ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him) appointed his brother Mu‘āwiyah in his place. Yazīd [ibn Mu‘āwiyah] was born during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. Mu‘āwiyah remained in Syria until the subsequent events unfolded. Therefore, the obligatory approach (al-wājib) is moderation (al-iqtisār) in this matter, avoiding preoccupation with mentioning Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah and testing Muslims regarding him. For this [making Yazīd a point of contention] is among the innovations (bida’) that oppose the way of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā’ah. It is because of this [contention] that some ignorant people have come to believe that Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah was a Companion, one of the greatest righteous figures, and an Imām of justice—which is a clear error (khaṭa’un bayyin).

## Section

Likewise, [among the causes of deviation] is dividing the Ummah and testing its members based on criteria not commanded by Allāh or His Messenger. An example is asking a man: ‘Are you a Shakīlī or a Qarfandī?’. These are baseless names for which Allāh has sent down no authority (sulṭān). Neither the term Shakīlī nor Qarfandī exists in the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him), or the well-known narrations from the early Imāms (Salaf al-A’immah). The obligation upon a Muslim, if asked such a question, is to reply: ‘I am neither a Shakīlī nor a Qarfandī; rather, I am a Muslim, following the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger.’ We have narrated from Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān that he asked ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both): ‘Are you upon the millah (way/religion) of ‘Alī or the millah of ‘Uthmān?’ Ibn ‘Abbās replied: ‘I am not upon the millah of ‘Alī, nor upon the millah of ‘Uthmān; rather, I am upon the millah of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him).’ Similarly, all the Salaf used to say: ‘All these deviant inclinations (ahwā’) lead to the Fire.’ One of them might say: ‘I do not know which of the two blessings is greater: that Allāh guided me to Islām, or that He saved me from these deviant inclinations.’ Allāh Almighty has named us in the Qur’ān: Muslims (al-Muslimīn), Believers (al-Mu’minīn), Servants of Allāh (‘Ibād Allāh). Therefore, we should not abandon the names Allāh has given us in

favor of names invented by people—names they and their forefathers devised—for which Allāh has sent down no authority.

Even concerning names whose usage might be permissible—such as people affiliating themselves with an Imām (like Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi‘ī, Ḥanbalī), or with a Shaykh (like Qādirī, ‘Adawī, and their like), or affiliations based on tribes (like Qaysī, Yamānī) or regions (like Shāmī [Syrian], ‘Irāqī, Miṣrī [Egyptian])—it is impermissible for anyone to test people based on these affiliations, nor to establish loyalty (yuwālī) or enmity (yu‘ādī) based upon these names. Rather, the noblest of creation in the sight of Allāh is the most pious (atqāhum), regardless of which group they belong to.

The Awliyā’ of Allāh (His close friends/allies) are indeed His allies: they are {those who believed and were fearing [Allāh]} [Yūnus: 62-63]. He (Glorified is He) has informed us that His Awliyā’ are the believers (al-mu‘minūn) who possess taqwā (piety, God-consciousness). He described those possessing taqwā (al-muttaqīn) in His statement: {Righteousness (al-birr) is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives Zakāh; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous (al-muttaqūn).} [Al-Baqarah: 177]. Taqwā is doing what Allāh has commanded and abstaining from what Allāh has forbidden.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us about the state of Allāh’s Awliyā’ and how they attain that status. In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, it is narrated from Abū Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {‘Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) says: ‘Whoever shows enmity to a Walī (friend) of Mine, I have declared war against him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the obligatory duties (mā iftaradtu ‘alayhi) I have enjoined upon him. And My servant continues to draw near to Me with voluntary deeds (nawāfil) until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. [Meaning: guided and supported by Me] Through Me he hears, through Me he sees, through Me he strikes, and through Me he walks. If he asks Me, I will surely give him; and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely grant him refuge. I do not hesitate about anything I am to do as I hesitate about taking the soul of My believing servant: he dislikes death, and I dislike hurting him, but it [death] is inevitable for him.’}

In this Hadith, it is mentioned that drawing near to Allāh Almighty occurs at two levels: (1) Drawing near to Him through the obligatory duties (farā’id). (2) Drawing near to Allāh through voluntary deeds (nawāfil) after fulfilling the obligatory duties. The first level is the rank of the Muqtaṣidīn (those who follow a middle course), the righteous (al-Abrār), the Companions of the Right (Aṣḥāb al-Yamīn). The second level is the rank of the Sābiqīn (the Foremost), the [highest level of] believers, also referred to as al-Muqarrabūn (those brought near). As Allāh Almighty stated: {Indeed, the righteous (al-abrār) will be in pleasure, On adorned couches, observing. You will recognize in their faces the radiance of pleasure. They will be given to drink [pure] wine, sealed, The last of it is musk. So for this let the competitors compete.} [Al-Muṭaffifīn: 22-26]. Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them both) commented [regarding the drink of Tasnīm mentioned later in the Sūrah]: ‘It is mixed [with other drinks] for the Companions of the Right, while those brought near (al-muqarrabūn) drink it pure (ṣīf).’ Allāh has mentioned this concept [of differing ranks] in several places in His Book. Thus, everyone who believes in Allāh and

His Messenger and possesses taqwā of Allāh is among the Awliyā' of Allāh.

Allāh (Glorified is He) has obligated mutual loyalty (muwālāh) among the believers and obligated enmity (mu'ādāh) towards the disbelievers. He Almighty stated: {O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies (awliyā'). They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allāh guides not the wrongdoing people. So you see those in whose hearts is disease hastening into [association with] them, saying, 'We are afraid a misfortune may strike us.' But perhaps Allāh will bring conquest or a decision from Him; then they will become, over what they have been concealing within themselves, regretful. And those who believe will say, 'Are these the ones who swore by Allāh their strongest oaths that indeed they were with you?' Their deeds have become worthless, and they have become losers. O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion – Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him, [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allāh and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allāh; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing. Your ally (walī) is only Allāh and His Messenger and those who have believed – those who establish prayer and give Zakāh, and they bow [in worship]. And whoever takes Allāh and His Messenger and those who have believed as allies – then indeed, the party of Allāh (ḥizb Allāh) – they are the predominant.} [Al-Mā'idah: 52-56].

Thus, He (Glorified is He) informed us that the ally (walī) of the believer is Allāh, His Messenger, and His believing servants. This applies generally to every believer characterized by this quality [of faith], regardless of their lineage, homeland, school of thought (madhhab), spiritual path (ṭarīqah), or lack thereof. Allāh Almighty stated: {The believing men and believing women are allies (awliyā') of one another.} [At-Tawbah: 71]. He also stated: {Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allāh and those who gave shelter and aided - they are allies (awliyā') of one another...} until His statement {...And those who believed after [the initial emigration] and emigrated and fought with you - they are of you.} [Al-Anfāl: 72, 75]. And He stated: {And if two factions among the believers should fight...} until His statement {...then make settlement between them justly and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.} [Al-Ḥujurāt: 9-10].

It is narrated in the authentic collections (Ṣiḥāḥ) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: {'The parable of the believers in their mutual affection (tawādduhum), mercy (tarāḥumihim), and compassion (ta'āṭufihim) is that of a single body; if one limb suffers, the whole body responds to it with sleeplessness and fever.} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Also in the authentic collections, he said: {'A believer to another believer is like a building; each part strengthens the other,}' and he interlaced his fingers. [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Also in the authentic collections, he said: {'By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. And he (peace be upon him) said: {'A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does not betray him (lā yuslimuhu) nor wrong him (lā yaẓlimuhu).'} [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Texts like these are numerous in the Book and the Sunnah.

In these texts, Allāh has made His believing servants allies (awliyā') of one another, made them brothers (ikhwah), and made them mutually supportive (mutanāsirīn), merciful (mutarāḥimīn), and compassionate (muta'āṭifīn). He (Glorified is He) commanded them to unite (i'tilāf) and forbade them from division (iftirāq) and disagreement (ikhtilāf). He said: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided.} [Āl

{Imrān: 103}. And He said: {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, [O Muḥammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allāh...} [Al-An'ām: 159]. How, then, can it be permissible for the Ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to become divided and disagree to the extent that a person allies himself with one faction and shows enmity towards another based merely on conjecture (zann) and desire (hawā), without any proof (burhān) from Allāh Almighty? Allāh has indeed absolved His Prophet (peace be upon him) from those who act in this manner. This is the practice of the people of innovation (Ahl al-Bida'), like the Khawārij who separated from the main body of Muslims (Jamā'at al-Muslimīn) and deemed lawful the blood of those who opposed them.

As for Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'ah, they hold fast to the Rope of Allāh. The least [manifestation of deviation] in this regard is when a person favors someone who agrees with his own desires, even if another person is more pious (atqā) before Allāh. The obligatory course (al-wājib) is to give precedence to whom Allāh and His Messenger have given precedence, and to defer whom Allāh and His Messenger have deferred; to love what Allāh and His Messenger love, and to hate what Allāh and His Messenger hate; to forbid what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden; to be pleased with what pleases Allāh and His Messenger; and for the Muslims to be a single hand (yadan wāḥidah). How much worse is it, then, when the matter reaches the point where some people declare others misguided (yuḍallilu) or disbelievers (yukaffiruhu), while the truth (aṣ-ṣawāb) might actually be with the accused, who may be adhering to the Book and the Sunnah? Even if one's Muslim brother has erred in some matter of religion, not everyone who errs becomes a disbeliever (kāfir) or a sinner (fāsiq). Indeed, Allāh has pardoned this Ummah for unintentional error (khaṭa') and forgetfulness (nisyān). Allāh Almighty mentioned in His Book the supplication of the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the believers: {'Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred.'} [Al-Baqarah: 286]. And it is established in the authentic Hadith that Allāh replied: {'I have done so.'} [Muslim].

This is especially pertinent when someone agrees with you on matters more specific than general Islām—for instance, being upon the same madhhab as you, like the Shāfi'ī school, or affiliating with the same Shaykh, like Shaykh 'Adī—yet subsequently disagrees on a particular issue, where perhaps the truth is actually with him. How then can his honor ('ird), blood, or wealth be deemed permissible [to violate]? This is despite the rights of a Muslim and a believer that Allāh Almighty has mentioned. And how can it be permissible to divide the Ummah using innovated names that have no basis in the Book of Allāh or the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him)?

This division that has occurred within the Ummah—among its scholars ('ulamā), Shaykhs (mashāyikh), rulers (umarā), and leaders (kubarā)—is what has led to the enemies gaining dominance over it. This results from abandoning adherence to the obedience of Allāh and His Messenger, just as Allāh Almighty stated: {And from those who said, 'We are Christians,' We took their covenant; but they forgot a portion of that of which they were reminded. So We caused among them animosity and hatred...} [Al-Mā'idah: 14]. Whenever people abandon some part of what Allāh has commanded them, enmity ('adāwah) and hatred (baghdā') arise among them. When a people become divided, they become corrupt (fasadū) and perish (halakū); and when they unite, they become righteous (ṣalahū) and gain strength/dominion (malakū). For indeed, unity (al-jamā'ah) is mercy (raḥmah), and division (al-furqah) is punishment ('adhāb).

The core solution lies in commanding what is right (al-amr bil-ma'rūf) and forbidding what is wrong (an-nahy 'anil-munkar), as Allāh Almighty stated: {O you who have

believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him]. And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided...} until His statement {...And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right (ya'murūna bil-ma'rūf) and forbidding what is wrong (yanhawna 'anil-munkar), and those will be the successful (al-muflīḥūn).} [Āl 'Imrān: 102-104]. Part of commanding what is right is commanding unity (i'tilāf) and togetherness (ijtimā'), and forbidding disagreement (ikhtilāf) and division (furqah). And part of forbidding what is wrong is establishing the prescribed punishments (ḥudūd) upon those who deviate from the Sharī'ah of Allāh Almighty.

Thus, whoever believes that a human being is a god (ilāh), or invokes a dead person, or asks them for provision (riqz), victory (naṣr), or guidance (hidāyah), or places trust (tawakkul) in them, or prostrates to them, is called to repent (yustatāb). If he repents, [he is spared]; otherwise, he is executed (ḍaribat 'unuquhu). Whoever elevates any Shaykh above the Prophet (peace be upon him), or believes that anyone can dispense with obedience to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), is called to repent. If he repents, [he is spared]; otherwise, he is executed. Likewise, whoever believes that any of the Awliyā' of Allāh can be with Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the same way that Al-Khiḍr was with Mūsā (peace be upon him) [i.e., possessing knowledge independent of the Prophet's Sharī'ah], is called to repent. If he repents, [he is spared]; otherwise, he is executed. This is because Al-Khiḍr was not from the nation (ummah) of Mūsā (peace be upon him), nor was obedience to Mūsā obligatory upon him. Rather, he said to Mūsā: 'I possess knowledge from Allāh that He taught me, which you do not know; and you possess knowledge from Allāh that He taught you, which I do not know.' Mūsā was sent specifically to the Children of Isrā'īl, as our Prophet (peace be upon him) said: '{A prophet [before me] used to be sent specifically to his own people, whereas I have been sent to all people universally.}' [Al-Bukhārī, Muslim]. Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was sent to both realms of creation (ath-thaqalayn): mankind (ins) and jinn. Therefore, whoever believes it is permissible for anyone to deviate from his Sharī'ah and obedience is a disbeliever (kāfir) who must be executed.

Similarly, whoever declares Muslims to be disbelievers (kaffara al-muslimīn) or deems their blood and wealth permissible based on an innovation (bid'ah) he has invented, which has no basis in the Book of Allāh or the Sunnah of His Messenger, must be forbidden from doing so and punished in a manner that deters him, even if it requires execution or fighting. For when transgressors (al-mu'tadūn) from all factions are punished, and the pious (al-muttaqūn) from all factions are honored, this becomes one of the greatest means of pleasing Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and rectifying the affairs of the Muslims. It is obligatory upon those in authority (ūlūl-amr)—namely the scholars, rulers, and Shaykhs of every group—to oversee their communities, command them to do good (ma'rūf), and forbid them from evil (munkar). They must command them with what Allāh and His Messenger have commanded, and forbid them from what Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have forbidden.

The first category [commanding good] includes enjoining the Laws of Islām (Sharā'i' al-Islām): the five daily prayers (ṣalawāt) at their appointed times; establishing the Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) and congregational prayers (jamā'āt), both obligatory and regular Sunnah prayers (sunan rātibah) such as the Eid prayers, eclipse prayer (ṣalāt al-kusūf), prayer for rain (istisqā'), Tarāwīḥ prayers, funeral prayers (ṣalāt al-ḵanā'iz), and others. It also includes legislated charities (ṣadaqāt), legislated fasting (ṣawm), and pilgrimage (Ḥajj) to the Sacred House. It includes belief (īmān) in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and belief in divine decree (qadar), both its good and its bad aspects. It includes Iḥsān (spiritual excellence), which is to worship Allāh as though

you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you. It includes all other inward (bāṭinah) and outward (ẓāhirah) matters commanded by Allāh and His Messenger, such as sincerity (ikhḷās) in religion for Allāh alone, trust (tawakkul) in Allāh, loving Allāh and His Messenger more than anything else, hoping (rajāʾ) for Allāh's mercy, fearing (khashyah) His punishment, patience (ṣabr) with Allāh's decree, and submission (taslim) to Allāh's command. It also includes truthfulness in speech (ṣidq al-ḥadīth), fulfillment of covenants (wafā' bil-'uhūd), returning trusts (adā' al-amānāt) to their rightful owners, kindness to parents (birr al-wālidayn), maintaining ties of kinship (ṣilat al-arḥām), cooperating in righteousness and piety (ta'āwun 'alal-birri wat-taqwā), kindness (iḥsān) to neighbors, orphans, the needy, travelers, companions, spouses, and slaves, and justice ('adl) in speech and action. Furthermore, it includes encouraging noble character traits (makārim al-akhlāq), such as maintaining ties with those who sever them from you, giving to those who withhold from you, and forgiving those who wrong you. Allāh Almighty stated: {And the recompense for an evil is an evil like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allāh. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers. And whoever avenges himself after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]. The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment. And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination.} [Ash-Shūrā: 40-43].

As for the munkar (wrongdoing) which Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, the greatest of it is Shirk (associating partners) with Allāh. This involves invoking another deity (ilāh) alongside Allāh—whether it be the sun, the moon, the stars, an angel, a prophet, a righteous man, one of the jinn, idols (tamāthil) representing these, their graves, or anything else invoked besides Allāh Almighty, sought for help (yustaghāthu bihi), or prostrated to. All of this and similar acts constitute Shirk, which Allāh has forbidden through all His Messengers. Allāh has also forbidden killing a soul unjustly and consuming people's wealth wrongfully—whether through usurpation (ghaṣb), ribā (usury/interest), maysir (gambling), or forbidden types of sales and transactions prohibited by the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). Likewise forbidden are severing ties of kinship (qaṭī'at ar-raḥim), disobeying parents ('uqūq al-wālidayn), giving short measure or weight (taṭfīf al-mikyāl wal-mizān), sin (ithm), and wrongful transgression (baghy). Also among the things Allāh Almighty has forbidden is for a person to speak about Allāh without knowledge. Examples include narrating Hadiths attributed to Allāh and His Messenger while asserting their authenticity without knowing it, or describing Allāh with attributes for which no Book from Allāh has been revealed nor any trace of knowledge (athārah min 'ilm) has come from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him). This applies whether these are attributes of negation (nafy) and denial (ta'tīl)—like the claims of the Jahmiyyah that He is not above the Throne nor above the heavens, that He will not be seen in the Hereafter, that He does not speak or love, and similar denials of Allāh and His Messenger—or attributes of affirmation involving anthropomorphism (ithbāt wa tamthīl), such as claiming that He walks on the earth, sits with creation, that they see Him with their physical eyes [in this world], that the heavens contain or encompass Him, or that He permeates His creation, among other types of fabrication (firyāh) against Allāh.

Likewise [forbidden are] innovated acts of worship (al-'ibādāt al-mubtada'ah) which Allāh and His Messenger (peace be upon him) did not legislate, as Allāh Almighty stated: {Or have they partners [associated with Allāh] who have legislated for them from the religion that which Allāh has not permitted?} [Ash-Shūrā: 21]. Allāh legislated acts of worship for His believing servants, but Shayṭān introduced acts of worship for them that

mimic the originals. For example, Allāh legislated the worship of Him alone, without partner, so Shayṭān legislated partners for them, which is the worship of other than Him and associating partners with Him (al-ishrāk bihi). Allāh legislated the five daily prayers, reciting the Qur'ān within them, listening to it, and gathering to listen to the Qur'ān outside of prayer as well. The first Sūrah revealed to His Prophet (peace be upon him) was {Read! In the Name of your Lord Who created} [AL-'Alaq: 1]. At its beginning, He commanded reading, and at its end, He commanded prostration, stating: {...prostrate and draw near [to Allāh].} [AL-'Alaq: 19]. This is why the greatest form of remembrance (adhkār) within the prayer is the recitation of the Qur'ān, and the greatest action is prostration (sujūd) to Allāh alone, without partner. Allāh Almighty stated: {...and [also] the Qur'ān [recitation] of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed.} [AL-Isrā': 78]. And He stated: {So when the Qur'ān is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy.} [AL-'A'rāf: 204].

When the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) gathered, they would ask one among them to recite [the Qur'ān] while the rest listened. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to say to Abū Mūsā [al-Ash'arī] (may Allāh be pleased with him): 'Remind us of our Lord.' So Abū Mūsā would recite while they listened. {The Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by Abū Mūsā (may Allāh be pleased with him) while he was reciting and began to listen to his recitation. He later said: 'O Abū Mūsā, I passed by you last night and started listening to your recitation.' Abū Mūsā replied: 'Had I known [you were listening], I would have beautified it (la-ḥabbartuhu) greatly for you.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: 'Allāh listens more intently (ashaddu udhunan, i.e., listens more attentively) to a man with a beautiful voice reciting the Qur'ān than the master of a songstress listens to his songstress.'} [Narrated by Ibn Mājah]. This [listening to the Qur'ān] is the samā' (spiritual listening) of the believers, the Salaf of the Ummah, and the major early Shaykhs like Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād, Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī, and their like. It is also the samā' of the major later Shaykhs like Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir [al-Jīlānī], Shaykh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, Shaykh Abū Madyan, and other Shaykhs (may Allāh have mercy on them). As for the polytheists, their form of samā' was as Allāh Almighty described it in His Book: {And their prayer at the House [Ka'bah] was not except whistling (mukā') and handclapping (taṣḍiyah).} [AL-Anfāl: 35]. The Salaf explained: Mukā' is whistling, and taṣḍiyah is clapping the hands. The polytheists used to gather in the Sacred Mosque, clapping and making noises, considering that an act of worship and prayer. Allāh condemned them for this and deemed it among the falsehoods He forbade. Therefore, whoever adopts a similar form of listening [whistling, clapping, etc.] as an act of worship and a means of drawing near to Allāh has resembled these [polytheists] in some of their practices. Furthermore, this [innovated samā'] was not practiced by the first three generations praised by the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor by the major Shaykhs.

As for listening to singing (ghinā') merely as entertainment ('alā wajh al-la'ib), this is specific to occasions of celebration (afrah) for women and children, as indicated by various narrations (āthār). Indeed, the religion of Islām is accommodating (wāsi'), with no undue hardship (ḥaraj) in it. However, the pillar ('imād) of the religion, without which it cannot stand, is the five prescribed daily prayers (aṣ-Ṣalawāt al-Khams al-Maktūbāt). The attention Muslims must give to them is greater than that required for any other act. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to write to his governors: 'Indeed, the most important of your affairs in my view is the prayer. Whoever safeguards it and maintains it preserves his religion. And whoever neglects it will be even more neglectful of his other deeds.' Prayer was the first act of worship Allāh obligated. Allāh Himself undertook the obligation of the five prayers by addressing His Messenger directly

on the night of the Mi'rāj. It was the final counsel the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his Ummah as he was departing this world, repeatedly saying: {'The prayer, the prayer, and [be mindful of] those whom your right hands possess!'} [Narrated by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah]. It is the first deed a servant will be held accountable for, and the last part of the religion to be lost. When it is gone, the entire religion is gone. It is the pillar ('amūd) of the religion; when it goes, the religion collapses. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'The head of the matter is Islām, its pillar is the prayer (ṣalāh), and its highest peak (dhirwatu sanāmihi) is Jihād in the way of Allāh.'} [Narrated by At-Tirmidhī].

Allāh stated in His Book: {But there came after them successors who neglected prayer (adā'ū aṣ-ṣalāh) and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil (ghayy).} [Maryam: 59]. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) and others said: 'Neglecting it means delaying it beyond its proper time; for if they abandoned it entirely, they would be disbelievers.' Allāh Almighty stated: {Guard strictly the prayers, especially the middle prayer (aṣ-ṣalāt al-wuṣṭā)...} [Al-Baqarah: 238]. Guarding them means performing them at their appointed times. He Almighty also stated: {So woe to those who pray [but] who are heedless (sāhūn) of their prayer} [Al-Mā'ūn: 4-5] – these are the ones who delay it until its time expires. The Muslims have unanimously agreed (ittafaqa al-muslimūn) that it is impermissible to delay a daytime prayer until night, or a nighttime prayer until day, neither for a traveler, nor a sick person, nor anyone else. However, it is permissible, in cases of need, for a Muslim to combine (yajma') the two daytime prayers—Dhuhr and 'Aṣr—performing them together at the time of either one, and to combine the two nighttime prayers—Maghrib and 'Ishā'—performing them together at the time of either one. This concession applies to travelers, the sick, during rain, and similar valid excuses (a'dhār).

Allāh has obligated Muslims to pray according to their capacity (ṭāqah), as Allāh Almighty stated: {So fear Allāh as much as you are able} [At-Taghābun: 16]. A person must pray with complete purification (ṭahārah), complete recitation (qirā'ah), and complete bowing (rukū') and prostration (sujūd). If one lacks water, or would be harmed by using it due to illness, cold, or other reasons, while in a state of minor ritual impurity (muḥḍith) or major ritual impurity (junub), he performs tayammum with clean earth (aṣ-ṣa'īd aṭ-ṭayyib), which is dust/earth. He wipes his face and hands with it and then prays, without delaying the prayer beyond its time, by scholarly consensus (ittifāq al-'ulamā'). Likewise, if one is imprisoned, bound, chronically ill (zamin), or otherwise restricted, he prays according to his condition. If facing an enemy, he also performs the Prayer of Fear (Ṣalāt al-Khawf). Allāh Almighty stated: {And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer, [especially] if you fear that those who disbelieve may disrupt [or attack] you. Indeed, the disbelievers are ever to you a clear enemy. And when you [O Muḥammad] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you...} until His statement {...and let them take their precautions and their arms...} until His statement {...But when you are secure, establish prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times (kitāban mawqūṭā).} [An-Nisā': 101-103].

It is obligatory upon capable Muslims (ahl al-qudrah) to command prayer to everyone—men, women, and even children. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: {'Command them [your children] to pray at the age of seven, discipline them for abandoning it at the age of ten, and separate them in their beds.'} [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, sound]. If an adult male refuses to perform even one of the five daily prayers or abandons some of its agreed-upon obligatory components, he is called to repent (yustatāb). If he repents, [he is spared]; otherwise, he is executed (qutila). Among the scholars, some say he becomes an apostate (murtadd), a disbeliever (kāfir), upon whom the funeral prayer is not

performed and who is not buried among the Muslims. Others say his ruling is like that of a highway robber (qāṭi' aṭ-ṭarīq), a murderer, or a married adulterer (az-zāni al-muḥṣan) [i.e., subject to the death penalty as a major sinner, but not necessarily declared an apostate].

The matter of prayer is too immense in status to be fully covered here, for it is the foundation (qiwām) and pillar ('imād) of the religion. Allāh Almighty's emphasis on it in His Book surpasses that of all other acts of worship. He (Glorified is He) sometimes singles it out for mention, sometimes pairs it with Zakāh, sometimes with patience (ṣabr), and sometimes with sacrifice (nusuk). Examples include His statement: {And establish prayer and give Zakāh} [Al-Baqarah: 43], His statement: {And seek help through patience and prayer} [Al-Baqarah: 45], His statement: {So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]} [Al-Kawthar: 2], and His statement: {Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice (nusukī), my living, and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims.'} [Al-An'ām: 162-163]. At other times, He begins and ends the description of righteous deeds with prayer, as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij [70:22-35] and at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn. Allāh Almighty stated: {Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive (khāshi'ūn); And they who turn away from ill speech (laghw); And they who are observant of Zakāh; And they who guard their private parts, Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they are not to be blamed - But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors; And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive; And they who carefully maintain their prayers (ṣalawātihim) - Those are the inheritors Who will inherit al-Firdaws [the highest level of Paradise]. They will abide therein eternally.} [Al-Mu'minūn: 1-11]. We ask Allāh, the Magnificent, to make us and you among those {who will inherit al-Firdaws. They will abide therein eternally.} Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. All praise is due to Allāh alone. May Allāh bestow His prayers and abundant peace upon Muḥammad, his family, and his companions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> End of the book "Mujmal l'tiqād as-Salaf" (A Summary of the Creed of the Predecessors). Following it is the book "Mufaṣṣal al-l'tiqād" (The Detailed Creed).