



• THE BOOK OF •
WORSHIP

الْعِبَادَة

The Book of Worship

Translated and compiled by
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'Say: Indeed My Lord has guided me to the Straight Path, the upright and true the religion of Abraham (Ibrâheem), the *Haneef* (firm and true in Allâh's worship and His Obedience) and he was not of the polytheists. Say: Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allâh the Lord of all the worlds. He has no partner (equal). With that I have been commanded and I am the first of those who submit.'

[Sūrah al-An'ām (6):161-3]

'Indeed actions are (judged) by the intentions (behind them) and every man shall receive (but) that which he intended. Thus he whose migration was for Allāh and His Messenger, his migration was (in fact) for Allāh and His Messenger and he whose migration was for the world, that he may take a portion of it; or for a woman, to take her in marriage, then his migration was for that for which he migrated.'

(Reported by
al-Bukhāri from 'Umar ibn
Al-Khattāb)

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Transliteration Guide

ب	B b	ط	T t
ت	T t	ظ	Z z
ث	Th th (as in <i>think, throw</i>)	ع	' or ' (glottal stop)
ج	J j	غ	Gh gh
ح	H h	ف	F f
خ	Kh kh	ق	Q q
د	D d	ك	K k
ذ	Dh dh (like <i>th</i> in <i>this, that</i>)	ل	L l
ر	R r	م	M m
ز	Z z	ن	N n
س	S s	ه	H h
ش	Sh sh	و	W w
ص	Ṣ ṣ	ي	Y y
ض	Ḍ ḍ	ء	' or ' (glottal stop)
ة	H h or T t		

The three short vowel sounds made by the Arabic letter ا and the symbols \bar{a} , \bar{i} and \bar{u} are expressed by the letters *a*, *i* and *u* respectively. \bar{A} \bar{a} : denote the long *a* vowel as in *father*; \bar{u} : the long *u* as in *rule*.

Arabic Salutation Guide

Following the mention of the Prophet Muḥammad:

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Heaven's Salutations and the Peace of Allāh be upon him.

Following the mention of the companion(s) of the Prophet

(صلى الله عليه وسلم):

رضى الله عنه

Allāh be pleased with him.

رضى الله عنهما

Allāh be pleased with her.

رضى الله عنهما

Allāh be pleased with them both.

رضى الله عنهم

Allāh be pleased with them all.

Following the mention of the angels, prophets and messengers in general:

عليه السلام

Upon him be the Peace and Protection of Allāh.

عليها السلام

Upon her be the Peace and Protection of Allāh.

عليهما السلام

Upon them both be the Peace and Protection of Allāh.

عليهم السلام

Upon them all be the Peace and Protection of Allāh.

Following the mention of a deceased scholar:

رحمه الله

Allāh's Mercy be upon him.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Foreword

All Praise is rightfully due to Allāh alone. We praise Him, seek His aid and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allāh misguides, there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is His servant and Messenger.

When Noah (Nūḥ عليه السلام), the very first Messenger, was sent to his people, he was commanded to begin his call with the following:

يَقُومُ عِبَادُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ

‘O my People! Make your worship for Allāh alone. There is no other object of worship for you besides Him.’¹

and likewise, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb. In fact, this was the essence of the message of all the Messengers including the one sent to the whole world, Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ

‘And We did not send any messenger before you (O Muḥammad) except that We inspired him (to say): *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* (there is none worthy of worship except Allāh).

1. Sūrah al-A‘rāf (7):59.

Therefore worship Me (alone).²

Thus, all the Messengers were sent to correct and re-establish the worship of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic after mankind had gone astray from the Straight Path of Allāh.

Unfortunately, the understanding of the concept of worship, through the ages, has become a compartmentalised one. Worship has been broken down into its component parts and each one of these components considered as worship itself.

Amongst our ranks, for example, are those who hold that mere belief in Allāh is sufficient; meaning to just declare one's belief in Allāh, acknowledge His existence and that He is the Creator of everything.

There are others who believe that love of Allāh is all that matters - as long as you love Allāh in your heart then you are fulfilling your purpose. There is no need to adhere to the commandments or avoid the prohibitions.

Others claim that sincerity, truthfulness and good companionship with people is worship.

There are some who actually perform the acts of worship such as prayers and fasting but do so only out of imitation (of forefathers) and habit, without conviction, pure faith and knowledge.

Then there are those who perform the acts of worship out of show and fear of people to avoid being criticised for being neglectful.

2. Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (21):25.

Also, there are others who perform the acts of worship sincerely, but do them without sufficient love of Allāh, fear of Him or hope in Him.

Still, there are others who believe they may worship Allāh in whatever form or fashion they wish; without adherence to the *Sunnah* (way/example) of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) while claiming that they do so only out of good intention.

Our error is that we have made one aspect of worship into worship itself. We have abandoned, neglected or become heedless of its other aspects. If we acknowledge, understand, combine and put the other aspects into practice we will earn the acceptance of our deeds and efforts, the fullest of rewards, the pleasure of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and, therefore, His Aid.

It is of the utmost importance (and this is the concern of the wise and thoughtful) that the Muslim acquaints himself with the reality of worship; along with all its conditions and characteristics and understands and learns the exact manner of its performance as it has been prescribed by Allāh and as it was performed by those whom Allāh has made as an example to be imitated, the *Salafus-Ṣālih*.³

3. *Salafus-Ṣālih* (or *Salaf* for short). Its meaning in the Arabic language is 'those who precede/have gone before', i.e. the Pious Predecessors. The term was used by the earliest scholars for the first three generations of Muslims and those who were upon their way in accordance with the *ḥadeeth* of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which is reported by al-Bukhāri: *'The best of generations is my generation, then those that follow them, then those that follow them.'*

Imām Abu Ḥaneefah (رحمه الله) d. 769 (150 H.) said: *'Adhere to the athār (narrations) and the tareeqah (way) of the Salaf and beware*

This is so that his relationship with Allāh is corrected and strengthened so he is left with a firm handhold and is able to walk upon a clear path, humbled and enslaved to none other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, the Lord of all His servants. Allāh the Exalted says about the believers amongst the Muslims:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

'And the *'ibād* (servants/worshippers) of ar-Rahmān⁴ are those who walk upon the earth with humility.⁵

of newly invented matters for all of it is innovation.' [Reported by as-Suyūti in *Sawn al-Mantaq wal-Kalām* p.32]

By clinging to their way, holding on to their beliefs and understanding them as they did, worshipping Allāh in His Oneness, upon the authentic *Sunnah* of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in the manner of the companions one is guaranteed success in this life and security from the Fire in the next life. When questioned by his companions about those who will be saved from the Fire, the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied: 'They are those who are upon what I and my companions are upon.' [Reported by at-Tirmidhi from Amr ibn al-Ās - *hadeeth hasan*]

All the great scholars from the earliest to the later times have advised clinging to the way and methodology (manhaj) of the Salaf and adherence to it as it is the only means of deliverance. Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) says: 'There is no criticism for the one who proclaims the way (madhhab) of the Salaf, who attaches himself to it and refers to it. Rather, it is obligatory to accept that from him by unanimous agreement (ittifāq) because the madhhab of the Salaf is nothing but the Truth (Haqq).' [Majmū' al-Fatāwa 4/149]

4. A name of Allāh meaning 'the Ever-Merciful' etc.

5. Sūrah al-Furqān (25):63.

The following book has been based on a translation and emendation of a booklet in Arabic entitled: *Worship: its meaning, characteristics and conditions* compiled by Abu Hudhayfah ibn Muḥammad. This booklet is short but informative while at the same time concise and hence the translation in English so as to allow a greater access to the valuable contents of this treatise. The chapters have been rearranged, complementary text inserted in various places and a chapter on *Iḥsān* and detailed glossary of terms added. This book would be particularly useful for new Muslims or even non-Muslims who are interested in knowing about worship in Islām. I hope that all who read this book will find it beneficial and that it will improve the understanding and practise of their worship.

O Allāh! Make this effort righteous, for Your sake alone and make no one as a partner in it.

In need of Allāh's Forgiveness and Mercy,

Amjad ibn Muḥammad Rafiq,
University of Essex.

Chapter 1: Worship - Its Obligation

The Creation of Mankind

Worship is the basis and pillar of the *Deen*⁶ and for it Allāh the Mighty and Majestic⁷ created *Jinn*⁸ and humanity. The Exalted says:

6. *Deen* can be translated to mean religion and way of life but the word also has a number of different connotations such as sincere worship and judgement as expressed in the following verses:

'And to Him belongs all that is in the Heavens and the Earth and perpetual *Deen* is rightfully His alone.'

[Sūrah an-Nahl (16):52]

'Verily We have sent down to you (O Muḥammad) a Book with Truth. Therefore, make your *Deen* exclusively for Allāh and make your worship for Him alone. Hark! The *Deen* belongs exclusively to Him alone.' [Sūrah az-Zumar (39):2-3]

'For you your *Deen* and to me my *Deen*.'

[Sūrah al-Kāfirūn (109):6]

'Verily, that which you are promised (life after death) and *Deen* (the reckoning and the judgement and retribution) must indeed come to pass.' [Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51):5-6]

7. We have simplified the translation of the Arabic term '*Azza wa Jalla* to the Mighty and Majestic. '*Azza* means strength or power coupled with honour and *Jalla* means sublime, lofty, exalted and dignified. Both these words together show the absolute Greatness of Allāh and His Magnanimity.

8. Spirit-like beings created by Allāh from smokeless fire.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٩﴾

'And I have not created Jinn and humanity except that they may worship Me.'⁹

Allāh has described in detail His signs and miracles to mankind that they may come to recognise and believe in Him and realise that He is their Creator, Maker and Fashioner. Among the greatest of His signs and miracles is the creation of man from a mere sperm drop into a fully grown creature.

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾

'And He (Allāh) fashioned both male and female from a drop of fluid that has been ejaculated.'¹⁰

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ

'Verily, it is We who have created man from a drop of mingled liquids (male and female ejaculations).'¹¹

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿١١﴾ أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِي
يُمْنَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ
الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدْرِ عَلِيٍّ أَن يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

9. Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51):56.

10. Sūrah an-Najm (53):45-6.

11. Sūrah al-Insān (76):2.

'Does man think that He is left to Himself to waste his life? Was he not a mere *nutfah* (mixed male and female discharge of semen) poured forth? Thereafter he became a clot and then (Allāh) gave its form and shape. And He, from that, made both sexes, male and female. Is He then not able to bring the dead back to life?'¹²

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ۖ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً
 فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۖ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً
 فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا
 ءَاخَرَ فَتَبَرَّكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ۖ

'We created man from the quintessence of clay. Thereafter, We placed him as a *nutfah* in a safe lodging (i.e. the womb). Then We fashioned the *nutfah* into a clot (of thick coagulated blood) which We fashioned into a lump of chewed-like flesh. Then We fashioned the chewed-like flesh into bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We developed out of it another creature. So Blessed be Allāh, the Best of Creators.'¹³

12. Sūrah al-Qiyāmah (75):36-40.

13. Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23):12-4.

Subjection of the Universe for Mankind

Allāh the Exalted has created and subjected all that is in the Heavens and the Earth for mankind so that they may recognise this great blessing and honour and that this facilitates for them the performance of their obligation towards Him.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

'Do you not see that Allāh has subjected to you all that is in the Heavens and the Earth?'¹⁵

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ❁

'And He has subjected to you all that is in the Heavens and the Earth; it is all as a favour and kindness from Him. Verily, in it are signs for a people who think deeply.'¹⁶

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْفَلَكَ لِتَجْرِيَ

15. Sūrah Luqmān (31):20.

16. Sūrah al-Jāthiyah (45):13.

فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْأَنْهَارَ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرَ دَانِبِينَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۖ وَآتَاكُمْ مِنْ
كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا

'Allāh is He who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water (rain) from the sky, and thereby bought forth fruits as provisions for you; and He has made the ships to be of service to you, that they may sail through the seas by His Command; and He has made rivers also to be of service to you.

And He has made the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses, to be of service to you; and He has made the night and day, to be of service to you. And He gave you all that you asked for, and if you (attempt to) count the blessings of Allāh, never will you be able to count (all of) them.¹⁷

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۖ

'And the cattle, He has created them for you; in them there is warmth (of clothing) and numerous benefits and from them you eat.¹⁸

17. Sūrah Ibrāheem (14):32-4.

18. Sūrah an-Nahl (16):5.

Sustenance

Allāh has made marriage and lawful sexual relations the route by which every soul will come into his or her life on this earth for a decided period and the means by which the human race will continue.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا

'It is He who has created you from clay, and then has decreed a stated term (for you to die).'¹⁹

وَ هُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُمْ بِالنَّهَارِ
ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

'And it is He who takes your souls by night (when you are asleep) and has knowledge of all that you have done by day, then he raises (wakes) you up again that a term appointed (your life period) may be fulfilled, then in the end unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.'²⁰

The sustenance of every individual has been pre-determined and apportioned to make him reach the fixed period of his lifespan and

19. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):2.

20. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):60.

also to enable him to perform the obligatory duties imposed upon him.

وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ

'And He sent down from the sky water and with it brought out (from the ground) fruits as sustenance for you.'²¹

'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: 'The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told us, and he is the Truthful, the Believed: "Indeed, the creation of one of you is brought together in his mother's womb in forty days as a drop of sperm, then as something which clings for a similar period, then as a chewed lump (of flesh) for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to blow into it the soul. And it (the angel) is commanded to write down four things: his sustenance, his age, his deeds and whether he will be wretched or happy."²²

21. Sūrah Ibrāheem (14):32.

22. Reported by al-Bukhāri and Muslim from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd.

The Heart, Eyes and Ears

Among Allāh's blessings are that He has given us the faculties of hearing, seeing and understanding. Allāh the Exalted says:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

'Say: It is He Who initiated your (creation) and gave you hearing, sight and the understanding (heart); little thanks do you give.'²³

Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) says: 'Allāh, the One free from all imperfections, the Exalted, created the heart for man that he may know things by it, just as He has created the eyes that he may see things by them and the ears that he may hear things by them and likewise [He created] all the various limbs for a specific purpose.'²⁴

The hearts were created to know Allāh, become acquainted with Him, love Him, fear Him, develop a nearness and attachment to Him and become satisfied with Him. Also to reflect, understand and receive admonition and guidance by the Books and Messengers sent by Allāh the Mighty and Majestic.

23. Sūrah al-Mulk (67):23.

24. *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 9/307.

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ
 جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ
 ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَن
 يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن هَادٍ ❁

'Allāh sends down the most excellent of speech, a Book, its parts resembling each other in goodness and truth, oft-repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it (when they recite it or hear it). Then their skins and their hearts soften to the Remembrance of Allāh. That is the Guidance of Allāh. He guides therewith whom He pleases and whomever Allāh sends astray, for him there is no guide.'²⁵

مَن خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ ❁

'Who feared ar-Raḥmān unseen and brought a heart turned in devotion (to Him).'26

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ❁

'Indeed in the Remembrance of Allāh do hearts find satisfaction.'²⁷

25. Sūrah az-Zumar (39):23.

26. Sūrah Qāf (50):33.

27. Sūrah ar-R'ad (13):28.

'The ears carry words which contain "knowledge" to the heart'²⁸ and therefore have been made the carriers of the knowledge, which is contained in words, to the heart. Allāh the Exalted said:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

'Indeed, there are signs within that for a people who listen.'²⁹

أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

'Will they then not listen?'³⁰

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيهَا أُذُنٌ وَعَايَةٌ ﴿٣١﴾

'That We might make it a remembrance for you, and the keen ear may (hear) and understand it.'³¹

Likewise, the eyes have been made the carriers of the knowledge which is obtained by sight and observation to the heart. Allāh the Exalted said:

أَوْ لَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

'Or have they not observed the things Allāh has created?'³²

28. Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله), *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 9/310.

29. Sūrah Yūnus (10):67.

30. Sūrah as-Sajdah (32):26.

31. Sūrah al-Hāqqah (69):12.

32. Sūrah an-Nahl (16):48.

فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ ❁

'And We bring forth from it produce from which their cattle and their own selves do eat. Do they then not see?'³³

وَ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ❁

'And within your own souls, will you not observe?'³⁴

أَوْ لَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

'Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who came before them?'³⁵

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ
الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَلُّوتٍ فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ ❁ ثُمَّ
أَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِنًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ❁

33. Sūrah as-Sajdah (32):27.

34. Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51):21.

35. Sūrah ar-Rūm (30):9.

'The One Who has created the seven heavens one above another, you can see no fault in the creation of ar-Raḥmān. Then look again, can you see any rifts? Then look again and yet again, your sight will return to you in a state of humiliation, worn out.'³⁶

36. Sūrah al-Mulk (67):3-4.

Knowledge and Reflection

And thus the heart accesses knowledge by these two routes (sight and hearing) and the heart 'is in reality the place of knowledge'³⁷, reflection and understanding.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا

'Do they not travel through the earth that they may have hearts with which they understand.'³⁸

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

'Do they not carefully reflect over the Qur'ān or are there locks upon their hearts?'³⁹

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا

'They have hearts with which they do not understand.'⁴⁰

37. *Majmū' al-Fatāwa* (9/313). For an excellent discussion on the nature of the heart, eyes and ears and their role, interdependence and importance in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwa* of Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) (9/310).

38. *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* (22):46.

39. *Sūrah Muḥammad* (47):24.

40. *Sūrah al-A'rāf* (7):179.

The eyes provide the heart with knowledge of Allāh's handiwork, skill, His signs and wonders to mankind and the deserted ruins of the previous nations. The ears provide the heart with the knowledge of what Allāh has rehearsed to them about Himself (His Names and Attributes) and from among His verses, what He has enjoined upon them, forbidden them, what He has warned them with (Hellfire), what He has promised them with (Paradise), knowledge of the examples He has set forth for mankind and of how He has dealt with the nations gone by.

Once the heart receives this knowledge it reflects and ponders with it so that the *Tawhēed* of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic - that is, His Oneness, His absolute ownership over the Universe and His right to be worshipped alone - becomes apparent to it just like daylight to the eyes.

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) says: 'The signs (handiwork) of Allāh which are observed give testimony to the truthfulness of the Āyāt (revealed verses) of Allāh which are heard.'⁴¹ The Exalted says:

سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

'Soon will We show them Our Signs in the furthest horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth.'⁴²

41. *Al-Fawā'id* of Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 32.

42. Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (41):53.

Meaning that: 'We shall show them from Our Signs which they observe, witness (and which they hear about) by the faculties which We have bestowed upon them so that it becomes evident to them that that this Book (and the verses and signs contained therein) which We have revealed to them and which they read and recite is nothing but the manifest Truth.'

Consequently, the servant of Allāh is made to realise the truth. Also his insignificance, helplessness and the grandeur and might of Allāh the Exalted; and therefore his absolute dependance upon Allāh the Mighty and Majestic for guidance and assistance in all his affairs till his matter has been decided (i.e. entry into Paradise or Hellfire).

Guidance

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) says: 'So it is not befitting for Him (Allāh) to leave His servants without a purpose, neglected; without teaching them what will benefit or harm them in their daily lives and in the Hereafter. This would be an injustice to His Rubūbiyyah⁴³ and ascribing to the Exalted Lord

43. Rubūbiyyah: A term denoting the absolute sovereignty and kingship of Allāh over the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. The verb '*rabba*' (and the noun *rabb*, translated as Lord) is derived from it, meaning: 'to nurture, to bring to fruition, to create, own and regulate, control and bring together all the elements necessary for the existence and well being of something or somebody'. *Rubūbiyyah* has three aspects to it: *Khalq* (creativity): Allāh by Himself makes everything from nothing; *Mulk* (possession): Allāh, by Himself owns everything; and *Amr* (administration): Allāh by Himself, controls and directs everything that He creates and all that He owns. Some of the proofs for these are:

'He (Allāh) has the creation (*khalq*) and His is the command (*amr*). Blessed be Allāh, Lord (*Rabb*) of all the worlds.'
[Sūrah al-A'rāf (7):54]

'Allāh is your Lord (*Rabb*). He owns everything and those whom you call upon besides Him do not own even the white stringy-strand on a date-stone (such a minute possession).'

[Sūrah Fātir (35):13]

Some of Allāh's Names are related to His *Rubūbiyyah* and are more specific than the name *ar-Rabb*. For example: *ar-Razzāq* (the Provider), *al-Muhyee* (the One Who Gives Life). Likewise there are certain actions which are related to His *Rubūbiyyah* and are more specific than the name *ar-Rabb*. For example: sending down the rain, splitting the seed, giving someone honour or debasing someone, guiding and misguiding etc.

that which does not befit Him.⁴⁴

He also says: 'Whoever gives the name *ar-Rahmān* its due right knows that it necessitates the sending of Messengers and revealing of Scripture greater than it necessitates sending of the rain, causing the herbage to grow and bringing out the seed (from the ground). (Mankind's) dependance upon Allāh's Mercy for that from which life is obtained by the hearts is greater than (mankind's) dependance upon Allāh's Mercy for that by which the bodies obtain life.'⁴⁵

Thus, after all that has preceded, Allāh completed His favour to mankind and made the Angels, the Books and the Messengers the means by which He informs and reminds His servants of their origins, their purpose and their inevitable end; by which He teaches them that which will benefit them and harm them in both the worlds. Also, to give glad tidings of Paradise to the obedient and grateful and to warn with Hellfire the disobedient and ungrateful.

يُنزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ۞

'He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command upon whomever He wills from amongst His servants, commanding them thus: Warn them that there is none deserving of worship except Me; therefore fear Me.'⁴⁶

44. *Al-Madārijus-Sālikeen* of Ibn al-Qayyim, 1/31.

45. *Ibid.* 1/32.

46. *Sūrah an-Nahl* (16):2.

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُونِي اللَّهُ
وَأَجْتَنِبُوا الطُّغُوتَ

'And We have sent to every nation a Messenger with this command: That you should make your worship for Allāh alone and avoid (the worship of) false deities.'⁴⁷

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ

'And We do not send the Messengers except as givers of glad tidings (of Paradise to the believers) and warners (of Hellfire to the disbelievers and transgressors)'⁴⁸

By the Messengers, He made clear to His servants the path of guidance and safety and asked them to follow it and also made clear to them the paths of misguidance and destruction and warned from following them.

قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فِيمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ
مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ۗ وَمَنْ
أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَعْمَى ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ۗ

47. Sūrah an-Nahl (16):36.

48. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):48.

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيَتْهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى ۞

'He (Allāh) said: Get you all down from here! And if there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance then

He will not go astray and neither will he be wretched. And whoever turns away from My Remembrance then He will have a narrow, constricted life and We shall raise him on the day of Judgement blind. He will say: O My Lord! Why have you raised me blind while I had sight before? He (Allāh) will say: Thus My signs came to you yet you forgot them so likewise, on this day will you be forgotten.⁴⁹

'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: 'Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) drew a line for us, then he said: "This is Allāh's way." Then he drew lines to its right and left and said: "These are the other different ways. Upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it." Then he recited:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
الْأَسْبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ

"And this is My Straight Path, therefore follow it and do not follow other paths; they will separate you from His path."^{50/51}

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also explained: 'I have left you upon clear white ground. Its night is (illuminated) like its day, no one deviates from it after me except that he is destroyed.'⁵²

49. Sūrah Tā Hā (20):123-6.

50. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):153.

51. Reported by Imām Aḥmad in his *Musnad*.

52. Reported by Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah - *ḥadeeth ḥasan*.

So Allāh is not one who is unjust and has neglected His creation. Rather, He sent them Messengers and Scripture and explained to them in detail the way of life He has ordained for them. As a result, this places the burden of responding to this message upon the whole of mankind. Furthermore, there is no excuse for them deviating from the Straight Path which Allāh has explained in detail through His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) after having been guided to it.

Responsibility

Allāh has made the heart the master of the body. He also made it the object of knowledge, admonition, guidance and healing.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ
لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

'O humanity! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord and a healing for that which is in your breasts - a guidance and a mercy to the believers.'⁵³

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ

'And whoever believes in Allāh, He guides his heart.'⁵⁴

Just as the heart was created to know Allāh and adore him, the limbs and joints were created to actualise the worship of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, to prostrate and bow to Him and to help fulfil the obligations men owe to their Maker and those which they owe to each other.

The heart is the king and the limbs are its troops. The limbs follow the heart and are subservient to it. The hearts like, dislike, love, hate, fear, desire, wish and aspire (on account of what they are filled with by

53. Sūrah Yūnus (10):57.

54. Sūrah at-Taghābun (64):11.

means of the eyes and ears and through reflection, thought and imagination) and the limbs give effect to that by the performance of actions. Allāh the Exalted says:

وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ

'But He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned.'⁵⁵

And there occurs in the *hadeeth* reported by Muslim which clarifies this: *'Indeed, Allāh does not look at your bodies nor at your appearances but He looks at your hearts and your actions.'*⁵⁶

As such, the goodness or badness of a believer's conduct depends on his actions; his actions are performed by the limbs Allāh has made for him. His limbs in turn are subservient to his heart which is the controller of his body. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: *'Indeed, there is a piece of flesh in the body which if it is wholesome and sound the whole body is wholesome and sound and which if it be corrupt the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.'*⁵⁷

In view of this, the servants's success in the Hereafter depends on the condition of his heart. Allāh the Exalted said:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٢٦﴾

55. Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):225.

56. Reported by Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeh*.

57. Reported by Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeh*.

'The Day on which neither wealth nor sons will benefit. Except he who comes to Allāh with a sound heart.'⁵⁸

Allāh revealed to His servants and made obligatory upon them that which would guide, heal and admonish their hearts so that they remain pure, sound and healthy. This is nothing but the worship of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic to which the hearts are naturally inclined. He made clear to them the consequences should they believe in this message and also the consequences should they disbelieve or become ungrateful. He has done this in a manner which is truly exhaustive and full of concern, compassion and care.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا
دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ
وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

'O you who believe! Answer Allāh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life and know that Allāh comes in between a person and his heart. And verily to Him shall you all be gathered.'⁵⁹

Whoever responds to this call and humbles himself, then he will have prospered and will be given an everlasting life of joy and bliss. Allāh has prepared immense rewards for the person that comes to Allāh having kept their heart pure (from all false beliefs, doubts, suspicions,

58. Sūrah ash-Shu'arā' (26):88-9.

59. Sūrah al-Anfāl (8):24.

lusts and desires) and filled their heart with faith (*Imān*); and on account of that, worshipped Allāh upon *Tawhēed*, in the manner requested by Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and as described by His Messenger (صلواته عليه وسلم).

As for those who associate partners with Allāh, disbelieve in Allāh and His Messenger, refuse His worship out of arrogance, are neglectful in their worship, or increase in their sins and transgressions to such an extent that their acts of worship become null and void, for them Allāh has prepared a punishment equivalent to their transgression and sin. Like for like.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ❁

‘Truly, when it was said to them, *Lā ilāha ill-Allāha* (none is deserving of worship except Allāh), they puffed themselves up with pride (i.e. denied it).⁶⁰

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ❁

‘And your Lord said: Call upon me (i.e. believe in My Oneness and My right to be worshipped alone and then ask me anything), I will respond to your invocation. Verily! Those who scorn My worship (i.e. do not believe in Me and do not call upon Me) they will surely enter Hell in humiliation.⁶¹

60. Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt (37):35.

61. Sūrah Ghāfir (40):60.

وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ۞

'And We shall drive the *mujrimūn* (polytheists, criminals, disbelievers in Allāh's Oneness) to Hell in a thirsty state.'⁶²

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تُظَلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۞

'This Day (of Resurrection) no soul will be dealt with unjustly and nor will you be requited anything except that which you used to do.'⁶³

The free will and choice which Allāh has given every person (by means of the faculties of hearing, sight and reflection) justifies their responsibility and accountability for their actions and also the resulting reward or punishment.

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ۞

'Verily, We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.'⁶⁴

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ۞

'And We have guided him (i.e. made clear to him) to the two paths (i.e. the path of righteousness and the path of evil).'⁶⁵

62. Sūrah Maryam (19):86.

63. Sūrah Yā Seen (36):54.

64. Sūrah al-Insān (76):3.

65. Sūrah al-Balad (90):10.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

'And say, the Truth is from your Lord. So whoever wishes, then let him believe and whoever wishes, then let him disbelieve.'⁶⁶

Therefore:

كُلُّ أَمْرٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

'Every soul is held in pledge for that which he has earned.'⁶⁷

66. Sūrah al-Kahf (18):29.

67. Sūrah at-Tūr (52):21.

Judgement

Allāh has decreed death for all of mankind and none can escape it. Death is the means by which the fixed term of each soul comes to an end and is returned to its Lord to be judged and subsequently rewarded or punished without the least injustice.

أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ

'Wherever you may be, death will overtake you.'⁶⁸

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ❁

'Every soul shall taste death and then will you be given your recompense on the Day of Judgement. So whoever is saved from the Fire and is made to enter Paradise, then he will have succeeded. And this Life is nothing but a deceiving entertainment.'⁶⁹

68. Sūrah an-Nisā' (4):78.

69. Sūrah Āli 'Imrān (3):185.

Unification of Worship for Allāh the Exalted

As such, whoever reflects and ponders over what has preceded will realise that the whole of creation revolves around nothing but the worship of its Creator and Sustainer.

The unification of worship for Allāh the Mighty and Majestic alone and the avoidance of the worship of everything that is besides Him is that end for which the Messengers were sent (عليهم السلام). Allāh the Exalted says:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا
الطَّاغُوتَ

'And We have indeed sent to every *ummah* (nation) a Messenger (with this command:) That you should worship Allāh (alone) and avoid (the worship of) all false deities.⁷⁰

Furthermore, this aim or objective (unifying all worship for Allāh alone) is the cause of the dispute of the Messengers with their respective peoples and due to it, mankind has become divided into two parties: a party in Paradise and a party in the Blazing Fire.

As for those who are in the Fire then they are those who deny Allāh the Mighty and Majestic absolutely; or acknowledge Allāh's Lordship (i.e. His *Rubūbiyyah*; see p. 29, f.note 43) over the universe, but do not

70. Sūrah an-Naḥl (16):36.

worship Him in His *Ulūhiyyah*⁷¹ by making their worship exclusively for Him alone or paying part worship to others besides Him. Such was the case of the pagans of Mecca to whom the Messenger (صلوات الله عليه وسلم) was sent. The Exalted says:

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ
الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ❁

‘Say: Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs (of this universe)? They will say: Allāh.

71. *Ulūhiyyah*: A term denoting that Allāh is the only One to Whom all forms of worship should be directed in truth; whether actions of the heart (feelings), words and statements or actions of the limbs. The word *ilāh* is derived from it, meaning: something that is adored, worshipped, turned to i.e. an object of worship, subservience and adoration. There is nothing else besides Him which deserves that, and this is the meaning of the testimony ‘*Lā ilāha ill-Allāha*’ (There is no *ilāh* deserving of worship/subservience except Allāh), the truth and certainty of which every Messenger came to establish. Allāh the Mighty and Majestic says:

‘Your *ilāh* is but one *ilāh*.’ [Sūrah an-Nahl (16):20]

‘And He alone is the *ilāh* in the Heavens and the *ilāh* in the Earth.’ [Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43):84]

‘Invoke not, nor pray to any *ilāh* along with Allāh. There is no *ilāh* but He.’ [Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28):88]

Say: Will you not then be afraid (of Allāh and His Punishment)?⁷²

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ
سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ
قُلْ مَنْ مِنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ

'Say: Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne? They will say: Allāh. Say: Will you not then fear Him? Say: In whose Hand is the Sovereignty of everything - and He protects (all) while against Him there is no protector - if you really do have knowledge? They will say: Allāh. Say: How then are you deceived and turn away (from the Truth)?⁷³

So they believed in Allāh's *Rubūbiyyah*, even in some of His Names, but that did not make them Muslims. Rather, Allāh the Exalted called them disbelievers and made their abode the Hellfire, in spite of their affirmation of His *Rubūbiyyah*.

As for those who are in Paradise then they are those who have affirmed their belief in Allāh the Exalted and everything that is due to Him from His Names and Attributes; who have believed in His Messengers and have responded to their call by making all their

72. Sūrah Yūnus (10):31.

73. Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23):86-9.

worship purely for Allāh alone; who travel upon their way, in both belief and action, and who then remain steadfast upon the Truth and strive for its dominance.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ❁

‘Indeed, those who say: “Our Lord is Allāh” and thereafter *istiqāmū* (remain steadfast⁷⁴), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.’⁷⁵

So they acknowledge His *Rubūbiyyah* due to their saying: ‘Our Lord is Allāh’ and then they worship Him alone on the path of *istiqāma*.

Therefore, making all of worship for Allāh the Mighty and Majestic alone is the basis of the *Deen* of Islām as the meaning of *Lā ilāha ill-Allāha* is that ‘there is nothing which has the right to worship in truth except Allāh alone.’ This meaning is indeed the straight and firm *Deen* which most of mankind are heedless of. The Exalted said:

أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَ لَكِن
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ❁

74. *Istiqāma*: steadfastness upon the Straight Path with sincere worship and all that it entails of patience, obedience and good deeds.

75. *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf* (46):13.

**'He has commanded that you do not worship except Him alone.
That is the straight, upright *Deen*. Yet most of mankind do not
know.'**⁷⁶

For this reason it is obligatory for everyone who desires entry into Paradise and deliverance from the Fire that they acquaint themselves with its meaning, conditions, characteristics and perfection.

Presented to you now, O reader, is the meaning of worship.

76. Sūrah Yūsuf (12):40.

Chapter 2: The Meaning of Worship

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) said: *Worship (Arabic: 'ibādah) is obedience to Allāh by carrying out what He has commanded on the tongues of His messengers.'*

He also said: *'Ibādah is a collective term for everything which Allāh loves and is pleased with from among the sayings and inward and outward actions.'*

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) said: *'Ibādah (is) gratefulness to Him, love of Him and awe of Him.'*

Ibn Katheer (رحمه الله) said: *'Ibādah in the (Arabic) language is humbleness (dhillah). It is sometimes said: "A levelled and smoothed road (mu'abbad) and an uneven road (ghayr mu'abbad)" meaning (one has been) humbled, lowered, debased. Its usage in the Revelation: an expression of what brings together the perfection of love, fear and hope (in Allāh's worship).'*

Al-Qurtubi (رحمه الله) said: *'The basis of 'ibādah: humbling oneself (tadhallull) and submission (khudū') and the duties of the Sharee'ah are called "Ibādāt" (pl. of 'ibādah, i.e. acts of worship) because the (worshippers) stick to them and perform them with submissiveness and out of humility to Allāh the Exalted.'*

From these statements one will realise that *'ibādah* has a very wide meaning and is comprised of many matters. It will also become clear that many people have an incorrect and fragmented understanding of *'ibādah*. Most commonly they limit the meaning of *'ibādah* to prostrating, bowing, fasting, pilgrimage and other acts of worship. However, this is only one aspect from the many aspects of *'ibādah*.

In essence, the word *'ibādah* in the Arabic language and in the revelation has three meanings:

- 1) Humbleness, lowliness (*dhillah*) and submissiveness (*khudū'*).
- 2) Obedience (*tā'ah*) and compliance (*inqiyād*).
- 3) Devotion/sacrifice (*tanāssuk*) and worship (*ta'alluh*).

When used in the Qur'ān, either one of the above meanings is intended alone or two of them or all three together.

Obedience and Compliance

'*Tbādah* is often used in the Qur'ān with the meaning of obedience and compliance. This is the second meaning by itself. Allāh the Exalted says:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىٰءَ آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ
لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

'Have I not made it binding upon you, O Children of Ādam, that you should not worship Shaytān? For he is to you a manifest enemy.'⁷⁷

The meaning of '*the worship of Shaytān*' is not the acts of worship such as prostrating, bowing, *tawāf* (i.e. circumambulation around the *K'aba* in Mecca) and other actions like them. Rather, the intended meaning is obedience to him, following him in what he inspires and dictates to his friends and allies.

This meaning of obedience and compliance does not always constitute the great *shirk*⁷⁸ which takes one out of the religion. In fact it is of two forms:

The First: Obedience to something involving disobedience to Allāh the Mighty and Majestic (without considering this disobedience to be

77. Sūrah Yā Seen (36):60.

78. **Shirk:** The association of partners with Allāh. This can occur in ones beliefs, feelings or actions.

lawful). This is when Shaytān, for example, beautifies fornication to someone, so he obeys him in that. Or when someone's master orders him to drink alcohol, so he obeys him. Or when someone's leader orders him to lie, so he obeys him in that while knowing and believing that it is prohibited (*ḥarām*). This is the obedience which is included in the word 'ibādah and the one who commits this is termed 'a worshipper of Shaytān' - meaning one who follows him. However this is not the *shirk* which takes one out of the religion. It is something which is forbidden and the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) warned against it with a severe warning by saying: 'There is no obedience in what involves disobedience to Allāh. Indeed, obedience is only in that which is good.'⁷⁹

The Second: This is obedience in ruling and making laws; i.e. in the declaration of what is lawful (*ḥalāl*) and prohibited (*ḥarām*). It is not permissible to direct this right to any other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. If it is given to other than Allāh then it constitutes the great *shirk* because the right of ruling and legislation is not fit for any other than Allāh the One, the Subduer. The Exalted said:

وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ۖ

'And He (Allāh) makes none to share in His Decision and Rule.'⁸⁰

and He also said:

إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ

79. Reported in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*.

80. *Sūrah al-Kahf* (18):26.

'Verily, the Rule is for none but Allāh.'⁸¹

The right of ruling and legislating is one of the specific characteristics of *Ulūhiyyah* (the right of being worshipped alone) and due to this, one of the meanings of the word 'ilāh' is 'the Legislator'. Some of the beautiful names of Allāh are *al-Hakam* (the Judge, Arbiter) and *al-Hakeem* (the All-Wise). Based upon this, anyone who legislates or makes obligatory a legislation or rule other than that of Allāh's has attributed to himself one of the characteristics of *Ulūhiyyah* and by doing so he has made himself like Pharaoh who said:

مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي

'I do not know of another ilāh (deity) for you besides me.'⁸²

As for the evidences that mere obedience and following other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic in ruling and legislating is considered *shirk*, then they are many. Among them is the following verse:

وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لِيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ
لِيَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

'And indeed the devils do inspire their *awliyā'* (friends and allies) that they may dispute with you. And if you were to obey them then you would be *mushrikūn* (i.e. those who commit *shirk*).'⁸³

81. Sūrah Yūsuf (12):40.

82. Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28):38.

83. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):121.

The obedience to the *awliyā'* of Shaytān in this verse is considered *shirk* because it is obedience in legislation, that is in the *halāl* and *harām*. This right does not befit anyone except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. It is reported by Hākim and others with an authentic chain of narration from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: 'People from among the pagans used to dispute with the Muslims regarding the matter of sacrificing (animals) and dead animals. They used to say: "You eat from what you have killed but you do not eat from what Allāh has killed (i.e. carrion)." So Allāh the Exalted said:

وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

"And if you obey them then you would be *mushrikūn*."⁸⁴

Therefore, mere obedience in matters like these is considered *shirk*.

Ibn Katheer (رحمه الله) says: 'That means: when you turn away from what Allāh has commanded and legislated you with towards the saying of someone other than Him, then you have placed others in front of Him and this is *shirk*.'

Thus, whoever obeys the scholars in the making of *harām* that which Allāh has made *halāl* and the making of *halāl* that which Allāh has made *harām* in their religious verdicts, or obeys the leaders in their rules and canons by which they govern the people, then that person has taken them as lords besides Allāh and as a result of that he has become a *mushrik* (i.e. one who commits *shirk*). The following verse regarding the People of the Book - the Jews and Christians - offers proof for that. The Exalted said:

84. Ibid.

أَتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ

'They have taken their priests and their rabbis as lords besides
Allāh.⁸⁵

Taking priests and rabbis as lords does not mean prostrating and bowing to them. What is meant here is obedience to them in the matters of ruling and legislating and making things *halāl* and *ḥarām*. This is because such obedience is *'ibādah* just like prostrating and bowing and is not permissible for anyone except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. Due to this, Allāh rejected that from them (the People of the Book) in the remainder of the verse:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

'And they were not commanded (anything) except to worship
only one *ilāh* - none has the right to be worshipped except He.
How free and remote is He from what they ascribe to Him.⁸⁶

The Exalted also says, giving an example of such people who obey
and follow a legislation other than His:

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنَ بِهِ
اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ

85. Sūrah at-Tawbah (9):31.

86. Ibid.

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

'Or do they have partners who legislate for them in the *Deen* that for which Allāh has sent down no authority. And if it were not for a word of judgment, the decision would certainly have been made between them and the wrongdoers - for them is a tormenting punishment.⁸⁷

So be warned as many have been put to trial by this.

87. Sūrah ash-Shūra (42):21.

Humbleness and Submissiveness

Tbādah is also used in the Qur'ān when the first and second meanings are implied together. They are: humbleness and submissiveness along with obedience and compliance. The example of that is what is said in the language of the Arabs: 'a debased camel, subdued, docile and easily compliant and obedient'. However, the liberated *Muwaḥḥidūn*⁸⁸ refuse to do that for any other than their Lord.

An example in the Qur'ān for such meanings is the saying of the Exalted:

88. **Muwaḥḥid**: One who has the very same firm and resolute belief in Allāh and His Names and Attributes as did the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his companions (رضي الله عنهم), [without denying or changing their meanings, asking about their condition (modality), or likening them to those of the creation] and in all the other articles of faith. Who then singles out Allāh in all of his worship, not associating anything as a partner or equal with his Lord; doing that whilst loving Allāh, fearing Him and hoping in Him and adhering strictly to the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) his companions and all those who followed in their footsteps without deviating to the right or to the left but rather being straight and upright in the *Deen*, the *Deen* of Ibrāheem, who was not of the *mushrikūn*:

'Say: Indeed, My Lord has guided me to the Straight Path, the upright and true *Deen*, the religion of Ibrāheem, the *ḥaneef* (i.e. the one firm and true in Allāh's worship and in His Obedience) and he was not of the *mushrikūn*. Say: Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allāh the Lord of all the worlds. He has no partner (equal). With that I have been commanded and I am the first of those who submit.' [Sūrah al-An'ām (6):161-3]

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٩﴾
 إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عٰلِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَقَالُوا
 أَنْزِلْ لَنَا لَبِئْسَ لَنَا مِثْلًا نَّمِثِلَنَّهُمْ وَلِنُعٰبِدَهُمْ ﴿٧١﴾

Then We sent Moses (Mūsa) and his brother Aaron (Hārūn) with Our Signs and a clear authority to Pharaoh and his chiefs. But they behaved arrogantly in the land and were an insolent people. And they said: Shall we believe in two mortals like ourselves while their people give 'ibādah to us?'⁸⁹

'Ibādah here does not refer to the acts of worship such as bowing, prostrating and others but it means debasement and submissiveness along with complete obedience and compliance.

At-Tabari (رحمه الله) said: "...give 'ibādah to us" means "obey us and humble themselves to us, they make consultation and plan with our plan and affair and subject themselves for (our) sake." The Arabs name everyone who subjects himself to his master as "a worshipper of him."

Pharaoh used to enslave the Children of Israel and would impose an evil punishment upon them. He would spread his fear amongst them and into their hearts by murder and separation of families to make them concede to his authority. Pharaoh also forced them to submit to him and comply with his legislation and government and his rules and canons which he made incumbent upon them so that they may yield to his dictates. Rather he made binding his tortures and punishments upon whoever tried to escape from obeying him or

89. Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23):45-7.

refused to do so due to being enticed by his soul. Humiliation, submission and compliance are from among the meanings of 'ibādah which is not permissible for other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and hence, Mūsa said to Pharaoh:

وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدتَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۞

'And is that the favour of which you remind me, that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?'⁹⁰

The Children of Israel were, in reality, slaves to Pharaoh due to their obedience and unrestricted submission to him. You would see them complying with him, being submissive to every rule, resolution and judgement which he established. He would lead them to the right and they would follow and he would lead them to the left and they would follow. He would mock and ridicule the existing values and morals by his statements and declarations and by means of his announcements. He would cast out all other beliefs and convictions and call at the top of his voice:

مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي

'I do not know of another *ilāh* (object of worship) for you besides me.'⁹¹

Meaning, 'there is not for you an object of worship - one that is obeyed and who legislates besides me and my statute and rule is the only (form of) judgement - there is no legislation besides it.' You will have found the

90. Sūrah ash-Shu'arā' (26):22.

91. Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28):38.

Israelites, despite all of that, complying with him and submitting to him willingly. Rather they would applaud him, flatter him and rejoice and shout by his honour. This is of the lowest degrees of enslavement to other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and because of this, Allāh the Exalted has described such people with insignificance, foolishness and transgression. Allāh the Exalted said:

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَاطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ۞

'So he befooled and misled his people and they obeyed him.
Surely they were a transgressing people.'⁹²

So take caution and take caution again lest you become one of the transgressing people.

92. Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43):54.

Sacrifice and Worship

'*Ibādah* is also used in the Qur'ān to mean devotion/sacrifice and worship. This is from two aspects:

The First: Either by fulfilling the acts of worship such as bowing, prostrating, circumambulating (the *K'aba*), sacrifice (of animals) and others. All of this is '*ibādah* and it is not permissible to direct it to anything other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic; neither to a grave, a tomb, a pious person nor a prophet. Most people know this meaning and think it is the only meaning for '*ibādah* while being ignorant of the other meanings.

The Second: By believing that an individual has control over the causes and effects in this world. So a person fears him and calls upon him for his needs, to receive his help; and appeals to and petitions him in moments of difficulty, terror and decrease in life and property. He also seeks deliverance from him, places his hope in him and seeks refuge in him from what he fears and is afraid of.

The people of Ibrāheem used to call upon other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. So Allah, the One free and remote from all imperfections, named that '*ibādah*. Allāh the Exalted says, quoting Ibrāheem:

وَأَعْتَبْتُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ

'And I will withdraw from you and what you call upon besides Allāh...⁹³

93. Sūrah Maryam (19):48.

Then the Exalted said:

فَلَمَّا أَعْتَزَلْتَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

'Then when he withdrew from what they used to worship
besides Allāh...'⁹⁴

Thus there occurs in the authentic *hadeeth* of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم):
'Supplication is 'ibādah.'⁹⁵

The *mushrikūn* amongst the Arabs used to seek refuge with and seek deliverance from the *Jinn* due to their fear of them. So Allāh the Exalted rebuked them because this is worship which is not to be directed to anything other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic:

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ
فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ❁

'And there were some men amongst mankind who used to seek refuge with males from amongst the *Jinn* and they (Jinns) only increased them (men) in wrongdoing.'⁹⁶

The example of that in our own time is the magnification of the leaders, ministers, chiefs and the officials with the belief that increase and decrease in sustenance is in their hands. Men fear them until this constant fear penetrates into their hearts; so they begin to be

94. Sūrah Maryam (19):49.

95. Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

96. Sūrah al-Jinn (72):6.

observant of them and reckon with their reckoning, both in their presence and their absence. They put forward their commands over and above the commands of the One who has enormous power over the heavens and the earth. They fear them secretly and openly and hold them in awe greater than they hold Allāh the Mighty and Majestic in awe. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has advised every single one of us with the following authentic words:

*When you ask then ask from Allāh and when you seek aid then seek aid from Allāh. Know that if the ummah gathered together in order to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you with anything except what Allāh has already written for you. And (know) that if they were to gather in order to harm you with anything, they would not harm you with anything except what Allāh has already written for you. The pens have been lifted and the ink has dried.*⁹⁷

These are the meanings of 'ibādah which you have just become acquainted with. So be covetous and zealous - may Allāh have mercy upon us and you - of unifying them all for Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. So do not humble yourself or be submissive to any besides Him - and do not obey or follow other than His legislation - and do not prostrate, bow, supplicate or give devotion to anything other than Him. The Exalted said:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي

**'Indeed, I am Allāh, none is deserving of worship except me.
So worship Me (alone).'**⁹⁸

97. Reported by Imām Aḥmad.

98. Sūrah Tā Hā (20):14.

He, the Mighty and Majestic, has ordered us to worship Him with everything that the word 'ibādah encompasses from among the meanings of humiliation and submissiveness, obedience and compliance, devotion and sacrifice. The Exalted has also said:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

'Say: Indeed my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and death are all for Allāh the Lord of all the Worlds. He has no partner; with that have I been commanded and I am the first of those who submit.'⁹⁹

So be from among the people of *Tawhēed* and do not associate anything in the worship of your Lord as that is the right of Allāh upon you and if you fulfil it then it is a promise binding upon Allāh to admit you into the Garden without punishment. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: *'The right of Allāh upon His servants is that they should worship Him alone and not associate any partners with Him and the right of the servants upon Allāh is that He shall not punish anyone who does not associate anything with Him.'*¹⁰⁰

And presented to you now are the necessary conditions of 'ibādah...

99. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):162-3.

100. Reported by al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

Chapter 3: The Conditions of Worship

As for the conditions of *'ibādah*, that is, for it to be accepted, then they are three in number: faith (*Imān*), sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and imitation (*ittibā'*).

So the servant's *'ibādah* is not accepted except with the abundance and the bringing together of the three abovementioned conditions.

Faith (Imān)

As for *Imān* then that is what has been mentioned in the *hadeeth* of the Angel Gabriel (Jibreel) in *Ṣaḥeeh Muslim*: '(*Imān* is) that you affirm your conviction in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Final Day and the Divine Apportionment, both the good and the bad of it.'¹⁰¹

As our *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) have said: '*Imān* consists of firm and resolute belief in the heart, profession with the tongue and acting in accordance with the commands of Allāh and His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).'

Imān is a pillar in the acceptance of '*ibādah*. The Exalted says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ۖ

'Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness - never shall we diminish the reward of the one who has made excellent his action.'¹⁰²

The Exalted also says:

وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْتَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۖ

101. Reported by al-Bukhāri and Muslim from 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb.

102. Sūrah al-Kahf (18):30.

'And whoever does an action whether male or female while being a believer, then they will enter Paradise and will be given provisions without measure.'¹⁰³

So *Imān* has been made a condition and acting out of *Imān*, brother and sister Muslim, requires:

1. that you have full conviction and firm belief in the commandment that you are acting upon, that it has been ordered by Allāh on the tongue of His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), in an authentic text,
2. and that you also make yourself aware of the specific reward that would result should you fulfil that commandment, increasing thereby your motivation for it.

It is likewise for a prohibited act:

1. that you have full conviction and firm belief in the prohibition, that it has in fact been prohibited by Allāh on the tongue of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in an authentic text,
2. and that you also make yourself aware of the specific punishment that would ensue should you become disobedient, so as to make you flee from it.

As for those who are devoid of *Imān* then their worship will not be accepted. The Exalted says:

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنۡ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنثُورًا ❁

103. Sūrah Ghāfir (40):40.

'And We shall turn to whatever actions they did and turn them into scattered dust.'¹⁰⁴

The Exalted also says regarding their worship:

أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بَقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا

'Their actions are like a mirage in the desert which the thirsty man deems to be water; until when he comes to it to find nothing (there).'¹⁰⁵

and the Exalted also says:

أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ

'Their actions are like ashes on which the wind blows hard on a stormy day.'¹⁰⁶

So, brother and sister Muslim, increase your *Imān* by learning the specific details of the Islāmic Creed, performing the prescribed actions and avoiding what displeases Allāh and brings upon you His anger - and there is nothing more harmful to your *Imān* than sins - so that every action you perform is not wasted, turned to dust or blown away by the wind.

104. Sūrah al-Furqān (25):23.

105. Sūrah an-Nūr (24):39.

106. Sūrah Ibrāheem (14):18.

Sincerity (Ikhlāṣ)¹⁰⁷

As for *ikhhlās*, then that is one of the meanings of the testimony 'none has the right to 'ibādah except Allāh' in that your 'ibādah should be exclusively and sincerely for Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. *Imān* by itself is not sufficient for our 'ibādah to be accepted by Allāh. Rather it is necessary that your action is out of *Imān* in Allāh and complete *ikhhlās* to Him, the Mighty and Majestic, so that you do not make anyone a partner with Him. The Exalted said:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا ءِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ اُولَٰئِكَ لَهُم
الْاٰمَنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

'Those who have *Imān* and confuse not their *Imān* with injustice, for them there will be security and they are the rightly guided.'¹⁰⁸

Injustice here means *shirk* as was explained by the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) and as has been recorded by al-Bukhāri in *Kitābut-Tafseer* of his *Ṣaheeh*.

Allāh the Mighty and Majestic has laid down a condition for the perfection of *Imān*, which gives its possessor security, guidance and freedom from *shirk* and that is *ikhhlās*; the abundance of which is necessary for 'ibādah to be accepted. The Exalted says:

107. For a more comprehensive discussion on this topic, you can refer to our English translation of *The Book of Sincerity* by Shaykh Ḥusayn al-'Awā'ishah. ISBN 0 9530668 0 0.

108. Sūrah al-An'ām (6):82.

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

'And they were not commanded except with this: that they should worship Allāh, being completely sincere in the *Deen*.¹⁰⁹

and the Exalted also says:

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

'Say: Indeed I have been commanded to worship Allāh making the *Deen* sincerely for Him alone.¹¹⁰

and there is also the *ḥadeeth Qudsi* reported by Muslim: 'I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having partners. Thus, whoever does an action for someone else's sake as well as Mine, will have that action rejected by Me to him whom he associated with Me.'¹¹¹

Ikhhlās is the sanctification of one's speech and action from every blemish of the soul's desire. For example, desiring your beautification in the hearts of people, desiring their praise so that they say 'a scholar', 'what a brave man' or 'a doer of good'. Also included in this is running away from the criticism of people (i.e. abandoning certain actions because people may criticise or become angry), seeking people's magnification of yourself, their aid and assistance, the fulfilment of your needs or desiring other people's wealth and possessions - while being contented with all of that because your soul is deceived at amazement with itself.

109. Sūrah al-Bayyinah (98):5.

110. Sūrah az-Zumar (39):11.

111. Reported by Muslim.

Know also, brother and sister Muslim, that *ikhlās* is not correct until you are truthful in your speech, action, striving and while you desire nothing but the Face of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and the Home of the Hereafter. The Exalted says:

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
 كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُورًا

‘And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as it should be strived for while being a believer, then his striving will be acknowledged (rewarded).’¹¹²

There are some other useful definitions of *ikhlās*:

1. It is the freedom from every blemish and impurity of the desire for nearness to Allāh the Mighty and Majestic.
2. It is singling out Allāh the Mighty and Majestic with one’s intention in all acts of worship.
3. It is forgetting the sight of the creation by continual observance of the Creator (i.e. His *Deen*).
4. It is to hide your good deeds just like you would hide your evil deeds.

So be warned, brother and sister Muslim, that no action is acceptable to Allāh if somebody else is given a share in it. Reflect carefully upon the words of Yūsuf bin al-Ḥusayn ar-Rāzi: ‘Indeed the hardest thing (to achieve) in this world is *ikhlās*. How many times have I struggled to extinguish *riyā’* (showing off) from my heart except that it only appeared

112. Sūrah al-Isrā’ (17):19.

again in a different colour.¹¹³

Also reflect upon the words narrated by Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisi in his *Mukhtasir Minhājil-Qāsideen*: 'Indeed mankind, all of them, are destroyed except those with knowledge. And all those with knowledge are destroyed except those who act upon it. And all those who act are destroyed except those who are sincere in their action. And all those who are sincere are in great danger (of associating other than Allāh in their actions).'¹¹⁴

113. *Jāmi ul-Ulūm wal-Hikam* of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali p. 17.

114. *Mukhtaṣir Minhājil-Qāsideen* of Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisi p. 360.

Imitation and Adherence to the Sunnah (Ittibā')

As for *ittibā'* then that is also one of the meanings of the testimony that: 'Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh' in that one's *'ibādah* should be in agreement with and in accordance to what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with.

Every form of worship which is introduced and invented and which the Messenger (ﷺ) did not come with is false and rejected, not being accepted from the one who acts upon it - even if he has *Imān* and *ikhhlās*.

The Messenger (ﷺ) said, as is recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, about the perfection and comprehensiveness of his guidance: 'By Him in Whose Hand is my soul. I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it. And I have not left a single thing which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from Hellfire except that I have prohibited you from it.'¹¹⁵

In *Ṣaḥeeḥul-Bukhāri* and *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* the Prophet (ﷺ) says: 'Whoever introduces into this affair of ours something which does not belong to it will have it rejected.'¹¹⁶

Muslim adds in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from 'Ai'shah that the Prophet (ﷺ) also said: 'Whoever does an action which we have not commanded, will

115. Reported by Ibn Khuzaymah and Aḥmad.

116. Reported by Imām Muslim.

have it rejected.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, one's *'ibādah* should be performed in accordance with the manner of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and that is his proven, authentic *Sunnah*. Abu Dāwūd in his *Sunan* reports from Ibn 'Eesā: *'Whoever does an action in a way different from ours, then it is rejected.'*¹¹⁸

Fudayl ibn Ayyād, one of the *tābi'ūn* (second generation of Muslims), said regarding the verse, *'...that He may test you, which of you is best in deeds'*¹¹⁹, *'(It means) the most sincere and the most correct'*. So those who were around him said: *'And what is the most sincere and the most correct?'* He replied: *'Action, if it is correct but not sincere will not be accepted. And action, if it is sincere but not correct will not be accepted until it is both sincere and correct. Sincere means that nothing but the Face of Allāh is sought and correct means that it is in conformity with the Sunnah.'*

The great Imām, Sufyān ath-Thawri (رحمه الله), said: *'No word is accepted without action and no word and action are accepted without intention and no word action and intention are correct unless they are in accordance with the Sunnah.'*

From the above-mentioned narrations you should know, brother and sister Muslim, that:

1. The Messenger's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) guidance is complete and perfect, nothing has been omitted. Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said: *'The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not even leave a bird flapping its wings in the sky except that*

117. Reported by Imām Muslim.

118. Reported by Abu Dāwūd.

119. Sūrah Hūd (11):7.

he gave us knowledge regarding it.¹²⁰

2. Anything introduced into the religion which was not present at the time of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) will be rejected. Imām Mālik (رحمه الله) said: 'Whoever introduces something into Islām and considers it to be good has claimed that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was treacherous to his trust of Messengership.'¹²¹

3. Any action (of worship) which is performed without the command of Allāh or His Messenger (ﷺ) will be rejected.

4. Any action which is performed in a manner other than that of the Messenger (ﷺ) will be rejected.

The matter has been made clear for us in the *Ṣaḥeeḥ* of Muslim who reports from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to say in his sermon for a particular need: 'The best of guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad and the worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.'

So it is incumbent, O brother and sister Muslim, that you make your 'ibādah bound and fettered with these three conditions: *Imān, ikhlāṣ* and *ittibā'*; and be zealous that your worship is in accordance with the *Sunnah* as those who abandon it are greater than those who cling to it. If not, then scattered dust... scattered dust... scattered dust!!!

And presented to you now are the essential characteristics of 'ibādah...

120. Related by Aḥmad (5/153), at-Tiyālasī (no. 479) and at-Tabarānī in al-Kabeer (no. 1647). Its *isnād* is *ṣaḥeeḥ*.

121. Reported by as-Shātibi in *Al-I'tisām* (1/49).

Chapter 4: The Characteristics of Worship

It is befitting for our *'ibādah*, in order that it may be performed in the exact manner in which it has been requested by Allāh, that we accompany it with three matters: love, fear and hope.

Love (Maḥabbah)

So we worship the One free from all imperfections, the Exalted, out of love. The Exalted says:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

'And those who believe are more intense in their love for Allāh.¹²²

and the Exalted also says:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

'O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns his back from his religion, then soon will Allāh bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him.¹²³

And the love of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic necessitates the following of His laws. The Exalted says:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَ يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

122. Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):165.

123. Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5):54.

'Say (O Muḥammad): If you really do love Allāh then follow me, Allah will love you (on account of that) and forgive you your sins.'¹²⁴

And loving Him, the One free from all imperfections, the Exalted, necessitates placing His command before the world and whatever is within it. The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, as is recorded by al-Bukhāri: *'There are three things which if a person possesses he will have tasted the sweetness of Imān: that Allāh and His Messenger are more beloved to him than everything besides them...'*¹²⁵

Some of the *Salaf* have said: *'And the basis of 'ibādah (is that it) guarantees extreme love with extreme humility and this is not befitting for anything except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic alone.'*

If this is directed to other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic then it is *shirk*, just as Allāh the Exalted says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ

'And amongst mankind are those who take others besides Allāh as partners, they love them as they should only love Allāh.'¹²⁶

This is when someone loves the singers, actors and other characters more than Allāh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). A sign of this is that he is more attached to them than he is to the commandments of Allāh

124. Sūrah Āli 'Imrān (3):31.

125. Reported by al-Bukhāri.

126. Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):165.

the Mighty and Majestic. Also, it is like those who love the *tawāghūt*¹²⁷ from among the rulers and those besides them. As a result of this love they put their commandments and understanding above the Rule of Allāh the One, the Subduer. They sing out of praise for them and boast of their servitude to them.

Beware and beware once again that you do not become one of them as you will lose out in this world and in the Hereafter. Indeed, this would be the manifest loss.

127. *Tāghūt* (pl. *tawāghūt*) is something or someone which is taken as an object of worship along with or besides Allāh. It is a 'false god' because it does not possess any of the qualities which Allāh the Exalted, the only *ilāh* in truth, possesses. It cannot cause benefit or remove harm, nor can it give life or cause death. Thus, even prophets, angels or pious people can become false gods when worship which is due to Allāh alone is directed towards them. Likewise a leader or a ruler can be a *tāghūt* when he is given such obedience as is due only to Allāh alone. The duty of all the Messengers was to prevent the worship given to *tawāghūt* and to redirect it to Allāh alone, the only One deserving of such worship:

'And We have certainly raised in every nation a Messenger with this command: Make your *'ibādah* for Allāh (alone) and avoid all *tāghūt*. Amongst them were those whom Allāh guided and there were others upon whom misguidance was due. So travel through the Earth and see the end of those who reject (true faith).' [Sūrah an-Nahl (16):36]

Allāh also says:

'And whoever rejects *tāghūt* and believes in Allāh will have made a firm handhold which never breaks.'

[Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):256]

It is not sufficient that you worship Allāh with love alone without accompanying it with fear and hope. None of those from among the Sūfis¹²⁸ deviated when they deviated except due to their false notion that they are the beloved ones of Allāh, worshipping Him with love only; without having fear of His punishment and hoping or aspiring for His forgiveness and reward. This is one of the biggest reasons for their misguidance and deviation because they went against the command of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic where He has ordered us to worship Him with fear and hope as well as love. He says:

وَأَدْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

'So call upon Him out of fear and hope.'¹²⁹

128. See *The Reality of Sufism in Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah* by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Rab'ī al-Madkhali.

129. Sūrah al-A'rāf (7):56.

Fear (Khawf)

As for worshipping Him out of fear then that is due to the Exalted's saying:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۗ

'And as for the one who fears the standing in front of his Lord and prevents his soul from its whims, then indeed Paradise will be his abode.'¹³⁰

The Exalted also says:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ ۗ

'And for the one who fears the standing in front of his Lord there are two gardens (in Paradise).'¹³¹

and He, the Mighty and Majestic, also said:

ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ ۗ

'That (victorious establishment upon the Earth) is for the one who fears the standing in front of Me and fears My warning.'¹³²

130. Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt (79):40-1.

131. Sūrah ar-Raḥmān (55):46.

132. Sūrah Ibrāheem (14):14.

and the One free from all imperfections also says:

فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۞

'So do not fear them but fear Me if indeed you are really believers.'¹³³

Fear by itself is not sufficient for the correctness of *'ibādah*. There is no escape from accompanying it with love and hope. Some of the *Khawārij* were amongst those who had intense fear of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic and due to this they had little rest and comfort at night (due to praying). However, they had strayed because fear alone is not sufficient for travelling upon the Straight Path. Do you not see that Shaytān claimed fear from Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. The Exalted says:

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ
إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۞

'Like the example of Shaytān when he says to man: Disbelieve (or be ungrateful), so when he disbelieves (or becomes ungrateful), he (Shaytān) says: I am free of you. Indeed, I fear Allāh the Lord of the Worlds.'¹³⁴

and the Exalted also says about Shaytān:

133. Sūrah Āli 'Imrān (3):175.

134. Sūrah al-Hashr (59):16.

فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَيَّ عَقْبِيهِ وَقَالَ
 إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
 وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۞

'So when the two parties were seen by him he fled on his heels
 and said: I am free from you all. I see what you do not see.
 Indeed, I fear Allāh and Allāh is strict and intense in
 Punishment.'¹³⁵

Allāh has cursed Shaytān. He knows that Allāh is the Lord of the Worlds and that He is intense in punishment. He sometimes remembers that so he fears Him. However, this fear is only temporary and with pretence - it is free from the worship which is accompanied with love and hope - and that will not save Shaytān from the punishment of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic because he does not give obedience nor does he restrain from disobedience. Thus, the curse of Allāh remains upon Shaytān till the Day of Judgement.

135. Sūrah al-Anfāl (8):48.

Hope (Rajā)

It is necessary that we worship Allāh, the One remote from all deficiencies, the Exalted, out of hope. That is, we hope in His Forgiveness and His Paradise. The Exalted says, describing the believers:

أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

‘Those are the ones who place their hope in the Mercy of Allāh and Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.’¹³⁶

The Exalted also said, addressing the believers with the quality of hope which distinguishes them from the disbelievers:

وَتَرَجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ

‘And you hope from Allāh what they do not hope (from Him).’¹³⁷

The servant’s worship of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic is not set aright by hope alone, without fear and love. Those who deviated amongst the *Murji’ah* (those who believe that sins do not damage a person’s *Imān*) did not deviate except due to their excess in depending upon hope (in Allāh) only. Those who follow them in the present day are many, indulging themselves in the various types of *shirk* and disobedience. If you were to command them with a good deed or prohibit them from an evil deed they would enumerate what

136. Sūrah al-Baqarah (2):218.

137. Sūrah an-Nisā’ (4):104.

they have memorised regarding the vastness of Allāh's Mercy: that He is *ar-Raḥmān* (the Ever-Merciful), *ar-Raḥeem* (the Mercy-Giving), *al-Ghafūr* (the Forgiving), *ar-Ra'ūf* (the Compassionate). Thus, they disobey and commit sins while placing their hope in Allāh's Mercy without fearing Him; that they may keep away from what He has forbidden them and without love which would make them follow His laws. In fact, Allāh the Mighty and Majestic when He describes Himself does not just mention Mercy by itself, but rather He says:

نَبِيِّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ❁ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ
الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ❁

'Inform my servants that I am al-Ghafūr, ar-Raḥeem. And that My punishment is a painful, tormenting punishment.'¹³⁸

The Exalted also says:

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطُّوْلِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ❁

'The Forgiver of Sins and the Acceptor of Repentance, the Strict in Punishment and the One with a long reach. None has the right to be worshipped except He. To Him is the Return.'¹³⁹

So fear and hope are two necessary characteristics. It is vital that one does not exceed one with the other, as they are two opposites. When

138. Sūrah al-Hijr (15):49-50.

139. Sūrah Ghāfir (40):3.

they are equal, the servant's worship is correct and upright, whereas when one predominates, the other becomes disordered and imbalanced. Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, when He described His believing servants, has made it clear that their situation is a balanced one, in between Fear and Hope. The Exalted says:

يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ
كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

‘They hope for His Mercy and they fear His Punishment. Indeed, the Punishment of your Lord is something to beware of.’¹⁴⁰

and the Exalted also says:

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

‘Their sides do forsake their beds while they call upon their Lord out of fear and hope.’¹⁴¹

Meaning they fear His punishment and hope in His forgiveness and reward, until fear and hope become like the two wings of a bird to the believing servant which carry him in his path towards *istiqāma*. If one of them was left on its own then the servant would be destroyed.

This, brother and sister Muslim, is love, fear and hope. The servant's *'ibādah* is not complete and is not in accordance with the manner in which it has been ordered by Allāh the Mighty and Majestic until it

140. Sūrah al-Isrā' (17):57.

141. Sūrah as-Sajdah (32):16.

combines love, fear and hope. Those who have deviated have not deviated except due to falling short of these characteristics. For this reason the *Salaf* have said:

'Whoever worships Allāh with love only is indeed a Zindeeq (heretic). And whoever worships Him with hope only is indeed a Murji' (one who believes that sins impart no harm to a person's Imān). And whoever worships Him out of fear only is indeed a Harūri (another name of the Khawārij, those who believes that sins take a person out of Islām). But whoever worships Him with love, fear and hope is indeed a believing Muwahhid.'

Be careful, O brother and sister Muslim, that you do not let your hope in Allāh predominate and your fear and love of Him diminish as you will find it easy to commit sins and to disobey Him whilst thinking that you will be forgiven. Indeed, this is a delusion which many fall into.

Be careful, O brother and sister Muslim, that you do not let your love of Allāh predominate and your fear of Him diminish as this will make you think that you are His beloved. So you will become arrogant thinking that you have some sort of favour and promise with Allāh to the exception of others. Such is the case of the misguided Sūfis and the likes of them, who claim that they worship Allāh but only do so out of their desires and lusts and out of love only. As such, they invent and innovate into the religion thinking that this will be acceptable to Allāh.

And be careful also, brother and sister Muslim, that you do not let your fear of Him predominate and your hope in Him diminish as Shaytān will not fail to mislead you into thinking that there is no chance of forgiveness; so that you begin to despair of the mercy of the One Whose mercy predominates His Wrath and which has

encompassed every single thing.

And it is also incumbent upon you that you do not direct these three to anything other than the Lord of all the Worlds, so that you do not love anything as Allāh should be loved, and you do not fear anything as Allāh should be feared, and you do not place your hope in anything other than Allāh the Mighty and Majestic. If not, then behold, the Fire... the Fire... the Fire!!!

And presented to you now is the perfection of *'ibādah*...

Chapter 5: The Perfection of Worship

Ihsān

Brother and sister Muslim! You have now become acquainted with 'ibādah, its obligation, meaning, conditions and characteristics. It is incumbent that you beautify it. Therefore, it is upon you to accompany what has preceded with *Ihsān* and *Ihsān* is, as was taught to us by Jibreel (عليه السلام) when he questioned the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) regarding it and which has been recorded in *Saheeh Muslim*: 'That you worship Allāh as if you are seeing Him and although you see Him not, surely He sees you.'¹⁴²

Know that Allāh indeed sees us:

الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ۖ وَتَقْلُبُ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ ۗ

'The One Who sees you when you stand up (for prayer) and when you move amongst those who prostrate themselves.'¹⁴³

And know that Allāh's Knowledge has encompassed every single thing and nothing remains hidden from Him.

142. Reported by al-Bukhāri and Muslim from 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb.

143. Sūrah ash-Shu'arā (26):218-9.

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ
 مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ
 عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ
 مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٤٤﴾

'And never are you engaged in any affair, nor do you recite any portion of the Qur'an, nor do you do any action except that We are witnesses over you while you are deeply engaged in it. And there is nothing concealed from your Lord from the weight of an atom in the heavens and the earth or even smaller than that or greater, but it is in a clear book.'¹⁴⁴

And with this we say . . .

Brother and sister Muslim! You have just been presented with 'ibādah, its obligation, its meaning, its conditions and its perfection. Nothing remains for you after you have read and understood it but:

1. to increase your *Imān* by learning the general and specific details of the articles of faith, the first and foremost of which is the belief in the *Tawhīd* of Allāh, His Names and His Attributes;
2. then to purify your intentions by removing from them all the impurities (of showing off and seeking fame and recognition);
3. then to do actions upon the *Sunnah* of your Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), avoiding all innovations;

144. Sūrah Yūnus (10):61.

4. to do all of that out of obedience to Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, out of love for Him and love for such obedience;
5. whilst fearing His refusal of your action, His displeasure and His punishment;
6. and hoping for His acceptance of your action, His pleasure and His reward;
7. and then to embellish the whole of that with *Ihsān* by worshipping Allāh as if you see Him.

Only when you have united these components for each and every action will you have performed *'ibādah* in the way it has been prescribed. Then will your action be presentable to Allāh the Mighty and Majestic!

Hurry in doing that before the time comes when you may be one of those who will say:

يَاحَسْرَتِي عَلَى مَا فَرَطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ

'Woe be to me in that I neglected my duty towards Allāh.'¹⁴⁵

and of those who will say:

رَبِّ أَرْجِعُونِي لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ

'O My Lord! Send me back in order that I may do good in that which I have left behind.'¹⁴⁶

145. Sūrah az-Zumar (39):56.

146. Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23):99-100.

But rather be among the ones who will say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعَدَّهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ
تَتَّبِعُوا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمَلِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

'All praises and thanks be to Allāh Who has fulfilled His promise to us and caused us to inherit (this) land. We can dwell in Paradise where we will. How excellent a reward for the (pious) workers.¹⁴⁷

147. Sūrah az-Zumar (39):74.

Summary

As a summary for you, brother and sister Muslim, a poet has said:

O you would-be adherent

to the Deen of al-Mustafā

Cling to the means of deliverance

Imān, ikhlās and ittibā'

Be zealous of your sustenance

mahḥabbah, khawf and rajā

Then respond to His saying, the Most Benevolent

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

'Is the reward for Ihsān (anything) but Ihsān?'

*Peace and Blessings be
upon the Messenger of
Allāh, his Family and
his Companions, those
who followed them and
all those who are guided
in their footsteps till the
Day of Judgement.*

Glossary

Awliyā': *friends/allies/protectors*

Deen: *religion/way of life.*

Ḥadeeth (pl. **aḥādeeth**): *narrations containing the sayings, actions, silent approvals and physical descriptions of the Prophet Muḥammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم).*

Ḥadeeth Qudsi: *ḥadeeth of the Prophet Muḥammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) containing the speech of Allāh, other than that found in the Qur'ān.*

Hajj: *the pilgrimage to the K'aba in Mecca.*

Ḥalāl: *lawful.* All that has been made permissible by Allāh in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم). And Allāh and His Messenger (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) do not command or make permissible except that which is wholesome, good and conducive for man and His relationship with Allāh and His other creatures.

Ḥarām: *prohibited.* All that has been declared forbidden by Allāh in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم). And Allāh and His Messenger do not forbid except that which is impure, harmful and detrimental to man and his relationship with Allāh and His other creatures.

Ḥasan: *good/sound.* A rank classification of a *ḥadeeth*.

Tbādah: *worship.*

Ibn/bin: *son of...*

Ikhlās: *sincerity.*

Imān: *faith/creed.*

K'aba: the shrine in Mecca built by the Prophet Ibrāheem and his son, Ishmael (Ismā'eel), for the worship of Allāh alone.

Khawārij: A group from amongst the Muslims, the appearance of whom was prophesied by the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They declared Muslims to be disbelievers on account of committing sins and made lawful the shedding of their blood. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) ordered that they should be repelled and fought against.

Mushrik (pl. **mushrikūn**): one who is guilty of *shirk* in belief, word or action.

Muwahhīd (pl. **Muwahhīdūn**): one who unifies all his worship and directs it to Allāh alone.

Ṣaḥeeḥ: *authentic.* A rank classification of a *ḥadeeth*. The term is also used as an abridged reference to *Ṣaḥeeḥul-Bukhāri* or *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*: the authentic *aḥadeeth* collections of Imām al-Bukhāri and Imām Muslim respectively.

Salafuṣ-Ṣāliḥ (or **Salaf**): *the pious predecessors*; referring to the first three generations of Muslims.

Sharee'ah: the divinely revealed law (of Islām).

Shirk: to associate - directly or indirectly - any partners with Allāh in one's beliefs, feelings or actions; i.e. compromising any aspect of *Tawḥeed*.

Sunnah: the practice of the Prophet Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in general and his life exemplification of the Qur'ān in particular.

Sūrah: a chapter of the Qur'ān.

Tābi'i (pl. tābi'ūn): a companion of the companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They themselves did not see the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) but had the honour of the knowledge, wisdom, understanding, guidance and graceful company of those who did.

Tāghūt (pl. tawāghūt): a false deity, something which is taken as an object of worship along with or besides Allāh.

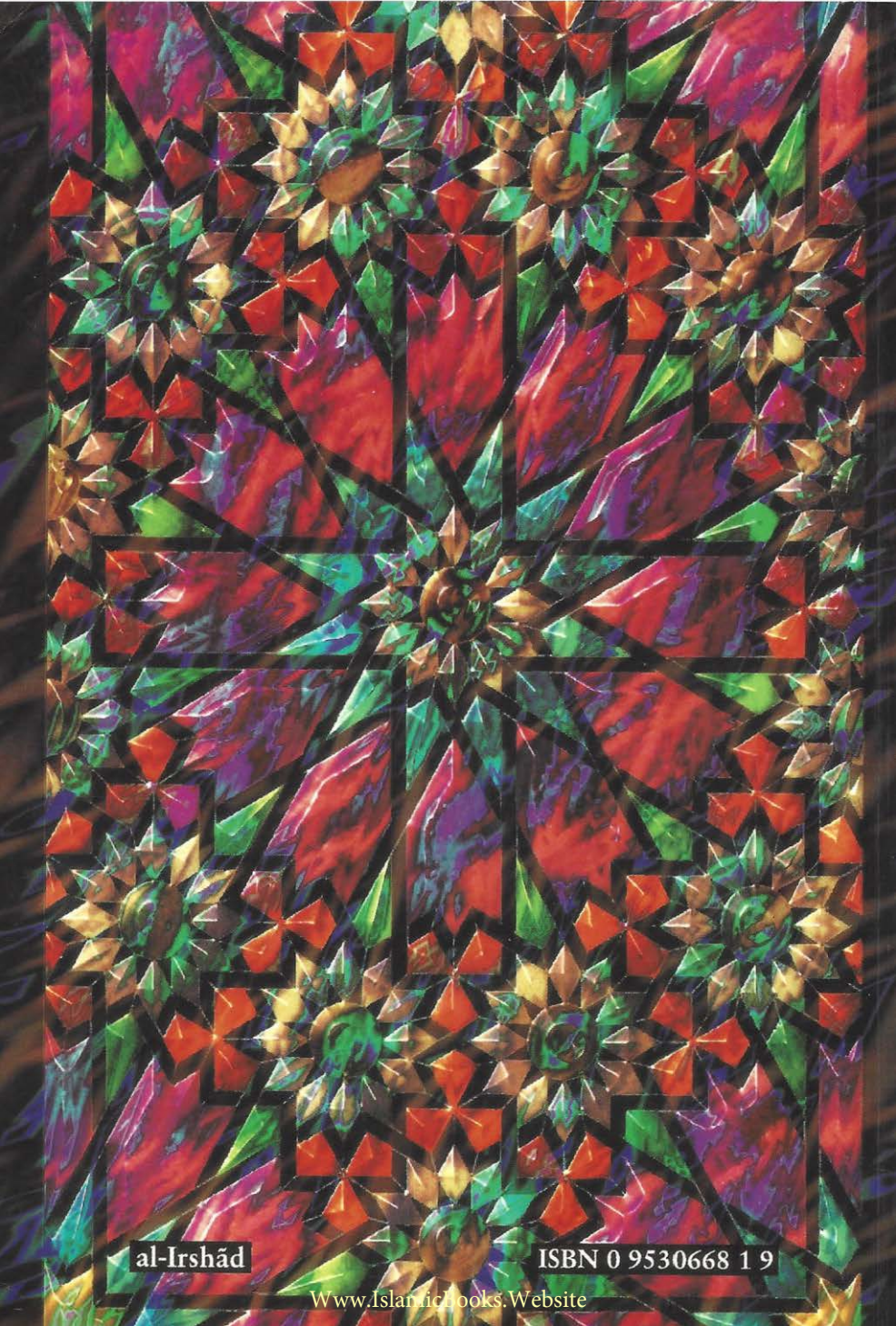
Tawāf: *circumambulation*; i.e. around the *K'aba* in Mecca.

Tawḥeed: Islāmic Monotheism. The Oneness, Unity and Uniqueness of Allāh's Lordship, His Right to be worshipped and His Names and Attributes.

Ummah: *nation*. The Muslim nation.

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