

EXPLANATION OF

The Three Fundamental Principles

AND THEIR EVIDENCES

Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din



Translated by

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Introduction

In the name of Allah. All praise is due to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah. To proceed:

This is a concise explanation of Three Fundamental Principles and Their Evidences by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab , may Allah have mercy on him.

It is very useful in its subject. I have not found another short work that can take its place, because it gathers the foundations of the religion in only a few pages.

Its correct title is Three Fundamental Principles.

Shaykh Salih ibn Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him, distinguished between two works. The Three Principles is a smaller work containing less knowledge and was written to teach children and younger students. Three Fundamental Principles and Their Evidences is the larger work. People often confuse the two titles, but the well-known title of the larger work is Three Fundamental Principles and Their Evidences.

This book has an introduction and a main part. The introduction contains four matters that set out a Muslim's path in learning and practice. The main part contains three fundamental principles: knowing Allah, knowing His Messenger, and knowing Islam. Each principle is explained briefly, the religion of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, is explained, and the book ends with resurrection and being called to account.

Chain of Transmission

I received this work from Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh while another student read it to him for study at the Open Islamic Academy. He explained it in twelve sessions. He had read it to Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al al-Shaykh , who received it from his teacher Abd al-Latif ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan by permission to transmit it, if he did not hear it directly from him. Abd al-Latif received it from his father, Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab , from his grandfather Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab .

I also heard it from Salih al-Usaymi in the Prophet's Mosque. He narrates it from Abd al-Aziz ibn Salih ibn Murshid, who read it to Abd al-Latif ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan, from his grandfather Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

I also heard it from Duwaykh al-Harithi and read it myself to Muhammad Abtan al-Quthami. Both narrate it from Sulayman al-Hamdan, from Abd al-Sattar al-Siddiqi, from Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Isa, from Abd al-Rahman Al al-Shaykh, from his grandfather Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

The Four Matters

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.
Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that we must learn four matters:

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The introduction is not itself the Three Fundamental Principles. It contains four opening matters.

The First Matter: Knowledge

The first: Knowledge. This is knowing Allah, knowing His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and knowing the religion of Islam with evidence.

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Beginning with the name of Allah is the practice of the people of knowledge. It is a way of seeking blessing through mentioning Allah's name and asking Him for help and success.

“May Allah have mercy on you” is a prayer asking Allah to have mercy on the reader. It shows good manners and a sincere desire for the reader's benefit. The phrase “we must learn four matters” establishes that learning these matters is required because they are general foundations that a Muslim needs throughout life.

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The word “knowledge” here is not being given a dictionary or special definition. What matters here is the foundation of beneficial knowledge in the sight of Allah: knowing Allah, knowing His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and knowing the religion of Islam with evidence. These are the same three principles explained later in the book.

This introduction prepares us to understand how this knowledge benefits us and why we learn it. We do not learn it just to argue, to be called knowledgeable, or simply to collect information.

The Second Matter: Acting upon Knowledge

| The second: Acting upon it.

EXPLANATION

This is how knowledge produces benefit. It should have an effect on our lives, changing our thoughts, character, habits, and dealings according to what we have learned.

The Third Matter: Calling Others to It

| The third: Calling others to it.

EXPLANATION

A person who learns, acts, and is sincere to Allah has saved himself, but Allah also commanded the believers with what He commanded the messengers. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Allah commanded the believers with what He commanded the messengers.” [R1]

Saving oneself from Allah's anger, punishment, and the Fire is a great matter. Better still is to call others to Allah, help whoever one can out of error, take people by the hand toward truth and guidance, and support the religion of Allah.

So the order is: learn, then act, then call others.

The Fourth Matter: Patience with Harm

The fourth: Being patient with harm that comes because of it.

The evidence is the saying of Allah:

“By time. Surely mankind is in loss, except those who believe, do righteous deeds, advise one another to the truth, and advise one another to patience.” [al-Asr 103:1-3]

References

[R1] Sahih Muslim, no. 1015 (65).

Al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "If Allah had sent down no proof upon His creation other than this Quran chapter, it would have been enough for them."

Al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, wrote a chapter entitled: "Knowledge before speech and action." [R4] The evidence is the saying of Allah:

"So know that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and seek forgiveness for your sin." [Muhammad 47:19]

He began with knowledge before speech and action.

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No one worships Allah and calls to Him without facing some harm. The amount differs from one person to another. The prophets suffered the greatest harm because they were at the head of the call and were examples for their people. Reading their stories with their nations contains many lessons.

The four matters are arranged according to the order in which they are actually needed. You cannot act correctly until you know. If you act without knowledge, you may act wrongly and without guidance or clear proof.

Action therefore comes after knowledge. Calling others comes after knowledge and action. If you call without knowledge, your call can become a call to error. If you guide others while failing to follow the guidance yourself and failing to

References

[R4] Sahih al-Bukhari, 1/24 (al-Sultaniyyah ed.).

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follow the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, you have neglected your own soul. You are the first person who should act upon what you have learned.

Patience comes after that because mere learning does not normally cause much harm. People may not care whether you study or not. Worship may bring some harm: a family may oppose your following the religion, or friends who are not upright may dislike your taking a different path. Usually this remains limited.

Calling openly to the truth is different. Then you will have opponents. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, informed us that this Muslim community would divide into seventy-three sects, all of them in the Fire except one. If you are upon guidance and call to the truth, the people of the other seventy-two ways become opponents according to how openly and clearly you present the truth.

Calling to truth also requires responding to falsehood, so its people may direct different forms of hostility at the caller. Abu Ismail al-Harawi said: “The sword was presented to me five times. I was not told, ‘Leave your position.’ I was told, ‘Be silent about those who oppose you.’ I replied, ‘I will not be silent.’” [R2]

Opposition can even come from some who agree with you. One person may oppose you to appear impartial. Another may try to draw close to opponents at your expense. Another may have agreed with you without knowledge, then become uncomfortable once the difference between truth and falsehood

References

[R2] Ibn Tahir al-Maqdisi, *al-Manthur min al-Hikayat wa-l-Su'alat*, p. 35.

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becomes clear because he preferred the vagueness he had before. Some who agree with you may also be excessive and will not be satisfied unless you agree with their excess.

Some callers therefore try to avoid every dispute and say, “I will only call to matters everyone agrees upon: prayer, condemning lying, encouraging the Sunnahs, forbidding wine, and forbidding zina.” These are good matters, without doubt. Yet such a person will still have opponents. People who follow newly invented religious practices may not be satisfied with someone who refuses to accept those practices. If he shows them some agreement in order to attract them, people of truth may accuse him of watering matters down. If he shows no agreement with those practices, they may reject him.

The point is that a person will face harm whether he tries to please people or tries to please Allah. The foundation is therefore to seek Allah's pleasure. Do not be overly concerned with who turns away. One person may leave and ten others may come. People of falsehood will find people who listen to their falsehood, and people of truth will find people who listen to the truth. Your concern should be that whoever listens benefits from the truth.

When you stand before Allah and another person says that he learned from you, you should be able to say: “My Lord, I taught him what I found in Your Book, what I found in the Sunnah of Your Prophet, and what I found the early generations of this Muslim community (Ummah) upon - the generations Your Messenger described as the best of people. This is what I called to, defended, believed, and acted upon.”

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A person who follows newly invented religious practices, on the other hand, may have nothing but: “This idea matched my reasoning; I found that in a particular book; I thought it fitted the situation at the time; I said this because of people's pressure,” and similar excuses. That is not a sound foundation.

The evidence for these four matters is the Quran chapter al-Asr. Allah swears by time that all mankind is in loss except one successful group: those who believe, do righteous deeds, advise one another to truth, and advise one another to patience.

These are the same four qualities. Faith is speech and action. Speech is built on knowledge: a person learns and then affirms what he learned. Action is also built on knowledge. Then they acted: “and do righteous deeds.” Then they called: “and advise one another to truth.” Then they showed patience because the path requires it: “and advise one another to patience.” They are patient in obedience, patient in keeping away from desires, and patient in the face of harm.

Al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “If Allah had sent down no proof upon His creation other than this Quran chapter, it would have been enough for them.” [R3]

Why would this chapter have been enough? Because it contains the basic foundations of the religion.

References

[R3] Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' al-Fatawa, 28/152, reporting the statement from al-Shafi'i.

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Al-Bukhari placed a chapter in his Sahih entitled “Knowledge before speech and action,” using as evidence Allah's saying: “So know that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and seek forgiveness for your sin.” [Muhammad 47:19] Knowledge is mentioned before seeking forgiveness, which is an action.

The Three Matters

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that every Muslim man and woman must learn these three matters and act upon them:

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“Know” is a command to pay attention and learn. “May Allah have mercy on you” is a prayer asking Allah to have mercy on the reader.

It says that every Muslim man and woman must learn these three matters and act upon them. Knowledge has already been established as coming before speech and action. Now these are specific matters that must be learned and acted upon.

The First Matter: Allah Created Us, Provided for Us, and Sent a Messenger

The first: Allah created us, provided for us, and did not leave us without guidance. Rather, He sent a Messenger to us. Whoever obeys him enters Paradise, and whoever disobeys him enters the Fire. The evidence is the saying of Allah:

“Indeed, We have sent to you a Messenger as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure.”

[al-Muzzammil 73:15-16]

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Allah created us. He brought us into existence from nothing. Even the disbelievers of Quraysh admitted this. Allah says:

“If you ask them who created them, they will certainly say: Allah.”
[al-Zukhruf 43:87]

The evidence is so clear that Allah challenges those who deny it:

“Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they have no certainty. Or do they possess the treasures of your Lord, or are they the controllers?” [al-Tur 52:35-37]

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Allah also provided for us from the time we were unborn children in our mothers' wombs. He provided food, health, intellect, and everything else we need.

He did not leave us neglected. Just as He did not neglect our bodies and provision, He did not leave our souls without what gives them life. He sent a Messenger to us carrying Allah's message. Through him we came to know our Lord and the path of guidance. Allah sent down a law by which we live so that the affairs of this world and the next are put right.

Whoever obeys the Messenger enters Paradise, and whoever rejects and disobeys him in disbelief enters the Fire. The end is either Paradise or the Fire. Allah gives the example of Pharaoh: a messenger came to him, Pharaoh rejected him, and Allah seized him severely. This teaches us how we must respond to our Messenger and what the result is. Whoever rejects him has the fate of those who rejected the messengers, while whoever believes and obeys is saved.

The Second Matter: Allah Accepts No Partner in Worship

The second: Allah is not pleased that anyone be associated with Him in worship, whether a close angel or a sent prophet. The evidence is the saying of Allah:

“The mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah.” [al-Jinn 72:18]

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Allah is not pleased that anyone be associated with Him in worship. Shirk is the sin Allah does not forgive. Allah says:

“Surely Allah does not forgive associating partners with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whoever He wills.” [al-Nisa 4:48]

So shirk is the greatest category of sin, whatever form it takes.

Allah, who created us, provided for us, sent the messengers, warned us against the Fire, and encouraged us toward Paradise, does not accept any partner in worship. This is true no matter who that partner is. Even the closest angels, such as Jibril or Mika'il, cannot be worshipped with Allah.

If someone were to worship a prophet, that person would be associating a partner with Allah. No righteous deed is accepted from him - no *sarf* and no *'adl* - and his end is Hell. People worshipped Isa (Jesus), peace be upon him, and Allah said: “They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘Allah is the third of three.’” [al-Ma'idah 5:73] The same would be true if anyone worshipped Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He is a prophet and messenger. He does not accept being worshipped besides Allah, and he came with *tawhid*.

Among his prayers was: “O Allah, do not make my grave an idol that is worshipped. Allah's anger became severe against people who took the graves of their prophets as places of worship.” [R5]

References

[R5] Malik, al-Muwatta, 1/172 (Abd al-Baqi ed.); Ahmad, al-Musnad, no. 7358. The editors graded its chain strong.

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The evidence is: “The mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah.” [al-Jinn 72:18] Therefore Allah alone must be singled out in worship.

The Third Matter: Loyalty and Opposition for Allah's Sake

The third: Whoever obeys the Messenger and worships Allah alone is not permitted to give religious loyalty to one who opposes Allah and His Messenger, even if that person is his closest relative. The evidence is the saying of Allah:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they are their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their close relatives. Those are the ones in whose hearts He has written faith and strengthened them with a spirit from Him. He will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to remain there forever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. Those are the party of Allah. Surely the party of Allah are the successful.”
[al-Mujadilah

58:22]

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To “oppose Allah and His Messenger” means to place oneself on the other side from Allah and His Messenger: refusing faith, rejecting obedience, or making a separation between oneself and their command. A believer cannot give the kind of loyalty described in the verse to such opposition.

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The verse does not merely say that such love is improper. It says that you will not find a people who truly believe in Allah and the Last Day giving this religious love and loyalty to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger. If a person gives them that loyalty, he is not a believer. You cannot say, “No, my Lord, I found believers who do this,” when Allah says that you will not find them.

Allah then praises the believers who do not give such loyalty: He writes faith in their hearts, strengthens them with a spirit from Him, admits them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. They are the party of Allah, and the party of Allah are the successful.

A question can arise here: a person's father or another close relative may be a person who worships others besides Allah. Is natural love for a relative itself shirk or the forbidden loyalty mentioned in the verse?

The Prophet's uncle Abu Talib was a person who worships others besides Allah, yet the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had a natural love for him. Allah says: “You do not guide whom you love.” [al-Qasas 28:56], and the commentators mention Abu Talib in connection with the verse.

There is no contradiction because this is natural love based on kinship, not love for disbelief or for the religion of the relative. There is a difference between saying, “I love Christians,” meaning love for them because of their Christian religion - that is disbelief - and saying, “I love my family,” when some family members happen to be Christian. The first attaches the love to their religion; the second attaches it to family ties.

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The forbidden close love and loyalty also carries the meaning of close supportive loyalty. Natural affection for a relative does not itself mean supporting that relative against the Muslims or preferring his disbelief over Islam. The decisive matter becomes clear when religion and kinship come into conflict: whom does a person support when the relative attacks Allah's religion or harms the Messenger? Natural family affection is one thing; religious loyalty and support are another.

Al-Shafi'i said that Allah distinguished people from one another by religion while not cutting the family ties between them. This shows that family relationships themselves are not part of the religious loyalty being discussed. [R6]

Najm al-Din al-Tufi al-Hanbali said that affection for sinful people is forbidden when the affection is for their sin: loving a sinner because of his sin is itself sinful, and loving a disbeliever because of his disbelief is disbelief. But affection for some other worldly reason or a good personal quality - such as knowledge one benefits from, generosity, or courage - is a different matter, for which Allah's pardon may be hoped. [R7]

There is another aspect as well: the close love and loyalty mentioned here means support and alliance. Al-Zajaj said that Allah made clear that a believer's faith is corrupted by loving the disbelievers in a way that leads to helping them against the believers. [R8]

References

[R6] Al-Shafi'i, al-Umm, 4/131 (Dar al-Fikr ed.).

[R7] Najm al-Din al-Tufi, al-Isharat al-Ilahiyyah ila al-Mabahith al-Usuliyyah, p. 629.

[R8] Al-Zajaj, Ma'ani al-Qur'an wa-I'rabuhu, 5/141.

The Hanifiyyah - the Religion of Ibrahim

Know, may Allah guide you to obey Him, that the Hanifiyyah, the religion of Ibrahim, is that you worship Allah alone, making the religion sincerely for Him. Allah commanded all people to do this and created them for it. Allah says:

“I did not create jinn (created beings normally unseen by us) and mankind except to worship Me.” [al-Dharyat 51:56]

The meaning of “worship Me” is: worship Me alone.

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This is where the Three Fundamental Principles themselves begin. Everything before this was introductory preparation.

“Know, may Allah guide you to obey Him” is a prayer asking Allah to guide the reader to obey Him. It is one of the good supplications, and we ask Allah to accept it.

“The Hanifiyyah is the religion of Ibrahim: that you worship Allah alone.” In other words, the Hanifiyyah, the way of Ibrahim, is to direct worship to Allah alone.

Making the religion sincerely for Allah means that you devote your religion only to Allah and worship only Him.

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Allah commanded all people with this. Every prophet came with this foundation, and the call of all the prophets reaches all people: worship Allah alone. Allah created mankind for worship, and worship requires tawhid, because worship mixed with shirk is not accepted. Allah says:

“Had they associated partners with Allah, all that they used to do would have been nullified.” [al-Anam 6:88]

Even if a person outwardly worships Allah, if minor shirk such as showing off enters a particular act, that act is corrupted. Allah says in the sacred hadith: “I am the One most free of need of partners. Whoever performs a deed in which he associates someone else with Me, I leave him and his association.” [R9]

Allah has no need of an act mixed with shirk. Correct worship therefore cannot exist without correct tawhid.

The words “I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me” show that jinn and mankind were created for the purpose of worshipping Allah. This is what is required of them.

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, explained “worship Me” as “worship Me alone.”

References

[R9] Sahih Muslim, no. 2985 (46).

The greatest thing Allah commanded is tawhid: singling out Allah alone in worship. The greatest thing He prohibited is shirk: calling upon someone else along with Him. The evidence is:

“Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him.” [al-Nisa 4:36]

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“The greatest thing Allah commanded is tawhid.” Tawhid is the greatest command because its opposite is not forgiven. A sinful person may be forgiven, and a person who fell short may be forgiven, but shirk is not forgiven. Tawhid therefore stands at the head of all commands. It means singling Allah out in worship.

“The greatest thing He prohibited is shirk, which is calling upon another along with Him.” Shirk is the greatest prohibition because it is not forgiven and because it destroys righteous deeds.

The evidence here is: “Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him.” [al-Nisa 4:36] This verse certainly commands tawhid and prohibits shirk, although it does not by itself state that tawhid is the greatest command and shirk the greatest prohibition. A verse even more explicit about the danger of shirk is:

“Surely Allah does not forgive that partners be associated with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whoever He wills. Whoever associates partners with Allah has invented a tremendous sin.” [al-Nisa 4:48]

Another strong evidence for the importance of tawhid is:

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“Say: I have only been commanded to worship Allah and not associate anything with Him. To Him I call and to Him is my return.” [al-Rad 13:36]

The wording “I have only been commanded” emphasizes the central place of this command.

The Three Fundamental Principles

If you are asked, “What are the three fundamental principles a person must know?” say: A servant's knowledge of his Lord, his religion, and his Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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These are the three principles. They are also the three matters about which a person will be questioned in the grave: Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is the man who was sent among you? Every Muslim must therefore know these three principles and act according to them. Someone who does not do so has not truly learned the religion.

The first principle is to know your Lord. The second is to know your religion. The religion cannot be known correctly except through Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A person might acknowledge his Lord yet not know how Allah is to be worshipped, and so he may worship Him in a way He did not command. It is therefore necessary to know the correct religion by which one draws close to Allah, and to know the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, because he is the one who shows us that religion.

The First Fundamental Principle: Knowing the Lord

If you are asked, “Who is your Lord?” say: My Lord is Allah, who cared for me and cared for all creation through His blessings. He is the One I worship, and I have no object of worship besides Him. The evidence is:

“All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all worlds.” [al-Fatihah 1:2]

Everything besides Allah is part of creation, and I am one part of that creation.

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The response given - “My Lord is Allah, who cared for me and cared for all creation through His blessings” - is not meant to be the only wording with which a person may answer. The purpose is to teach the meaning of Lordship. The finest description is Allah’s own speech, such as Ayat al-Kursi and other verses describing Him:

“Allah - none has the right to be worshipped except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they grasp nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and guarding them does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Most Great.” [al-Baqarah 2:255]

And:

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“Surely your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then rose over the Throne, governing all affairs. No one may intercede except with His permission. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him. Will you not then take heed?” [Yunus 10:3]

This wording makes the meaning of rabb clear. “He cared for me” means that He brought me up, cared for me, and developed me through His blessings. We grew only by the favor of Allah. He created us, provided for us, and bestowed His favors upon us. Without Allah’s provision and blessings, neither we nor the world could continue.

“He is the One I worship.” The object of worship is the one to whom worship is directed. Saying, “He is my object of worship, and I have no object of worship besides Him,” is the necessary consequence of being Muslim.

Allah is Lord of all creation. There is a world of human beings, a world of jinn, a world of animals, and many other kinds of created beings. All of these worlds have one Lord: Allah.

“All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all worlds.” The plural “worlds” includes every category of creation. Everything besides Allah is created, and each of us is one individual within that creation. My Lord is therefore Allah, just as He is the Lord of all created beings.

How Do You Know Your Lord?

If you are asked, “How did you come to know your Lord?” say: Through His signs and His created things. Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Among His created things are the seven heavens, the seven earths, everything within them, and everything between them. The evidence is:

“Among His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon. Prostrate to Allah who created them, if it is truly Him that you worship.” [Fussilat 41:37]

And His saying:

“Your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then rose over the Throne. He causes the night to cover the day, pursuing it swiftly, and He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, all subjected by His command. Surely creation and command belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, Lord of all worlds.” [al-Araf 7:54]

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Simply reflecting on this universe tells a person that it has a Creator and that its Creator is wise. The world runs according to an exact order. If the earth were closer to the sun, the water would evaporate, the trees would dry up, and life would be ruined. If it were farther away, we would freeze. Allah created the world according to an ordered measure.

The same precision appears in the human body. A wound normally closes and heals; if wounds could never close, even a single injury could remain life-threatening. The brain is easily harmed, so it is protected by the skull. The

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heart is protected by the rib cage. The spinal cord passes inside the vertebral column. The lungs bring oxygen into contact with the blood; the blood then travels through the heart and on to the smallest cells of the body.

Looking at the precision of creation leads to the knowledge that creation has a Creator. It also shows wisdom. A wise Creator does not create everything without a purpose. So why were we created? Would He leave us without telling us? Wisdom requires that He make the purpose known so that we do not wander through life without guidance.

Where do we receive this message? We examine those who claimed to be messengers. Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought a clear message from Allah. He is the only one whose message has been preserved by the most precise means.

The basic point is that reflecting upon created things points to Allah. This is the meaning of: “Through His signs and His created things.” The night, day, sun, moon, seven heavens, seven earths, what is within them, and what lies between them all point to Allah's greatness, the greatness of His creation, His wisdom, and His power.

A sign (ayah) is an indication or marker. The night, day, sun, and moon are signs because they point beyond themselves to the One who created them.

Allah says: “Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon. Prostrate to Allah who created them.” The verse uses prostration as an act of worship. Once an act has been made worship, whoever directs it to other than Allah disbelieves. The scholars say that in our law, whoever prostrates to other than Allah disbelieves. This differs from some earlier laws in which prostration could be used as a greeting. In our law, prostration belongs to Allah alone.

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The verse then describes Allah as the One who created the heavens and earth in six days and rose over the Throne. Whoever denies that Allah rose over His Throne has not believed in Allah, because Allah introduced Himself as the One who rose over the Throne. Allah's attributes are real. They are not like the attributes of creation, and we do not ask how they are. The night covers the day, and each follows the other swiftly. This way in which night surrounds day is among the matters discovered recently. The sun, moon, and stars are subjected by His command. Their movement, light, and benefits are all by His command. Creation belongs to Him and command belongs to Him. Blessed is Allah, Lord of all worlds.

The Lord is the One who deserves to be worshipped. The evidence is:

“O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that you may become mindful of Him; the One who made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy, and sent water down from the sky, bringing forth fruits as provision for you. So do not set up rivals to Allah while you know.” [al-Baqarah 2:21-22]

Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “The Creator of these things is the One who deserves worship.”

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“The Lord is the One who deserves to be worshipped.” The evidence is the command: “O mankind, worship your Lord.” Why is He to be worshipped? Because He created you and those before you, spread out the earth for you, made the sky a structure above you ^[T5], sent down rain, and produced fruits as provision. Therefore do not set up equals with Allah while knowing these facts.

Translator's Notes

[T5] In Arabic, *samā'* can refer to what is above; a ceiling and clouds are examples.

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Ibn Kathir summarized this meaning by saying: “The Creator of these things is the One who deserves worship.”

Types of Worship

The kinds of worship Allah commanded include Islam, iman, ihsan, supplication, fear, hope, trust in Allah, hopeful desire, fear and awe, humility, deep fear and respect, returning to Allah, seeking help, seeking refuge, seeking rescue, sacrifice, vows, and other forms of worship commanded by Allah. All of them belong to Allah alone.

The evidence is:

“The mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah. When the servant of Allah stood calling upon Him, they almost crowded around him. Say: I only call upon my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with Him.” [al-Jinn 72:18-20]

Whoever directs any part of worship to someone besides Allah is a person who worships others besides Allah and is a disbeliever. The evidence is:

“Whoever calls upon another god besides Allah, for which he has no proof, his account is only with his Lord. Surely the disbelievers will not succeed.” [al-Muminun 23:117]

The hadith states: “Supplication is the core of worship.” [R10] The evidence from the Quran is:

“Your Lord said: Call upon Me and I will answer you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell humiliated.”
[Ghafir 40:60]

EXPLANATION

Worship includes everything Allah commanded us to use as a means of drawing close to Him. It can be expressed through speech, through bodily action, or through the heart. Matters of the heart include beliefs as well as acts of the heart.

Whatever Allah has commanded to be directed only to Him is worship, and directing it to another as worship is shirk. Likewise, anyone who performs a religious rite as an act of devotion toward someone besides Allah has committed shirk.

These forms include Islam, iman, ihsan, supplication, fear, hope, trust, desire, fear and awe, humility, deep fear and respect, returning to Allah, seeking help, seeking refuge, seeking rescue, sacrifice, vows, and other forms of worship.

The evidence that worship cannot be directed to another is: “The mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon anyone along with Allah.” The surrounding verses also call calling upon another along with Allah “shirk”: “Say: I only call

References

[R10] Al-Tirmidhi: the wording “Supplication is the core of worship” comes through Ibn Lahi’ah; the authentic report from al-Nu’man ibn Bashir says, “Supplication is worship,” and al-Tirmidhi graded it hasan sahih.

EXPLANATION

upon my Lord, and I associate no one with Him.” Calling upon another in the manner belonging to worship is therefore shirk, and the same principle applies to other acts of worship.

The verse itself proves the point: Allah first commands, “Call upon Me,” then describes refusing to call upon Him as being too proud for “My worship.” The verse therefore identifies supplication as worship.

The report “Supplication is the core of worship” comes only through Ibn Lahi’ah. Al-Tirmidhi described this route as gharib. Ibn Lahi’ah is weak, and he made a mistake in this wording. The authentic report from al-Nu’mān ibn Bashir is: “Supplication is worship.” Al-Tirmidhi graded that report hasan sahih. ^[R10]

Fear

The evidence for fear is:

“So do not fear them; fear Me, if you are believers.” [Al Imran 3:175]

EXPLANATION

Fear is anxiety in the soul because of an expected harm. Allah commands believers to fear Him: “Do not fear them; fear Me, if you are believers.” Fear of Allah is fear of His displeasure and punishment.

Fear of created things is not all one ruling. It can be divided into three kinds:

References

[R10] Al-Tirmidhi: the wording “Supplication is the core of worship” comes through Ibn Lahi’ah; the authentic report from al-Nu’mān ibn Bashir says, “Supplication is worship,” and al-Tirmidhi graded it hasan sahih.

EXPLANATION

Fear of created things is of three kinds.

Allowed fear is fear of an ordinary harm that can normally occur, such as fire or illness. The Quran also mentions prophets experiencing this kind of fear: Zakariyya said, “I fear my relatives after me”; Musa left the city “fearful and watchful”; and Ibrahim felt afraid when his guests did not eat.

Forbidden fear is fear of an unseen harm that normal causes do not produce, such as superstitious fear of an owl or crow, or fear that an angry wali can secretly harm a person.

Shirk-related fear is fearing created beings as much as or more than Allah, or giving fear of people precedence over fear of Allah when the two conflict.

Any fear that keeps a person from obedience or leads him into sin is prohibited fear. Depending on its nature, it falls under the forbidden or shirk-related type.

Hope

The evidence for hope is:

“Whoever hopes to meet his Lord should do righteous deeds and associate no one in the worship of his Lord.” [al-Kahf 18:110]

EXPLANATION

Hope is expecting good. There is lawful hope and unlawful hope.

Lawful hope includes:

hoping for good from Allah; hoping for good through a created person in something the person can normally do, while knowing that Allah is the One who ultimately makes the matter possible.

EXPLANATION

Unlawful hope has three forms:

Blameworthy hope: hoping for good without taking the available means that a person is able to take.

Shirk-related hope: expecting the result while believing it will happen without Allah making it possible.

Hope that is disbelief: hoping for salvation in the Hereafter for people who die upon disbelief. This rejects the Quran and Sunnah.

Trust in Allah

The evidence for trust in Allah is:

“Upon Allah rely, if you are believers.” [al-Ma'idah 5:23]

And:

“Whoever relies upon Allah, He is sufficient for him.” [al-Talaq 65:3]

EXPLANATION

Tawakkul means depending on another and entrusting the matter to him. The correct form is to rely upon Allah while taking the permitted means.

Trust can be described in three ways:

The allowed form: relying upon Allah while also taking the lawful means available. An innovated and mistaken form: claiming trust in Allah while refusing to take the means Allah has placed in creation. A form of shirk: relying upon a created being while believing the being acts independently of Allah.

Hopeful Desire, Fear and Awe, and Humility

The evidence for hopeful desire, fear and awe, and humility is:

“They used to hasten to good deeds, calling upon Us with hope and fear, and they were humble before Us.” [al-Anbiya 21:90]

EXPLANATION

Desire is action accompanied by hope. Fear and awe is continuing fear. Humility is submission and lowering yourself before Allah. Allah praises His prophets: “They used to hasten to good deeds, calling upon Us with hope and fear, and they were humble before Us.” The fact that Allah praises these qualities as part of their worship shows their religious character.

Deep Fear and Respect

The evidence for deep fear and respect is:

“Do not fear them; fear Me.” [al-Baqarah 2:150]

EXPLANATION

Khashyah is fear of something that may happen in the future, and it is perhaps more closely connected to awe than to harm. Allah says: “They fear their Lord and fear an evil reckoning.” [al-Ra’d 13:21]

Returning to Allah

The evidence for returning in repentance is:

“Turn to your Lord in repentance and submit to Him.” [al-Zumar 39:54]

EXPLANATION

Inabah means turning back to Allah in obedience. It is close to repentance. Repentance is turning back from sin, while inabah can also mean returning to Allah after becoming careless. Allah says: “Turn to your Lord and submit to Him.”

Seeking Help, Refuge, and Rescue

The evidence for seeking help is:

“You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.” [al-Fatihah 1:5]

And in the hadith: “If you seek help, seek help from Allah.”

The evidence for seeking refuge is:

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak.” [al-Falaq 113:1]

And:

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind.” [al-Nas 114:1]

The evidence for seeking rescue is:

“When you sought rescue from your Lord, He answered you.”
[al-Anfal 8:9]

EXPLANATION

Seeking help means asking another for help. “You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help” puts “You alone” first. This emphasizes that this must be for Allah alone in the kind of ultimate trust and help sought from Allah. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “If you seek help, seek help from Allah.”

Seeking refuge means asking for protection from an expected danger: “Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak,” and “Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind.”

Seeking rescue means asking to be saved from a danger that has already occurred: “When you sought rescue from your Lord, He answered you.”

A practical form of seeking Allah's help is to begin an action while consciously recognizing that one's ability comes from Allah. For example, saying “la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah” when undertaking an action is an expression of seeking Allah's help.

Seeking help, refuge, and rescue fall into three broad categories:

Lawful: asking Allah; or asking a created person for something within normal created ability while believing that the person acts only by Allah's permission. Forbidden: asking for help in wrongdoing, or protecting a wrongdoer against a rightful claim. Allah says, “Do not cooperate in sin and going beyond the limit.” The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

“Allah curses the one who shelters an offender.” [R11]

References

[R11] Sahih Muslim, no. 1978 (43); a similar report is in Sahih al-Bukhari.

EXPLANATION

Shirk in seeking help, refuge, or rescue has two forms: asking a created being for something within normal created ability while believing that the being acts independently of Allah; and asking a created being for something that can rightly be asked only of Allah, such as asking an absent created being to rescue someone in hardship.

Sacrifice

The evidence for sacrifice is:

“Say: Surely my Lord has guided me to a straight path, an upright religion, the way of Ibrahim, who turned away from shirk and was not one of those who associated partners with Allah. Say: Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. This is what I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.” [al-An‘am 6:161-163]

And in the Sunnah: “Allah curses the one who sacrifices for other than Allah.”

EXPLANATION

Sacrifice here means drawing close to someone by spilling the blood of an animal. Allah says: “Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. With this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.” The Sunnah also says: “Allah curses the one who sacrifices for other than Allah.”

Nusuk here means sacrifice.

Sacrifice can be divided into three kinds:

EXPLANATION

Lawful: slaughtering to draw close to Allah, or slaughtering for food while mentioning Allah's name. Forbidden: slaughtering for showing off, or slaughtering in a manner in which Allah's name is not properly mentioned. Shirk: spilling the blood intending to draw close in worship to someone besides Allah.

Slaughtering an animal for a guest as food is not included in the last category, because the purpose is feeding the guest, not worshipping him.

Vows

The evidence for vows is:

“They fulfil their vows and fear a Day whose evil will spread far and wide.” [al-Insan 76:7]

EXPLANATION

A vow is a person obligating himself to perform an act of worship that was not already individually required upon him. Allah praises those who “fulfil their vows and fear a Day whose evil will spread far and wide.” This shows that fulfilling a vow made for Allah is an act of worship.

Vows are of several kinds. A direct vow of worship is when a person obligates himself to an act of worship for Allah. A conditional vow is tied to an event, such as saying, “If Allah cures me, I will perform such-and-such act of worship.” The Prophet forbade this kind and said that a vow does not bring about good. A vow to commit a sin must not be fulfilled. A vow concerning an ordinary act that is neither worship nor sin is not binding, while there is scholarly disagreement over whether expiation is due.

The Second Fundamental Principle: Knowing Islam with Evidence

Islam is to submit to Allah through tawhid, obey Him through obedience, and reject shirk and its people. It has three levels: Islam, iman,

and ihsan. Each level has pillars.

EXPLANATION

Islam is not derived from the word “peace.” It comes from aslama - “he submitted” - and one of its meanings is submission, because we submit our faces to Allah. Here Islam means submitting to Allah through tawhid.

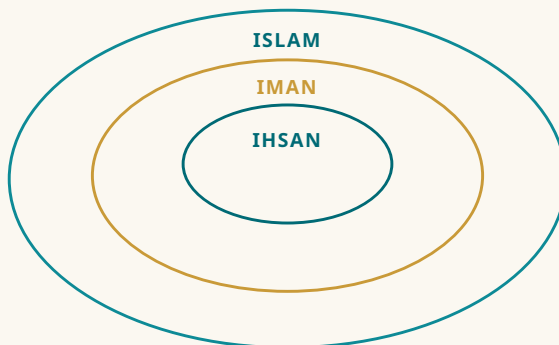
“And obedience to Him through obedience.” A Muslim yields to Allah and does not deliberately turn away from the path Allah approved.

Allah says: “Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, Lord of all worlds. He has no partner.” [al-An‘am 6:162-163] This is evidence for submitting to Allah alone.

Disavowal means rejecting shirk and disavowing its people. Tawhid is not complete while a person approves of shirk or treats it as an acceptable religion.

Islam has three levels: Islam, iman, and ihsan. These levels are not equal.

Islam is the broad level that includes everyone who remains within the religion: the righteous and the sinful, the person of Sunnah and the person who falls into innovation while remaining Muslim. Iman is a higher level associated with those who obey Allah, perform what He commands, and leave what He forbids. Ihsan is the level of those who worship Allah in the finest manner.



The three levels are shown as nested circles: Islam is broad, iman is a higher and narrower level, and ihsan is the highest level.

The First Level: Islam

The pillars of Islam are five: bearing witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; establishing prayer; giving zakah (required charity); fasting Ramadan; and pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah.

EXPLANATION

These five pillars do not all have exactly the same ruling when abandoned. Abandoning the two testimonies removes a person from Islam, and deliberately abandoning prayer also makes a person a disbeliever. A person who leaves zakah, fasting, or Hajj while still accepting their obligation commits an enormous sin but is not removed from Islam merely by leaving them.

The Testimony: None Has the Right to Be Worshipped except Allah

The evidence for the testimony is:

“Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Him, and so do the angels and those of knowledge, upholding justice. None has the right to be worshipped except Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise.” [Al Imran 3:18]

Its meaning is: none has the right to be worshipped except Allah.

“There is no god” negates everything worshipped besides Allah, while “except Allah” affirms worship for Allah alone, with no partner in His worship just as He has no partner in His dominion.

Its explanation is made clear by the saying of Allah:

“When Ibrahim said to his father and his people: I am free of what you worship, except the One who created me, for He will guide me. He made it a lasting word among his descendants so that they might return.” [al-Zukhruf 43:26-28]

And:

“Say: O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is just between us and you: that we worship none but Allah, associate nothing with Him, and that none of us take others as lords besides Allah. If they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.” [Al Imran 3:64]

EXPLANATION

Allah, the angels, and the people of knowledge bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Him. Allah maintains justice, and He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.

The meaning of the testimony is “None has the right to be worshipped except Allah.” The word *ilah* refers to one who is worshipped.

It would be incorrect to understand the sentence as “There is no object of worship in existence except Allah,” because many false objects of worship do exist. Idols and other things are in fact worshipped, but they are worshipped without right. The required meaning is therefore: there is no one worshipped rightfully except Allah.

EXPLANATION

The testimony contains negation and affirmation. “There is no god” negates every false object of worship. “Except Allah” excludes Allah from that negation and affirms worship for Him alone.

This wording - negation followed by an exception - is the most emphatic way in Arabic to restrict something to one object. It openly rejects every false object of worship and then affirms worship for Allah alone.

The fact that Allah alone creates, owns, and rules also requires that worship be directed to Him alone.

The Quran explains the testimony through Ibrahim's words: “I am free of what you worship, except the One who created me.” He rejected every object of worship among his people and affirmed worship for Allah.

There is a question about the wording in the exception “except the One who created me.” Some scholars treated it as a connected exception: Ibrahim's people worshipped Allah while also worshipping other beings, so he rejected all of their gods except Allah. Others treated it as a disconnected exception: he rejected everything they worshipped, then separately affirmed the One who created him. Arabic can use an exception in this way, as when a person says, “I do not want any of these books except the pen,” meaning, “I do not want the books; I want the pen.”

Under either explanation, the religious point is the same: Ibrahim rejected the objects his people worshipped and affirmed worship for Allah alone.

EXPLANATION

The other verse says to the People of the Scripture: “Come to a word that is just between us and you: that we worship none but Allah, associate nothing with Him, and do not take one another as lords besides Allah.” The common and just word is worshipping Allah alone without shirk. This is the meaning of Islam.

“Do not take one another as lords besides Allah” includes obeying such lords in disobedience to Allah, following them in altering Allah's law, and worshipping human beings. The verse rejects all such forms of taking lords besides Allah.

The Testimony: Muhammad Is the Messenger of Allah

The evidence for the testimony that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is:

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Your suffering is hard upon him. He is deeply concerned for you, and to the believers he is kind and merciful.” [al-Tawbah 9:128]

The meaning of bearing witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is: to obey him in what he commands, believe him in what he reports, avoid what he forbids and warns against, and worship Allah only in the manner he prescribed.

EXPLANATION

Allah says: “There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves.” He is a human being from among you. “Your suffering is hard upon him”: hardship and difficulty that strike his Ummah are difficult for him. “He is deeply concerned for you”: he is eager for you to believe and be guided. “To the believers he is kind and merciful.”

EXPLANATION

The word “meaning” here is not a word-for-word definition of the sentence. These are what the testimony requires. If you testify that Muhammad is truly a Messenger from Allah, you must obey him, believe what he reports, stay away from what he forbids, and worship Allah only as he taught.

1. obeying him in what he commands;
2. believing him in what he reports;
3. staying away from what he prohibits and warns against;
4. worshipping Allah only through what he prescribed.

A person who says, “I accept the Quran, but the Prophet’s commands do not bind me,” is not a Muslim. He has not truly testified that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, because a messenger is to be obeyed in what he conveys from Allah.

Likewise, he must be believed in what he reports. Allah does not send a liar as His messenger. Testifying that Allah sent him includes testifying to his truthfulness.

Avoiding what he forbids is part of obedience as well. Obedience covers commands and prohibitions.

The final requirement - that Allah be worshipped only by what the Messenger prescribed - is especially important. Allah did not leave us without guidance. When He wants us to worship Him, He sends messengers to convey how that worship is to be performed. He did not send a messenger to deliver half a religion and leave people to invent the rest. The message is complete. What the Messenger did not bring as religion cannot be added to the religion by us.

EXPLANATION

There is a very precise point here, showing deep understanding: if Allah sent the Messenger with a complete message, we are not free to invent acts of worship from ourselves. We worship Allah only through what the Messenger brought.

People of innovation changed the texts of the two revelations so that they would agree with beliefs they had taken from philosophers. They brought those beliefs in first, then tried to make revelation fit them. Today, other people do the same with Western modernity. Revelation becomes a burden to them because it interferes with the religion they have chosen, so they strain the texts to make them fit. The people of religion answer them with revelation. Praise be to Allah for the blessing of following.

Allah sent His Messenger with a complete message. A complete message has no missing part that we must supply and no defect that we must repair. We therefore do not worship Allah according to whatever we personally prefer, but according to what He wants, and what He wants is known through what His Messenger conveyed.

Prayer, Zakah, Fasting, and Hajj

The evidence for prayer, zakah, and the explanation of tawhid is:

“They were commanded only to worship Allah, making the religion sincerely for Him, turning away from shirk and worshipping Allah alone; to establish prayer and give zakah. That is the upright religion.” [al-Bayyinah 98:5]

The evidence for fasting is:

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become mindful of Allah.” [al-Baqarah 2:183]

The evidence for Hajj (pilgrimage) is:

“Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by whoever is able to find a way to it. Whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is free of need of all creation.” [Al Imran 3:97]

EXPLANATION

The verse, “They were commanded only to worship Allah, making the religion sincerely for Him, turning away from shirk and worshipping Allah alone, establishing prayer, and giving zakah,” combines three matters: tawhid, prayer, and zakah.

“Making the religion sincerely for Him” means worshipping Allah free from shirk. Sincerity is incompatible with shirk. “Inclining to pure monotheism” means being upon the way of Ibrahim, which includes rejecting shirk. Establishing prayer and giving zakah are practical examples of yielding to Allah's command and worshipping Him.

The verse of fasting shows both its obligation and one of its purposes: fasting was prescribed so that believers may develop taqwa. It also shows that fasting was prescribed for earlier nations.

EXPLANATION

The verse of Hajj makes pilgrimage required for the one who is able to find a way to it. The words “whoever disbelieves, Allah is free of need of all creation” led some scholars to say that deliberately abandoning Hajj is disbelief. This was reported from al-Humaydi and as one narration from Ahmad. The correct position from Imam Ahmad is that, among these practical pillars, deliberately abandoning prayer is what makes a person a disbeliever. Leaving Hajj while accepting its obligation does not.

So, “whoever disbelieves” is not simply a label for every person who fails to perform Hajj. It states that Allah is in no need of the disbeliever who refuses His commands.

The Second Level: Iman

Iman has more than seventy branches. The highest of them is saying, “None has the right to be worshipped except Allah.” The lowest is removing something harmful from the road. Modesty is a branch of iman.

EXPLANATION

Notice that these examples cover the different dimensions of iman:

“None has the right to be worshipped except Allah” is speech of the tongue joined with belief of the heart. Removing harm from a road is a bodily action. Modesty is an action of the heart.

Iman therefore includes speech of the tongue, belief in the heart, actions of the heart, and actions of the limbs.

EXPLANATION

Ahl al-Sunnah say that iman increases and decreases. It increases through knowledge: learning Allah's names and attributes, understanding the Quran more deeply, and learning the religion. It also increases through action: more prayer, more obedience, and fewer sins.

It decreases when sins and disobedience increase and righteous deeds decrease. Iman is therefore speech and action, and it increases and decreases.

The Six Pillars of Iman

Its pillars are six: to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and the divine decree - Allah's decree of all things - both its good and its evil.

The evidence for these six pillars is:

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west. Rather, righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets...” [al-Baqarah 2:177]

EXPLANATION

The six pillars of iman are belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree, its good and its evil.

Their order also has meaning. Faith in Allah is the center. We know that Allah created us for a purpose and that His wisdom requires guidance. The angels carry His messages. The books are the revelation carried by the angels. The messengers receive those books and messages and convey them to people. People must then act according to Allah's law, and they will be held to account for what they do on the Last Day. A Muslim's life therefore lies between Allah's law and His final reckoning.

Divine Decree

The evidence for divine decree is:

"Surely We created everything according to a decree." [al-Qamar 54:49]

EXPLANATION

Belief in divine decree has four levels:

1. believing that Allah knows everything;
2. believing that Allah wrote everything that will occur until the Day of Resurrection;
3. believing that everything that occurs does so by His will;

EXPLANATION

4. believing that Allah created everything.

These are the levels of belief in divine decree.

“Both its good and its evil” means that whatever reaches a person, whether good or bad, happens by Allah's decree. A person cannot say that something happened outside Allah's decree. That would mean that something besides Allah creates independently of Him. This is a grave statement.

The verse about righteousness came in a context where the Jews and Christians disputed over the direction of prayer. It lists belief in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets. It does not mention divine decree, so a separate verse is then given as evidence for decree.

The Third Level: Ihsan

Ihsan has one pillar: “To worship Allah as though you see Him; and if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you.”

The evidence is:

“Surely Allah is with those who are mindful of Him and those who do good.” [al-Nahl 16:128]

And:

“Place your trust in the Almighty, the Most Merciful, who sees you when you stand and your movements among those who prostrate. Surely He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.” [al-Shuara 26:217-220]

And:

“You are not engaged in any matter; nor do you recite any portion of the Quran, nor do you do any deed, except that We are witnesses over you when you are engaged in it.” [Yunus 10:61]

EXPLANATION

It is described as one pillar so that no one thinks the statement contains two pillars: first, worshipping Allah as though you see Him; and second, that Allah sees you. Rather, “if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you” explains the first statement.

Being conscious that Allah sees us produces the same careful excellence in worship that seeing Him would produce.

Ihsan is the highest of these levels. Consider a practical comparison: if an employee sees his manager standing beside him, he works with great care and even corrects how he sits. If the manager leaves but installs a surveillance camera, the employee still works more carefully, though seeing the manager directly has a stronger effect. Likewise, worshipping Allah as though you see Him produces exceptional care in worship; and when you do not see Him, remembering that He sees you still produces careful excellence.

If you were worshipping Allah while seeing Him, how would the prayer be? It would be full of humility, careful performance, and sincerity. The same principle applies to every act of worship.

Allah says He is with those who have taqwa and those who do good. This shows the virtue of the level of ihsan.

The Quran also repeatedly reminds the believer that Allah sees him. Allah sees you when you stand and when you move among those who prostrate. He hears what you say and knows what is in your heart. “You are not engaged in any matter... except that We are witnesses over you when you are engaged in it.” Even inward concern and thought are within Allah's knowledge, so how much more one's speech and actions. A believer should therefore remain conscious of Allah's watchfulness in all states.

The Hadith of Jibril

The evidence from the Sunnah is the well-known hadith of Jibril. Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

“While we were sitting with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, a man appeared before us with extremely white clothes and extremely black hair. No sign of travel could be seen upon him, and none of us knew him. He sat before the Prophet, placed his knees against his knees, put his hands on his thighs, and said: ‘Muhammad, tell me about Islam.’ He said: ‘Islam is that you bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish prayer, give zakah, fast Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the House if you are able to reach it.’ He said: ‘You have spoken the truth.’ We were amazed that he asked him and then confirmed his answer.

“He said: ‘Tell me about iman.’ He said: ‘That you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and believe in the divine decree, its good and its evil.’ He said: ‘You have spoken the truth.’

“He said: ‘Tell me about ihsan.’ He said: ‘That you worship Allah as though you see Him; and if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you.’

“He said: ‘Tell me about the Hour.’ He said: ‘The one being asked knows no more about it than the one asking.’ He said: ‘Then tell me about its signs.’ He said: ‘That the slave woman gives birth to her mistress [T3], and that you see barefoot, naked, poor shepherds competing in building tall structures.’

Translator’s Notes

[T3] One interpretation reported from scholars relates this sign to slave women and free people, including slave women marrying free men. Another contemporary interpretation understands it as referring to daughters treating their mothers like servants.

“Then he left. We remained for a time, and then he said: ‘Umar, do you know who the questioner was?’ We said: ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ He said: ‘That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion.’”

EXPLANATION

The Sunnah gathers these three levels in the famous hadith of Jibril.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, describes a man with extremely white clothing and extremely black hair. No trace of travel appeared on him, yet none of the Companions recognized him. This was unusual: the people knew the local residents, while a traveler would normally show some sign of journeying, tiredness, disordered appearance, or dusty clothing.

He sat directly before the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, placed his knees against his knees and his hands on his thighs, and asked about Islam. The Prophet listed the five pillars. The man replied, “You have spoken the truth.” The Companions were surprised: normally a questioner asks because he does not know, yet this man both asked and confirmed the answer.

He then asked about iman, and the Prophet listed its six pillars. He asked about ihsan, and the Prophet gave the definition already discussed.

Then he asked about the Hour. The Prophet replied: “The one being asked knows no more about it than the one asking.” The question was about its time, and neither the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, nor Jibril was given knowledge of that time.

The hadith may be pointing to what we see today: a daughter may order her mother around as if the mother were her slave and the daughter her mistress.

EXPLANATION

Glory be to Allah: this did not happen except in our days. People who had been barefoot, poorly clothed, poor shepherds came to compete in building tall structures.

The questioner then left. In another narration the Prophet told the Companions to look for him, but they did not find him. The Prophet later asked Umar whether he knew who the questioner was. Umar replied that Allah and His Messenger knew best. The Prophet said: “That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion.”

When the Companions replied regarding Jibril, “Allah and His Messenger know best,” they attributed knowledge to Allah and to the Messenger only in what Allah had taught him. The Prophet then explained that the unknown man who had asked these questions was Jibril, who came so that the Prophet could answer in front of the Companions and thereby teach them the foundations of their religion. This is one of the greatest hadiths because it gathers the foundations of the entire religion.

The Third Fundamental Principle: Knowing the Prophet Muhammad

His Name, Family, Age, and Mission as a Prophet

He is Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim. Hashim was from Quraysh. Quraysh are from the Arabs, and the Arabs are from the descendants of Ismail ibn Ibrahim, peace be upon them both.

He lived sixty-three years: forty years before he became a prophet and 23 years as a prophet and messenger. He became a prophet with “Read” and was sent as a messenger with “O you who are wrapped up.” His city was Makkah.

EXPLANATION

The third principle is knowing your Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

He is Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim. Banu Hashim are a branch of Quraysh. Quraysh are Arab, and the Arabs are from the descendants of Ismail ibn Ibrahim, peace be upon them.

He lived sixty-three years. Forty were before being a prophet and 23 after he became a prophet. The 23 years were divided into thirteen years in Makkah and ten years in Madinah.

He was made a prophet with the revelation of the opening verses of the Quran chapter al-Alaq: “Read in the name of your Lord who created...” He was already written as a prophet in Allah's decree before his creation. [R12]

Those opening verses were revealed in the Cave of Hira. Jibril came to him and said, “Read.” The Prophet replied that he could not read. This was repeated, with Jibril embracing him firmly, until Jibril recited: “Read in the name of your Lord who created...”

He was sent as a messenger with the opening verses of the Quran chapter al-Muddaththir: “O you who are wrapped up, arise and warn.” Once Allah commanded him to warn people of His punishment, the message was directed outward to them.

His homeland was Makkah, his mother city.

References

[R12] Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, 20/356 (al-Shathri ed.); al-Daraqutni, al-'Ilal, 14/74. Al-Daraqutni said the mursal route was closest to correct.

Allah sent him to warn against shirk and call to tawhid. The evidence is:

“O you who are wrapped up, arise and warn. Magnify your Lord. Purify your garments. Keep away from idols. Do not give seeking more in return. And be patient for your Lord.” [al-Muddaththir 74:1-7]

“Arise and warn” means: warn against shirk and call to tawhid.

“Magnify your Lord” means: honor Him through tawhid. “Purify your garments” means: purify your deeds from shirk. “Keep away from idols” means: leave idols and the people of shirk, and keep away from them.

EXPLANATION

Allah sent him to warn against shirk and call to tawhid. The verses of al-Muddaththir mean:

“Arise and warn”: warn against shirk and call to tawhid. “Magnify your Lord”: magnify Allah through tawhid. “Purify your garments”: purify your deeds from shirk. Ibn Qutaybah explained it as purifying oneself from sins, with “garments” used as an expression for the person because clothes surround a person. **[R13]**

Qatadah mentioned that Arabs called a person who broke promises “stained in garments,” and a person who fulfilled his commitments “pure in garments.” **[R14]**

Some of the early scholars took the verse according to its plain meaning of keeping the clothes pure, and that is also a strong reading. “Keep away from rijz”: rijz here refers to idols. Rijz can also mean impurities or filth. Leaving them means leaving idol worship and

References

[R13] Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib al-Qur'an, p. 495 (Ahmad Saqr ed.).

[R14] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, 23/407 (Hajr ed.).

EXPLANATION

keeping away from the idols and their people. “Do not give seeking more in return”: one explanation from Mujahid ibn Jabr is, “Do not regard your own deeds as great in your eyes in order

to seek more reward for them.” **[R15]**

“Be patient for your Lord”: patience has already been discussed.

He continued calling to tawhid for ten years. Then he was taken up into the heavens, and the five prayers were made required upon him. He prayed in Makkah for three years. Then he was commanded to migrate to Madinah.

EXPLANATION

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, remained in Makkah for ten years calling to tawhid and leaving shirk, without being commanded with the detailed laws and acts of worship. Then he was taken on the ascension to the heavens and the five daily prayers were prescribed. They were the first obligations. He had prayed before that, but prayer was not yet obligatory and had no fixed time.

The order of these stages helps us understand many matters. For example, someone may quote an early hadith saying that whoever sincerely says “None has the right to be worshipped except Allah” will enter Paradise and then say, “I have said it, so I will enter Paradise even if I leave prayer.” The answer is that

References

[R15] Attributed by al-Suyuti to Abd ibn Humayd and Ibn al-Mundhir; Mawsu’at al-Tafsir al-Ma’tthur, 22/387.

EXPLANATION

this was at the beginning of Islam. After prayer was made obligatory, whoever abandoned it was a disbeliever. So do not use a hadith from before prayer was made obligatory against the later ruling concerning the one who abandons it.

Then Hajj, fasting, and zakah were prescribed. Whoever abandons them is sinful and a fasiq and deserves punishment. His case is not like the person at the beginning of Islam who had only been commanded with tawhid.

Migration

Migration is moving from a land of shirk to a land of Islam. Migration from a land of shirk to a land of Islam is required upon this Ummah and remains until the Hour begins.

EXPLANATION

Migration is moving from a land of shirk to a land of Islam.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to migrate because the Muslims in Makkah were being restricted and fought. During the pilgrimage seasons - pilgrimage itself remaining among the traces of the religion of Ibrahim even in the pre-Islamic period - the Prophet would meet visiting tribes and call them to Islam. The people of Madinah had heard from the Jews that a prophet would be sent. When they met the Prophet and heard his call, they believed, and the Prophet later migrated to them.

Migration from a land of shirk to a land of Islam remains a religious ruling until the Hour when its conditions are present. The purpose is that the Muslim can live under the religion, mix with Muslims, and openly worship Allah.

The evidence is:

“When the angels take the souls of those who wronged themselves, they ask: What condition were you in? They reply: We were oppressed in the land. They say: Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate in it? Their home will be Hell - what an evil destination - except the truly helpless men, women, and children who have no means and cannot find a way. It is hoped that Allah will pardon them. Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Most Forgiving.”
[al-Nisa 4:97-99]

EXPLANATION

The Quran condemns people who remain where they cannot practice their religion despite having the ability to leave. When the angels ask them, “What condition were you in?” they say that they were oppressed. The angels answer: “Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate in it?” Their excuse is rejected and they are threatened, except for truly helpless men, women, and children who lack both the means and a path to leave. Allah may pardon such people.

And:

“O My believing servants, My earth is vast, so worship Me alone.”
[al-Ankabut 29:56]

EXPLANATION

The verse “O My believing servants, My earth is vast, so worship Me alone” carries the same meaning: if a person is prevented from worshipping Allah safely in one place and has the ability to move, Allah's earth is broad.

Al-Baghawi, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “The reason for the revelation of this verse was the Muslims in Makkah who had not migrated. Allah addressed them by the name of faith.”

EXPLANATION

Al-Baghawi said that this verse was revealed concerning Muslims in Makkah who had not migrated, and Allah still addressed them with the name of faith. The point is that merely failing to migrate does not automatically make a Muslim a disbeliever.

The evidence from the Sunnah is the saying of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: “Migration does not cease until repentance ceases, and repentance does not cease until the sun rises from the west.”

EXPLANATION

The hadith says: “Migration does not cease until repentance ceases, and repentance does not cease until the sun rises from the west.” [R16] This supports the statement that the ruling of migration remains until the end of time when the need and situation require it.

Today, in some lands called Muslim, rule has come to be based on the laws of the people of shirk. The Muslim is a stranger in his own homeland; scholars are in prisons; atheists are on pulpits; prayer is forbidden in the armies of some

References

[R16] Ahmad, al-Musnad, no. 16906; Abu Dawud, no. 2479. The editors graded it hasan li-ghayrihi.

EXPLANATION

of our countries; Allah is insulted in the streets; and Muslims are labelled “extremists” and given other names, until Muslims may even envy the people of the graves.

A difficulty found in some later situations is that a Muslim may sometimes be able to display his religion in a non-Muslim country more openly than in a country called Muslim. In some Muslim lands, a beard may be treated as a sign of extremism, regular attendance at Fajr may draw security attention, and a person known for speaking the truth may be imprisoned, while laws in some non-Muslim countries may protect his ability to worship. Such circumstances require careful consideration rather than merely applying labels to countries without looking at whether a person can actually practice the religion.

The Madinan Period

When he settled in Madinah, he was commanded with the remaining laws of Islam, such as zakah, fasting, Hajj, the call to prayer, jihad, commanding what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and other laws of Islam. He remained upon this for ten years.

EXPLANATION

When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, settled in Madinah, the remaining detailed laws were revealed and commanded: zakah, fasting, Hajj, the call to prayer, jihad, commanding what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and the rest of the laws of Islam.

The Madinan period was a stage in which the believers had accepted faith and were prepared to receive detailed law and submit to it. He remained in Madinah for ten years, teaching people the religion of Allah.

Then he died, peace and blessings be upon him, but his religion remains. This is his religion: there is no good except that he directed the Ummah to it, and no evil except that he warned them against it.

The good he directed to is tawhid and everything Allah loves and is pleased with. The evil he warned against is shirk and everything Allah hates and rejects.

EXPLANATION

Then he died, peace and blessings be upon him. The religion did not die with the Messenger. It remains.

There is no good except that he directed the Ummah toward it, and no evil except that he warned the Ummah against it. The greatest good he directed them to is tawhid, and included with it is everything Allah loves and is pleased with. The greatest evil he warned against is shirk, and included with it is everything Allah dislikes and rejects.

Reading the Quran and Sunnah shows that they cover every door of true good by directing people to it, and every door of evil by warning against it.

Allah sent him to all mankind and made obedience to him required upon jinn and mankind. The evidence is:

“Say: O mankind, I am the Messenger of Allah to all of you.”
[al-Araf 7:158]

EXPLANATION

Allah sent Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to all mankind, not only to the Arabs. The call of Islam is universal. Obedience to him is required upon both jinn and human beings. The evidence is: “Say: O mankind, I am the Messenger of Allah to all of you.”

Allah completed the religion through him. The evidence is:

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and chosen Islam as your religion.” [al-Ma'idah 5:3]

EXPLANATION

Allah completed the religion through him: “Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and chosen Islam as your religion.” A complete religion does not need additions. If a cup is already filled to the top, anything poured into it either spills out or displaces what was already there. Religious innovations similarly displace Sunnah practices. Invented forms of remembering Allah and invented religious methods take the place of the authentic forms of remembering Allah and practices transmitted from the Prophet. The religion is complete and does not need an innovator to complete it.

The evidence for his death is:

“You will certainly die, and they will certainly die. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will dispute before your Lord.” [al-Zumar 39:30-31]

EXPLANATION

The Quran also proves the Prophet's death: "You will certainly die, and they will certainly die." This is mentioned because some Sufis say, "He did not die, and you are not permitted to say that he died." Some of them even accuse Muslims of insulting the Prophet simply for saying that he died. But the Quran plainly states his death while affirming his great status.

Resurrection after Death

After death, people will be resurrected. The evidence is:

"From it We created you, into it We return you, and from it We will bring you out once again." [Ta Ha 20:55]

And:

"Allah caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it and bring you forth once again." [Nuh 71:17-18]

EXPLANATION

When people die, Allah will resurrect them. He will restore them to life after death and gather them for judgment.

Allah says: "From it We created you, into it We return you, and from it We will bring you out once again," and: "Allah caused you to grow from the earth like a plant; then He will return you to it and bring you forth once again."

After resurrection, people will be held to account and repaid for their deeds. The evidence is:

“To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth, so that He may repay those who do evil for what they have done and reward those who do good with the best reward.”

[al-Najm 53:31]

EXPLANATION

After resurrection, people will be held to account and repaid for their deeds. Allah will give Paradise or the Fire according to His justice and mercy. The people include different categories:

People are of different kinds: (1) people who enter Paradise without punishment, whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds; (2) disbelievers who remain in the Fire forever, even if one of them spent his worldly life doing good deeds but died upon disbelief; and (3) Muslims whose sins outweigh their good deeds and whom Allah does not forgive. They are punished in the Fire for as long as Allah wills, then they are brought out of it.

Allah owns everything in the heavens and earth and will repay those who did evil for what they did and reward those who did good with the best reward.

In the verse, the word “so that He may repay” is connected to the previous verse: “Surely your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His way, and He knows best who is guided.” He knows their condition and will repay them as they deserve.

Whoever denies resurrection has disbelieved. The evidence is:

“Those who disbelieve claim that they will never be resurrected. Say: Yes, by my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will certainly be informed of what you did. That is easy for Allah.”
[al-Taghabun 64:7]

EXPLANATION

If a servant rejects any pillar of iman, his iman falls with it.

Rejecting Taghut and Believing in Allah

Allah sent all the messengers as bearers of good news and warners. The evidence is:

“Messengers bearing good news and warning, so that mankind would have no argument against Allah after the messengers.”
[al-Nisa 4:165]

EXPLANATION

They give obedient people the good news of Paradise and warn those who disobey of the Fire. This was the way of all the messengers of Allah.

The first of them was Nuh, peace be upon him, and the last was Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He is the Seal of the Prophets.

The evidence that Nuh was the first messenger is:

“We have revealed to you just as We revealed to Nuh and the prophets after him.” [al-Nisa 4:163]

EXPLANATION

The first prophet was Adam, peace be upon him, and the first messenger was Nuh, peace be upon him. A clear evidence is the hadith of the Day of Resurrection in which people come to Nuh and say: “Nuh, you are the first of the messengers sent to the people of the earth.” [R17]

Not every prophet is a messenger, but every messenger is a prophet. The level of messengership is higher than prophethood.

The final prophet and messenger is Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. There is no prophet after him. Whoever claims being a prophet after him has disbelieved, and whoever accepts a false person making that claim to being a prophet has accepted that disbelief.

The verse “We have revealed to you just as We revealed to Nuh and the prophets after him” mentions Nuh and those after him. Here the revelation intended is the revelation connected with the mission of a messenger.

Allah sent a messenger to every nation, from Nuh to Muhammad, commanding them to worship Allah alone and forbidding them from worshipping false gods. The evidence is:

“We certainly sent a messenger to every nation, saying: Worship Allah and avoid taghut.” [al-Nahl 16:36]

References

[R17] Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3162; Sahih Muslim, no. 194 (327).

EXPLANATION

Allah sent a messenger to every nation from the time of Nuh until Muhammad, commanding the people to worship Allah alone and warning them against worshipping taghut. We do not know the names of every messenger sent to every distant people. The Quran relates the messengers whose stories were known and understandable to the people first addressed by revelation, including stories known to Jews and Christians, while many nations did not preserve reliable knowledge of their own earlier prophets.

The point is that Allah sent messengers to every people. The Quran tells us the stories of messengers known to the people first addressed by revelation, including the Jews and Christians. Many other peoples did not preserve knowledge of their prophets and books, especially after Christianity or paganism spread among them.

Allah made disbelief in taghut and faith in Allah required upon all people.

EXPLANATION

Allah obligated all people to reject taghut and believe in Allah. Every messenger called people to reject whatever was worshipped besides Allah and to believe in Him alone.

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “Taghut is everything by which a servant goes beyond his proper limit, whether something worshipped, followed, or obeyed.” **[R18]**

References

[R18] Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in*, 2/92 (Mashhur ed.).

EXPLANATION

The word taghut comes from the meaning of going beyond the proper limit.

The meaning is: whatever goes beyond the limit of being a servant becomes a taghut.

Al-Tabari described taghut as everyone who goes beyond the proper limit against Allah and is worshipped besides Him, whether people were forced into that worship or obeyed willingly, and whether the thing worshipped is a human being, a devil, an idol, or something else. [R19]

Taghuts are many, and their leading ones are five: Iblis, may Allah curse him; whoever is worshipped and is pleased with it; whoever calls people to worship him; whoever claims knowledge of the unseen; and whoever rules by something other than what Allah revealed.

EXPLANATION

There are many forms of taghut, and five leading examples are:

References

[R19] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, 5/419 (Dar al-Tarbiyah wa-l-Turath ed.).

EXPLANATION

1. Iblis, may Allah curse him. He is at the head of the tawaghit because he has all of their characteristics. He is their master and their teacher. Umar ibn al-Khattab, Mujahid, al-Sha'bi, al-Dahhak, Qatadah, and al-Suddi explained taghut here as Satan. [R20]
2. Whoever is worshipped and is pleased with being worshipped. The condition of being pleased is important. Isa, peace be upon him, is worshipped by Christians but rejects that worship and therefore is not a taghut. Imam Malik said in explanation of taghut: "That which they worship besides Allah." [R21]
3. Whoever calls people to worship himself. The previous type may become worshipped and then approve of it. This type actively calls people to worship him, even if no one follows the call.
4. Whoever claims knowledge of the unseen. This includes fortune-tellers and astrologers. A number of the early scholars also explained taghut as the fortune-teller, including Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Rafi', and Jabir ibn Abd Allah.
5. Whoever rules by something other than what Allah revealed: one who establishes a rival system to Allah's judgment, prefers it over Allah's ruling, or uses it in opposition to Allah's religion. Mujahid described taghut as Satan appearing in human form, to whom people take their disputes and whose authority they follow. [R22]

References

[R20] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, 5/417.

[R21] Ibn Abi Hatim, Tafsir, 2/495.

[R22] Ibn al-Mundhir, Tafsir, 2/747.

The evidence is:

EXPLANATION

The evidence for rejecting taghut is: “There is no compulsion in religion. Right guidance has become clear from error. Whoever rejects taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest handhold that will never break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

Rejecting taghut and believing in Allah is the reality expressed by “None has the right to be worshipped except Allah”: rejection in the first half, affirmation in the second.

The hadith says: “The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is prayer, and the highest part of its peak is jihad in the path of Allah.” [R23] The “matter” here means the matter of this worldly life. Without Islam, it is only like a dead carcass. Prayer is its pillar: without the pillar, everything built upon it falls. The highest and noblest of deeds is jihad when it is in Allah’s path.

References

[R23] Ahmad, al-Musnad, no. 22016; al-Tirmidhi, no. 2616. Al-Tirmidhi graded it hasan sahih.

EXPLANATION

Jihad is of two kinds here: jihad of the tongue and jihad of the sinan. The sinan is the sword. Regarding the jihad of the tongue and proof, Allah says: “Strive against them with it with a great striving.” Ibn Abbas and Muqatil explained “with it” as “with the Quran,” while Yahya ibn Sallam and al-Suddi explained it as “with speech.” [R24] [R25] [R26] [R27]

Regarding armed fighting, Allah says: “Fight in the path of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

Allah knows best. May Allah send peace and blessings upon Muhammad, his family, and his Companions.

This good and blessed book, which contains the foundations of this great upright religion, is now complete.

Glory and praise are Yours, O Allah. We bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except You. We seek Your forgiveness and repent to You.

References

[R24] Al-Tabari, Tafsir, 17/470.

[R25] Muqatil ibn Sulayman, Tafsir, 3/237.

[R26] Al-Tasarif li-Tafsir al-Qur'an mimma Ishtabahat Asma'uhu wa-Tasarрифat Ma'anihi, p. 332.

[R27] Yahya ibn Sallam, Tafsir, 1/486.